Title of Work:
*Scientific Rhythm* (Tap Improvisation)

Creator:
Producer: Rhapsody In Taps
Dance artist: Eddie Brown (1918-1995)

Background Information:
Eddie Brown didn’t set routines, he improvised. He did his dancing in the moment - for that one instant when the idea came to him. He stated, “Inspiration is what it’s all about.” Creating, performing and teaching tap dancing for more than 60 years, he achieved the highest level of excellence through perseverance, self-discipline and drive. Raised in Omaha, Nebraska, he was the seventh son in a family of nine boys and two girls. Although most of his brothers were musicians and dancers, he was the only one who became professional. Starting at the age of five with his uncle Sam, dancing became his passion. He toured with his uncle during the summers, but most of his learning took place on the street corners of his neighborhood, dancing with 20 to 30 other hoofers. In these daily sessions, each person would jump in and perform, working off each other’s ideas. Brown began with ‘buck’ dancing, progressed to ‘rhythm’ dancing and finally developed his own style, called ‘scientific rhythm.’ He gave it that name because you could hear the rhythm, but couldn’t see the movement which created it. His career began with the Bill Robinson Revue at New York’s Apollo Theatre during the 1930s and he appeared with Billie Holiday and Joe Turner at the Savoy, as well as with jazz greats Dizzy Gillespie, Count Basie and Duke Ellington. He taught and performed internationally and was featured with *Rhapsody In Taps*, a Los Angeles-based dance company under the artistic direction of Linda Sohl-Ellison.

About the Artwork:
Bill Robinson, the legendary ‘buck’ dancer, fascinated and inspired Eddie Brown. One day Robinson held an audition and Eddie, a young teenager at the time, prepared himself for it by learning an original Robinson routine. He did this by purchasing a record of *Ain’t Misbehavin’* which had a special arrangement featuring Robinson’s tapping. Brown played the recording over and over on an old gramophone slowing it down so he could hear every tap. He attended many performances of his idol to observe the structure of the steps in order to duplicate them. When he auditioned the piece, Robinson was absolutely amazed and Eddie Brown got the job, but his parents felt he wasn’t old enough to leave home.

Creative Process of the Artist or Culture:
Forms of tap and clogging were introduced by the Irish and the English. ‘Buck’ dancing was a flat-footed form of tap done by early African Americans. Bill (Bojangles) Robinson took ‘Buck’ to the balls of the feet and John Bubbles, another tap dance pioneer, introduced ‘rhythm’ dancing by dropping the heel and cutting the tempo in half so that more taps could be done within each bar. Every tap dancer develops his own style, performing similar steps in different ways. Audiences found Mr. Brown’s style mysterious because they couldn’t determine how he made his sounds.
Discussion Questions:

After the video has been viewed:
- What words would you use to describe Eddie Brown’s performance?
- Do you know of other cultures which incorporate rhythmic tapping into their dances? (Spanish, Mexican, Filipino, Hawaiian, African, German, etc.)
- What do you think are the main characteristics of tap dancing? (rhythmic patterns, use of feet, taps, etc.)
- How is tap dancing the same as other forms of dance you have seen? How is it different?

Summary of Mr. Brown’s Philosophy on Teaching:

Eddie Brown loved to teach as much as he loved to perform. He said, “I can’t stand it when someone only does something half-way. Make every tap count. If you’re only going to do something halfway, you might as well not do it at all.” Rather than count each pattern, he got students to hear the taps and feel the length of eight counts or eight bars. He constantly said to his students, “Get used to using these ears.” Brown stated that it is the combination of steps which make a tap routine seem complex, but you can learn each part separately. This is how he learned Bill Robinson’s routine, which led to his first success. Eddie gave his students short patterns, which they learned before combining them into longer sequences. He recalled that the slaves were put in a predicament when they couldn’t express themselves through their music, native languages and dance. But their rhythms were in their memories, and once something is recorded in your mind it can’t be taken away from you. You will find a way to express it, but practice and hard work, which hoofers call ‘woodshedding,’ were his keys to success.

Multidisciplinary Options:
- Think of something that you want to learn, then find a book or person to teach you. Use the concept of ‘woodshedding’ (to practice alone) to achieve this.
- Photocopy and read the interview segment with Eddie Brown, pages 17-19. Direct students to interview a friend or person they admire. Design five questions to ask what will reveal something special about their life or how they learned a skill or became interested in work or a hobby. Share these.

Audio-Visual Materials:
- Artsource® video excerpt: Stompin’ at the Savoy, Eddie’s Suite, and Rhapsody In Taps “30th Anniviersary” video, courtesy of Rhapsody In Taps.
- Artsource® audio recording: Yankee Doodle, traditional song arranged by and courtesy of Paul Tracey.
- Photos: courtesy of Rhapsody In Taps.

