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John F. Kennedy Center

"DANCE ACROSS CULTURAL PARADIGMS WITH BHANGRA -  
A FOLK DANCE FROM INDIA"

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>> SARAH MITCHELL: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the January installment of our VSA Webinar Series. My name is Sarah Mitchell, and I am your moderator and webinar organizer. Today's webinar is called "Dance Across Cultural Paradigms with Bhangra - a Folk Dance from India," and is a part of a monthly webinar series that comes out of the office of VSA and accessibility at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This series addresses topics related to the arts, disability and education.

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You have the ability to submit or answer questions using the chat pane located on the near -- near the bottom of the control panel. If you prefer to say the question instead of typing it, please click on the "Raise your hand icon" on the control panel and I will unmute your microphone. Your questions will come directly to me. During the designated question and answer time at the end of the presentation, I will relay them to the presenter.

Within the week, I will send out a follow-up E-mail with a link to the recording of today's presentation, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation and a copy of the webinar transcript. This means you don't need to worry about frantically scribbling down notes during the presentation, as you can go back to watch the recording and review the supplemental materials.

I would like to invite you to join us next month for "Creative Control, Arts, Self Determination And Student-led IEPs on Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. eastern time. If you haven't already, you can register for it right now by clicking on the link in the chat pane.

If you are activity on social media, I invite you to connect with us using #VSAwebinar. On Facebook, we are VSA international. And on twitter, we are @VSAINTL.

My colleague, Courtney, will be live tweeting during this webinar, so if you are active on twitter, please say hi to her over there. She would love to engage with you. And with that, I will turn it over to today's presenter, Mala Desai.

>> MALA DESAI: Hello, everyone. Before we start, I would like to wish everyone a happy 25th January. Today happens to be family day in India, and I want to thank Marquis Studios for providing me this opportunity for teaching Bhangra in the public schools, as well as the Kennedy Center for giving me and creating this forum that I can share Bhangra with you. Thank you so much.

So now we start with some topics that I will cover today. We talk a little bit about what is Bhangra, just the basics. Who were my students. What a class session looked like. How we determined some goals and how I worked towards achieving them, cultural aspects of my teaching and some strategies that I worked with that I would like to leave you with.

Bhangra originates from the Punjab region in India. My parents, my -- I'm from India, so the Punjab region extends beyond India, to the Pakistan region as well, and we share the same language and we share the same culture, but today I will focus on the Indian region.

Bhangra was started by farmers in Punjab to celebrate harvest.

I will now reveal some basic activities of farming, which is what I shared with my students. Digging. Plowing, where farmers traditionally used animals to assist. And of course we then see that men and women -- women can do the same job men can.

Planting, where I invite my students to find some shapes that the woman is creating with her body, as well as the fact that you need to reach down and touch the earth, touch the ground. So when we are dancing we try to reach the ground and bend down and squat and touch the ground.

We talked about chopping. And carrying. Again, we see it's men work collecting and farming the plants and it's women who actually do the hard work of getting it back home.

And this is how we see it, fruits and vegetables in our grocery stores, which must be a very familiar site for you.

Well, after the harvest, which happens in our region twice in a year, once in spring and once in fall, farmers get together and celebrate. They celebrate traditionally by playing on their instruments that they use on the farms, which soon became the Dhol, or a two-headed drum, and the poetry or the chanting which is in the Punjabi language.

Dance steps. I trace the origin of steps to my dancing, and when farmers created the steps, I break down my steps, and of

course we have variations that I provide, as well as what the students bring in as variations into our steps. But I do preserve the origin.

I simplify steps by using language that is common across the board, the side toe, the heel dig, which we actually call the tushi kick step. We also have a hamstring curl and the squats and the jumps which the kids recognize and do them, but realize we need to do the squats. We also do some side bends, and I make that into a fun step that we will share soon.

A Marquis Studio residency is ten sessions. Where I teach for nine sessions, which is class time, and the tenth session is performance, where all students have an opportunity to present themselves.

