Dance and education: The contributions of regional and contemporary Afro-Brasilian dance to the development of the self-esteem of Brasilian children
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The aim of this project dialogue is to analyze and discuss the project, “Dance Education and Self-Esteem – the Brazil that we want,” considering its results for the educational and technical training of dancers of Afro-Brasilian origin and their contribution to social integration, while also preserving their ethnic identity. This project started in 1990 with around 70 children aged 7-16, the majority being of Afro-Brasilian origin. The project is a pioneer in teaching dance in the periphery (Vila Castelo Branco and Jardim Profilurb) of Campinas, in the São Paulo region, which has a large Afro-Brasilian population and high rates of violence. During the project’s 20 years, we have had over 3,000 students in different parts of Campinas participate. The purpose of this project is to strengthen the self-esteem of Afro-Brasilian children by valuing Afro-Brasilian culture, especially dance, emphasizing its technique, influence, and cultural construction of history in Brazil. Dance associated with Afro-Brasilian origins is used as a mediator to discuss the everyday conflicts, the diversity, and the cultural richness of Brazil. With this connection, the history of Afro-Brasilian communities and its dance origins and influences builds and strengthens the self-esteem of children. They learn that they possess a rich history while they form their art and master complex technical movements. The exercise and discipline of dance of Afro-Brasilian origins build a healthy body and mind, which become prepared for other styles of dance. The use of Afro-Brasilian dance techniques makes it possible to work the full body without harming a particular body part. The contact with the arts of different ethnic (Afro-Brasilian, white, Indian) and regional (North, Northeast, South, Southeast, Midwest) groups as historically and culturally different must be respected; the differences do not in this case mean inferiority or superiority. Here, difference means richness of cultural history.

Keywords: multiculturalism, Afro-Brasilian dance, education, Carlkiss Dance, children

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