Additional References:

Sample Experiences:

LEVEL I

- Clap simple rhythmic patterns which can be echoed by the group. Everyone in class create one. The rhythmic pattern of simple word combinations can be used.
- Clap four counts on the beat and four counts adding or subtracting sounds within the same amount of time. Continue clapping four counts plain and four counts of a rhythmic pattern. Snaps, clicks, stamps can be added.
- One person moves into a circle of seated students and improvise using walks, runs, hops, jumps, gallops, skips, leaps and stop action. The circle of students should clap the rhythm made by the feet of the solo dancer.

LEVEL II

- Learn some of the basic tap dance steps, then put them together in simple combinations, leading to a dance.
- Using the toes and the heels only, explore ways to make rhythmic patterns. Share and try each other’s ideas.
- Clap simple rhythm patterns, then repeat them with your feet. Try phrases of different lengths. (4, 8, 12-count.)

LEVEL III

- Each student creates a 16-count phrase, using the basic tap steps in different combinations. Teach to a partner or select several patterns from members of the class and put into a 16 or 32 count sequence that everyone learns.
- Explore the musical concept of different note values by moving to the time value of whole notes, half notes, quarter notes and eighth notes. Build a sequence using these ideas. Do a walk, then add the full body.
- Xerox the interview segment with Eddie Brown on pages 17-19 in this unit. Students state why they think the contributions of Bill Robinson, John Bubbles and Eddie Brown are important to tap dance.

* Indicates sample lessons
About Rhapsody In Taps

www.rhapsodyintaps.com

Rhapsody In Taps, a Los Angeles based touring company, features seven tap dancers, six jazz and world musicians and special guest artists. The modern dance background of Artistic Director/Choreographer, Linda Sohl-Ellison, is reflected in Rhapsody In Taps’ diverse repertoire, which pays tribute to the rich heritage of tap as well as exploring innovative choreographic directions for the concert stage. Rhapsody In Taps has been a leader in the ‘tap resurgence’ that began in the 1980’s. RIT is one of the nation’s very few tap dance companies that creates original, often experimental repertoire and maintains a consistent ensemble of company dancers. In 2007 the company was honored with a Milestone Award from the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors for more than 25 years of performances, programs and arts leadership in Los Angeles.

Founded in 1981, Rhapsody In Taps has a history of creating original works, touring and presenting, assisted by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, James Irvine Foundation, Los Angeles County Arts Commission, Panasonic, Target, California Arts Council, N/S/C Partnership, Brody Arts, Times Mirror and others. The company has created more than 75 works, all performed with live music. Music commissions have included works by renowned jazz artists Al ‘Tootie’ Heath, Cedar Walton, Louie Bellson, Phil Wright, Gildo Mahones; collaborations with noted percussionists, Monti Ellison, M.B. Gordy, Michael Bissonnette, Brent Lewis and projects with world music masters: I Nyoman Wenten (Balinese gamelan music) and Leo Chelyapov (Jewish klezmer music). In 1986, Rhapsody In Taps created its first big band work for a performance at UCLA’s Royce Hall with an all star jazz big band and later had the distinction of performing concerts with the Louie Bellson Big Band.

The company has also enjoyed affiliations with Americas’ Tap Masters, performing with Los Angeles tap legend and featured RIT soloist Eddie Brown from 1985 until 1992, and presenting numerous solo tap veterans in concert including Sandman Sims, Charles ‘Honi’ Coles, Steve Condos, Bunny Briggs, Arthur Duncan, Leonard Reed, Frances Nealy, Tap and Tray and RIT soloist, Fred Strickler. An artistic highlight for the company was the choreographic project with Gregory Hines during the creation of his 1990 work for Rhapsody In Taps, Toeing the 3rd and Fifth, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. Other NEA supported choreographic commissions include works by Fred Strickler (1993), Keith Terry (1994), Brenda Bufalino (1998), Sam Weber (2002) and Linda Sohl-Ellison (2000, 2001, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). With funding from the James Irvine Foundation in 1999/2000, Rhapsody In Taps began a unique and ambitious collaborative project, an in-depth work for tap, Balinese gamelan music and Balinese inspired movement. This two year collaboration between Linda Sohl-Ellison, I Nyoman and Nanik Wenten and RIT resulted in a 40 minute, four section work, Nusantara (Bridge Between Islands). A phase II grant from the Irvine foundation in 2001/2002 supported touring Nusantara in California. Rhapsody In Tap’s 2005 tap/percussion collaboration with Monti Ellison, Stroke of the Oarsmen, received two Lester Horton Dance Awards

(Continued on page 4.)
for Outstanding Choreography and Outstanding Performance from the Dance Resource Center. In 2006, commemorating Rhapsody In Taps’ 25th Anniversary, Sohl-Ellison collaborated with Russian composer and clarinet virtuoso, Leo Chelyapov to create Laughing With Tears, a five part RIT ensemble work combining tap dance and Jewish klezmer music.

With funding from the James Irvine Foundation in 1999/2000, Rhapsody In Taps began a unique and ambitious collaborative project, an in-depth work for tap, Balinese gamelan music and Balinese inspired movement. This two year collaboration between Linda Sohl-Ellison, I Nyoman and Nanik Wenten and RIT resulted in a 40 minute, four section work, Nusantara (Bridge Between Islands). A phase II grant from the Irvine foundation in 2001/2002 supported touring Nusantara in California.