The story I'm telling today is from a New York City District 75 school. And New York City District 75 provides city wide educational, vocational and support programs for students. It consists of 56 school organizations, including home and hospital instruction, as well as visual and hearing services, and the schools and programs are located across the area around Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, including Syosset and Long Island.

Some student disabilities that I have encountered in my classes were cognitive or developmental, orthopedic problems, speech, language, visual, ADHD, autism and emotional and behavioral problems.

So as I said, the story I shared is about my residency from last year, January through April, where we had about 36 students. So here's what happened in each session. The first day when I walked into class, I did not know the students. They did not know me, so we did a greeting, which was a very special Indian greeting, where we join our hands and do namastes. This is after the teacher introduce me, and my name is not very easy to pronounce, so we came to the term that the students will call me miss M, which was good enough and easy enough to the students to remember. And the first I talked a little bit about myself and the history and the background and what we were going to do together and then we entered into the warm-up movement, the students stand up and start the movement, a lot of breath control.

And then I introduce two, maybe three steps. With each session, all the nine sessions, there was something new that I introduced every day. And we ended with a cooldown to calm the students down after a lot of movement.

We established goals for this school and this residency after the classroom teacher, who is a performance arts teacher, and I observed the kids, their interaction and reactions to me, as well as their ability. And these goals were established by the second class, or the second session, where we decided that it

would be physical movement at whatever level the students were able to do.

Engagement by all students at their comfort level, and participation by all students, again at the ability that they could.

The lesson plan was the overriding objective to improve independence and communication and increase the appropriate behavior in the students, improve engagement for better social skills, getting joint attention so as to improve their work study skills.

The physical movement, how I went ahead to now achieve my goals. Coordinated breathing with movement, movement along the planes of the body to ensure that I was covering sickness as well. Moving to the count of four, cues with stick figures, learning the "L," and music that gets you starting to move already.

So the anatomical movement planes that I try to cover, whether it's in my warm-up movement or it's through my dance movements, are along the anterior/posterior plane, the lateral plane and the horizontal plane, because dance for me is thickness, it's about help. I want to focus on that.

Dancing to the count of 4. Using rhythm and music and breaking down the music to the count of 4. And I do this first by making the students clap to the rhythm that they are hearing, and then when we transition from just the rhythm beat to poetry in the language, again I use music that is in the count of 4, so it's easy for them to then transition from accounting to rhythm music to poetry. It becomes the driving force, and it's also a consistent rhythm. And when they get to students now joining me in the creative process to make a choreography for their performance, it also helps the students create steps, combine students and combine steps and transition.

Using stick figures as cues and connections. So we do a movement that's the heel dig, which is -- heel -- dig, where it's down and out and the arms are pushing up. And actually I don't connect it when I show the picture, and the students come up with what activity is this group doing, and they say dig, and when we've done the heel dig step, the word "Dig" stays with them and they soon are doing the heel dig step and they want to talk about digging.

Hop four times with a clap. The clap transitions to the sides, to the top, wherever the students then bring in a variation. The hop is going in a forward direction, so we do a count of four slow hops and four fast hops. So we start focusing on the count of four, and slow and fast, as well as moving in the forward direction.

And very quickly when we start moving in the direction, the students connect it back to plowing. I had a student who actually started doing hand gestures when I said when we, you know, decided that we would use the hop, hop, hop step for plowing, and quickly I got a hand gesture that I modified to make it look like the bull and going in four directions to ensure that we covered the entire field.

The up and the down movement. Here we draw between the shape the woman creates, and the down is not just at the hip or the knee, but I had a student who actually took the hands down all the way to the earth, touching the ground, making a spin and coming back up. So students bring in movement that becomes part of my repertoire base, and the triangular shape that the lady created is what gets them, got the group to pick up that step.

Clapping and opening, again with the hamstring movement. Again, the clap transitions, there's a variation the students bring in, do you want to clap on top? Do you want to clap to the side? And they bring that in. And that transfers very quickly to a clap becoming the chopping action.

