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PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING ZUMBA TO  
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
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## ABSTRACT

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING ZUMBA TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Evelina C. Brandon  
Old Dominion University, 2019  
Director: Dr. Justin A. Haegele

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of physical education teachers toward teaching Zumba to children with disabilities during physical education classes. Sixty-two physical education (PE) teachers (Mean Age = 42.13, 15 males, 47 females) participated in this cross-sectional survey design study. The survey data was analyzed using Pearson correlation methods, independent t tests, and the Cronbach's coefficient technique to measure correlation, variance between participants, and the reliability and validity of the survey. Findings indicated that physical education teachers believed that teaching students Zumba in PE class would be beneficial and effective for students with disabilities. This included those who lacked experience teaching Zumba to those with disabilities in this context. The results of this study may help inform school systems of benefits of Zumba, and perhaps encourage them to fund PE teachers to attain their Zumba certification.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Historically, children with disabilities have been marginalized in educational settings. However, progressive advocacy, litigation and legislation have ensured that children with disabilities can receive free appropriate public education, including special education and related services (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004). In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the IDEA, which upholds and protects the rights of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families (IDEA, 2004). It mandates a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures they receive a free and appropriate education (IDEA, 2004). Since its inception, IDEA has opened the doors of public schools for millions of children and youth with disabilities ages three through 21 where they can have the opportunity to learn, share their skills and aptitudes, and thrive and contribute to their communities. Today, more than 62% of children with disabilities are educated in general education classrooms for 80 percent or more of their school day (IDEA, 2018).

IDEA (2004) defines special education as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including (a) instruction in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and other settings; and (b) instruction in physical education.” (Hodge, Lieberman, & Murata, 2012, p.6). This means that students served in special education must have physical education instruction provided to them unless the school does not offer it to their peers (Hodge et al., 2012). Most often, those with disabilities are receiving physical education services in classes with their peers without disabilities (IDEA, 2004).

Teachers' beliefs tend to vary on inclusion and teaching students with disabilities. Paradoxically, they expressed compelling intrinsic motives while voicing a multiplicity of concerns on teaching students with disabilities (Hodge, Ammah, Casebolt, LaMaster, Hersman, Samalot-Rivera, & Sato, 2009). Some physical education teachers have reported struggling at times with creativity, adapting their lesson plans/instructions to meet the needs of their students with disabilities, finding the best activities to keep all students interested, excited and engaged, finding activities that will help all students improve their overall health, and guiding students in the process of living an active lifestyle. Another study obtained views toward inclusion practices and perceived outcomes by a group of six physical education teachers. Results indicated that schools provided little support, and teachers reported that they were inadequately prepared to teach effectively with inclusive classes (LaMaster, Gall, Kinchin, & Siedentop, 1998). These teachers had strong feelings of guilt and inadequacy as they continued to try to be effective for all children (LaMaster et al., 1998). Research by Hodge and colleagues (2009) suggested that physical educators believed that the difficulties they faced in teaching students with disabilities were mostly related to the nature and severity of students' disabilities (e.g., those with severe disabilities were perceived to be more difficult to teach), their level of professional preparedness (impacting self-efficacy) and contextual variables (e.g., large classes).

### **Zumba in Schools**

Enjoyment is fundamental in motivating students of different ages to move their bodies and have fun interacting with different activities in a way that was only previously experienced through traditional methods involving sports (Vaggetti, Monteiro-Junior, Finco, Reategui, & Silva da Costa Botelho, 2018). Rhythmic activities such as dance are a favorite among children

(Pangrazi, 2007). One particular type of dance, which could be incorporated into physical education lessons for kids with and without disabilities, is Zumba fitness dance.

Zumba is an aerobic fitness program featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music. Alberto “Beto” Perez designed Zumba during the 1990s, incorporating Latin dance, aerobic exercises, Hispanic music, Latino music and a mixture of pop music. Perez helped found Zumba Fitness LLC, which provides instructor training programs that fit all age groups. There are nine different types of classes for different levels of age and exertion. Of particular relevance, the Zumbatomic (Zumba Kids and Zumba Kids Jr.) is designed to teach kids from ages four to 12 years old and could be embedded within physical education programs.

The goals of Zumba are to improve strength, balance, coordination, and cardiovascular endurance (Suri, Sharman, & Saini, 2017). It has a mixture of popular entertaining music, different dance styles and aerobic exercises which may improve the health of all age groups. Several neurological benefits of Zumba have been identified which ranges from memory improvement to strengthened neuronal connections (Suri, Sharman, & Saini, 2017). Zumba can enhance cardiovascular endurance and cardiorespiratory functions. It incorporates the movement of large muscle groups for aerobic endurance, strength training and flexibility thereby contributing to improved health of all ages. (Suri et al., 2017). Also, research is emerging focusing on Zumba and children with disabilities. For example, a quantitative study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of Zumba in improving speed, flexibility, and endurance of people with developmental disabilities, which showed a significant improvement of the speed, flexibility, and endurance of people with disabilities after being exposed to a Zumba program (Hilapo et al., 2016). This improvement suggests that Zumba can be an effective



movement exercise that can be given to people with disabilities to improve their physical skills. The study also concludes that further studies are also needed to determine whether Zumba could be carried out in a community or school setting (Hilapo et. al 2016).

Physical education teachers could teach Zumba Fitness to their students because of the variety of styles of dances and music it offers, and also because of the positive health findings that both students with and without disabilities can benefit from (Suri et al., 2017). Although dance is a popular form of exercise among children, many physical education teachers are hesitant about the subject area of “teaching dance.” (Pangrazi, 2007). Therefore, physical education teachers tend not to teach dance or incorporate dance activities in their lesson plans regularly (Renner & Pratt, 2017). For example, Renner and Pratt (2017) examined physical education teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs when teaching dance and found that although beliefs were suitable for teaching dance, the teachers did not seem interested in pursuing dance as a content area in their classes. A second study, by Brennan (1996), noted that many physical educators were unhappy with the inclusion of dance in their curricula. Interestingly, while some males teachers in this study undertook the challenge of teaching dance, many either delegated the task to female counterparts or in some instances negotiated with them to sit in or team teach in the dance modules so that they’d gain experience in content variety and presentation techniques with the view of teaching independently in the future (Brennan, 1996). Thus, it is clear that the inclusion of dance in physical education curricula is a contentious issue that needs further exploration.

Diversity is becoming more prevalent in today’s classrooms. Throughout the years there have been numerous studies conducted that investigate the attitudes and attitudes of classroom teachers and physical education teachers towards inclusion (Hodge, 2009). These studies have

reported that teachers feel unprepared, insecure, and stressed about teaching students with disabilities and as a result develop negative attitudes towards inclusion and doubt their abilities. (Hodge et al., 2009). This research, however, seldom looks at how teachers perceive teaching specific content areas such as dance to those with disabilities in physical education.

Dance/Zumba fitness dance is a favored activity that has demonstrated notable benefits for individuals with and without disabilities. Thus, understanding the physical education teacher's attitudes of dance/Zumba fitness dance is a viable pursuit that contributes to the current knowledge base. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes of physical education teachers toward teaching dance, and Zumba Fitness dance to children with and without disabilities during physical education classes. This research may also help persuade school administrations to pay the cost of certifications (Zumba fitness) to their physical education teachers to help ease some of the insecurities teachers have when feeling unprepared and unqualified to teach dance/Zumba fitness content.

### **Research Question**

- What are teachers' attitudes towards teaching Zumba Fitness Dance to children with and without disabilities in physical education?

### **Definition of Terms**

**Attitude.** An individual's tendency to favor or disfavor while assessing a particular entity (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007).

**Adapted Physical Education.** Describes educational services delivered to school-age students with disabilities in physical education. The instructions are modified to fit or accommodate the needs of the student (Hodges et al., 2012).

**Dance.** Expressive movements made with or without music (Pangrazi, 2007)

**Disability.** An impairment in an individual's body function or structure that substantially limits one or major life activities (caring for oneself, seeing, hearing, walking, standing, speaking, thinking, sleeping, learning, reading, concentrating and working).

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).** Students with disabilities are educated with their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate (Hodges et al., 2012).

**Physical Education.** Instruction in physical and motor fitness, instruction in fundamental motor skills and patterns, skills and aquatics, dance, individual and group games and sports intramural and lifetime (Hodges et al., 2012).