RIT has enjoyed touring engagements in California, New Mexico, Michigan, Utah, Florida, Oregon, Colorado, Wyoming, Canada and New York. In 2000 Rhapsody In Taps spent two weeks in Bali rehearsing and performing with I Nyoman Wenten and his gamelan musicians. Besides the artistry and inspiration gained from the Balinese people, culture and landscape, the company created its tap version of the Kecak (Monkey Chant) in Payangan, Bali. The Company’s performance history also includes four television appearances (KNBC and KCET), performing at L.A.’s Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, a New York debut at Lincoln Center Out of Doors Festival, San Francisco’s prestigious Stern Grove Festival for an audience of 10,000, three concerts at the Redlands Amphitheatre for 6,000 plus 22 annual seasons at the Aratani/Japan America Theatre in Los Angeles and 19 annual seasons in Orange County. The Company’s annual Los Angeles Season at the Aratani/Japan America Theatre each October features a public concert and a free Children’s Program for students from the Los Angeles Unified School District. RIT’s children’s program has been one of LAUSD’s most successful and popular events since its inception in 1991.

During its more than 30-year history, Rhapsody In Taps has produced numerous tap events of national and international significance in an effort to preserve and promote the unique American art form of tap dance. In 1983, ’84, ’86, ’93, ’95 and ’97, RIT co-produced the Essence of Rhythm, concerts featuring America’s tap legends and solo artists. In 1993, 1995 and 1997, Rhapsody In Taps and Orange Coast College co-produced the Southern California Tap Festival featuring an intensive program of tap and jazz classes, events and performances by renowned artists. Each year Rhapsody In Taps celebrates National Tap Dance Day by offering a day of master classes in Long Beach, taught by RIT artists and special guest teachers. Visit National Tap Dance Day page.

For more information on Rhapsody In Taps, scan this QR Code with your smartphone.
FASCINATING RHYTHMS
ENDURING VALUES

LEVEL 1 Sample Lesson

INTRODUCTION:
Rhythm is a universal concept which is found throughout life. There are natural rhythms, mechanical
rhythms, personal rhythms and musical rhythms which humans create to express themselves.

OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

• Create and respond to simple rhythmic patterns. (Artistic Perception and Creative Expression)

• Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to
Assessment at the end of this lesson. (Aesthetic Valuing)

MATERIALS:

• Percussion instruments (optional).

PROGRESSION:

• Begin by clapping the rhythm of each student’s name. For young children use first names and identify
the number of sounds and their rhythmic pattern. For older students, use first and last or first, middle
and last name combinations. Repeat each name rhythm three times to identify the pattern and the
correct emphasis.

• Using simple sentences or lines from a nursery rhyme or poem, clap the rhythm of the words. Make
sure that you clap the rhythm the way the sentence or rhyme would be rhythmically spoken, with all the
variations of accents, duration, pauses and dynamics.

Example: * / u / u / u / u / u u / u /
Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?

‘/ ’ indicates stressed syllable, ‘u’ indicates un-stressed.

• After several different lines have been spoken rhythmically and clapped with and without words, try
putting several lines or the entire rhyme into rhythm.

/ u / u / u / u / u u / u /
Example: Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow? (pause)
u / u / u / u / u / u u u u /
With silver bells, and cockle shells, and pretty maids all in a row.
Make sure that the students say each word rhythmically so that the rhythm pattern is exaggerated and clear, with the correct emphasis on the right syllables. There should be the feeling of a basic underlying beat or pulse throughout.

• Try working with other nursery rhymes using the same process.

EXTENSIONS:

• Experiment with other ways to create body percussion, such as stamps, clicks, taps, slaps on knees, etc. Sit in a circle or at tables in the classroom and ask different people to create a simple rhythm which can be echoed by the class. If it isn’t clear, have the person try again until the class can successfully repeat it.

• Ask the students to think of things that make rhythm (bouncing balls, trains, video games). Have them make a list of rhythms made by natural, mechanical or human means. With young children, make the list together; with older students have each make their own and share at the end of the week.

• Using a drum or other percussion instrument, play simple rhythmic patterns and a) have the children clap them back, b) have the students put them into their feet or c) have the students use a combination of body percussion and feet sounds to echo back the rhythmic patterns.

• Using a recording device, have students collect rhythmic sound patterns which can be shared and identified. This can also serve as a sound score for an original dance.

VOCABULARY: rhythm, rhythmic pattern, accent, duration, dynamics

ASSESSMENT: (Aesthetic Valuing)

DESCRIBE: Describe the rhythm of your own name. For example, how many sounds or syllables does your name have and do they sound long or short? Demonstrate by clapping your name.

DISCUSS: Discuss how you found the rhythm in the words of the nursery rhyme.

ANALYZE: Think about how you put the words of the nursery rhyme into a rhythm which you could clap and dance. Decide what you would change if you were to teach someone else how to do this?

