

Laura Stokes

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Experienced dance educator with over 7 years of teaching in Pittsburgh-area schools and arts organizations. Skilled in creative movement and dance, early childhood, outdoor exploratory, Spanish, and arts-integrated education. Known for fostering creativity, cooperation, and self-discipline in young learners. Currently teaching a self-written program called *Dance Your Planet* (DYP). DYP is a movement-based earth science enrichment program for young students.

Core Skills

- Classroom management & child development
- Creative movement & dance instruction
- Outdoor & experiential education
- Arts-integrated curriculum design
- Spanish immersion teaching
- Collaboration with teachers and families

Teaching Experience – Dance

Dance Your Planet

Various schools and community events, Pittsburgh, PA | 2026–present

- Wrote an original curriculum focused on connecting dance to nature themes.
- Teaching at the Red Balloon Early Learning Center and Dormont Arts' Art in the Park.
- Help children draw creative connections between movement in natural systems and movement in the body, leading to an appreciation for the natural world and physical play.

Creative Movement & Intro to Ballet

KST's Alloy School, Pittsburgh, PA | 2015–2019

- Taught original creative-movement curriculum for young children, introducing foundational dance concepts.
- Used music, imagery, and structured exploration to support coordination, expression, and confidence.
- Designed activities such as “jumping like raindrops” and “finding a dot when the music stops” to build focus and body awareness.

Creative Movement – Outreach Program

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, Pittsburgh Public Schools | 2009

- Led weekly creative-movement classes for 1st and 2nd graders across multiple school sites.
- Delivered joyful, structured lessons that encouraged exploration and self-expression.

- Adapted instruction to varied teaching environments including gyms, auditoriums, and hallways.

Ballet, Hip Hop & Creative Movement

Hope Academy of Music and the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh, PA | 2008–2009

- Assisted ballet and hip-hop instructors in weekly classes for elementary students.
- Supported students in improving technique, performance quality, and confidence.
- Taught creative movement for children ages 3–5 and their parents, fostering shared learning experiences.

Teaching Experience – Additional Subjects

Art and Assistant Teacher (Spanish Immersion)

Escuelita Arcoiris, Pittsburgh, PA | 2016–2018

- Supported intellectual, emotional, and social development using emergent-education practices.
- Led art activities using diverse materials including clay, wire, felt, and loose-parts media.
- Co-facilitated outdoor education through hiking, tree climbing, plant identification, and nature exploration.

Spanish Teacher

Montessori Children’s Community, Sewickley, PA | 2011–2014

- Taught Spanish to preschool through 6th grade using immersion-based methods.
- Integrated music, dance, and storytelling to support natural language acquisition.
- Incorporated Montessori principles to promote independence and community learning.

Education

A.S. Physical Therapist Assistant

Community College of Allegheny County — Pittsburgh, PA • 2023

Focus on anatomy, kinesiology, movement science, and treatment.

B.A. Dance

Slippery Rock University — Slippery Rock, PA • 2006

Training in technique, pedagogy, choreography, improvisation, and performance.

Study Abroad: Spanish Language & Culture

Universidad de Costa Rica — San Pedro, Costa Rica • 2007

Immersive coursework in Spanish, including cultural studies through the social sciences and dance.