**Physical Education Teacher.** A teacher who is certified in physical education (Pangrazi, 2007).

**Special Education.** Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability which includes instructions conducted in the classroom and outside of the classroom (home, hospitals, institutions, physical education gymnasium). (Hodge et al., 2012).

**Zumba.** Aerobic fitness program featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music. (Stevenson, Lindberg, 2010).

### **Delimitations**

1. Participants will include teachers who are certified to teach physical education in both public and private schools.
2. Participants will include physical education teachers who have certifications to teach Zumba, and also teachers who are not certified to teach Zumba in their classroom.
3. Participants will include female and male physical education teachers.
4. Participants for this study will include those who are currently teaching in any of the 50 States.

## **Limitations**

1. School districts may have pre-set curricula that are mandated for teachers. Hence, some physical education teachers' perspectives about dance may be influenced by mandated curricula content.
2. Participants' experience with dance or with teaching students with disabilities will not be formally measured. Thus, it will be unknown how those prior experiences influence their attitudes on teaching dance to children with disabilities.

## **Significance of the Study**

Recent laws and legislations have resulted in physical educators teaching classes that include children with disabilities. The inclusion of students with disabilities into regular physical education classes has provided a tremendous challenge to physical educators who have strived to meet the needs of the included children without neglecting the needs of the other children. (Elliot, 2008). Researchers have attempted to discover the factors associated with the successful inclusion of students with disabilities. The role of teachers' attitudes has been studied and the majority of these studies in physical education have assumed that a positive attitude towards inclusion was necessary for the successful inclusion of children with disabilities into physical education. (Elliott, 2008; Rizzo & Vispoel, 1992; Tripp & Sherrill, 1991). These studies have examined the relationship between different types of attitudes and variables such as age (Rizzo, 1985; Rizzo & Wright, 1988), gender (Patrick, 1987) teaching experience (Marston & Leslie, 1983), and educational preparation (Elliott, 2008; Rizzo & Vispoel, 1992).

However there are not enough studies done that examine the relationship between teacher's attitudes towards teaching dance and more specifically teaching Zumba fitness dance to students with and without disabilities in physical education classes. Zumba fitness dance can be

easily adapted to fit the needs of students with disabilities. This study will help find the stance physical education teachers have when it comes to teaching dance to students with and without disabilities in their classes. Additionally, the study will explain what their views and feelings are regarding teaching Zumba to students with disabilities.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a meaningful literature review of research done in the following areas: physical education for youth with disabilities, the benefits of dance for youth with disabilities, teacher's attitudes toward teaching dance, and Zumba fitness dance.

### **Physical Education for Youth with Disabilities**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA (2004) defines special education as specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) provides general coverage for children/youths ages three to 21, and states that public entities must ensure that each student with a disability participates with peers without disabilities in the extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student (IDEA, 2004). This means students served in special education must have physical education instruction unless the school does not offer it to their peers.

Having students integrated into classes with typically developing peers means that appropriate services or assistance will be needed. Encouragement from all involved, including school administrators, parents, therapists, and special education teachers, are needed for these students to thrive. However, physical education teachers' beliefs tend to vary on the subject of inclusion and teaching students with disabilities in physical education classes. Teachers, administrators and therapists need to work together to address the specific needs of children with disabilities in schools.

Research has identified the importance of the attitudes and beliefs of physical education teachers in informing the experiences of students with disabilities (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). The role of teacher's attitudes towards inclusion have been studied and the majority of its

findings in physical education have demonstrated that a positive attitude towards inclusion was critical for the successful integration of children with disabilities into physical education (Rizzo & Vispoel, 1992; Tripp & Sherril, 1991). Teacher's attitudes towards inclusion tend to be more favorable if teachers perceived themselves as being better teachers (Rizzo & Vispoel, 1991, Rizzo & Wright, 1988), had greater education preparation (Rizzo, 1985), and had more experience in teaching children with disabilities (Marston & Leslie, 1983, Rizzo & Vispoel, 1991). Also, students with less severe disabilities tend to be viewed more favorably than those with more severe disabilities (Rizzo, 1984; Rizzo & Vispoel, 1981; Rizzo & Wright, 1987; Tripp, 1988).

### **Dance for Students with Disabilities**

Dance plays multiple roles in our society. It has been used as a means of social communication, bonding promotes cooperation, is used as a method of expression to show feelings for one of the opposite gender, and as a method of healing through dance rituals. Using dance as well as creative movements is beneficial for students who have difficulty expressing themselves. Inclusive classrooms may benefit from using/ integrating creative movement and dance as a teaching tool. Students with learning disabilities, emotional disorders, attention deficit disorder, cognitive disabilities, gifts and talents can have their needs met (Skoning, 2008).

Many general education teachers are now integrating Howard Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences (Armstrong, 1994; Armstrong 2003; Campbell & Campbell, 1999) and the idea that students have different learning styles (Tobias, 1994; Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2000) into their classrooms in a variety of ways (Feinstein, 2006). Tortora (2006) spent years developing an early childhood program that combined what has been learned in the fields of dance therapy, psychology, and child development. In her program she worked with children

with a variety of disabilities and communication disorders and found dance a powerful and successful treatment approach even with “the most difficult-to-reach children.” In an inclusive classroom of 27 students, where nine of whom had disabilities, children with learning and cognitive disabilities showed increased comprehension of character, plot, and overall comprehension of novels read (Skoning, 2008). Students who had attention deficit disorder became classroom leaders and head choreograph dancers. Students with emotional disabilities took risks and participated in movement activities as members of small groups which led to an increase in social skills. Children with gifts and talents discussed how movement aided their understanding of character development and their prediction of the future behaviors of characters in a novel (Skoning, 2008).

Werner (2001) revealed that integrating dance in math classes significantly increased positive attitudes towards math in students in second through fifth grades. In addition to increased student knowledge in a topic, student behaviors also improved when dance experiences were added to the curriculum (Griss, 1994). Griss (1994) discussed the ability to take disruptive energy and make it creative. When creative energy is aligned with learning objectives, a positive environment is created. Many children who exhibit behaviors that challenge their teachers may be kinesthetic learners and have difficulty staying seated, facing the front of the classroom, and often need to fidget with something during independent work times. Griss (1994) found that the ability to move while learning decreased the inappropriate behaviors of these students. As early as the late 1980s, dance was used to expand the special education repertoires as part of the Special Physical Education teaching research Clinic (SPEC) at Northern Illinois University. Students who moved quickly from one thing to another (such as children with ADHD) were asked to move in the same manner as something that typically moved more slowly. Students



could explore different movement's qualities and train their bodies to respond and move in a wider variety of manners while they used their kinesthetic strengths in new ways. Students with emotional disabilities used movement to explore emotions and determine how different kinds of movement made them feel. They also explained how feelings made them move differently (Skoning, 2008).

While teaching a dance session to students who have a wide range of disabilities and learning styles can be challenging, in the past decade dance has been introduced in a large number of special schools, day centers, hospitals and numerous other places rather than mainstream schools and youth clubs (Hills, 2003, p.1). There are dance companies whose members are not the stereotypical type of dancer with a specific shape and way of moving but are dancers who use wheelchairs, who are deaf, or who have learning disabilities. Nowadays, dance participants are an ever-increasing population with increasingly diverse needs (Hills, 2003, p.1).

The increased number of persons with disabilities engaged in dance programs should be encouraging to all physical education teachers who may not believe they can teach dance to students with disabilities. Research has shown that people often assume that individuals with disabilities who are unable to move their bodies independently, who are not able to move their limbs and lack control of their movements are 'un-physical' (Hills, 2003, p.7). As a result, individuals with disabilities may not be included in physical activities and experiences, such as dance (Hills, 2003). For those who have a fixated image of what a dancer looks like (bodied able, perfect proportions, technically able) the notion of someone with severe disabilities dancing can be extremely challenging. (Hills, 2003). Therefore, access to dancing activities can be denied in schools even before any individual is allowed to experience it and decide for him or

herself (Hills, 2003). The increased number of individuals with disabilities being offered and participating in the dance experience is an assurance that dance can be taught to students with disabilities during physical education classes alongside students without disabilities.