And then to celebrate, we do our famous balle balle, which is clapping with a lateral bend on one side, and then raising the arms, twisting them up and making the wrist down, so when you fling up your arms and the wrist is now dancing along with your feet and your hands and your body, you start using the word balle balle. The word balle balle means fun, fun, hooray, hooray, happy, happy and enjoying. So that is used to celebrate.

Learning the "L." I want to focus a little bit on this because I find that it grounds direction. It also helps facilitate group movement. So I want to show you a slide when I'm doing the movement, and then we'll bring me back up so you can follow me if you like. So you put your hands up and identify where your "L" is on the rhythm with the students. Then the hand comes down to -- in front of you. The other hand, which is not your "L" hand, comes to clap it, and then you have your pointers going up.

So why don't we try to do this. Give us a second to turn the camera on.

So I'd like you to bring up your hands in front of you and identify your "L." Now I am mirror imaging you. So this is my "L." So you hold your "L" out. The L prompts your left leg to give a turn and the other hand comes to clap it. So your right foot comes in. And then on the count of three, your pointers go up and you take a turn and the students have done a warm-up with their shoulders, which is the clapping -- shoulder movement, and that goes with the balle balle. So once again, you identify

your "L" on one. Two is the clap. Three is the pointer. And four is the balle balle.

And they get it. Within two or maybe three rounds of breaking it down first with just the hand movement, then the right foot coming in and the right foot going out, and once they get that, we also add a twist, so they're doing 90 degrees on the left foot and the right foot comes in, and then they do a 90-degree pivot back on the left foot and the right foot goes out. So now they're also doing directions.

Learning the "L" also transfers to some of the activities that I guide the students through. And here we start combining the steps. So again, it becomes -- the "L" becomes your hand holding the tree. The right hand, instead of clapping, chops the tree, and they are -- the left hand that has now become a fist. And then your pointers take your back, pointing your thumb into your basket, so the movement becomes hold, chop, in my basket.

I'd now like you to experience some music. And I'm going to play some brief tracks. So sit back and enjoy the music. The first music, the first track, is a warmup piece, which is done with breathing.

Just one more moment. We are trying to get the track up.

[Music playing].

The next track is when I'm done teaching the steps and I now put them in the rhythm and I introduce them first by making them clap to the rhythm music and then doing the steps.

[Music playing].

Okay. I'm sorry that track played twice. We will send you the first track, which is for the warm-up music.

So the third thing that happens is when I introduce the language. And language, we do -- of course, we have done the balle balle step already, and then everyone loves to do the chicken movement. So we do a chicken step, chicken, chicken, smile, smile. That's on the count of four. And when I introduce this track, many students will not understand it so I have them listen for just two words. I have them listen to the singer saying, hum chicka hum chicka, hum chick. So when he says hum chicka, hum chicka hum chick, the instruction is do the chicken step, and then when the singer says balle balle, we do the balle balle step. And when he's not doing hum chick or balle balle, we do some of the other steps that we've learned.

[Music playing].

The next track that I would like to share with you is a creation that happened in one of my classes. I have six students and they were severely challenged. It was a difficult group to engage, and so the performance arts teacher, as well as the paraprofessional, we all decided that, okay, they engage

with me, and then we give them a reward, because when they came to the class, they wanted to play with the instruments and they wanted to do everything else because it was new for them. So the reward was that they would get to listen to their favorite track. They would get their favorite music, and each student had their own selection, but many of them would respond to treasure. So by the fifth session, we started giving them the reward. If they hung out with me a few steps, they would get to dance to their own music. So in the sixth session, the performance art teacher and I decided that is going to be their performance. So we created new music, and that was their performance. They gave me one minute, and then they had the freedom to do treasure, dance to treasure, and then we got them back for another minute and it was a full five minutes of the students, six of them, on the stage, dancing to this music.

[Music playing].

So the added challenge with this was that we encourage the students when they were doing dancing to Treasure to do some partner work. So we have two partnerships that came on, they would grab each other's hand and dance together, and we had two would just dance across the stage, free dancing. It was an absolute delight.