CONNECT: What other ideas do you have for creating or finding rhythm patterns?
INTRODUCTION:

Eddie Brown said “Tap dancing was just one of those things - like a kid's first love. Dancing was me, and I'm still learning.” Learning is easy when someone is motivated and interested in the subject. Tap dance can be a challenging exercise for the mind, as well as for the feet. This lesson provides some tap basics and opens up a door for anyone to learn about the power of rhythm.

OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes)

Students will be able to:

• Learn some basic tap steps and put them together in simple combinations. (Artistic Perception)

• Experiment by putting basic steps together in different ways. (Creative Expression)

• Learn a tap dance (optional). (Artistic Perception)

• Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to Assessment at the end of this lesson. (Aesthetic Valuing)

MATERIALS: (It is not necessary to have tap shoes, any shoes can be used for this lesson.)

• Artsource® audio recording of tap music or any other type of music with a strong beat in 4/4 meter.

• Artsource® video of Eddie Brown and Rhapsody In Taps performing Eddie’s Suite, or Stompin’ at the Savoy or Rhapsody In Tap’s “30th Anniversary” video.

PROGRESSION: (This is a series of lessons to learn the tap basics)

• Introduce the students to tap dance by giving them some background on its history. Watch the video of Eddie Brown and the dancers from Rhapsody In Taps. Notice the way the dancers move and listen to the tap rhythms. Mr. Brown improvises his section, but the women are dancing steps which are choreographed and based on the original tap material of Eddie Brown. The piece concludes with all three dancing together.

• Use the “Discussion Questions” as a point of departure for class discussion or ask the students what they already know about tap dancing (Assessing Prior Knowledge).

• Introduce some of the basic tap terms. If there are members of the class who study tap dancing, have them demonstrate or help teach the steps. If no one knows any tap, then read the directions from the section called “Basic Tap Terms” and figure them out. When the basic tap terms are understood, then select a few steps from “Suggested Tap Exercises” or “Combination Steps” to teach.
• Practice each step several times on both feet. Perform each step four or eight times, before switching to a different step. Try doing the step in different directions. For example, a shuffle step can be done eight times on the right and eight times on the left or can alternate from side to side for eight counts. You can also shuffle out to the side of the body and then shuffle across the body (shuffle side, shuffle across), combining these two ideas together. Experiment with variations.

• When several of the basic steps are learned and practiced, try the time steps, the Irish or other combinations.

• Divide the class into small groups. Appoint a ‘dance captain’ and have the students practice the tap exercises together, doing each one several times and alternating sides, if appropriate.

• When all the eight steps (over a series of lessons) are learned, have the students practice putting them in sequence and doing the entire dance, using the Artsource® audio recording. Again, work in small groups with a ‘dance captain.’

EXTENSIONS:

• Divide the class into partners. One partner leads by improvising a combination which takes four counts and the other partner copies the idea. Have each leader do four four-count combinations, then switch roles.

• In small groups have each person put two or three tap ideas together spontaneously which the group then imitates. (e.g., Shuffle/Hop/Step)

VOCABULARY: improvise, dance captain, alternating

ASSESSMENT (Aesthetic Valuing):

DESCRIBE: Describe the movements you used in your tap steps.

DISCUSS: Discuss how you learned the tap steps and whether there could be a better way to learn them. Decide whether you were successful in learning the steps and combinations.

INTERPRET: Discuss how learning tap dancing is like learning math. In what ways do they differ? (Alike: There are patterns, counting, addition, subtraction and reordering of parts)

CONNECT: Think of other things you know about that could be similar to tap dancing. Here’s a hint, what else do you do where you put several ideas together into a combination? Can the sequence of the combination be changed around?
BASIC TERMS FOR TAP DANCE

BACK SHUFFLE (BK SH):
Raise one foot from floor across supporting leg. Brush free foot out to side, then spank same foot behind supporting leg.

BALL-CHANGE (BCH):
A quick change of weight from the ball of one foot to the ball of the other foot, then back to the original foot. (step-step; leap-step; leap-leap). Can be performed in any given direction with either foot in front, or side by side.

BRUSH (B):
A movement made by striking ball of foot forward (a tap with a forward direction - after a brush the foot is always off the floor).

CHUG (CH):
Raise the heel or heels off the floor, slide the foot or feet forward and at the same time drop the heel or heels to the floor.

FLAP (FL):
Brush-leap or brush-step, executing these movements rather quickly.

FLIP (FI):
Back flap or spank step.

FRONT SHUFFLE (FT SH):
Raise one foot. Hold free foot across back of supporting foot. Brush free foot out to side, then spank same foot across supporting leg.

HEEL-DROP (HE DR):
Raise the heel or heels off the floor (keeping contact with the ball of the foot) and striking them down on the floor. Usually done with the knee of the heel-drop bent.

HOP (H):
Spring from the floor from one foot, landing on the ball of the same foot and bending the knee of that same leg.

LEAP (L):
Spring from the floor, landing on the opposite foot (land on the ball of the foot) bending the knee of the leg on which you land.