Dancing is also a form of creative expression. Since children with disabilities can experience difficulties expressing themselves and understanding emotions, dance may be an avenue to allow them to feel free to express themselves in a non-threatening environment. Here they might be instructed to try and move their bodies' in new and interesting ways they might not have thought of before (Batema, n.d.). Furthermore, for children with sensory disorders, Autism or ADHD, dancing can provide structure, stimulation, calming or relaxation. The music in dance can also provide effective experiences for children to develop listening skills especially for those with learning disabilities (Azizinezhad, Hashemi, & Darvishi, 2013; Hirt-Mannheimer, 1995; Humpal & Wolf, 2003; Wolf, 1992).

### **Teachers' Attitudes toward Teaching Dance**

The National Standards for K-12 Physical Education by Society of Health and Physical Education (SHAPE America) and other state standards require that teachers incorporate dance into their curriculums. According to SHAPE's operational definition of activity categories, dance and rhythmic activities are all forms of creative movements and dance forms such as ballet, modern, ethnic/folk, hip hop, Latin, line, ballroom, social and square (SHAPE America, 2013). The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. (SHAPE America, 2013). SHAPE's national standard #1 states that the physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns; the national standard #2 states that the physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity

for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction. (SHAPE America, 2013). For physical education teachers these standards are a guideline to use when searching for activities/ lesson plans to incorporate into their classrooms.

Dance is a vibrant element of SHAPE America and is a part of a comprehensive P-12 physical education curriculum. Through dance, physical education teachers can offer their students the opportunity for self-expression through movement, for enjoyment, and social interaction. In dance classes' students learn dance forms used in cultural and social occasions (e.g., weddings, parties), and have the opportunity to improve their skills level of competency. The rationale for the inclusion of dance in physical education has changed over the years and is still widely debated. Stevens (1992) maintained that the initial motive for the inclusion of dance surrounded the potential of folk dances to provide health and fitness benefits to participants.

The apparent conflict between teachers' and students' attitudes of dance in physical education has informed recent research in the area. For example, a study by Brennan in 1994 focused on the problems, real and perceived, surrounding the introduction of dance as a discrete element within the new Northern Ireland Curriculum. The purpose of the study was twofold, first to try to illuminate the policy process that orchestrated dance's inclusion in the Northern Ireland Physical Education Curriculum (NCPE) and, secondly, to try to uncover the attitudes of physical education (PE) specialists to this innovation. In-depth interviews targeted four members of the Northern Ireland Physical Education working party (two female and two male PE specialists). Attitudes questionnaires were distributed to all secondary schools in the North Down area (n=25) and the cohort of students graduating from a Physical Education Initial Teacher Training course at the University of Ulster at Jordanstown in 1994 (n=17) (Brennan, 1996). The study highlighted the attitudes of experienced and newly trained physical education

specialists to the innovation (dance inclusion), and their perceived fears. The study uncovered some of the reasons behind teachers' hesitations teaching dancing in physical education (Brennan, 1996). Dances aesthetic content was neither valued nor appreciated enough by male physical education teachers to make them decide to teach it in their programs; dance in a social context was widely viewed as feminine and as a result has never been an influential feature in boys' physical education (Brennan, 1996). Male physical education teachers expressed being more concerned with performance and success at competitive sports and games.

Research by Askew and Ross (1989) found that boys generally reacted badly and rejected activities in which they have to work together, sharing feelings, or listening to one another. This study also revealed that it was the male physical education teachers who were the least committed and even antipathetic towards dance. Lack of training and subsequently knowledge were ranked as the greatest perceived problems among practicing teachers when considering teaching dance, followed by fear of lack of personal ability for teaching, and for demonstrating. Pre-service teachers revealed that lack of knowledge and lack of confidence in presentation skills were ranked as their greatest perceived problems. These pre-service teachers also reported that the rejection of dance was widespread and pervasive and their greatest fears also surrounded the stereotypical attitudes displayed by parents, established teachers and pupils (Brennan, 1996).

Research suggests that single-sex schools (particularly male) and inner-city all-boys schools have more difficulties adhering to dance activities (Brennan, 1996). The task of dance teaching is avoided on what the professionals consider to be sound educational arguments. The single-sex schools suggest that dance is avoided because boys have no rhythm and it is unrealistic to expect that physical education professionals with up to 20 years of experience will have to now teach dance (Brennan, 1996). The inner-city secondary schools may avoid dance

because of the battle teachers already have on their hands to get the children participating in activities that are deemed appropriate and because of the disruptive behavior and indiscipline, they may display because of the lack of suitability. The findings by Askew and Ross (1989) help verify that when it comes to dance, change and progress regarding dance was not welcome by all and is not consistent among schools.

Physical education teacher's attitudes and insights about teaching dance in physical education would most likely be consistent with some of the challenges encountered at the Northern Ireland School. Another study conducted by Justin Maclean (2007) examined factors that impacted the confidence of undergraduate physical education student teachers to teach dance. Students completed questionnaires to ascertain the factors that impacted their confidence, and the study revealed that student teachers were concerned with fears surrounding the performance of dance, the recall of content, and the ability to teach motifs (MacLean, 2007). A positive significant relationship was found between previous experience and perceived confidence to teach dance with female student teachers whereas a weak relationship was found with the male student teachers (MacLean, 2007).

This finding was not aligned with previous findings (Rolfe, 2001), where it was reported that previous experience improved confidence to teach dance. Future research needs to be conducted to develop a complete understanding of this issue, to investigate why experiences of dance among male student teachers do not seem to have an impact on perceived confidence when the opposite effect appears evident with female student teachers (MacLean, 2007).

Researchers believe that the future of dance lies in the hands of physical education teachers and that these challenges are not unique to a particular school but rather similar in various schools from different regions/countries (McLean, 2007). Flintoff (1991, p. 33) stated

that “not many physical education teachers are prepared to offload their prejudices enough to make dance teaching attractive and relevant.” Further, Gard (2003, p.220) stated “it is this association in the minds of male teachers and students which more than anything else, keeps dance out of physical education classes.” The current study will seek to continue this line of inquiry, and examine teachers’ attitudes toward dance for a specific population; individuals with disabilities.

### **Zumba Fitness Dance**

One type of dance that might be particularly relevant to examine is Zumba fitness dance. Founded by Alberto “Beto” Perez during the 1990s (Lloyd, 2011), Zumba is a global dance fitness program focused on whole-body movements that fuses fitness and entertainment; it helps reduce lifestyle disease epidemic (Suri et al., 2017). It is the largest branded fitness program in the world, reporting more than 15 million weekly participants, in over 200, 000 locations across more than 180 countries (Suri et al., 2017). Zumba dance fitness uses Latin dance, Aerobic exercises, Hispanic music, Latino music and a mixture of pop music. It has gained much popularity in the last two decades especially in youngsters. Its motto is “Ditch the workout and join the party.” (Parcher A., Zumba website). The goal of Zumba is to improve cardiovascular endurance, improve balance, coordination, and strength through a variety of classes targeting specific participant groups, including children and elderly persons (Suri et al., 2017).

The practice of making dance an adjunct of physical education has placed it in the same category as athletics or physical skills. Although Zumba is dance-oriented, it is also perceived as a physical exercise activity. The exercises include music with fast and slow rhythms, as well as resistance training. The music comes from the following dance styles: Cumbia, Salsa, Merengue, Mambo, Flamenco, Chachacha, Reggaeton, Soca, Samba, Hip Hop music, Axe’

music, and Tango. There are nine different types of classes with different levels for age and exertion. Zumba Kids and Zumba Kids Jr. classes are designed for children between the ages of four and 12 (Suri et al., 2017). To encourage children's physical activity, the Zumba Fitness LLC is very involved in schools around the country in efforts to fight the growing childhood obesity. In 2014, this global fitness brand launched a campaign to get two million kids dancing in 100,000 classrooms throughout the 2014-2015 school year. To ensure that the program adheres to industry standards, Zumba Fitness LLC works with other health and fitness professional companies such as the American Council on Exercise (ACE), the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA), IDEA Health & Fitness Association, and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) (Zumba Fitness LLC, 2018).

Programs based on the dance/movement education are gradually becoming a reality in public schools. Despite its established value for children's psychomotor development, there is little evidence indicating that dance/movement education such as Zumba Fitness is taught by many physical education teachers. It appears that movement specialists or certified Zumba specialists/teachers are responsible for most of the programs now in existence. These certified/licensed specialists are usually contracted by an individual school to teach to the students after school where in some cases the students are required to pay. Physical education teachers are not experts in teaching Zumba fitness dance and the vast majority are not certified or licensed to teach. Teacher's attitudes and teacher's self-efficacy towards teaching dance can influence their abilities towards teaching Zumba fitness dance. Graham (1980) believes that the inadequate training of physical educators is largely responsible for this situation. He also suggests that because many boys don't like to dance, physical education teachers may hesitate to build dance/movement education experiences into the curriculum. Carter (1984) concurs with Graham

and adds that dance educators should establish goals and directions for dance and conduct more research relative to overall fitness.