To engage the students, I -- because the classes are really small, I make the effort. It's an effort for me because I'm not good with names. I recognize them by face, and I absolutely know who engages with me and who responded, so I make the effort to get to know them by name. We do a handshake, and then I play this game. You forgot my name and I forgot yours so tell me your name again, because many of them cannot speak their name, so it becomes an added incentive that they need to tell you their name, and if they can't, then their friend tells me their name.

I also encourage a lot of feedback from the students at every step. I give them choices. They make the choice, whether it's going to be -- which piece of music we're going to play, are we going to do partnership work today, which step comes first. They guide me through the class. I do a lot of collaboration and sensory stimulation.

Collaborating with the classroom teachers, with the paraprofessionals. If a paraprofessional -- and the steps that we are doing and the process, believe me, the students are dancing, but the absolute joy is when the students start doing partner work with each other. And we collaborate to determine goals, to do a lot of limit setting, because we do have behavioral challenges in the classes, and also to ensure success.

Collaboration, and this is the graphic we hold up and they immediately know they need to hold hands. And here again, I transfer the learning of "L." They have to do a left handshake and a high five or a low five with the right hand. So again, we are doing grounding and we are doing direction.

Or the "L" transfers into a loop where one is facing front and one is facing the back and they loop together and they hop together. With one hand very well going up to do balle balle.

So we've talked about balle balle. This year I'm going to introduce one more word, which is shava shava.

Toys. These have proven to be very successful. I had a student who would not leave the chair, would not get up until the day I brought in a scarf, and her paraprofessional, who was assisting her, took the scarf, the whole bag, and asked her which color she liked, and she picked up the lemon, the yellow one. And the paraprofessional threw it over her face. As soon as she had the scarf over her face, she jumped out of her chair, she walked up to me and she says, peek-a-boo! What's your name? And this was a student who had -- who could not get up, and that became our game. The moment she would see me, the scarf would come out and we would play peek-a-boo, what's your name.

I had one student doing it only with the O-ball. Of course, we had behavior issues with the O-ball, but, you know, it worked itself out. They all loved the bells, and the stretchy band was with my group of nine students, where we had nine students, as well as nine paraprofessionals, who held the band and did exact movement. They walked up on stage, they picked up the stretchy band, all 18 of them together, they walked around in a circle, moved in and out and went up and down because I wanted them to touch the earth as well. And that actually was their performance.

And the Tambourine works when I have a student leader. When I haven't engaged with them, even with the toys, guess what comes in? Chips. I bring back my pictures, and chips, the potato chips and the potatoes coming from the farm, and the nachos and the sauce definitely gets them. And very soon in the next class, I will have a bag of chips and I will have a bag of nachos that they bring in and they say can we eat this during class? So that works. So whatever level of engagement I'm engaged in, I work it.

The winner is, of course, the costumes. If they have not gotten them yet, if they have not decided to move, when the costumes come in, that becomes the reinforcer. You have to get up if you want to try on the vest. You have to get up if you want the wig.

The boys I use a small vest, which a friend of mine helped put them together. And I fixed up some tunics for the older

students, and it goes on over the head and it ties so it doesn't matter the size of the student. It's also free for, you know, to sit in. All the boys from my residencies, they are in blue jeans with a white shirt or a white vest or a white undershirt, something white on top, and these are not just the colors. I have them in every color you can think of.

The girls, the younger girls get a skirt so that it ties and it stays in place. The older girls get a wrap, which, again, is free size, it can fit any size. But the most important and significant part of girls' costume is the Dupatta, which is the way which they can tie across their shoulder to waist. They can have it around -- over their shoulder. They can use it to put up in their hair, and if it's all the girls, then we take it over the hair, as well as across the shoulders, which looks really elegant.

Again, I have these in every color you can think of. And we mix match the veil with the skirt, so it's a contrast.

