

# Laura Stokes

Pittsburgh, PA

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Experienced dance educator with over 20 years of teaching in Pittsburgh-area schools and arts organizations. Skilled in creative movement, early childhood education, Spanish instruction, and arts-integrated learning. Known for fostering creativity, cooperation, and self-discipline in young learners. Currently developing *Dance Your Planet*, a movement-based science enrichment program for elementary students.

## Core Skills

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

## Teaching Experience – Dance

### 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 & 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.

### **Summer Program Instructor – “Monkeying Around”**

*Winchester Thurston North Campus, Allison Park, PA | Summer 2018*

- Developed and taught an original curriculum combining movement games and outdoor activities.
- Guided students in designing obstacle courses using natural materials and found objects.

### **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, and movement science.

### **B.A. Dance**

Slippery Rock University — Slippery Rock, PA • 2006

Training in technique, pedagogy, choreography, and improvisation.

### **Study Abroad: Spanish Language & Culture**

Universidad de Costa Rica — San Pedro, Costa Rica • 2006

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