

# FOCUS FOR INTERGENERATIONAL DANCE CLASS

## Ages: 5 to adult

Children, parents, teachers, grandparents, guardians, aunts, and uncles enjoy interacting, moving, and bonding through fun, energizing, brain-building movement classes that encourage creativity and collaboration. These classes may be held at schools, recreation centers, senior centers, and dance studios. Classes are for all ages and abilities and include the BrainDance, exploration of dance concepts, folk dance, moving with props, shape games, and more. Intergenerational dance classes promote lifelong health, cross-generational understanding, and bonding. Many of the lesson plans at the end of the concept chapters in part II of this book may be tweaked for intergenerational classes. Music suggestions are from *Music for Creative Dance (MCD)* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and *BrainDance Music* by Eric Chappelle.

## Length

45 to 75 minutes

## Warming Up

**Introducing the Concept:** *Focus—single focus, multi-focus.* Dancers read and say the words as they physically demonstrate the concept of *focus*.

**BrainDance:** Following your lead, participants perform movements for the eight BrainDance patterns (chapter 4) of breath, tactile, core–distal, head–tail, upper–lower, body–side, cross–lateral, and vestibular. If participants are familiar with the BrainDance, ask partners to mirror each other for the last four patterns, with the aid of your cuing. *Suggested music:* *BrainDance Music*, #2 or #4, spoken rhymes, or *MCD* Vol. 3, #20.

## Exploring the Concept

### *Focus Shape Museum*

“Find a partner. One dancer uses eyes as a ‘laser’ to ‘move’ a partner’s body part. For example, a dancer stares at a partner’s elbow, and the partner moves the elbow into a shape, then the dancer stares at two more body parts as the statue moves those parts to form a final shape. The laser sculptor copies the statue’s shape, and the statue then becomes the laser sculptor.” If dancers are young children or uncomfortable with the activity, they might stay with the same

partner; if they are comfortable with it, have them change partners. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 3, #6.

### *Reflection*

“If you liked using eyes to mold the shape, sit down. If you liked reacting to the laser eye, stand up. Tell a friend or family member why you made that choice.”

### *Instruments (Optional for a 45-Minute Lesson)*

Shadow a partner through space while playing a rhythm instrument and moving to the tempo of the music. Copy the partner’s rhythm and movement. Take turns being leader. Families can follow each other. Each takes a turn being the leader. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 3, #9.

## Developing Skills

### *Circle Dance (Optional for a 45-Minute Lesson)*

If you know a simple folk dance that is fun and easy, teach that dance. Do not dwell on instructions. Model the dance and then turn on the music. Folk music is repetitive, so everyone will know the dance by the fourth time through. You can create your own simple circle dance to a folk dance tune or use the suggested music. Try something like *circle left 8 counts, circle right 8 counts, come together 8 counts, move apart 8 counts, turn with a partner right 8 counts and left 8 counts, clap 8 times, and stomp 8 times*. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 3, #19. Instructions for circle dances and folk dances are in *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* (Gilbert, 2006).

### *Obstacle Course*

Set up spots, cones, milk cartons, hoops—whatever you have available—in two separate lines along the sides of the space. Two separate lines of dancers leap or step over obstacles (jump in, walk on, etc., depending on mobility). When couples meet at the end of the obstacles, they hold hands and slide, gallop, or walk down the center to the starting line. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 3, #17.

## Creating

### *ABA Totem Pole Dances*

A—Groups of three to six people (friends and family) form a totem pole by making shapes at different levels from low to high.

B—Dancers move through general space depicting characters from the totem pole using abstract movements (salmon, eagles, bear, frog, etc.). This section may be improvised or choreographed.

A—Dancers return to form the original totem pole shape.

*Suggested music: MCD Vol. 3, #1.*

## **Cooling Down**

Students perform totem pole dances for each other. They applaud for each other and discuss the dances.