Costumes, once they're in the costumes, they participate. It was a rehearsal day where all 36 students tolerated the costume and went up on stage and gave me their final rehearsal. And then they were ready to share it the following week with their friends and families.

Why Bhangra? Bhangra is an important part of my upbringing. As I mentioned earlier, my parents were born in undivided India from the Punjab region. Punjabi language, singing and dancing, has been in every aspect of my life. I am trained in classical dance, but this is what connects me to the family, to my community. It was in every social event, every wedding, every birthday, every party. They say Punjabis know how to party, so it's been in my upbringing. And working with students who have disabilities has a very personal connection for me. I've lived my life in two tracks. I'm a social worker since '82, and I'm a dancer since I was four years old, and it was these two parallel lives that I have always lived where dance nurtures me and social work sustains me. So I couldn't connect the two. It was a day job and the night and evening and weekend job. Then Marquis Studios put me into the schools, and when I was in the schools and I had the first class where I needed to do integrated education because it was an inclusive class with 30 kids and ten of whom have special needs, and there came my social work and my dance together. So it has some connection, and sharing that with students who otherwise don't have the opportunity is very, very -- it's a beautiful experience for me.

Dance -- Bhangra is rooted in human activity. It tricks them into moving when they see the photographs in front of them and then I say okay, which dance gets you to dig and which dance

gets you to celebrate? So, you know, they're not scared to do that.

Of course, the beats and the rhythms are after my own heart, and the music as you experienced, and we will definitely get you the tracks is lively and energetic.

Immersion in culture. So when I'm in a class in a general ed setting, you know, the teacher will tell the students to be respectful and focus on the teacher and be very careful and behave themselves, whereas when I'm in a class with -- either in an inclusive setting or in a class only with special needs students, they are uninhibited. They immediately pick up my accent, and so I talk about myself, I talk about the fact that we all have our own accent. The way I say dance is different. The way I say Bhangra is different so we laugh about it and then it becomes an added laugh. Using a universal storyline. If you have not visited a farm, many of them have gone apple picking. So then I say, did you go apple picking? And who grows the apples? Did you pick up the pumpkins for Halloween? Did you see a pumpkin? So they've done that. If they haven't done that, have they visited a garden? Many of them have. If they have not visited a garden, have you seen a flower or a plot in a planting pot on the window. So it cuts across all experiences. The idea is about acting is life.

The music. I want to just spend a little time about music. I hope you experience some of the music I shared, and it's easy to find music on YouTube. A lot is available. But make effort. I am very paranoid, I would say, about the music I pick up, and the language, how appropriate it is for the age group of the students. So if you're using music in the Punjabi language, make sure you get it translated and you know what the words mean because I definitely share the meaning of the words if there's a chorus line and the added meaning gives them more reason to dance to that specific meaning, and that, of course, gets us to the poetry aspect of it.

And then the costumes. Again, you don't have to get the full costume, but get a token. The significant part for the women is the veil, and for me the significant part for the boys is the vest, which is actually very easy to do.

My measure of success was reflected in my collaboration with the teachers and the paraprofessionals. How students responded to different music, playing with the toys, balle balle, and tolerating costumes. There was one student who had very sensitive skin, and it was not easy to put on her costume. But she wanted it, and she allowed us to put in, you know, her veil and her -- the skirt and the wrap into different parts of her, and she went up on stage and absolutely danced with this.

Remember the class routine is a smaller group that follows, and understanding the counts of 4 follows. But student partnerships again is not a very small group. It is enough students who enjoy dancing with a partner, and if they're not dancing with a student partner, then we definitely partner them with a paraprofessional or a teacher so that they can do a little bit of partner work and they can do a little walk around the stage. Student choreography takes the cake. I had a student who transferred my picking up a heavy ball and moving it over the head to an unbelievable step to going and picking apples and then she ended up designing the costume. She said she wanted to wear red because of the apple picking. And then she added one more step, pick up a fantastic if they can. And we added a step to that. And we had -- of course I share with you the students who brought in the time --

Student choreography is something I absolutely encourage and it adds to my repertoire.

