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### Sample Artistic Activity

I plan for students to spend a maximum amount of time "in the medium", and my program is designed to give students experience in a wide variety of dances and concrete situations to form their ideas. I typically work with the PE specialist and/or the Music specialist, have 2 or 3 classes for an hour session, and do several sessions throughout the day. For the first exposure I try to get some age diversity, i.e. mixing a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade with a 5<sup>th</sup>. In High Schools I likewise mix classes, and allow students to come back during study halls if they get permission.

Sessions usually run this way: 2 or 3 minutes to walk through the dance, and then 5-7 minutes to do the dance with music. We then build on some of those figures for the next dance. With younger children I will often do singing "Playparties" that take less than a minute to teach, and last 3 or 4 minutes. At the end of the session we take a few minutes for questions about the dances and instruments, and I do some demonstrations on various styles, swings, and historical developments as well.

As the week progresses, walk through time goes down a bit, and we work more on grace, style, and details. I also have teachers and students take more of a leadership role in the dances, even having them call a few while I play the music if they feel ready. Often I can make arrangements to have a live musician for the end of the week.

I not only call the dances, I also play a number of instruments for a good many of them, and will do a short performance at the end of the session if that is appropriate.

In working with various teachers, I design follow-up sessions to develop themes, dances of specific interest, or to work with students with special abilities or needs. I frequently do an evening dance open to the entire community.

## RESIDENCY GUIDELINES

In my program, emphasis is placed on developmental, age appropriate dances that are multicultural, gender fair, and disability aware. I focus on what the learner needs and strive to inspire confidence and pride, building slowly on fundamentals and continually encouraging everyone to do their best. I believe we all learn through doing, so I intend to provide as much time as possible for as many students as possible to be actually *dancing*. The following information gives optimal conditions and is meant as a suggestion of what works best for me. Your particular situation may indicate variance for scheduling, special needs, or interest. I suggest you review all materials and let me know what will work best for you.

**EXPOSURE GROUPS:** Usually two classes for 60 minutes. Any combination will work, with different mixtures giving different results. For example, two 1st grade classes would do mostly playparty dances and be introduced to the Appalachian Big Circle Dance. Two 5th grades would do some playparties, mostly the Big Circle, and be introduced to Line dances. A 1st grade with a 5th grade would have about an equal mix of playparty and Big Circle dances.

**CORE GROUPS:** Can be either one class or two, depending on emphasis. 50 to 60 minutes. If the teachers are interested in incorporating dance into their curriculum it is often easier to have just their class. If you want to have as many students as possible have a depth experience then you can double the class. And it is also possible to have a few single sessions and a few with another class. The core experience has many options. You may choose a particular style for the class to become proficient in and then demonstrate to the other classes, or you may choose to focus on an interdisciplinary theme such as the MAYPOLE and have the class work on design, sewing, History, etc. You may have the core group visit and dance with a local seniors group or collect information on dance in your community. The possibilities really are endless, and I invite you to dream up your own.

Any room that is large enough for everyone to be moving is fine. I have my own sound system and prefer to remain in one place throughout the residency. It is quite easy to do one class in it's own room if necessary to allow the gym to be set up for lunch.

**WORKSHOPS:** I am always willing to meet with teachers any time it is convenient to discuss any aspect of the program. If there is a desire to increase their skills in teaching and leading the dances I am happy to do a simple workshop from 30 to 90 minutes. This may be of interest to other teachers and child care providers in your area, as well as musicians and other community members. This is an excellent way to network with like minded folks in your area.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** These dances were made by and for the community, and they exhibit their most complete beauty in that setting. You may invite parents, grandparents, and siblings join the sessions in school. Or you can make arrangements at a local nursing home and do a session there with one class. Or plan a *Family Dance* in either the school gym or community center. I can help with arrangements for a band and suggest you ask around and see if there are folks in your area that play "old tyme dance music." Members in our band can pick up and play with anyone, and I can line up one or several depending on your situation. It is a glorious moment when the children realize just how rich and full our own American Music and Dances really are. And when they realize they are a link in that great chain.



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Classroom Teacher  
Residency Guide

I will be leading several of our country's traditional folk dances with your students. Preparations include tied shoes, clean hands, and respect for learning. Here is some background information, which may be helpful.

The dances now, and historically, happen in one of these settings:  
**HOUSEPARTY:** Informal gathering of friends and neighbors to dance and play music at a particular home. This is the base of our tradition.  
**BARN DANCE:** A gathering for a special occasion with a large space for a larger crowd. The band and caller are usually more formalized.  
**COMMUNITY DANCE:** A regularly scheduled event that happens in a public place in the community. The music is live, and style varies with location.

#### American Folk Dances

**PLAYPARTIES:** Simple, active dances done by younger children that combine singing, clapping, and movement in a game like atmosphere.  
**APPALACHIAN BIG CIRCLE:** These dances introduce large and small group figures with easy partner interaction that is non-gendered.  
**REELS:** Those long dances brought by the French, Irish, and English.  
**ALL ELSE:** There are formations in 6 (triplets), 8 (squares), Sicilian Circles, and more. Many challenge dancers to think in new ways!