LUNGE (LG):
Spring from one foot to the other, landing on the whole foot, bending the knee of the leg bearing the weight. That is, the leg of the foot you spring to.

SCUFF (SC):
A brush made by striking the heel to the floor instead of the ball of the foot (always done with a forward movement, usually to side).

SIDE SHUFFLE (SD SH):
Raise one foot from the floor in back of supporting leg. Brush free foot out to side, then spank same foot behind supporting leg (where it started).

SLAP (SL):
Brush-touch, executing these two movements rather quickly.

SPANK (SP):
A back brush. This movement may be done either across supporting foot or in back of supporting foot.

STAMP (ST):
A step executed with the whole foot as opposed to just the ball of the foot. Be sure to change the weight to the foot that strikes the floor, i.e., a transfer of weight from one foot to the other, but on the whole foot.

STEP (ST):
A movement executed by transferring the weight from the ball of one foot to the other. Always performed on the ball of the foot.

TAP (T):
Strike the ball of one foot to the floor, moving the foot from the ankle, then raising foot.
TOE-TAP (TO T):
Strike the tip of the toe (point) to the floor. This movement is from the knee and should be performed only behind, or in front of, the supporting leg.

TOUCH (TCH):
A movement executed by ‘touching’ the ball of the foot to the floor, without the change of weight.

TRENCHES (TR):
Skate-like steps in which the body leans forward and the steps ‘skate,’ pushing backwards in place.

Definitions by Jack Stanly and Stan Mazin

SUGGESTED TAP EXERCISES

Use the Artsource® audio recording, Yankee Doodle or other music of your choice (see the list of suggested music for tap). The music has four phrases of 16 counts or 64 counts. This tape can also be used as music for the 32 count student tap phrase in Sample Lesson III.

The following exercises are a suggested way of warming up your students. Introduce each part of the exercise separately, knowing that your students may learn only one or two steps per lesson.

LEVEL I

• With weight on heels, and feet together, tap right toes and then left toes, alternating back and forth. 16 counts.
• With weight on toes, and feet together, tap right heel, then left heel, alternating back and forth. 16 counts.
• Do a simple combination of 4 toe taps, alternating left and right with four heel taps, alternating left and right. repeat.
LEVEL II

• Do fifteen shuffles to the front with the right foot, stepping on the right foot on count sixteen.
  Repeat on the left foot.

• Do fifteen shuffles to the right side with the right foot, stepping on the right foot on count sixteen.
  Repeat on the left foot.

• Do fifteen shuffles with the right foot, crossing over the left leg (one shuffle) and back in place (one shuffle), step on count sixteen (there are two shuffles combined, one across and one in place).
  Repeat on the left foot.

• Do seven shuffle-ball-change steps using the right foot and stepping on the right foot on count eight.
  Repeat on the left foot.

LEVEL III

You can substitute some of the following practice steps for the ones above.

• Do eight or sixteen shuffle-hop-steps (Irish step) alternating between right and left sides.

• Do eight or sixteen slaps, alternating sides.

• Do seven slap-steps on the right foot, stepping on the right foot on count eight.
  Repeat on the left foot.

• Select one of the time steps and do it four times.

• Add direction changes to any of the steps.

• Make up your own combination of two steps and repeat them on each side several times.
COMBINATION STEPS

**ROLLS**

3 count roll: BRUSH TOE STEP (TOE) HEEL  
BR-T ST(T) HE

4 count roll: HEEL BRUSH STEP HEEL  
HE BR ST HE

6 count roll: BRUSH HOP SLAP HOP DIG  
BR H SL H DG

**TIME STEPS**

Single: SHUFFLE-HOP STEP SLAP-STEP SH-H ST SL-ST  
1 sound

Double: SHUFFLE HOP SLAP SLAP-STEP SH-H ST SL-ST  
2 sounds

Triple: SHUFFLE-HOP SHUFFLE-STEP SLAP-STEP SH-H SH-ST SL-ST  
3 sounds

**BREAK**  - pattern of steps which is done in-between combinations. This is an example:

SHUFFLE-HOP SHUFFLE-STEP SHUFFLE-STEP SHUFFLE-STEP SHUFFLE-STEP  
RT L RT RT L L RT RT  
SH H SH ST SH ST SH ST

SHUFFLE-HOP SLAP BALL-CHANGE  
L RT L RT L  
SH L SL B CH

**IRISH STEP**

SHUFFLE HOP STEP (altnerates from left to right on each new combination)  
SH H ST

Credit for this information: Jon Zerby
INTRODUCTION:

Tap dance is very much like a rhythmic math problem. The choreographer must figure out how to fit different tap sounds and steps into eight counts. To do this, it helps to see how many ways there are to divide the eight counts. They can be divided into half, quarter, eighth or sixteenth notes, if one knows music; or the eight counts can be counted out and students can experiment with the combination of sounds which will fit the phrase. Of course, when someone becomes skilled at this, he/she begins to naturally feel the phrases in terms of 8, 16 or 32 counts and can then handle more complex rhythmic problems. Tap dance disciplines one’s mind to think in strict tempo, coordinate the mind and body and to play within the rules of the rhythmic forms.