Here was from an accomplishment I wanted to share on how many, going back to our goals, participated, how many did the movement and how many engagement with total independence, but with cervical assist.

So the strategies I applied were getting their attention. In some way, shape, whether it was a big of chaps or it was a veil, but getting some attention from them. To look me in the eye and ask me for that little toy. Providing visual cues, constant verbal prompts, whether it was me or other teachers, constant verbal prompts. Physical assistance was needed. I had a student who was blind. And the teacher would guide him through the step movement one time with a physical assist, and after that he would follow the verbal cue and back. Demystifying dance using a story line. Creating every opportunity to participate, and having very high expectations. I have very high expectations from my students. I am trained in classical art and I look for perfection when I'm doing it, but here's my goals, but I still have very high expectations.

Dealing with some challenges, there were very big gaps between sessions in this particular residency, there was a week off for winter. I had a week off for spring and then I had a personal family emergency so I missed class, but co-teaching and planning ahead and leaving behind decisions, whether this was translation to the poetry, the tracks of music, the stick figures, we had copies of everything made for the teacher to have, and she gave them the practice when I was not able to be there, and also during the week because she --

This group, actually one of the groups presented Bhangra at a local inter-school activity. More one-on-one time is always needed. Tools and toys help out. And paraprofessional, those

partners are key to engaging the students. And the last is actually if we can have more sessions at greater regularity, which may result in better outcome.

So today's take-ways, first collaboration. Second, music. But be careful of what music you use. Creating partnerships encouraging and creating opportunities for student choreography. And the winner always is costume. If you get a costume, you get on stage.

Something special about Bhangra is my personal history, the history of the region, the language and the music which are very dear to me. Origin of steps and how you can -- it has become an international dance form, and if you attend in New York, you will see across the board diversity of everyone wanting to dance Bhangra.

Costumes, and I want to end with why Bhangra is a folk dance. It's a folk dance because everyone can dance it. When you join them the dancing when you feel like joining it and you leave it when you want to leave it, and it's the movement or movement in lines and forms. But everyone -- for me, everyone can dance, and Bhangra creates that.

So I want to thank you again for joining me today, and I will send it back to Sarah for any questions.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you so much, Mala. We are now going to go into the question and answer session. If you have any questions, please do enter them into the question panel on the right side of your screen. But we can get started with a couple of the people have been asking, the first was asked by Beth Teresa, and it was, what are the feet doing during the "L" movement?

>> MALA DESAI: Okay. So your feet. Let's bring up the "L" again and I'm now going to stand up and you're going to stand up and do this if you want. "L." Let's get your "L." Now, the "L" prompts your left leg to stand, and then after you stand, I want you to bring your right foot in when your hand comes to clap. When your pointers go up, your "L" stands again and now your right foot goes out and you do the shoulder movement. Okay? So it's right -- L stance, right foot in, L stance, right foot out, and then when you add the direction and the language, your L comes in, and when you stand, you turn 90 degrees. When your pointers go out, you turn back the other side. So here is the L becomes pulled, the clap becomes a chop. The pointers become the plants, and the shoulders become in my basket. So here you go. Pull with the left, stamp, right foot comes in to chop, left stamps again and right goes back to basket. I hope that helps.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: That's great, Mala. Now, the second question that I have is can you give us some names of artists or

songs that you really like, that you think are appropriate? Maybe there are some links that we could follow up with after the webinar.

>> MODERATOR: Okay. So because --

>> MALA DESAI: Okay. So now because I've been doing this for a few years, I do have some music that I go back to and since the students have CHOREOGRAPHED for me, I use the late -- a lot. There's a whole album which you can download on YouTube. I also use Bollywood music. Many students are familiar with Bollywood. So I try to keep up with movies. There are some movies that just came out, and I went, and I was squeezing my mother or my husband's hand and saying, oh, that's a new song. And the words are appropriate. So I look out for new music as it comes out because that's what students want to hear.

