

FYE Summer Reading: How to Be an Antiracist  
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All humans are born with bodies; therefore, movement and dance are inherently inclusive. Nearly all who have bodies can move, and move in ways that can be connected to and inspired by music. However, the study of Westernized dance forms is bound in traditions which teach and promote fundamentally exclusive practices – inviting those with privilege and those who are deemed ‘able bodied’ to engage while overlooking others. Why must dance be for some and not all?

While reading *How to Be an Antiracist* I was struck with a deep reflection of my own discipline – how much work there is to do and how far we must go to foster an inclusive environments in the study, performance, and instruction of dance. Kendi’s writing promoting active antiracism compels the re-assessment of Westernized dance practice and teaching. It also necessitates an examination of active antiracism actions within the practice, curriculum, and policy of dance education as programs, like Skidmore, work to decolonize the teaching practices and structure of the Western Canon. Furthermore, my reflection on Kendi’s *How to be an Antiracist* inspired me to consider ways that we may use dance as a tool for antiracism and promotion of inclusion of all people in and through dance.

In my work at Skidmore, I have developed a program called [Dance to Success](#) which is a streaming movement program created to engage elementary children in dance breaks during the school day and enhance arts exposure for *all* kids through dance. After reading *How to Be an Antiracist*, I spent time reflecting on ways by which we may use dance to engage children in topics of inclusion and how to use movement as a medium for this engagement. Therefore, in response to this reading, I created a dance for the Dance to Success Program, which you can find linked below as well as on the Dance to Success [YouTube Channel](#).

I choreographed this work based on my personal reflections of the book, designed to share with young children (ages 5-10). Themes of welcoming, listening, care, and understanding of differences are reflected in the movement and voiceover found in this work. This video is an expression of Kendi’s writing from my perspective as a dancer, intended to introduce themes of diversity and inclusion to young children.

As you play this video, I strongly encourage you to physically move and dance with us. Dance to Success films are not intended to be viewed in a traditional format but instead, created to engage the viewer in an embodied experience. The patterns used in this dance are specifically choreographed to engross the body in an ‘awakening’ – utilizing both hemispheres of the brain simultaneously and creating a physical sensation of self-awareness of one’s one body in space. For example, in this video you’ll find movements that cross the midline of the body, engage the dancer in deep breathing practices, and use tactile stimulation. Furthermore, please note the

content of this video is tailored for elementary students (the users of the Dance to Success program), yet the movement patterns and physicality of this work has no boundaries. As a dance professor, I utilize these movement patterns with college students, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and even with colleagues at scholarly conferences. Movement can be inclusive to all, and while the video was created for children, it can be beneficial to people of all ages and abilities.

So now, I invite you to stand up in whatever space you are in, [click here](#), and engage an embodied experience of inclusion. My sincere thanks to the summer students who collaborated and danced on this film, Caitlin Koto '22 and Kathryn Brodie '22, our partners at WMHT PBS Media, and the Dance Department Musical Director Carl Landa who created and performed the incredible original musical score.