Strategies for Diverse Learners

Dance is for everyone! Let us repeat that a little louder.
DANCE IS FOR EVERYONE!

We put together some strategies for working with diverse learners so everyone can get the most out of the Crelata® dance content. We want to help make dance accessible to everyone! Also, be sure to read our dance tips for teachers.

Movement of any kind is an essential part of being human. At Crelata, we believe that every child is unique and should be celebrated for their effort and growth in dance. Your students are capable of so much given the proper learning environment and support. Find their strengths and push them to step outside of their comfort zone.

We built Crelata with the best practices in education in mind. You will notice that a lot of supports for students are already built into our video content:

- Closed captions in English and Spanish
- ASL interpretation
- Clear expectations from the beginning
- Routine lesson format where students will be able to predict what section is next
- Names of steps on screen lighting up to show when it's time to change movements
- Right and left arrows on screen
- Visual, word, and auditory examples
- Embedded checks for understanding
- And more!

Make adjustments along the way to meet students' individual needs and goals. We recommend reading the students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, if they have one and you are permitted access. If you have questions about the best way to help a particular student, ask the student, their teachers, support providers, and families. What you see on paper may not be a true reflection of the student so get to know them and have fun!

The suggestions below can help you work with students with:

- Autism
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing loss
- Orthopedic impairments
- Other health impairments
- Specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, or traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairments
- As well as English language learners

The most important thing is to stay open and find out what your students can do! Think creatively, try different things, and trust yourself. Every student can benefit from the discipline of dance. ***Your students will not do everything in the same way, but they should all have an equal opportunity to participate.***

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Strategies for working with students with autism:

Learn from the student!

- Do they like to talk?
- Do they like to move?
- Do they like to use an assistive communication device? (Students can use this to communicate during the peer feedback section and in the extension activities.)

Reinforce the routines of the lessons. The same sections will occur in each video lesson:

- Introduction
- Warm up
- Exploring concepts and developing skills
- Splitting the room in half and taking turns dancing and giving feedback
- Creative choice
- Cool down
- Review

- Make the room as free from unexpected changes (loud noises, things outside the windows, turning the lights on and off, etc.) as possible.
- Allow students to dance with comfort objects like a stuffed animal.
- Give the student extra physical space to move in.
- Allow students to wear headphones if there is too much noise and there is a sensory overload.
- Find ways for students to communicate their needs and understanding.
- Take breaks away from stimuli.

Strategies for working with students with emotional disturbance:

- Preview the video in advance by scanning through it with your students to let them know what they will be doing and what is expected.
- Find out what motivates your students.
- Allow students who are shy to stand in the back of the room where fewer people will see them.
- Start with a fresh mentality every few minutes.
- Allow the students to make and learn from their mistakes.
- Redirect students with positive affirmations.
- If a student is being unsafe, they may need to be temporarily removed from the dance environment or visit a calming area until they are ready to safely rejoin.
- It’s ok to pause the video and come back to it later or keep going and see if the students get hooked back in!

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Strategies for working with students with hearing loss:

- Turn on the closed captions.
- Play the videos with ASL interpretation.
- Place students close to the screen so they can see all of the supports provided.
- Allow students to stand next to the speakers and turn up the volume so they can hear the vibrations of the music.
- Use assistive listening technology if it is available.
- Encourage students to use their peripheral vision to watch the other students around them.
- Encourage students to follow the teachers and students movement on screen as well as the visual cues provided (step names, right and left arrows), etc.

Strategies for working with students with orthopedic impairments:

Work with each individual student to find out:

- What can they do on their own?
- What physical supports are needed: chair, objects for balance, braces, crutches, shoes, etc.
- How can the student embody the essence of the dance?
  - Can they transpose the movement into another body part? For example, can they do the Salsa basic step with their arms instead of their legs?
  - Which body parts can they find the rhythm in: eyes, hand, head, leg, etc.? Any body part can work!
  - Can they make the movement bigger?
  - Can they make the movement smaller?
  - Can they go slower?
  - Can they go faster?
- How can they express their understanding of the desired outcomes?

- Let the students know that they can make modifications to the movement to make it work for their body.
- **We want students to express themselves independently so encourage them to make their own movements.** We don't recommend "puppeting" or moving students' bodies for them.

Strategies for working with students with other health impairments:

- Be sensitive to the volume.
- Allow students to take breaks.
- Redirect students to focus back onto the lesson.
- Encourage students to participate.
- Praise students for their efforts.
- Place students somewhere in the room where they are most comfortable.
- Allow students to direct their learning and do things in the way that makes the most sense for them.
- Be aware if students use an inhaler or have other health needs that may present themselves during the lesson.

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Strategies for working with students with specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, or traumatic brain injury:

- Allow students extra processing time by pausing the video lesson for breaks.
- Allow each student to express their understanding of desired outcomes in their own way.
- Remind students that they can respond non-verbally by using their thumbs, body language, eyes, dance movements, or another way.
- Pair students with a thought buddy to share their ideas in a smaller setting before sharing with the whole class.
- Have another student or an adult help scribe the students ideas onto paper or a whiteboard.
- Use assistive communication devices, whiteboards, or other means of communication so students can participate.
- Read and restate text to the students.
- Remind students of the order of the lesson and of the steps.
- Encourage students to follow what they see.

Strategies for working with students with visual impairments:

- Make sure the space is as free from objects as possible.
- Orient the students so that they have a large dancing area.
- If students wear glasses, make sure that they are on and that they are clean.
- Encourage students to listen for cues in the video.
- Assign an adult to help students who are in need of extra verbal narration.
- Pair students with a buddy to practice with one another.
- It may be helpful to have students hold onto a teacher or a peer who is moving along to the video so they can learn the movement by feel. This can help the student understand the weight shifts and body placement for the movements.

Strategies for working with English language learners:

- Turn on the closed captions in English or Spanish.
- Encourage student translators.
- Remind students to watch the screen for visual and word examples.
- Students can respond non-verbally with their thumbs and body expression.
- Assess the students' understanding of concepts physically - watch them do it!
- Use the vocabulary frequently.
- Encourage students to say the vocabulary words aloud.
- Allow students to speak when they are ready to.
- Link concepts to students' backgrounds.
- Allow for wait time.
- Review prior concepts before adding new material.

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DANCE IS FOR EVERYONE!

Remember that every child is unique and deserves the opportunity to participate in dance. It is up to you to help shape the learning environment to allow students to be successful. Follow the lead of the students and go from there.

Contact Us

Reach out to us with any questions or concerns at hello@crelata.com and we'll be happy to help!

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