

Premise: A football player with a chance to play for the NFL must take dance class if he's to stay on the team, and have a chance

Large themes: athletics, dance, teamwork, responsibility, accountability, overcoming obstacles, family, friends, self-identity

Other themes: civil rights, history, World War II, achievement, self-reliance, investment in self, social constraints, psychology of relationship dynamics, disabilities, perseverance, goal setting, environment, slavery, illegal aliens

Kindergarten - Grade 3: Focus on goal setting & alternative story-telling

Discussion

In our story, a teenage football player is so good, he has a chance to be in the NFL. The only problem is that he's always seems to get injured. So his coach tells him that he can stay on the team, but only if he takes a dance class to strengthen his muscles and flexibility. Our football player agrees, but the truth is, he hates dance.

1. Would you be willing to do one of the things you like the least, if it means you can have the thing you like the most?
2. Why or why not?

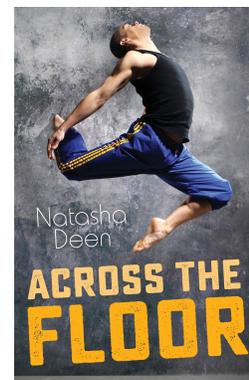
Activities

1. There are many types of dance forms. A fun activity could include having students learn a few dance moves (for some simple steps, check out <https://youtu.be/oejgTGo-BCc>), then have them choreograph a dance (they can do this individually or in pairs.). A fun twist on this would be to partner with another class in school. Students can create a class dance that they teach to students of another class.
2. Part of achieving success with goal-setting is to break down the goal into micro goals. A twist on this that also helps students get active is to create scavenger hunt that allows them to move around the school, and also engage in teamwork. For example, have them find the pieces of a puzzle (or pieces that make up a slogan). Hide the items in different locations, then create clues (i.e., a puzzle piece could be taped to the underside of a swing or slide, and a clue, "Find it on the playground, under an up and down thing, boy it's always fun, playing on a (swing).") For younger students, the clue gathering could be done as a group activity.)
3. Every dance has a story. Have students view a dance video (for example, <https://youtu.be/FcWAocmMfuM>). What do they think the story of the dance is? Who are the characters? What kind of adventure do students think the dancers are having? (The trick to this activity is to find a video that has only instrumental music, or is sung in a language none of your students understand).
4. Dance celebrates not only movement and music, but the cultures around the world. Why not connect your social studies class with a journey around the dance world and how different cultures explained natural phenomenon via dance? (i.e., Polynesian dance in Hawaii, Celestial dance in Cambodia)
5. An interesting twist on #4 is how dance can be used covertly, for example, capoeira.

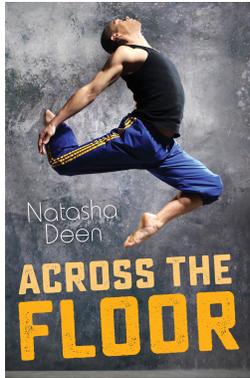
Grade 4- 6: Focus on sports & physical movement**Discussion**

Our society emphasizes physical activity as an important part of a healthy lifestyle. What do students think constitutes physical activity (i.e., does it have to be an organized sport? Does the person have to sweat a lot for it to be exercise, or can something as simple as walking be considered a valid exercise)?

1. Are there any sports that should be considered too dangerous to participate in? Can extreme activities such as cliff diving be considered a legitimate sport?
2. There is a lot of money that gets funnelled into sports, both professional and amateur. Should there be a restriction on how much money athletes can make, or restrictions on how much money colleges can put toward their athletic programs?
3. There is growing controversy with colleges not paying their athletes during sporting competitions (NCAA/March Madness), but reaping millions of dollars based on their athlete's performances. There is also debate about the ethics involved in using an athlete's image for video games, while not paying the athlete for this. Colleges justify it by saying these athletes go on to pro contracts, yet many of them do not. How do students feel about this?