The connection between these dances and your student's learning ability is immense. Since all of their intelligences are being used, many students focus clearly and are engaged the entire session. By actively building group energy, and frequently making individual choices with observable positive outcomes in the dances, they *feel their common cultural bonds*. This can be a powerful, enjoyable experience.

I would welcome your presence at the session to celebrate the special bond you share with your students. The sparkle in those young eyes is frequently fleeting, but well worth seeing, encouraging, and nurturing. May we make the most of our brief time together!



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Elementary PE, Music & Art Specialists  
Residency Guide

Please read the guide for classroom teachers.

Teamwork can help an awful lot when it comes to dance, so I encourage you to pool your skills and support one another in attaining a consistent, comprehensive dance package that has our own simple, achievable dances at the base.

Put a tentative schedule together, and send it to me early -- I may have suggestions that will make the sessions flow easier for us all. I realize there are many factors and people involved, and I can go with a wide variety of options, and this may benefit the overall picture.

Review the booklet and other handout materials, and after a day or two of doing the dances, look them over again, and let me know if there is anything unclear, or what you might need in order to do the dances. I am glad to help you develop your skills, work with your acoustics, or share strategies that have worked for others in similar situations.

When the children come in, I have them form a circle, and with larger groups I sometimes form another circle around the first.

You build the strong base that allows Middle School Teachers the chance to keep students "in the medium". Having children practice and develop these life long, valuable skills will keep them healthy and responsive for the rest of their lives. I welcome the chance to work with you and intend to make it as easy as possible to follow up doing the dances.

Through the years I have been given excellent advice and direction from folks in your position. I appreciate any insights and experiences that will make my work more effective and useful.



# Time to Dance

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## Middle Level & High School PE Teachers Residency Guide

Please read the Residency Guide for classroom teachers. You are my link to your colleagues, and I would appreciate you letting folks know they may join us at any time, for 10 minutes of "learning on our feet". Their modeling would certainly enhance the sessions, and give a strong message. If they want to join us with their entire class, for a whole period, that can often be arranged.

Pre-residency activities: Parachute games, juggling, Ultimate Frizbee, or any other New Games. It may be easier doing dance with your students after the residency.

I prefer to have students wear regular clothes, and just change shoes where necessary. I encourage you to mix age levels when possible, and to invite Music and Art classes, as well as Pre-school & Elementary aged children when possible.

We will form a circle to begin, and with multiple classes, we'll have the second or third classes form a circle around the first. I generally introduce myself and give a brief "Respect for all" request.

I appreciate 10 - 15 minutes at the end of the day to de-brief, compare observations, and plan strategies for the next sessions.

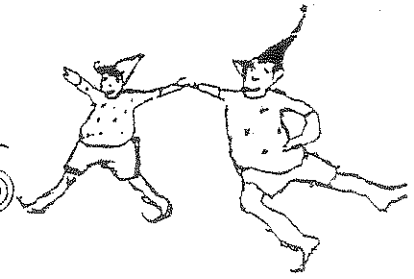
I will give you a booklet of the dances, along with an accompanying CD. I have other CDs from other artists I will gladly share upon request, as well as information on many aspects of the dances.

I welcome the chance to work with you and be a resource to you! There are many stages to learning how to lead these dances and enjoy the process, particularly with this age group. However, with patience and an eye to effective learning it is a very achievable goal. I am glad to design the program to fit your particular needs, and to help you make the most of the residency.

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# Time to Dance

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Greetings Volunteer Helpers,

And **THANK YOU** for helping me present these American folk dances. I will “put you to work” by having you dance with the children, and you merely have to follow directions like everyone else. My style is to move quickly from dance to dance, and to build on broad, basic themes and movements. For the non-listeners this generally means that they are a bit confused initially, and that they have to rely on their other seven intelligences to “get with the program”. This means they will watch you, and take their cues from you, so just smile and keep focused, and we’ll stay buoyant and flowing. On occasion, when we are doing a “mixer”, you may find yourself ending with a child that is a “weak link” or needs your special attention.

If you have a younger child with you, you may take a break anytime you want, hold the little one with you, or be their partner.

I would like to encourage you to do these dances on your own if you’d like to. They are a lot of fun in your own kitchen, and my own path started with volunteering in my children’s classrooms. I have two booklets with directions that I would be glad to give you in appreciation. My contact person at the school should know who has the **CD** that accompanies the booklets, and you may dub yourself a copy.

Of course I recommend doing your own singing and playing. I have tinwhistles and an accompanying booklet that you may find interesting. My wife, Marge, began and enjoyed the learning in her forties, and we have many good times with the simplest of tunes.

The heart and soul of our tradition is the sense of fun and wholeness, simplicity and joy in community that these dances preserve. You embody that tradition with your presence, and give these dances their fullness.

May your feet grow ever lighter!