OBJECTIVES: (Student Outcomes) “This lesson should only be done after the class is familiar with and has practiced the tap basics.

Students will be able to:

• Work within a 32 count phrase and find ways to design tap steps and create rhythms which work in different combinations. (Artistic Perception and Creative Expression)

• Describe, discuss, analyze and connect information and experiences based on this lesson. Refer to Assessment at the end of this lesson. (Aesthetic Valuing)

MATERIALS:

• Artsource® audio recording of Yankee Doodle or any other type of music with a strong beat in 4/4 meter.

• Artsource® video of Eddie Brown and Rhapsody In Taps in Eddie’s Suite and Stompin’ at the Savoy or the Rhapsody In Taps’ “30th Anniversary” video.

PROGRESSION:

• Watch the video of Eddie brown and the dancers from the group, Rhapsody In Taps. Notice the way in which the dancers move to the tap rhythms. Mr. Brown improvises his section, but the women are dancing steps which are choreographed and based on the tap material of Eddie Brown. Or watch any of the segments from the Rhapsody In Tap “30th Anniversary” video. Use the Discussion Questions.

• Discuss the video and ask for comments that will help the class in their tap choreography.
• Each student is given the following problem to work on alone or with a partner:

* PROJECT:  Tap Choreography.

DIRECTIONS: Create 32 counts of tap sounds to go with the Artsource® tap recording or other selected music.

INCLUDE:
- two turns (any type)
- heel sounds
- toe sounds
- shuffles
- hops
- flaps or slaps
- brushes
- arm and other body movements
- kicks
- toe sounds
- brushes
- shuffles
- stamps

SPECIFICS:
- May be in any order.
- May be done separately or together.
- May include other moves as long as the above 10 ideas are included.

* Have the students perform their work and keep a checklist to see if the above ideas were included in their choreography. If you wish, you may use the Artsource® audio recording, Yankee Doodle. This recording has 64 counts, so the dance could be repeated or two different groups could combine ideas.

EXTENSIONS:
- Divide the students into groups of eight. Have them select two 16 count phrases from their group and combine them into a 32 count phrase which the entire group learns and performs.
- Refer to the “Eight Combination Steps Can Create a Dance.” Learn each of the combinations. Perform them as a dance.

VOCABULARY: phrase, choreography, combination

ASSESSMENT: (Aesthetic Valuing)

DESCRIBE: Describe the process you went through in creating your tap choreography.

DISCUSS: Discuss the problems you encountered and how you dealt with them.

INTERPRET: Discuss why you made the choices you did in designing your choreography.

CONNECT: Connect this experience to other problem solving experiences you have had. What was similar and what was different?

* Tap Project courtesy of Karen Ospina, teacher at Pacoima Arts Magnet Junior High School, Los Angeles Unified School District.
** Yankee Doodle arranged and played by Paul Tracey.
EIGHT COMBINATION STEPS CAN CREATE A DANCE

Note: Each step may be used as a separate exercise. If you say the steps as you do them, it is easier.

**STEP ONE**

(4 sets of 8 counts or 32 counts)

SHUFFLE-STEP  SHUFFLE-STEP
RT  RT  L  L
&  a  1  &  a  2

SHUFFLE-STEP-STEP  SHUFFLE-STEP
RT  RT  L  RT  RT
&  a  3  &  a  4

* Repeat these 4 counts alternating sides and ending on L foot. TOTAL: 4 times/ 16 counts.

**BREAK**

STEP-HOP  STEP-HOP  TOE (BK) - STEP (TO RT)  TOE (BK) - STEP (TO L)
RT  RT  L  L  RT  RT  L  L
1  &  2  &  3  &  4

SHUFFLE-BALL-CHANGE  WALK-WALK  SCUFF
RT  RT  L  RT  L  RT
5  &  6  7  &  8

* Repeat the break ending on L foot. TOTAL: 2 times/ 16 counts

**STEP TWO**

(4 sets of 8 counts or 32 counts)

(CR RT)
STEP (TO RT) - KICK (SNAP)  (CR L)
STEP (TO L) - KICK (SNAP)
RT  L  L  RT
1  &  2

* Repeat these two counts 1 more time, totalling 4& counts, then add counts 5- 8 below.

These steps are done in place.

3-STEP turn to the Right  CLAP
RT  L  RT
5  &  6

* Repeat the 3-step turn to the Left for cts. 7& 8&

TOTAL: Do 8 cts. 3times/24 counts

**BREAK**

STEP (TO RT) - TOE (BK)  STEP (TO L) - TOE (BK)
RT  L  L  RT
1  &  2

* Repeat these 4 steps to complete counts 3& 4&

SHUFFLE-HOP-STEP  SHUFFLE-HOP-STEP
RT  L  RT  L  R  L
5  &  6  7  &  8

TOTAL: 1 time/ 8 counts.
**STEP THREE**  
(4 sets of 8 cts. or 32 counts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>fwd</th>
<th>fwd</th>
<th>in place</th>
<th>fwd</th>
<th>fwd</th>
<th>in place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>POINT-POINT-STEP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>POINT-POINT-STEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in place  
SHUFFLE-STEP-STEP  
1/4 TURN TO RT AND LIFT RT KNEE  
RT | RT | L | PIVOT (knees bend) | RT  
5 & | 6 | & | 7 | 8

* Repeat these 8 counts, making a complete circle (four 1/4 turns).  
TOTAL: 4 times/ 32 counts.