One of the ways students in public schools across the country are becoming exposed to Zumba fitness dance in physical education classes is through the use of exergames. In the classrooms students are being exposed to Zumba fitness dance through the use of brain blasters activities through resources such as GoNoodle to increase not only daily physical activities but also to improve on-task behavior as well as academic performance. Exergames are consoles that require a higher physical effort to play when compared to traditional video games. Exergames have added a component of physical activity to the otherwise motionless video game environment and have the potential to contribute to physical education classes by supplementing the current activity options, and increasing student enjoyment. The use of exergames has already shown positive results in the past through their potential to fight obesity (Vagheti, Monteiro-Junior, Finco, Reategui, & Costa Botelho, 2018). In their classrooms, students can participate in Zumba fitness dance, where the choreography of the dance/song is given to the students through a virtual/ exergaming instructor and the students follow along. In some select physical education classes, students get to Zumba Dance by following the choreography of their teacher who is most likely a certified/licensed Zumba fitness Instructor (Palacios, 2012).

Some school districts across the country have been working tirelessly to promote Zumba fitness to their students and to get their physical education teachers certified. For example, San Antonino Independent School District (SAISD) is the only one in the country that has Zumbatomics in each of its schools. The district is certifying each of its physical education teachers in Zumba to promote a healthy lifestyle for students and to offer free classes to the community. It has been a goal for the city of San Antonio to get the community involved in



health activities to encourage its residents to become fit. San Antonio Independent School district has been offering free Zumba classes one day a week at local schools as part of the city's Fit Family Challenge.

For students with disabilities, dance tends to be a positive escape. Recent investigations have supported the long-held belief that children's intellectual and emotional development is enhanced through participation in the movement arts (Breckenridge, 1965; Duggan, 1978; Fisher, 1980; King, 1968; Riordan and Fitt, 1980; Sharpe, 1979; Ziunlik and Young, 1979). The effective use of dance/movement education for children with disabilities has also been documented. For instance, participation in dance/movement education has been attributed to improved body image and self-concept of children with learning disabilities (Fisher, 1980; Polk, 1979) and deafness (Polk, 1979). Polk further observed that dance/movement education programs can provide appropriate outlets for children's aggressive behaviors. Dance/movement has been successfully employed with children who have a limited capacity for movement. Duggan (1978) found that children with cerebral palsy who received regular movement experiences improved their muscle tone, range of motion, and joint stability as well as increased respiratory and renal functioning (Ross & Butterfield, 1989). Although there is research done on the impact Zumba fitness dance has on people with disabilities, it safe to say that there is not enough research done with physical education teachers in public schools. More research is needed from the students who already attend public or private schools, from the physical education teachers who are already certified/license and are teaching the dance to their students.

The physical education of today's generation is more inclusive and lifetime oriented. Many schools are choosing to adopt an approach to physical education that promotes healthy habits that can be carried on into adulthood. Today's generation of children is influenced and

stimulated by technology, television, the internet, and video games which presents a challenge to physical education teachers who struggle to engage them with traditional physical activities. Fewer students are choosing traditional games played with balls and bats over games that are played interactively and in front of a large screen television. The focus of today's physical education teachers should be on physical activity that promotes maximum or total participation and that is ultimately fun. As technology is evolving, physical education must adapt to meet the needs of a new generation of students. Physical education teachers must be able to think outside of the box, to promote fitness that is fun, interactive, engaging and social.

Zumba fitness dance is a workout program designed by Zumba Fitness specifically for girls and boys ages four to twelve and is increasingly popular. In addition to being fun, the classes teach fundamental concepts such as balance, coordination, discipline, confidence, and teamwork. This fitness dance incorporates Latin dance moves but also places great emphasis on contemporary urban styles that appeal to this generation of students such as pop and hip-hop. Zumba fitness satisfies the requirements that students are looking for in today's physical education classes, the enjoyment, and fun. They have the option to dance along through the exergames where having a live teacher interaction is not necessary, and they also have an option to have their physical education teacher teach it to them during class. The benefits for both students with disabilities and students without disabilities have been researched and the finds are positive and encouraging, Zumba fitness improves the student's health from the inside out. Zumba fitness is a positive influence on a student's physical and emotional fitness. More physical education teachers should incorporate Zumba fitness dance to their curriculums and for this reason, finding out their thoughts and attitudes about teaching this trend to their students with and without disabilities should help public schools, in general, to make decisions as far as

providing their teachers with adequate training, and continuing education towards a license/certification.

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of the procedures and instruments that were used throughout the data collection and data analysis process. The following sections will describe the research design and data collection procedures, participants, instrument, and data analysis process.

### **Research Design and Data-Collection Procedures**

This study adopted a cross-sectional, survey research design. The target population for this study was physical education teachers in the United States. The final version of the questionnaire was entered into the online survey platform, Google Forms. Data collection took place from December 2019 to April 2020. The survey link was distributed by email and social media posts. More specifically, a cover letter, as well as a URL to the online survey, was (a) directly emailed to physical education teachers in local school districts, (b) emailed to graduates of physical education training programs, and (c) posted to social media pages. The cover letter was included with survey distribution which described the purpose, methodology, inclusion criteria, and projected time commitment for the study. To be eligible to participate in this study, participants must have been physical education teachers in a school or school system that has the capability of teaching PE to children with disabilities. The letter also informed participants that all responses were anonymous and confidential, and participation is voluntary. Those interested in participating were invited to click the link to proceed to the online consent form, which participants will be asked to review. Those who recorded that they agreed with the terms of the consent form were permitted to advance on the online survey and were included as participants. Reminders were sent six times, every two weeks, over three months. Only those individuals, who clicked on the link within the email or social media post, and consent to participate on the first

page, were included in the study. The questionnaire included no identifiable information for the participants, ensuring anonymity.

### **Participants**

Sixty-two participants (aged 23-61 years) completed the survey and volunteered to participate in the study. The mean age of the participants was 42.08 ( $SD=10.06$ ). Females made up 74.2% of participants taking the surveys while the remaining 25.8% of participants were male. Thirty-one participants (50%) taught at secondary schools, 26 (42%) taught at elementary schools, and five (8%) taught at both secondary and elementary schools. Years of experience teaching physical education ranged from zero to 40 years, and years teaching students with disabilities ranged from zero to 40 years. The range of years in teaching dance during PE for these teachers varied from zero to 30 years. Zumba experience ranged from zero to seven years for the participants. Twenty-one percent of the teachers responded that they have immediate family members with disabilities.

### **Instrument**

The survey used for this study consisted of 31 items and contained demographic questions and an attitudinal survey towards teaching Zumba to children with disabilities in PE. The purpose of the survey was to explore physical educators' attitudes about teaching dance, in particular Zumba, to students with disabilities. The survey focuses on experiences and associations in Zumba, experience working with disabilities children, feelings towards implementing Zumba to the class, to include students with disabilities, and to capture some demographics on the teachers who are anonymously going to submit their responses.

The survey instrument was modified from an existing survey constructed to reveal attitudes that PE teachers have towards fitness tests (Keating, Guan, Ferguson, Chen & Bridges,

2008). The Physical Education Teacher Attitudes toward Fitness Tests Scale (PETAFTS) survey was the original survey used to assist in the development of the survey for this study. The final 16 questions of this survey were attitude-based questions and adopted the framework of the PETAFTS. The modifications kept the framework of the questions similar to the original survey but shifted the focus from fitness tests to teaching Zumba to students with disabilities in physical education. After revising the survey, it was reviewed by the three members of the thesis committee for content and then submitted to the Old Dominion University Institutional Review Board for approval. Once accepted, the final instrument was uploaded to the online survey platform, Google Forms, for distribution.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the survey were analyzed using several different descriptive and inferential analyses. First, frequency analyses were used to compute percentages of different demographics by the question and descriptive analysis such as the means and standard deviations were also used to conductive a comparative analysis between the different demographic groupings used for this study. Following the analysis conducted was to determine if there was any correlation between the PE teachers' attitudes and reported demographic data, including years of experience teaching, dancing, and Zumba. Then, three independent sample t-tests were conducted by taking 14 of the demographic questions and putting them into seven different groups and tested for variance. Levene's test for equality of variance was performed to determine if the variance of the means of each group was approximately equal based on a confidence interval of 95%. The independent sample t-tests were conducted to examine differences between; males vs. females, teachers who have immediate family members with disabilities vs. teachers who do not have any immediate family members with disabilities,

teachers who teach elementary level education vs. teachers who teach secondary level education, teachers who have taken a dance class vs. teachers who have not received a dance class, teachers who have more than ten years of teaching experience vs. teachers who have less than ten years of teaching experience, teachers who have experience teaching dance in PE class vs. teachers who have no experience teaching dance in PE class, and teachers who have experience teaching Zumba to students with disabilities vs. teachers who have no experience teaching Zumba to students with disabilities.