Who are some of the other things -- I can actually send that to you in writing.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great and we can follow up with it after the webinar. Great.

Now, the last question that we have received about this is you talked about a lot of strategies for working with students with disabilities. But the question was about could all these be applied to a classroom situation in which you are teaching students with and without disabilities?

>> MALA DESAI: If I said to you that I follow the same pattern in my elementary school classes and in my 675 classroom, it may be surprising to you. But I am right now currently in my residency, two residencies, and in one residency -- in two residencies, I have inclusive classroom setting, and -- [indiscernible] -- I'm following the exact same pattern, teaching the exact same steps, but it's the level of engagement with the students. So there is a difference in how students perform and engage with you. But I don't change what I teach, and because the performance is the end result, there is also a difference in what the students present and perform. So in a general ed class where I would, you know, after using -- like today, I shared the pictures with the student, and their homework is to think about the picture and the steps they've learned, and next week we are going to transfer the pictures into dancing steps and they are going to bring in some variations. So that's my general ed class, which also breaks up into groups and then I'll have five groups doing five different activities. Now, that has not happened in the 675 class, but then one group of eight students, we were able to transition with the picture, the farming activity picture, and the stick -- you know, the stick figures, combining those. And they're trying to show the story of farming. So the difference is in the performance. But not really in the dancing. That happens

in the classroom. The difference is in the level of engagement and the foods I use. But not really in the movement that I want to teach.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: Great. Thank you so much for. And actually, we have received another question, and that is a little bit more about the specifics. The question is do you assist in the actual performance or demonstration? Are you facing students and they follow, or they are performing with the paraprofessional during their student presentation or performance? Also, how do you manage the students during the excitement of the performance?

>> MALA DESAI: Yes, we do assist. We do provide visual cues. We do hold up the stick figures to transition them, and we do have accounting that we do on our fingers. We try not to be answering in front, because there is an audience, and we are standing between the audience -- or we are seated between the audience and the stage, so while giving the class time, either the performance arts teacher or me or the paraprofessionals are dancing, but in front of the students, when we get to performance, we start transitioning them from us dancing to the stick figures. So these cues that we learned in class are then also performance cues with the group -- the paraprofessionals actually went up on stage. We did not use. It was the paraprofessionals and the students and they were dancing together. They were moving together. Their performance was to perform where it was one minute walking up on stage in the costume, doing three actions with the stretchy band with the para, and then walking back down. And they were all made to stay by. Whereas my group of six, where we had some -- you know, the treasure music, the kids bop music next, they did a pow before they came off. For them, again, we didn't have any cues. It was the music transitioned them to treasure and the music transitioned them to go -- when we came into Bhangra, yes, we held up the stick figures, and then the other four steps, so yes, we definitely dragged the students through the performance -- guide the students through the performance.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: Great. One more.

>> MALA DESAI: One more thing. I do not intervene if there is a behavior problem. I do not assist. But it is for the teachers and the paraprofessionals to manage the behavior situation. So if a student needs to go for a walk, it's a choice teachers make. I don't make that choice. I don't want the student to leave, but if the student has left and gone for a walk, I do try to say that next time, can we not have the student leave the space? Yes, you can separate the students and have a side conversation. But let's try to not have the student leave the space of the class.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: Great. Thank you so much, Mala. Now, that does end our question and answer portion of the webinar. As a quick reminder, I would love for all of you, our webinar participants, to remain on the webinar for a few minutes longer just to complete a short evaluation survey that will open when you close this point. But otherwise thank you so much for joining us. If you have questions or comments about the webinar, either this one or the series itself, please feel free to contact me, Sarah Mitchell, at my E-mail address, [spmitchell@Kennedy-center.org](mailto:spmitchell@Kennedy-center.org), or by phone at 202-416-8873. Thank you all so much, and I hope you have a nice day.

>> MALA DESAI: Thank you. Thank you Kennedy center for having me on this. I thank you all for participating.

>> SARAH MITCHELL: Great. Thanks so much!  
[Webinar concluded]