



ARTS + MORE


FORWARD MOTION FRAMEWORK:

Five Skills Students Build Through Dance Integration

Forward Motion Framework: Five Skills Students Build Through Dance Integration shows how meaningful movement strengthens learning while building essential life skills. Each section offers practical strategies, reflection prompts, and classroom-ready activities that help students develop self-regulation, creative problem-solving, emotional literacy, collaboration, and spatial awareness. Designed for educators and teaching artists, this guide supports real-world instruction with clear, actionable steps you can use right away. Ready to get started? Let's move forward together and support student growth through the power of dance.



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DEFINE YOUR GOALS



A parent shared this with me recently:

“My child is doing great in school, but the moment something goes wrong, he completely falls apart.”

I hear this often. And it points to a deeper question many families and educators are carrying right now:

Will our children be ready for life’s challenges?

Not just tests or grades—but uncertainty. Change. Disappointment. The moments that don’t come with instructions.

In arts-integrated classrooms, we see this play out every day.

A dance doesn’t go as planned. A drawing doesn’t match the vision. A group drama scene falls apart. These are small moments, but they mirror real life. And they become powerful teaching opportunities.

So many students are capable, motivated, and bright; yet unravel when plans change, or they hear “no.” What’s missing isn’t intelligence.

It’s guided practice. It’s rehearsal.

Arts integration creates space for children to rehearse life skills in meaningful ways. Through movement, visual art, storytelling, and music, students learn to pause, reflect, problem-solve, and try again. They experience setbacks safely. They adapt. They rebuild.

That’s exactly what Arts Integration supports.

Through **Moving Forward**, children rehearse:

- ✓ Emotional intelligence – naming and managing big feelings
- ✓ Growth mindset – learning from mistakes
- ✓ Resilience – bouncing back after disappointment
- ✓ Adaptability – adjusting when things change
- ✓ Confidence – trusting themselves through challenge



These aren’t abstract concepts. They come alive through creative, hands-on experiences that connect learning to real moments—at home, in classrooms, and during transitions.

At Arts+More, we believe the arts give children a rehearsal space for life. Preparing kids isn’t about pushing harder. It’s about giving them inner tools they can carry forward—no matter what comes next.

FIVE CORE SKILLS



Here are five core skills students develop through Arts Integration using dance:

1. Self-Regulation

Students learn to manage their energy, focus their attention, and respond to cues. Movement requires awareness of timing, space, and impulse control—skills that transfer directly to classroom learning.

2. Creative Problem-Solving

Dance invites students to explore multiple solutions. How do you show “change” with your body? How do you represent a math pattern through movement? This builds flexible thinking and innovation.

3. Emotional Expression & Literacy

Movement gives students a safe way to identify and communicate feelings. They learn to recognize emotions in themselves and others, strengthening empathy and emotional intelligence.

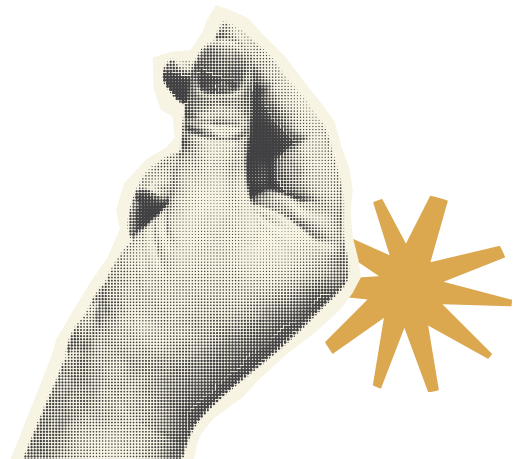
4. Collaboration & Communication

Partner and group choreography develop listening skills, shared decision-making, and respect for different ideas. Students practice giving and receiving feedback in real time.

5. Spatial Awareness & Kinesthetic Learning

Dance strengthens understanding of space, sequencing, and relationships; supporting concepts in math, science, and literacy while engaging learners who thrive through movement.

Together, these skills support academic growth while building resilience, confidence, and adaptability—the same life skills students will rely on far beyond the classroom.



THE APPROACH

The best way to measure skills from arts integration is a mix of observation, reflection, and structured assessment—focusing on growth rather than just “correct” outcomes.

Here’s a practical approach for a classroom:

1. Rubrics: Create simple, skill-based rubrics for each target area—self-regulation, collaboration, creative problem-solving, emotional literacy, and spatial awareness. Include observable behaviors, like staying on task, contributing ideas in a group, experimenting with movement, or expressing emotions through gestures.

2. Reflection and Journals: Ask students to reflect on their experiences after activities. Questions like “What part was challenging?” or “How did you adjust when something didn’t go as planned?” provide insight into emotional intelligence, adaptability, and growth mindset.

3. Peer and Self-Assessment: Encourage students to give feedback to themselves and peers through a **SPARK SESSION**. They can identify strengths, note improvements, or set goals for the next activity. This promotes metacognition and reinforces collaboration skills.

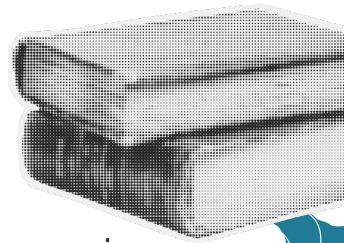
4. Performance Tasks: Use short, structured movement tasks tied to academic concepts. Observe how students solve problems, follow sequences, or respond to changes. For example, can they adjust a dance pattern to match a math or science concept?