In addition to descriptive and inferential analyses, the questions utilized to determine the teachers' attitudes were also analyzed for reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to identify which questions contributed to the overall reliability of the survey after each question was individually assessed for validity.

## CHAPTER IV: MANUSCRIPT

### **Physical Education Teachers' Attitudes toward Teaching Zumba to Children with Disabilities**



### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of physical education teachers toward teaching Zumba to children with disabilities during physical education classes. Sixty-two physical education (PE) teachers (Mean Age = 42.13, 15 males, 47 females) participated in this cross-sectional survey design study. The survey data was analyzed using Pearson correlation methods, independent t tests, and the Cronbach's coefficient technique to measure correlation, variance between participants, and the reliability and validity of the survey. Findings indicated that physical education teachers believed that teaching students Zumba in PE class would be beneficial and effective for students with disabilities. This included those who lacked experience teaching Zumba to those with disabilities in this context. The results of this study may help inform school systems of benefits of Zumba, and perhaps encourage them to fund PE teachers to attain their Zumba certification.

## Introduction

Historically, children with disabilities have been marginalized in educational settings. However, progressive advocacy, litigation and legislation have ensured that children with disabilities can receive free appropriate public education, including special education and related services (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 2004). In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the IDEA, which upholds and protects the rights of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families (IDEA, 2004). It mandates a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures they receive a free and appropriate education (IDEA, 2004). Since its inception, IDEA has opened the doors of public schools for millions of children and youth with disabilities ages three through 21 where they can have the opportunity to learn, share their skills and aptitudes, and thrive and contribute to their communities. Today, more than 62% of children with disabilities are educated in general education classrooms for 80 percent or more of their school day (IDEA, 2018).

Physical education teachers' beliefs tend to vary in teaching students with disabilities. Paradoxically, they express compelling intrinsic motives while voicing a multiplicity of concerns on teaching students with disabilities (Hodge et al., 2009). Some physical education teachers have reported struggling at times with creativity, adapting their lesson plans/instructions to meet the needs of their students with disabilities, finding the best activities to keep all students interested, excited and engaged, finding activities that will help all students improve their overall health, and guiding students in the process of living an active lifestyle (Hodge et al., 2009; LaMaster, Gall, Kinchin, & Siedentop, 1998). Further research has indicated that schools provided little support, and teachers feel that they were inadequately prepared to teach

effectively with inclusive classes (Hodge et al., 2009; LaMaster et al, 1998). The introduction of pre-programmed activities, that are fun, exciting, and keep all students engaged throughout the class period, may help alleviate physical educators' concerns about preparedness while also providing rich and meaningful experiences for youth with and without disabilities. Enjoyment is fundamental in motivating students of different ages to move their bodies and have fun interacting with different activities in a way that was only previously experienced through traditional methods involving sports (Vagheti, Monteiro-Junior, Finco, Reategui, & Silva da Costa Botelho, 2018). Rhythmic activities such as dance are a favorite among children (Pangrazi, 2007). One particular type of dance, which could be incorporated into physical education lessons for kids with and without disabilities, is Zumba.

### **Zumba in Schools**

Zumba is an aerobic fitness program featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music. Alberto "Beto" Perez designed Zumba during the 1990s, incorporating Latin dance, aerobic exercises, Hispanic music, Latino music and a mixture of pop music. Perez helped found Zumba Fitness LLC, which provides instructor training programs that fit all age groups. There are nine different types of classes for different levels of age and exertion. Of particular relevance, the Zumbatomic (Zumba Kids and Zumba Kids Jr.) is designed to teach kids from ages four to 12 years old and could be embedded within physical education programs.

The goals of Zumba are to improve strength, balance, coordination, and cardiovascular endurance (Suri, Sharman, & Saini, 2017). It has a mixture of popular entertaining music, different dance styles and aerobic exercises which may improve the health of all age groups. Zumba can enhance cardiovascular endurance and cardiorespiratory functions. It incorporates the

movement of large muscle groups for aerobic endurance, strength training and flexibility thereby contributing to improved health of all ages. (Suri et al., 2017). Also, research is emerging focusing on Zumba and children with disabilities. For example, a quantitative study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of Zumba in improving speed, flexibility, and endurance of people with developmental disabilities, which showed a significant improvement of the speed, flexibility, and endurance of people with disabilities after being exposed to a Zumba program (Hilapo et al., 2016). This improvement suggests that Zumba can be an effective movement exercise that can be given to people with disabilities to improve their physical skills. The study also concludes that further studies are also needed to determine whether Zumba could be carried out in a community or school setting (Hilapo et Al., 2016).

Physical education teachers could teach Zumba to their students because of the variety of styles of dances and music it offers, and also because of the positive health findings that both students with and without disabilities can benefit from (Suri et al., 2017). Although dance is a popular form of exercise among children, many physical education teachers are hesitant about the subject area of teaching dance (Askew & Ross, 1989; Brennan, 1996; Pangrazi, 2007). Therefore, physical education teachers tend not to teach dance or incorporate dance activities in their lesson plans regularly (Renner & Pratt, 2017). For example, Renner and Pratt (2017) examined physical education teachers' self-efficacy beliefs when teaching dance and found that although beliefs were suitable for teaching dance, the teachers did not seem interested in pursuing dance as a content area in their classes. Interestingly, Askew and Ross (1989) found that a number of variables influenced teachers attitudes toward teaching dance. More specifically, males, those with little training, and those with limited knowledge about dance appear to be the least committed and even antipathetic toward dance. Supporting this, Brennan

(1996) also found that male physical educators were largely against including dance into their curriculum, viewing it as feminine, and having more concern for performance and success at competitive sports and games.

Interestingly, few males teachers appear to want to take on the challenge of teaching dance, many either delegated the task to female counterparts or in some instances negotiated with them to sit in or team teach in the dance modules so that they'd gain experience in content variety and presentation techniques with the view of teaching independently in the future (Brennan, 1996). Thus, it is clear that the inclusion of dance in physical education curricula is a contentious issue that needs further exploration. However, it is currently unknown if these attitudes extend toward Zumba, a new dance craze, and teaching those with disabilities. As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the attitude of physical education teachers toward teaching dance, specifically Zumba, to children with and without disabilities during physical education classes.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design and Data-Collection Procedures**

This study adopted a cross-sectional, survey research design. The target population for this study was physical education teachers in the United States. Data collection took place from December 2019 to April 2020 through Google Forms. The survey link was distributed by email and social media posts. More specifically, a cover letter, as well as a URL to the online survey, was (a) directly emailed to physical education teachers in local school districts, (b) emailed to graduates of physical education training programs, and (c) posted to social media pages. The cover letter was included with survey distribution which described the purpose, methodology, inclusion criteria, and projected time commitment for the study. To be eligible to participate in

this study, participants must have been physical education teachers in a school or school system that has the capability of teaching PE to children with disabilities. The letter also informed participants that all responses were anonymous and confidential, and participation is voluntary. Those interested in participating were invited to click the link to proceed to the online consent form, which participants will be asked to review. Those who recorded that they agreed with the terms of the consent form were permitted to advance on the online survey and were included as participants. Reminders were sent three times, every two weeks, over six weeks. Only those individuals who clicked on the link within the email or social media post, and consent to participate on the first page, were included in the study. The questionnaire included no identifiable information for the participants, ensuring anonymity.