**Activities**

1. Countries and nations have particular sports they enjoy—soccer in Europe, baseball in America, but there are also unusual sports few of us have heard of (see here: <http://read.bi/1TyQJwW>) They can either do an essay on what they have learned, or hold a lesson where they teach the sport to their fellow students.
2. One of the growing debates concerns player injuries. The NFL is facing multiple lawsuits over concussions, and players are retiring early to preserve their health (<http://cbsprt.co/2fvx96a>). Have students break into groups to research this topic. An interesting activity could be having students debate whether the NFL, NHL, and WWE should be sued, and if payments for head injuries should be retroactive to past players and/or their families. (An interesting twist on this could be to fictionalize what they've learned, and create a dystopian story in the vein of Hunger Games, Tron, or Maze Runner).
3. Sports and dance aren't just for the stage and field, they show up in movies, as well. What do students think is involved in choreographing a fight scene? What is involved if someone wants to become a stunt coordinator or stunt player in Hollywood?
4. A fun twist on dance/sports as action can show up in comic books. Heroes (especially female heroes) are often depicted in poses that are almost impossible to replicate. Have students look through comic books, and find poses for both male and female superheroes. Can they reenact those poses? Is there a gender bias towards how males are shown and how females are shown?
5. Sports and dance have been around for a long time. What are some of the ways ancient peoples passed their time? For example, the Mayans had a game called the Ball Game (a precursor to basketball), but the game held much ritual significance to the people, with the captain of the losing team often being beheaded.



Grade 7-12: Focus on personal & world connections

Discussion

One of the issues Luc grapples with in *Across the Floor* is trying to keep everyone happy, from his teammates to his coach, his family, and himself. It's an impossible task, and he must deal with the fallout of wanting to achieve something, even when it might put him at odds with those around him.

1. Did you ever have something you really wanted?
2. Do you have a dream about something you want to achieve?
3. Is there a point where the cost of a dream is too high?

In *Across the Floor*, Luc has to make sacrifices if he's to stay on the team, and he must listen to his coach, dance teacher, and family. He's lucky because those around him want only the best for him. But as is often the case when it comes to sports or life, the people surrounding us may not always have the best intentions.

1. Can you think of an incident where someone's celebrity or power allowed them to get away with bad behaviour? (i.e., Bill Cosby, Penn State, Gitmo).
2. When someone is working under the authority of someone else, how much responsibility do they bear if they see something going wrong?
3. When we think of power and authority, one of the things we don't often think about is how clothing factors in. Do you think clothes play a role (and what kind) in how people are perceived in terms of their power?

Activities

1. The psychology behind group dynamics can be quite fascinating. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest the "yes men" phenomenon was in play during one of the NASA missions, and helped lead to the Challenger disaster. When it comes to clothing and authority, there is intriguing information concerning "ordinary" citizens and those in power (i.e., doctors, prison guards). Have students look into the Milgram experiment and the Stanford prisoner study, and come up with their thoughts on connections between power, abuse, and the treatment of those considered vulnerable.
2. Sacrifice and tough choices are part of norm when it comes to achieving a goal. However, there is pressure for athletes and dancers to achieve levels that are almost impossible, and dangerous to their health. An interesting case study could be Lance Armstrong and the doping controversy. Another case study could be female ballet dancers and the pressure they face to maintain an unrealistic body size, and the link with eating disorders.
3. The idea of beauty isn't restricted to only humans. In the past, a beautiful home had a certain standard when it came to lawn maintenance. In recent years, this attitude has changed as people have learned about the disastrous effects of weed killers on wildlife and the sewage system, as well the strain on city water systems. More and more people are moving to a wild lawn. Yet this push for natural environments is met with resistance from city bylaws and neighbours. What are the pros and cons of a wild lawn, and how can conservationists choose this path without incurring disapproval from their towns and neighbours?
4. Luc works for his father during the summer, and though the work is difficult, Luc is never under duress. However, there are many children who are forced into work at factories, sold into slavery, and some of these sweatshop conditions exist in America. How does the life of an average North American teenager compare to those in developing countries? How does

that teenager's life compare to a teenager, also living in North America, but there illegally? (It would be interesting to turn the research into a fictional story, where a character must escape the confines of their sweatshop, and the people who bought them.) Some background reading can be found here: <http://www.refinery29.com/2015/12/99481/los-angeles-garment-workers-child-care-problems> and http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/woman-chief-breaks-up-850-child-marriages-in-malawi_us_56fd51c2e4b0a06d580510da

5. Stereotypes exist everywhere, especially in the sports world. What are some of the stereotypes athletes face? How are these ideas changing? An interesting case study would be to investigate athletes' responses to President Trump's defence that his inappropriate remarks concerning Arianne Zucker were "locker room talk." Students can also investigate the changing culture concerning athletes who are LGBTQ.
6. Quite often, when it comes to dance and sports, the focus is on the elite levels of the human body. Yet, dance and sports exist for people with disabilities, and their athleticism is just as valid. How does our society exclude people with disabilities from "having a seat" at the sports and dance tables, and how does this elitism inform body image and body worth for the rest of society?
7. Dance and athletics have been catalysts for social change and civil rights reform. Have students research some of the iconic figures and how their journey had an effect not only on the sport or the dance form, but on civil rights.