The Three “T’s”
Toe Shoes, Tutus and Tchaikovsky

Grade Level:  First Grade
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Length of Unit:  Eight lessons

I.  ABSTRACT
Step into the world of ballet in a first grade classroom. This unit allows the “non-ballet trained” classroom teacher to explore basic ballet, music and movement through Tchaikovsky’s The Nutcracker Suite. Young children will gain familiarity with Edgar Degas, the life of Tchaikovsky, and the famous Native American ballerina, Maria Tallchief.

II.  OVERVIEW
A.  Concept objective
   1. Understand that ballet combines music and movement to tell a story.
   2. Develop an understanding that music is written by a composer to express a feeling.
   3. Recognize that the visual and performing arts have a valuable impact on our lives.
B.  Specific content from the Core Knowledge Sequence to be covered:
   1. Literary terms
   2. Spatial sense
   3. Observe use of dark and light in color
   4. Texture
   5. Elements of music
   6. Music can tell a story (ballet)
   7. Musical terms and concepts
   8. Body systems
   9. The Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy
   10. Maria Tallchief
   11. Pas De Deux
   12. The Dance Class
   13. Before the Ballet
C.  Skills will be addressed in the individual lesson plans.

III.  BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
A.  For Teachers
B.  For Students
   1. Muscles (1)
   2. Geography Spatial Sense- maps and globes (1)
   3. Writing and spelling - (K and 1)
   4. Recognizing instruments- (K)
   5. Elements of Music-(K)
   6. Identify ordinal positions 1st through 6th- (K)
   7. Interpret simple pictorial graphs- (K)
   8. Sequence Events: before after, next, last (K)
9. Orientation of time (K)
10. Identify left and right (K)
11. Identify top, bottom, and middle (K)
12. Terms of orientation and relative position (K)

IV. RESOURCES
2. Member of the community who is knowledgeable about ballet.
3. A local ballet company or dance studio
4. Music of Tchaikovsky
5. Pictures of musical instruments
6. Video of The Nutcracker

V. LESSONS
Lesson One - Can I Dance?
A. Objectives:
   1. Lesson Content: The ballet
   2. Concept Objective: Understand that ballet combines music and movement to tell a story.
   3. Skill Objectives:
      a. To demonstrate the five ordinal positions of ballet steps.
      b. Identify left and right.
      c. Know and use terms of orientation and relative position.
      d. Locate France on a map.
B. Materials:
   1. I Am a Dancer
   2. Lili at Ballet
   3. Member of the community who is knowledgeable in ballet.
   4. Leotard
   5. Tights
   6. Ballet shoes
   7. Toe shoes
   8. Map of continents and countries
C. Key Vocabulary
   1. Saying: Practice makes perfect.
   2. Ballet shoes
   3. Barre
   4. Toe shoes
   5. Leotards
   6. Tights
   7. Plies
   8. Rehearsal
   9. Positions
   10. Index cards with the following label - leotard, tights, ballet shoes, toe shoes, T-shirts, footless tights.
D. Procedures/Activities
   1. Read aloud Lili at Ballet. Discuss what the male and female students wore in class. Show or wear ballet attire. Have the following words written on cards: leotard, tights, ballet shoes, toes shoes, and t-shirt. Label a poster or picture of the ballet attire. Select students
to label the attire worn by ballet dancers.
2. Have a member of the community who is knowledgeable in ballet come and demonstrate the five ordinal positions. Explain to students what is expected in a ballet class. Have the students try the five basic ballet positions and a plie. Allow time for questions and answers with the ballet dancer.

E. Evaluation and Assessment
1. The students will find key vocabulary words in the word search. (Appendix A)
2. Ask students the following questions. What is the universal language of ballet? How many positions are there in ballet? What does a ballet dancer wear to class?
3. Journal Writing - What would it be like to be a dancer?

Lesson Two- Muscles in Motion
A. Objectives
1. Lesson Content: Muscles and how they move.
2. Concept Objective: Understand that ballet combines music and movement to tell a story.
3. Skill Objective: To demonstrate that movement occurs when muscles pull in opposite directions.

B. Materials
1. String
2. Two cardboard tubes (Appendix B)
3. Fasteners
4. Drinking straws
5. Crepe paper streamers
6. Masking tape
7. 6 inch piece of pipe cleaner

C. Key Vocabulary
1. Muscles
2. Partners
3. Opposite

D. Procedures/Activities
1. Review ballet positions learned from the previous day.
2. Ask questions about how a ballerina moves their legs and arms.
3. Review the jobs of the brain and nerves in sending messages to the body.
4. Demonstrate how muscles work with the model. (See appendix B). This model will show that muscles pull and not push to move. Muscles work as partners pulling each other in the opposite directions.
5. Children can make streamers to move to the music of The Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy. Cut six to eight streamers 12 inches long. Hold all the strips in one hand, fold in half, and twist a 6 inch pipe cleaner in one end of the straw. You can use tape to wrap around it to make it more secure. Now you are ready to go! (Save for lesson 5)