### **Instrumentation**

The survey used for this study consisted of 31 items and contained demographic questions and an attitudinal survey towards teaching Zumba to children with disabilities in PE. The purpose of the survey was to explore physical educators' attitudes about teaching dance, in particular Zumba, to students with disabilities. The survey focuses on participant teaching experiences as well as that in Zumba, experience working with children with disabilities, attitude towards implementing Zumba to the class, to include students with disabilities, and to capture some demographics on the teachers who are anonymously going to submit their responses.

The survey instrument was modified from an existing survey constructed to reveal attitudes that PE teachers have towards fitness tests (Keating, Guan, Ferguson, Chen & Bridges, 2008). The Physical Education Teacher Attitudes toward Fitness Tests Scale (PETAFTS) survey was the original survey used to assist in the development of the survey for this study. The final 16 questions of this survey were attitude-based questions and adopted the framework of the

PETAFTS. The modifications kept the framework of the questions similar to the original survey but shifted the focus from fitness tests to teaching Zumba to students with disabilities in physical education. After revising the survey, it was reviewed by the three members of the thesis committee for content and then submitted to the Old Dominion University Institutional Review Board for approval. Once accepted, the final instrument was uploaded to the online survey platform, Google Forms, for distribution.

### **Participants**

Sixty-two participants (aged 23-61 years) completed the survey and volunteered to participate in the study. The mean age of the participants was 42.08 ( $SD=10.06$ ). Females made up 74.2% of participants taking the surveys while the remaining 25.8% of participants were male. Thirty-one participants (50%) taught at secondary schools, 26 (42%) taught at elementary schools, and five (8%) taught at both secondary and elementary schools. Years of experience teaching physical education ranged from zero to 40 years, and years teaching students with disabilities ranged from zero to 40 years. The range of years in teaching dance during PE for these teachers varied from zero to 30 years. Zumba experience ranged from zero to seven years for the participants. Twenty-one percent of the teachers responded that they have immediate family members with disabilities. Detailed participant information is available in Table 1.

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the survey were analyzed using several different descriptive and inferential analyses. In addition to descriptive and inferential analyses, the survey questions utilized to determine the teachers' attitudes were also analyzed for reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to identify which questions contributed to the overall reliability of the survey. First, frequency analyses were used to compute percentages of different

demographics by the question and descriptive analysis such as the means and standard deviations. Following, the correlation analysis was conducted to determine if there was any correlation between the PE teachers' attitudes and reported demographic data, including years of experience teaching, dancing, and Zumba. Following, three independent sample t-tests were conducted by taking 14 of the demographic questions and putting them into seven different groups. Specifically, the groups were separated by male vs. female, teachers with more than and less than 10 years of experience, teachers who have or have not taken dance class, teachers who have or do not have an immediate family member with disabilities, teachers who teach elementary school versus secondary school, teachers who have experience teaching Zumba to students with disabilities vs. teachers who have no experience teaching Zumba to students with disabilities, and teachers who have experience teaching students with disabilities vs. teachers who do not.

### **Results**

The adapted PETAFTS survey showed good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.845$ ) for measuring participants' attitude toward teaching Zumba. Generally speaking, the participants presented a favorable attitude toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities (*mean total attitude score*=59.02, *SD*=23.16). The correlation analyses showed that several demographic variables, including the number of years teaching dance in PE classes ( $r = 0.40$ ), the number of years teaching students with disabilities in PE ( $r = 0.46$ ), and the number of years teaching Zumba in PE classes to students with disabilities ( $r = 0.51$ ) had significant positive correlations with PE teachers total attitude toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities (see Table 2). There was no significant correlation, however, between PE teachers' attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities and the number of years of teaching experience.



There were significant differences in attitude toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities between different groups of participants. The independent sample t-test showed that four of the group comparisons showed that there were significant differences between groups. That is, those that took Zumba classes had significantly higher attitudes than those that did not, females had higher attitudes than males, teachers with experience teaching Zumba to students with disabilities had more favorable attitudes than those that did not, and teachers who had experience teaching students with disabilities, in general, had higher attitudes than those that did not. Conversely, no significant differences were found with regard to years teaching, family members with disabilities, or school level (i.e., elementary v. secondary, see Table 3).

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitude of physical education teachers toward teaching dance, specifically Zumba, to children with and without disabilities during physical education classes. Generally speaking, participants noted having favorable attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities. This is notable, as teachers attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities, in general, has become an area of research given much attention (Hodge et al., 2009; LaMaster et al., 1998) given the impact that teachers attitudes can have on the experiences of those with disabilities in physical education (Haegele & Sutherland, 2015). This result is encouraging and may identify Zumba as an activity that perhaps teachers are comfortable teaching for this population.

Given the growing interest in this dance fitness program over the past 30 years (Suri et al., 2017), Zumba has entered the mainstream. As such, it is reasonable to suggest that if teachers have positive attitudes toward teaching this content, there may be additional benefits to children with disabilities. That is, if teachers can effectively instruct students with disabilities to engage in

Zumba classes during the school day, these skills may generalize to other Zumba classes outside of the schools, which can open the door for enhancing health, fitness, and quality of life, as well as other benefits associated with this fitness trend (Suri et al., 2017). It is also reasonable to suggest that skills learned to engage in Zumba, such as counting steps or generally engaging in rhythmic movements, may generalize to other contexts where regimented dance is encouraged and appropriate, such as weddings, which can lead to socialization opportunities for youth with disabilities throughout the lifespan.

The results of this study show that a variety of variables were associated with participants' attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities. Several of these findings are not surprising and are consistent with prior literature pertaining to teaching dance (Brennan, 1996), including findings suggesting that female teachers, those who had taken Zumba classes, and those with experience teaching students with disabilities, had more favorable attitudes than male teachers, those who had not taken Zumba classes previously, and those without teaching experiences. While not surprising, these findings have important implications for physical education teacher education. That is, it is clear that those who have more experience and training tend to have more favorable attitudes toward teaching Zumba to those with disabilities. As such, it appears that physical education teacher education programs can play a role in enhancing the amount that Zumba is taught in schools by providing experiences during pre-service training that focuses on Zumba or other fitness dance curricula. Should Zumba be found to have similar benefits for those with disabilities as it does for those without disabilities, this would be a meaningful enterprise for pursue for higher education professionals.

While not surprising, these results point toward specific groups who may not be reluctant to teach dance, or Zumba fitness, as a subject area. As noted by prior research (Pangrazi, 2007;

Renner & Pratt, 2017), some groups are hesitant to teach dance and their classes. For example, Brennan (1996) noted that while males may teach dance, they are hesitant to do so, and this was reflected in the current study. Future research may consider further exploring these demographic variables, and perhaps seek to challenge teachers' views on teaching dance through providing Zumba, or other dance fitness content, training as an intervention study.

### **Limitations and Conclusions**

Like most research, this study suffered from several limitations, including a relatively small sample size and unknown response rate. As such, findings should be consumed with caution from this study. However, several important conclusions can be drawn from this study. Firstly, teachers generally held favorable attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities, which is an important starting point for getting Zumba into schools for the population. Secondly, several demographic groups were identified whom have more favorable attitudes, including those with experience teaching Zumba, as well as female teachers. The significance of this research may aid people and organizations in deciding whether introducing Zumba to their students would be beneficial. Based on the results of this study, it can also be used to help make decisions in providing their teachers with adequate training and continuing education towards a license/certification.