**NO BREAK STEP**

**STEP FOUR**  
(4 sets of 8 counts or 32 counts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SHUFFLE-HOP-STEP</th>
<th>SHUFFLE-HOP-STEP</th>
<th>SHUFFLE-HOP-STEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp;</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3&amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP TO L  
STEP RT  
NEXT TO L  
Bend knees, putting weight on both feet and snapping fingers.  
7 | 8

* Repeat, alternating sides. On the last time just touch the RT foot, no weight on it.  
TOTAL: 3 times/ 24 counts

**BREAK**  
LEAP (TO RT) - TOE (L BKWD RT) - STEP (IN PLACE)  
R | L | R | 1 | & | 2

*Repeat to the left side for counts 3 & 4

SHUFFLE-BALL-CHANGE  
STEP (FWD)-STEP (FWD)-SCUFF  
TOTAL: 1 time/ 8 counts.  
(step bkwk-step fwd)

RT | RT | L | R | L | RT  
5 & | a | 6 | 7 | & | 8
**STEP FIVE**  
(4 sets of 8 counts or 32 counts)

**BRUSH-TOE-STEP**  
RT  RT  RT  L  L  L  
&   a   1  &   a   2  
* Repeat these two steps 2 times, totalling 6 counts, then add counts & 7 & 8.

**BRUSH - STEP**  
RT  RT  L  RT  
&   7  &   8  
* Repeat these 8 counts, alternating sides, ending with weight on L foot. TOTAL: 2 times/ 16 counts.

**BREAK**  
**BRUSH - STEP - STEP - STEP**  
RT  RT  L  RT  
&   1  &   2  
(or slap steps)

**BRUSH - STEP - STEP - STEP**  
RT  RT  L  RT  
&   5  &   6  
&    7  &   8  
Do the first 6 counts facing 1/4 turn RT, and do the Steps facing forward. Repeat the 8 counts facing 1/4 turn L and ending forward. TOTAL: 2 times/ 16 counts.

**STEP SIX**  
(4 sets of 8 counts or 32 counts)

**STEP - HOP**  
RT  RT  L  L  L  
1  &   a   2  
* Repeat these 4 counts, alternating sides, ending on L ft. TOTAL: 8 times/ 32 counts.

**SHUFFLE-STEP (BK)**  
RT  RT  
a  a  3  

**SLAP (FWD) - BALL - CHANGE**  
L  RT  L  RT  
&   4  &   a  

**NO BREAK STEP**
**STEP SEVEN**

(4 sets of 8 counts or 32 counts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(forward)</th>
<th>(forward)</th>
<th>(turn to L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WALK</td>
<td>WALK</td>
<td>SHUFFLE-BALL-CHANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This step travels forward. Repeat, facing backward and ending front. TOTAL 2 times/16cts.

**BREAK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP-CLAP</th>
<th>STEP-CLAP</th>
<th>STEP-CLAP</th>
<th>STEP-CLAP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp;</td>
<td>2 &amp;</td>
<td>3 &amp;</td>
<td>4 &amp;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Body bent and rocking onto heels) (First RT and then L) (First L and then RT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP (BK)</th>
<th>STEP (BK)</th>
<th>SPIN TURN</th>
<th>TOUCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>7 &amp; 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Repeat the break, alternating sides. TOTAL: 2 times/16 cts.

**STEP EIGHT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLAP (TO RT)</th>
<th>HEEL-HEEL</th>
<th>(CR BK L)</th>
<th>CR FT L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>RT</td>
<td>RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; 1</td>
<td>&amp; 2</td>
<td>&amp; 3</td>
<td>&amp; 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Repeat these 4 counts.

**BREAK**

Walk in a circle to the RT doing TOE HEEL TOE HEEL

| RT | RT | L | L |
| & 1 | & 2 |     |

Repeat 2 more times totalling 6 counts, then adding counts 7 & 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP-STEP-STEP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RT L RT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 &amp; 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Repeat, moving in a circle to the L, ending with RT foot forward in a lunge, arms reaching upward for end of dance. TOTAL: 2 times/16 counts.

Tap Dance by Susan Cambigue-Tracey.
Eddie’s solo tap improvisations are music. The taps are used more specifically to create drumming-type rhythms. The steps are less visually ‘shaped’ than in other tap dance styles. If you close your eyes you can easily hear the patterns. You can do this while watching the video or listening to the audio recording.

Dancing with his taps as one of the musical instruments, Eddie often traded fours or eights (four or eight bar phrases) with the drummer. These rhythm exchanges are similar to a dialogue or conversation - either question and answer or a statement followed by a variation of the statement. On the video, Eddie trades eights with the Rhapsody In Taps drummer.