E. Evaluation/Assessment
Students will describe how their muscles in their arms make the streamers move.

Lesson 3: My Hero or Heroine
A. Objective:
1. Lesson Content: Maria Tallchief
2. Concept Objective: Understand that ballet combines music and movement to tell a story.
3. Skill Objectives:
   a. To sequence events and orient time.
   b. To introduce Maria Tallchief.
B. Materials:
1. The Nutcracker Book
2. Maria Tallchief
3. A video of The Nutcracker
4. Ballet costume or I am a Dancer

C. Key Vocabulary
1. Saying: Practice makes perfect.
2. Prima Ballerina
3. Tutu
4. Pas De Deux
5. Danseur
6. Choreographer
7. The Nutcracker
8. Hero
9. Heroine

D. Procedure/Activities
1. Read aloud The Nutcracker. On chart paper list the characters - Clara, Fritz, Sir Drosselmeyer, Prince, Nutcracker, and the Sugar Plum Fairy. Decide who would be the hero or heroine for the story. Set the scene for the different acts. Act I would be the party scene. Act II would be the land of sweets. Discuss the time period of the story.
2. Show a costume or a picture of a costume with a tutu. Let the children feel the tutu. Explain that the ballerina wears a short tutu.
3. Show a picture of Maria Tallchief. Read aloud Maria Tallchief. Explain that she was a prima ballerina for the New York City Ballet. She had the lead role of the Sugar Plum Fairy. List her accomplishments and honors. Show a clip of the Pas De Deux with the male and female from The Nutcracker. Explain that she was the first person dance the Sugar Plum Fairy for the NYC Ballet.

E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Draw a picture from the Nutcracker - the party scene or the land of sweets.
2. Journal entry - write their thoughts of Pas De Deux.
3. Ask questions from the biography of Maria Tallchief.

Lesson Four: Who Wrote This Stuff?

A. Objective:
1. Lesson Content: What is a composer?
2. Concept Objective: Develop an understanding that music is written by a composer to express a feeling.
3. Skill Objective: To recall three facts about Tchaikovsky.

B. Materials
1. Peter Tchaikovsky by Mike Venezia
2. Audio tape of The Nutcracker
3. Chart paper
4. World map
5. Gold stars
6. Black suit coat

C. Key Vocabulary
1. Composer
2. Prodigy
3. Orchestra
4. Peter Tchaikovsky
5. Conductor
D. Procedures/Activities
1. On chart paper, make a graph saying, “What is a composer?” Give the choices of a person who write a book, a person who writes music, a person who writes T.V. shows. Let the children write their names under their choice.
2. While the children are completing morning work, play selections from The Nutcracker.
3. Discuss the morning graph and give the correct answer. Explain that all music is written by a person, but the music like we have been listening to is written by a composer. Give the definition of composer.
4. Inform the children that the composer of the music we have been listening to is Tchaikovsky. Read Peter Tchaikovsky to the class. As the book discusses a country, find it on a map and label it with a gold star. Using chart paper, make a list of some facts of the composer. Then let a child wear the black suit coat and pretend to “conduct” the orchestra.

E. Evaluation/Assessment
The students will be evaluated through a journal entry. The topic will be, “Tchaikovsky wrote music when he was sad and it made him feel better, what do you do when you are sad.”

Lesson Five: All in the Family
A. Objectives:
1. Lesson Content: Musical instruments
2. Concept Objective: Recognize that the visual and performing arts have a valuable impact on our lives.
3. Skill Objective:
   a. To become familiar with the various sounds orchestra instruments make.
   b. To be able correctly sort instruments into the correct family.

B. Materials:
1. Two sets of pictures of basic instruments (clarinet, flute, trumpet, drum, etc.)
2. Real instruments (optional)
3. Science board labeled at the top with woodwind, brass, strings, and percussion.
4. Chart paper

C. Key Vocabulary
1. Instrument
2. Brass
3. Strings
4. Woodwind
5. Percussion
6. Musician

D. Procedures/Activities
1. Pose the question, “What is a family?” How do you know you are part of a family?
   Discuss that one way to recognize a family is by the way you look. Inform the children that instruments are, also, in families.
2. Show a real instrument or a picture of one. Ask the children if they play an instrument or knows of someone who plays one. Introduce the pictures of all the instruments and their names.
3. Spread the pictures out for the children to see and ask the question, “How can we group these instruments?” Give the children time to respond and list possible ways on chart paper.
4. Give the real family name and their attributes. Give each child a picture and, using the science board, have them place it under the correct family name.
5. Inform students that each instrument has its own sound. Pass out the second set of
instruments pictures. Tell the students that they will listen to the instruments on the tape and guess which one they hear. If the child has the picture of the instrument they should hold it up. As you play the game, review the names of the instruments.

E. Evaluation/Assessment
The children can be assessed by either passing out the instrument pictures and sorting them into correct families, or using the same picture and matching them to the sounds they hear on the tape.