5. Anecdotal Notes: Teachers and teaching artists can track behaviors during activities, noting moments of persistence, innovation, or social-emotional growth. Over time, patterns emerge showing skill development.

Combining these approaches gives a holistic picture of both individual and group growth, while keeping assessment flexible, authentic, and supportive of learning through dance.

notes:

” **GROWTH BEGINS WHEN
YOUR STUDENTS
START REFLECTING.**



OBSERVATION

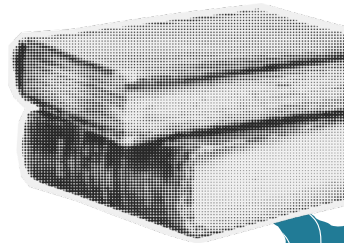


Moving Forward: Five Skills Classroom Rubric

Skill	Emerging (1)	Developing (2)	Proficient (3)	Exemplary (4)
Self-Regulation	Struggles to focus or follow directions; easily frustrated	Can stay on task with reminders; sometimes adjusts behavior	Usually maintains focus and adjusts behavior independently	Consistently focused and adapts behavior in challenging situations without support
Creative Problem-Solving	Relies on one approach; avoids experimenting	Tries new ideas with guidance; occasionally solves problems	Generates multiple solutions independently; explores different approaches	Innovates and adapts solutions confidently; takes risks to improve outcomes
Emotional Literacy	Has difficulty expressing or identifying feelings	Sometimes identifies feelings and responds appropriately	Usually recognizes emotions and expresses them clearly	Consistently demonstrates awareness of self and others' emotions and responds thoughtfully
Collaboration	Rarely participates or works with others respectfully	Participates with support; sometimes listens to peers	Works cooperatively; contributes ideas and respects others	Actively supports team, encourages peers, and demonstrates strong leadership in group tasks
Spatial Awareness & Kinesthetic Learning	Struggles to move safely or follow movement patterns	Follows patterns with some guidance; occasionally misjudges space	Moves confidently, aware of self and others; sequences are accurate	Demonstrates advanced control, fluidity, and precision; adapts movement to new contexts easily



FORWARD MOTION REFLECTION JOURNAL



Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What happened today?
(Describe the situation, activity, or challenge.)

2. What feelings did I notice?
(Use emotion words: frustrated, excited, nervous, proud, confused, calm...)

3. What did I do that helped me move forward?
(Examples: took a breath, asked for help, tried again, changed my plan.)

4. What would I try next time?
(One small adjustment or new strategy.)

teacher notes:

”

**"HAPPINESS IS NOT
BY CHANCE, BUT BY
CHOICE."**

— JIM ROHN

FORWARD MOTION REFLECTION JOURNAL



Name: _____ Date: _____

1. A moment I felt proud of today was...

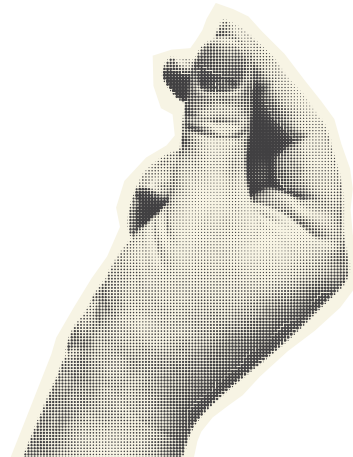
2. A moment that challenged me was...

3. How did I show resilience or adaptability?

4. What did I learn about myself?

”**YOU ARE BRAVER
THAN YOU BELIEVE,
STRONGER THAN YOU
SEEM, AND SMARTER
THAN YOU THINK.”**
— A.A. MILNE

teacher notes:



FORWARD MOTION PEER FEEDBACK



Your Name: _____ Peer's Name: _____

1. I noticed you showed emotional intelligence when...

ACHIEVEMENTS

2. I saw you use a growth mindset when...

3. You showed resilience by...

4. One thing you do really well is...

5. One thing you could keep practicing is...
(Kind, helpful, specific.)





FORWARD MOTION SELF-ASSESSMENT

Name: _____ Date: _____

Rate yourself on each skill:
(1 = still learning, 5 = I do this often)

ACHIEVEMENTS

Skill					
I can name my feelings					
I try again after mistakes					
I bounce back after disappointment					
I adjust when things change					
I trust myself during challenges					

What I'm proud of:

What I want to grow next:

One strategy I will use:

”

**"THE SECRET OF
GETTING AHEAD IS
GETTING STARTED."**

— MARK TWAIN



BUILD LASTING HABITS

"I will take a few minutes each class to observe and note how students are using self-regulation, problem-solving, emotional awareness, collaboration, and spatial skills, so I can track growth and adjust activities to support their learning."



Habit:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Habit:

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notes:

EDUCATOR ANECDOTAL NOTES

"I will take a few minutes each class to observe and note how students are using self-regulation, problem-solving, emotional awareness, collaboration, and spatial skills, so I can track growth and adjust activities to support their learning."



TEACHER: _____
CLASS/GROUP: _____

Date	Student	Observed Skill	What Happened	Next Step
		EI / GM / R / A / C		
		EI / GM / R / A / C		
		EI / GM / R / A / C		
		EI / GM / R / A / C		
		EI / GM / R / A / C		

(EI = EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, GM = GROWTH MINDSET, R = RESILIENCE, A = ADAPTABILITY, C = CONFIDENCE)