In the duet from Eddie’s Suite the tempo is slower than usual, allowing for more variation in the shape of the steps. Eddie is also able to choreograph larger, traveling steps, big slides and trenches (skate-like steps) which suit the more physical style of the Rhapsody In Taps dancers. Also, notice the use of ‘stop time’ in the duet section.

In the final section of Eddie’s Suite the choreography is structured in eight bar steps set to a 32 bar chorus of the melody Jeepers Creepers. If you count measures you can see where one idea ends and a new step begins. This segment is one 32 bar chorus plus a 16 bar tag (and music which is used for bowing).
Prologue: Bill Robinson, the legendary ‘buck’ dancer, fascinated and inspired Eddie Brown. One day Robinson held an audition and Eddie, a young teenager at the time, prepared himself for it by learning an original Robinson routine. He did this by purchasing a record of *Ain't Misbehavin'* which had a special arrangement featuring Robinson’s tapping. This interview begins with a question about how he accomplished this seemingly impossible task.

SCT: How did you learn the entire tap routine of Bill Robinson’s by listening to a record player?

EB: You see in those days they used to have old machines with a big horn for the sound - I think they were called gramophones. Well, you could slow them down or speed them up. They’re obsolete today. But, I would slow it down so that I could hear the taps. Then I’d see his performances. That gave me a chance to see what the structure of the taps was. I had a photographic memory. Then I knew how to place the steps, since I had seen him do it. To me, it’s easy now, but it was very difficult then.

SCT: It still sounds hard to me!

EB: All the dancers, even those who never got to see him in person, knew his style. When they see somebody else do this style, right away Bill Robinson comes to mind. Because that was Tap dancing! He was the biggest thing. That was ‘Buck’ dancing which is the difference between dance then and dance today. Back then, that was the thing. He wasn’t only my idol, he was all dancers’ idol - all ‘hoofers’ - idol.

SCT: What was the response when he saw you audition with his steps?

EB: He was amazed! He asked me where did I learn it? I told him, from you and off your records. He was amazed! Every time a dancer hears these rhythms and see this style (Eddie gets up and demonstrates the rhythm and style) they think of Bill Robinson. It was very easy to identify because he set the standards then. And all dancers were interested in the way he danced.

SCT: That’s a very interesting story. I’m interested now in some of the special terms used in tap dancing. For example, what does ‘Buck dancing’ mean?

EB: I’ve got to show you! (Eddie gets up and shows me exactly what Buck Dancing is.) Buck Dancing has two beats to the measure, but then Bubbles came along with ‘Rhythm Dancing’ where you get four beats to the measure. He slowed it all down so you could get more sounds in and make it more interesting. (Eddie stands up again and demonstrates Rhythm dancing. Going back and forth between the two, he proceeds to show me the differences between them.) If you cut ‘Flash Dancing’ in half you have more beats to each measure and can create more rhythms which makes it more interesting.
SCT: So, ‘Flash Dancing’ is another term for Buck Dancing?

EB: Yes it is. So Bubbles and his rhythm dancing was a great asset because he set a standard which is still living. And rhythm dancing is every dancer’s gift. They are still trying to learn it. Like me, for instance, I am still learning - after all of these three or four years. (Susan and Eddie both laugh at this joke.)

SCT: So maybe one of the things that makes an artist outstanding is that they set a standard. They create something that other people can learn from. They think of something that had not previously been thought of.

EB: Yes. They give it something to elevate their art - give something new to the profession.

SCT: What do you think you have added to tap dancing?

EB: I can’t see as I’ve added anything. As I’ve said before, I’m still learning. Every dancer does the same steps, but they look different on each dancer because of the difference in style. So that’s it! If I’ve added anything, it’s in the style in which I perform the steps.

SCT: Can you describe your style? What words come to your mind?

EB: Well, I hung a label on it - “Scientific Rhythm” - just like a scientist or a doctor. They create a medicine and then hang a label on it. That’s what I’ve done. And I had to find something that no other dancer had thought of. So I found “Scientific Rhythm” and I’m the first one to use it - Eddie Brown’s Scientific Rhythm. I don’t know when they are going to rub it out. You know, the rhythmic gangsters are going to come along and rub it out sometime. But, until then, that’s it!

SCT: Why is it scientific rhythm? Why did you choose that name?

EB: Boy, that is a good question. I’ll have to think about that. (At this point Eddie gets up and begins to demonstrate his scientific rhythm dancing. As he begins dancing he continues talking.) See, see what I’m doing here? Now you can hear it, but you can’t see it. People always come back and tell me after a performance, “You don’t even move!” I’m movin’, but they can’t see it. They say, “All of those taps and you don’t see ’em. I don’t see how you can do it - all those taps, but you just look like you’re standing up there!”

SCT: Sounds like you are a tap magician!

EB: Well, it was this mystery which brought to my mind, “Scientific Rhythm!”

-End of the interview -
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