Lesson Six: And the Beat Goes On
A. Objectives:
1. Lesson Content: Tempo changes
2. Concept Objective: Recognize that the visual and performing arts have a valuable impact on our lives.
3. Skill Objectives:
   a. To discriminate between fast and slow music.
   b. To listen and respond according to tempo changes.
B. Materials:
1. A tape of music with various tempos
2. Chairs for each student minus one in a circle facing out.
3. A pair of chopsticks for each student or the streamers from Day Two.
C. Key Vocabulary
1. Tempo
2. Beat
3. Fast
4. Slow
D. Procedures/Assessments
1. Listen to the musical tape. Ask the children if it is fast music or slow music. Explain that when they tap, they are tapping the beat. Change the type of music being played, ask the children to find the beat.
2. Play musical chairs. Tell the children that they must move to the beat of the music.
E. Evaluation/Assessment
The children will be evaluated by demonstrating their ability to stay on beat during activities.

Lesson Seven: Can You Feel It?
A. Objectives
1. Lesson Content: Edgar Degas.
2. Concept Objective: Recognize that the visual and performing arts have a valuable impact on our lives.
3. Skill Objective:
   a. Identify Degas as an impressionist painter
   b. Students will use texture in their own art work.
   c. Identify ballerinas as Degas favorite subject matter
B. Materials:
1. Chart paper
2. Markers, crayon, or paint
3. 18 by 24 inch paper
4. Selected art work of Edgar Degas
5. Still life arrangement using different textured items.
C. Key Vocabulary
1. Sculpture
2. Texture
3. Impressionist
4. Rough
5. Bumpy
6. Smooth
7. Other tactile words

D. Procedures/Activities
1. Provide the children with a mystery box filled with a variety of textured materials. Through a hole in the box have the children touch and describe what they feel. Record these words on a chart.
2. Show the items and discuss the textures, such as rough, smooth, etc.
3. Show the Little Dancer of Fourteen Years. Explain that the real piece is a statue and the skirt how a different texture than the rest of the statue. Compare the tutu in the print with a real tutu.
4. Create a still life arrangement using a variety of items. Put the arrangement in the center of the classroom with the desks around on the outside. Have the children describe what they see. Children are to paint or draw a picture from their perspective of the still life arrangement. After the painting is dry, the children will glue scraps of different textures on the picture.

E. Evaluation/Activities
1. Children will describe the different textures in their painting.
2. Children will identify Degas as a painter and sculptor.

Lesson Eight: Shine On

A. Objectives:
1. Lesson Content: The effects of shadowing
2. Concept Objective: Recognize that the visual and performing arts have a valuable impact on our lives.
3. Skill Objective:
   a. To explore how light affects their own art work.
   b. To describe how light shines on objects and makes shadows
   c. To identify shadows in paintings.

B. Materials:
1. Select prints of Degas that show dark and light areas.
2. Light source such as a large flashlight
3. 18 inch by 24 inch construction paper (dull colors)
4. Temper paint- four pastels and black
5. Sponges cut in squares held by clothes pins
6. Pie plates to hold the plate.

C. Key Vocabulary
1. Color
2. Light
3. Shadows
4. Bright
5. Dark

D. Procedures/Activities
1. Use flashlights to make shadows. Discuss what makes a shadow.
2. Shine a light down on an object and have children color where it is dark and light. Children will shade the picture of the ballet slippers with their crayons to show the light and dark areas. (Appendix C)
3. Display the prints of Degas and describe his use of dark and light.
   a. The Dance Class
b. Before the Ballet

4. To make a background on the paper, set up paint stations with the four colors of paint. Place a few sponges held by the clothes pins in each area. Students will go from station to station to prints with all four colors. For the background, make light lacy prints of each color all over the paper.

5. Use template of the ballerina or dancer to trace around or cut out and glue on the background of the light and dark areas. Outline drawing with a thin painted line using black tempera. (Appendix D and F)

E. Evaluation/Assessment

Students will identify the light and dark areas of their picture.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

The culminating activity for this unit is to take the students to see a live performance of The Nutcracker. If that is not available, watching the video would be an option. After viewing the performance ask the students questions concerning the various lessons. Draw a picture of your favorite part of the story. Discuss dancing, costumes, and music.

VII. HANDOUT AND WORKSHEETS

Appendix A - ballet word search
Appendix B - muscle pattern
Appendix C - ballerina shoes
Appendix D - ballerina
Appendix D - dancer

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ballet Word Search

TIGHTS  S R L T R D
OF D A N C E E U H A
E R N O C P Q O T P N
S E B A L L E T U L C
H N L M A I H A G I E
O C K J S B A R R E R
E H A B S C D D E S F
S Q R E H E A R S A L

BALLET         LEOTARD         REHEARSAL
TOE SHOES      DANCER         FRENCH
TUTU           CLASS          P L I E S
DANCE          TIGHTS
Appendix B

Muscle pattern

1. Make an arm with two cardboard tubes with paper fasteners
2. Make a hand.
3. Use a piece of string to show how a muscle moves.
dancer