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Table 1

*Demographic information of survey participants*

	Mean	Range	SD
Female (46 surveys)			
Age	41.2 (42.08)	23-60	9.59 (10.06)
Years teaching physical education	14.0	0-37	9.04 (9.51)
Years teaching SWD	10.8	0-37	8.89 (9.49)
Years teaching dance	10.0	0-30	8.62 (8.34)
Male (15 surveys)			
Age	45.0 (42.08)	29-61	11.40 (10.06)
Years teaching physical education	18.3	2-40	10.24 (9.51)
Years teaching SWD	14.8	0-40	10.64 (9.49)
Years teaching dance	7.1	0-25	7.61 (8.34)
Total ( <i>All Participants</i> )			
Note. SWD=Students with Disabilities			

Table 2

<i>Intercorrelations Between Physical Education Teachers Attitudes and Teaching Experiences</i>		Total attitude	Years teaching PE	Years teaching PE for SWD	Years teaching dance in PE	Years teaching dance for SWD	Years teaching Zumba for SWD
Total attitude	Pearson Sig(2- tail)	1					
Years teaching PE	Pearson Sig(2- tail)	0.13 0.368	1				
Years teaching PE for SWD	Pearson Sig(2- tail)	0.228 0.112	.802** 0	1			
Years teaching dance in PE	Pearson Sig(2- tail)	.396** 0.004	.542** 0	.481** 0	1		
Years teaching dance for SWD	Pearson Sig(2- tail)	.458** 0.001	.299* 0.018	.318* 0.012	.643** 0	1	
Years teaching Zumba for SWD	Pearson Sig(2- tail)	.514** 0	0.107 0.409	0.191 0.137	0.232 0.069	.385** 0.002	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

PE=Physical Education, SWD=Students with Disabilities

Table 3

## Teacher's Attitude Comparison Between Groups

Group	Attitude (M $\pm$ SD)	p	Cohen's d
Teaching experience $\geq$ 10 years	60.39 $\pm$ 7.91	0.06	0.60
Teaching experiences < 10 years	55.94 $\pm$ 7.01		
Having taught students with disabilities	56.15 $\pm$ 6.18	0.04	-0.62
Having not taught students with disabilities	60.70 $\pm$ 8.38		
Having taught elementary school level	59.25 $\pm$ 7.98	0.44	0.23
Having taught secondary school level	57.50 $\pm$ 7.27		
Has immediate family member with a disability	58.22 $\pm$ 9.34	0.78	-0.09
Does not have immediate family member with a disability	59.02 $\pm$ 7.59		
Male	54.57 $\pm$ 5.75	0.01	-0.86
Female	60.56 $\pm$ 7.96		
Has taken a dance class	60.59 $\pm$ 7.52	0.00	1.15
Has not taken a dance class	52.82 $\pm$ 5.84		
Has experience teaching Zumba to SWD	67.10 $\pm$ 4.18	0.00	1.75
Has no experience teaching Zumba to SWD	56.83 $\pm$ 7.18		



## CHAPTER V: SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of physical education teachers toward teaching dance, specifically Zumba, to children with and without disabilities during physical education classes. Zumba is an aerobic fitness program featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music. Physical education teachers could teach Zumba Fitness to their students because of the variety of styles of dances and music it offers, and also because of the positive health findings that both students with and without disabilities can benefit from (Suri et al., 2017). Although dance is a popular form of exercise among children, many physical education teachers are hesitant about the subject area of “teaching dance.” (Pangrazi, 2007). Therefore, physical education teachers tend not to teach dance or incorporate dance activities in their lesson plans regularly (Renner & Pratt, 2017). Thus, it is clear that the inclusion of dance in physical education curricula is a contentious issue that needs further exploration.

Diversity is becoming more prevalent in today’s classrooms. Throughout the years there have been numerous studies conducted that investigate the attitudes and attitudes of classroom teachers and physical education teachers towards inclusion (Hodge, 2009). These studies have reported that teachers feel unprepared, insecure, and stressed about teaching students with disabilities and as a result develop negative attitudes towards inclusion and doubt their abilities. (Hodge et al., 2009). This research, however, seldom looks at how teachers perceive teaching specific content areas such as dance to those with disabilities in physical education.

Dance/Zumba fitness dance is a favored activity that has demonstrated notable benefits for individuals with and without disabilities. Thus, understanding the physical education teacher’s

attitudes of dance/Zumba fitness dance is a viable pursuit that contributes to the current knowledge base.

Generally speaking, participants noted having favorable attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities. This is notable, as teachers attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities, in general, has become an area of research given much attention (Hodge et al., 2009; LaMaster et al., 1998) given the impact that teachers attitudes can have on the experiences of those with disabilities in physical education (Haegele & Sutherland, 2015). This result is encouraging and may identify Zumba as an activity that perhaps teachers are comfortable teaching for this population. The results of this study show that a variety of variables were associated with participants attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities. Several of these findings are not surprising, including findings suggesting that female teachers, those who had taken Zumba classes, and those with experience teaching students with disabilities, had more favorable attitudes than male teachers, those who had not taken Zumba classes previously, and those without teaching experiences. While not surprising findings, these results do point toward specific groups who may not be hesitant to teach dance, or Zumba fitness, as a subject area. As noted by prior research (Pangrazi, 2007; Renner & Pratt, 2017), some groups are hesitant to teach dance and there classes. For example, Brennan (1996) noted that while males may teach dance, they are hesitant to do so, and this was reflected in the current study. Future research may consider further exploring these demographic variables, and perhaps seek to challenge teachers' views on teaching dance through providing Zumba, or other dance fitness content, training as an intervention study.

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## Appendix A

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING ZUMBA TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Zumba fitness dance is an aerobic fitness program featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music.

I want to know how physical education teachers feel about teaching dance (Zumba fitness) to students with disabilities. To determine this, I would like to utilize a matrix method focused on two major focus areas; experience in teaching students with disabilities and experience in teaching Zumba fitness. An example of my matrix is as follows:

	Teaching Experience	NO Teaching Experience
Zumba Experience	Zumba Experience	Zumba Experience
	Teaching Experience	NO Teaching Experience
NO Zumba Experience	NO Zumba Experience	NO Zumba Experience
	Teaching Experience	NO Teaching Experience

Based on the combination of experience, or lack thereof, in both areas I would then like to use that information to help me shape the discussion on the attitudes that physical education teachers have towards teaching Zumba fitness to children with disabilities . What are their attitudes? Do they teach Zumba? Would they be willing to teach Zumba if given the opportunity? Would they feel comfortable teaching Zumba fitness? Do they find it fitting and beneficial to the students with disabilities? In conjunction with the above matrix I plan on using my survey to acquire the data necessary to perform an analysis, results, and summary section of my thesis. The survey is going to focus on the areas I discussed in my Methodology section experience/association in Zumba

fitness, experience working with children with disabilities, feelings towards implementing Zumba fitness to the class, to include students with disabilities, and to finally capture some demographics on the teachers who are anonymously going to submit their responses.

### **Instructions for the questionnaire:**

Thank you for participating in this survey, which is part of a thesis at Old Dominion University.

Zumba is an aerobic fitness program featuring movements inspired by various styles of Latin American dance and performed primarily to Latin American dance music.

The survey contains 31 questions primarily related to Zumba. We are seeking to collect data on the experiences and attitudes of physical educators on Zumba. This survey should take you less than 15 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous and confidential, you do not need to enter your name, the school of your employment, or any other identifying information.

### **Demographic Questions:**

1. I am \_\_\_\_ years of age.

2. I am:

a) Female b) Male c) Other

3. Do you have immediate family members that have special needs?

Yes No

4. I am currently teaching in:

a) Public school b) Private school c) Charter school d) Homebound

5. Which best describes the location where you teach physical education classes

a) Gymnasium b) Classroom c) Auditorium d) Outside/No Gym e) Other (specify)

6. I have \_\_\_\_ years of fulltime teaching experiences.

7. I have taught students with disabilities for \_\_\_\_ years

I have taught dance in PE for \_\_\_\_\_ years (enter 0 if you have never taught dance)

I have taught Zumba in PE for \_\_\_\_years (enter 0 if you have never taught dance)

8. Which grade levels do you primarily teach (check all that apply)?

a) Pre-school b) Elementary school c) Middle school d) High school e) Other (specify)

9. How many years of teaching dance during physical education do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

10. How many years of teaching dance outside of school do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. How many years of teaching dance to students with disabilities do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

12. How many years of experience teaching Zumba to students with disabilities do you have?

\_\_\_\_\_

13. Have you taken dance classes before?

Yes      No

14. Are you a certified Zumba instructor?

Yes      No

15. If you are a certified Zumba instructor, what type of Zumba specialty do you teach?



- a) Zumba Basic   b) Zumba Kids + Kids Jr.   c) Zumba Gold   d) Zumba Basic 2  
 e) Zumba Toning   f) Zumba Step   g) Aqua Zumba   h) Pro Skills

**Attitudes toward teaching Zumba to Students with Disabilities**

16. I feel time flies when my students with disabilities are participating in Zumba.

Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree

17. The results of my students with disabilities participating in Zumba are useless.

Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree

18. My students with disabilities' performance during my Zumba instruction has no impact on my physical activity/fitness instruction.

Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree

19. My students with disabilities' performance during my Zumba instruction helps me effectively evaluate my physical activity/fitness instruction.

Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree

20. I dislike using observations of my students with disabilities' Zumba performance to modify my physical activity/fitness instruction.

Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree

21. I enjoy implementing Zumba for students with disabilities.

Strongly Agree                  Agree                  Neutral                  Disagree                  Strongly Disagree

22. The way in which my students with disabilities perform Zumba inaccurately reflects what students learned from my physical activity/fitness instruction.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

23. I ignore the results of my students with disabilities' ability to perform Zumba.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

24. The performance of my students with disabilities during Zumba helps me understand their dance abilities.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

25. I feel it is fun when my students with disabilities participate in Zumba.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

26. I care about my students with disabilities' Zumba performance.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

27. I enjoy watching my students with disabilities taking Zumba.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

28. Zumba helps motivate my students with disabilities to participate in physical activity on a regular basis.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

29. I dislike spending my teaching time on implementing Zumba.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

30. Zumba performance can be used to assess the effects of my physical activity/fitness instruction.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

31. My students with disabilities seem to ignore Zumba.

Strongly Agree      Agree      Neutral      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

## Appendix B

### Original Fitness Testing Survey

1. I feel time flies when my students are taking fitness tests.
2. The results of my students' fitness tests are useless
3. My students' fitness test results have no impact on my physical activity/fitness instruction.
4. My students' fitness test results help me effectively evaluate my students' health related fitness.
5. I dislike using the results of my students' fitness tests to modify my physical activity/fitness instruction.
6. I enjoy implementing fitness tests in my classes
7. The results of fitness tests inaccurately reflect what students learned from my physical activity/fitness instruction
8. I ignore the results of my students' fitness tests
9. The results of fitness tests help my students understand their health-related fitness.
10. I feel it is fun when my students take fitness tests
11. . I care about my students' fitness test results.
12. I enjoy watching my students taking fitness tests
13. The results of fitness tests motivate my students to participate in physical activity on a regular basis.
14. I dislike spending my teaching time on implementing fitness tests.
15. The results of fitness tests can be used to assess the Effects of my physical activity/fitness instruction.
16. My students seem to ignore their fitness test results.

## Appendix C



### OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH



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 4111 Monarch Way, Suite 203  
 Norfolk, Virginia 23508  
**Mailing Address**  
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 1 Old Dominion University  
 Norfolk, Virginia 23529  
 Phone(757) 683-3460  
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DATE: January 9, 2020

TO: Justin Haegele  
 FROM: Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee

PROJECT TITLE: [1546999-1] PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING ZUMBA TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

REFERENCE #:  
 SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS  
 DECISION DATE: January 9, 2020

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Laura Chezan at (757) 683-7055 or lchezan@odu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee's records.

## Appendix D

### INFORMED CONSENT OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

**PROJECT TITLE:** PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING ZUMBA TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The purposes of this form is to give you information that may affect your decision whether to say YES or NO to participation in this research, and to record the consent of those who say YES. This project, physical education teachers' attitudes towards teaching Zumba to children with disabilities in physical education, will be conducted via online survey.

#### **RESEARCHERS**

Max Brandon, Master's Student, Old Dominion University  
Justin A. Haegele, PhD, Assistant Professor, Old Dominion University

#### **DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore physical educators' attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities in PE.

If you decide to participate, then you will be asked to complete an online questionnaire about your attitudes toward teaching Zumba to students with disabilities. The questionnaire contains 31 questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

#### **EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA**

To the best of your knowledge, you should be a certified physical education teacher who is currently working in schools.

#### **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

**RISKS:** There are no expected or predicted potential risks associated with participation in this study. And, as with any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified.

**BENEFITS:** There are no expected or predicted potential benefits associated with the participation in this study.

#### **COSTS AND PAYMENTS**

The researchers want your decision about participating in this study to be absolutely voluntary.

#### **NEW INFORMATION**

If the researchers find new information during this study that would reasonably change your decision about participating, then they will give it to you.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The researchers will take reasonable steps to keep private information, such as names and contact information. The researchers will delete/destroy all contact information after data are collected. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but the researcher will not identify you. Of course, your records may be subpoenaed by court order or inspected by government bodies with oversight authority.

#### **WITHDRAWAL PRIVILEGE**

It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later by not completing the questionnaire. Your decision will not affect your relationship with Old Dominion University, or otherwise cause a loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled.

#### **COMPENSATION FOR ILLNESS AND INJURY**

If you say YES, then your consent in this document does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm arising from this study, neither Old Dominion University nor the researchers are able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any other compensation for such injury. In the event that you suffer injury as a result of participation in any research project, you may contact Dr. Justin A. Haegele, at [jhaegele@odu.edu](mailto:jhaegele@odu.edu) or 757 683 5338, Dr. Laura C. Chezan, the current chair for the DCOE Human Subjects Committee, at [lchezan@odu.edu](mailto:lchezan@odu.edu) or 757-683-7055.

#### **VOLUNTARY CONSENT**

The purpose of this form is to inform you about the study prior to participation. By agreeing to participate in the online survey, you are consenting to participate in this study. This means, you are saying that you have read this form or have had it read to you, that you are satisfied that you understand this form, the research study, and its risks and benefits. The researchers should have answered any questions you may have had about the research. If you have any questions later on, then the researchers should be able to answer them:

Justin A. Haegele: 757 683 5338

If at any time you feel pressured to participate, or if you have any questions about your rights or this form, then you should call Dr. Laura C. Chezan, the current chair for the DCOE Human Subjects Committee, at [lchezan@odu.edu](mailto:lchezan@odu.edu) or 757-683-7055.

By checking this box and continuing to the questionnaire, you consent to participating in this study.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**Evelina C. Brandon**  
[enhassengo@yahoo.com](mailto:enhassengo@yahoo.com)

### ADDRESS

530 Wittington Drive  
 Chesapeake, VA 23322  
 757-672-6008

### **CERTIFICATION**

Collegiate Professional License in Health & Physical Education, PreK-12  
 July 2012

### **EDUCATION**

Master of Science in Physical Education Concentration: Adapted Physical Education Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA	Pending 2020
Bachelor of Art in International Relations and Diplomacy Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA	May 2004
Associates of Art in Business Administration University of Central Florida	May 2001

### **RECENT EMPLOYMENT**

**Chesapeake Public Schools Physical Education Teacher** August 2014 – Present

- Planned and implemented lesson plans to students
- Taught, demonstrated, instructed and motivated students to perform a variety of physical fitness activities, and sport-specific games.
- Educated students on the importance of proper nutrition and healthy habits practice.
- Evaluated students performance and level of physical fitness.
- Participated in faculty meetings as well as before and after school events and bus duties.

**Chesapeake and Virginia Beach Public Schools Substitute Teacher** August 2013-June 2014

- Taught health and physical education using permanent teacher's lesson plans.
- Carried on classroom procedures, expectations, and maintained classroom discipline.
- Performed cafeteria duties, bus duties as well as playground supervision.

**Kings Grant Academy & Day School Private School Teacher** August 2010-August 2013

- Taught health and physical education to over 70 students ranging from K-5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Prepared lesson plans and semi-annual fitness gram assessments for all students

**Zumba Instructor/Group Exercise Instructor** January 2010 – Present

- Instructed classes at six different gyms ranging in class size from five to 70
- Provided Zumba, cycling, boot camp, and aerobic classes in various gyms



**Pebble Beach Company Personal Trainer/Group Exercise Instructor** August 2007-Dec 2009

- Trained club members, world-class athletes, and individuals ranging in age and fit level
- Designed and led classes to fit and accommodate all ages and fitness levels

**VOLUNTEER WORK**

2001-2004

- Lady Monarchs's spokesperson to outreach program for Habitat for Humanity Fundraisers
- Lady Monarch Basketball Team spokesperson at the Annual Downtown Norfolk Children's Festivals
- Lady Monarch Basketball Team spokesperson to several Hampton roads high schools (performed speaking and student mentoring services)
- "Buddy Walk" program volunteer chaperone to children with Down Syndrome to raise funds and awareness for Down Syndrome.
- Coached and coordinated basketball sports clinics for Special Olympic athletes
- Volunteer server for the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Celebrity Night Fundraiser to benefit child abuse prevention in Hampton Roads.

**CERTIFICATIONS**

- American Red Cross CPR/AED
- Zumba Fitness Instructor
- Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA) Step certification
- AFAA Personal Trainer certification
- AFAA Group Exercise instructor certification
- Mixed Fit certification

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

- AFAA
- Zumba LLC