**Spanish Lesson for Nora Davis Magnet School (Fall 2014)**

**Researched & Instructed by USM dance majors in**

**DED 360 (Methods of Teaching Dance)**

**Written by Julie Hammond White**

*Nora Davis Magnet School is located in Laurel, Mississippi. Teachers teach academics artfully every day and in many ways. All four arts are taught as distinct disciplines in and of themselves at this school, and the arts specialists weekly work with regular classroom teachers to integrate arts and academics together. USM dance education majors do much of their fieldwork at NDMS for this reason – the teachers are dedicated to individualized and creative instruction, and the students excel in this curriculum despite most of them being on free or assisted lunches and living in a relatively isolated and socio-economically depressed town.*

*Researching, designing, and instructing this cultural dance class is an annual assignment for students enrolled in DED 360, organized and guided by myself. NDMS lets us know what culture we will present, as the larger school celebrates this culture not just in arts experiences, but in the food they serve, the attire they wear, the concepts they learn, and the activities they have that special day. It is taught to every student in the school as well – PreK – 6th, SPED and gifted and midline, thus the material (movement as well as supporting information and commentary) needs to easily be differentiated to stay developmentally and ability appropriate. There is an intentional balance between doing creative movement (focused on the dance elements) and traditional cultural dances with authentic music as accompaniment. The class is 30 minutes long and is taught seven times in a row. In this way, our majors get a “real life” experience with what K12 teachers do daily in terms of the amount of teaching they do, the stamina and energy this requires, and how many students are in their charge by day’s end. The lesson plan is written after instruction takes place so that best practices across the full spectrum of students and class periods are recorded and not just our original ideas. For this reason, this lesson is “tested and good to go” in terms of being immediately ready to teach. We hope you do!*

**Introduction**

* Hola! This means “hello” in Spanish.
* As you might know, Spain is a country located in Europe and is famous for its rich history and vibrant culture. The people of Spain are religious (primarily Catholic), love a good bullfight, and live for soccer.
* Most importantly, they are a culture who dances to celebrate life.
* Today we will be learning some traditional Spanish dances as well as the other arts that define this amazing place and people. The movement characteristics of Spanish dance include quick footwork, specific gestures, sharp or accented movement, partnering and precision. We will be experiencing many of these today.

**Warm-Up**

* Spain is very diverse geographically. It has mountains, seas, and open plains.
* One of Spain’s most famous citizens was an architect named Antonia Gaudi. The city of Barcelona, Spain’s capitol, is defined by his work. Everything from subway station terminals, to churches, to private homes were designed by this unique artist. He loved the human body and the natural wonders of his country, and tried to capture the lines and structures of each in his buildings.
* His most famous structure is a church called the Sagrada Familia which has been under construction (to this day!) since 1882. It is the number one visited attraction in Spain.
* For our warm-up, we will explore the shapes that inspired its creation in our bodies.

32 counts: moving body parts (head, arms, torso, legs)

32 counts: exploring circles (body, pathways)

32 counts: exploring curves (hands, arms, torso, twists/whole body)

32 counts: exploring spoking (levels, slow vs. fast, directions)

32 counts: freely combine any of the above

**Traditional Spanish Dance: Sardana**

This dance is done throughout Spain and symbolizes Spanish pride, unity, and identity. It is repetitive and not meant for a performance on a stage. Instead it is done to feel connection to one another and to celebrate life itself. The steps are simple but grow larger in energy at certain points. Try your best to get the footwork and if you are successful here, add in size!

Step right, step left, cross right, touch forward left. Repeat left. Repeat 8 times.

Add in jumps (prance, prance, skip)…right and left 8 times.

Add in music and do 8 times low energy, 8 times high energy, 8 times low energy. If appropriate, have students hold hands with a partner or two.

**Flamenco History and Characteristics**

* The Flamenco dance originated in the 1800’s and is considered a “gypsy” dance. Gypsies are nomadic people who Spanish people believe can conjure spirits and cast spells. They are respected as a culture in and of themselves and have contributed much to the Spanish culture.
* *There are three parts to a Flamenco dance.*
* Cante (song)
* Toque (guitar)
* Baile (dance)

**Basic Flamenco Steps**

*Chico (boys) and Chica (girls) have different arms. Add these in if and when appropriate, but let students know what they are and see them at some point.*

1. Golpe: stomp. 8 slow golpes alternating right and left, then double time.
2. Planta: ball of the foot. Ball heel right, two stomps left, one stomp right. Each done with a count. Alternating feet each time. Slowly speed up when pattern is clear and confident.
3. Tacon: heel dig. Ball heel right, heel dig left. One count each. Alternate starting foot. R, L, L, R, etc.

**Flamenco Dance**

Combine the above steps into a phrase that has a beginning, middle, and end and repeat the entire sequence three times. Have half the class perform at a time and invite the other half to watch and give feedback.

**Closure**

Beun Trabajo (good job!) today. Gracias (thank you) for dancing with us. Before we go, please share your favorite Spanish step with us before you do. Ready, set, dance! Fantastico (fantastic)!