

Dance Based Teaching and Learning



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Creative Movement: An Overview

Students are rarely asked to consider how they move or to discover new body shapes or ways of traveling. The world of today's students is typically information rich and action poor. Yet movement is an inherent, intrinsic element of all of our lives. From their earliest days, students use movement as their primary form of expression. In running, sliding, jumping or skipping, students find a release for unspecified physical energy; just as in emotionally charged movement, they find a sure way to express deep feelings. Sadly, their potential can atrophy through disuse or habituated misuse.

Children's dance is too often characterized by pink tutus and images of falling snowflakes or trees blowing in the wind. But dance is not simply a pantomime of some animal or event or an attempt to look like something. Creative movement is an attitude and approach that is predominantly concerned with process. It is about communicating through movement. In creative dance, students explore the quality of a movement. The idea is not simply to "move like a giant" but to discover the ways a giant might move, to explore weight and gravity, the ponderous quality of slow, heavy movement, length and speed of step.

Dance provides a quintessential opportunity for learning by doing: it is a form of **inquiry-based learning**. As we dance ideas, we make our thinking visible so we can identify and then reflect on our perceptions and make our movements ever more intended. The process requires perception of the worlds in our minds and around us, the actual making or production of dances and ongoing reflections upon the work itself. Referring frequently to specific understanding goals help students make connections between what they are doing, what they are thinking and what they can learn from the experiences.

Learning Outcomes in Dance

- Dancers increase their knowledge and vocabulary through an understanding of the elements and principles of dance
- Dancers learn to solve movement problems that are both simple and complex, honing their creative problem-solving skills.
- Dancers increase their learning in other curricular areas as dance is integrated into the curriculum.
- Dancers increase their listening skills and learn how to follow directions.
- Dancers sharpen their skills of observation and learn how to make informed judgments.
- Dancers gain an understanding of the dance histories and cultures of the world's people.
- Dancers expand their creative skills through improvisation and composition.

Physical Outcomes:

- Body awareness
- Healthy practices
- Exercise for life

Interpersonal Outcomes:

- Working together
- Building collaborative skills

Academic Outcomes:

- Developing an experiential and content based knowledge of dance
- Acquiring discipline based dance knowledge, applying it in new, authentic, integrative ways
- Using dance as an entry point to understand integrative connections between: movement and number relationships, patterns, geometric form, spatial design, literature, writing process and choreographic process, scientific method, etc.

Elements of Process:

- Includes: observation, sequencing, focus, expressive skills, draft and revision, improvisation and pattern development

Elements of Technique:

- Includes: developing/performing finished combinations, contributing to the group effort, flexibility and skillfulness

Elements of Choreography

- Includes: pattern, form, theme and variation, gesture, style, expression, ethnic and cultural influences

III. The Elements of Dance: Body, Space, Time, and Force

Body

Parts: Head, neck, arms, wrists, elbows, hands, fingers, pelvis, spine, trunk, legs, knees, feet, toes, ankles, heels, shoulders, etc.

Shapes: Curved/straight, angular/twisted, symmetrical/asymmetrical

Relationships: body parts/other body parts, individuals/groups, near/far, meeting/parting, alone/connected, mirroring/shadowing, unison/contrast, over/under, above/below, around/through, beside/between, gathering/scattering, etc.

Balance: centered/off balance

Space

Personal space: the area immediately around you in which you can move

General space: the entire space that you can move through

Direction: forward, backward, sideways space

Place: self-space/general space

Size: big/small, far reach/near reach

Level: high/mid/low

Direction: forward/backward, right/left, up/down

Pathway: curved/straight/zigzag

Focus: where the dancer is looking – close, far, direct, indirect

Time

Time literally means a period during which something exists. Usually the words rhythm and tempo are used to describe information about time in a dance.

Rhythm in dance can be determined by the grouping of beats into specific measures of time. These kinds of groupings form rhythmic patterns

Tempo signifies the relative speed of the rhythm. Speed can range from very fast to very slow.

Speed or tempo: fast, slow, varied, duration

Rhythm: pulse, pattern, breath

Force/Energy

Energy can mean action, power or type of force. In dance, the movement can be described as having a particular energy quality. The basic energy qualities are sustained, percussive, swing and collapse.

Sustained: a continuous flow of energy

Percussive: specific stopping and starting of energy

Swing: a fall and recovery of energy. Like a pendulum

Collapse: a total release of energy

Energy: sharp (sudden) - smooth (sustained)

Weight: strong/light

Flow: free/bound

Source: Green-Gilbert, A., (1992). *Creative dance for all ages*. Reston, Virginia: National Dance Association. pp 5.

IV. The Vocabulary of Dance: Movement Terms

Locomotor movement refers to the ways we move through space: walk, run, jump, hop, leap, gallop, slide, crawl, roll, skip, shake

Non-Locomotor or axial movement refers to movement we can do in place: bend, twist, stretch, swing, push, pull, fall, melt, sway, turn, dodge, poke, kick, lift, carve, curl, lunge, slash, dab, punch, flick, float, glide, press, wring, shake, rise, sink, wiggle

Performance Elements:

Dancers

Music

Costumes

Lights

Set and props, creating the environment for the dance

Theme, idea, story, image

Dance Forms: Hip hop, polka, jazz, tango, ballroom, modern, ballet, flamenco, salsa, square dance, break dance, Irish step, African etc.

Dance and Movement Warm-Ups

The intent of a warm-up is to warm the instrument (the body) and introduce aspects of the learning experience that will follow. Physical warm-ups help us to understand the physical work that we will do and help our bodies to know that we'll treat them with care, appropriate caution and respect. Warm-ups help build strength, endurance, flexibility,

trust, and body awareness and serve as an important signal to the start of a dance experience or lesson. Warm-ups help to get the blood circulating and the muscles warm and stretched. Warm-ups can include stretches, axial movements (in place) such as bending, twisting, reaching and shaking, and locomotor movement (moving through space). Warm-ups generally begin with smaller scaled movement (including breathing) that moves to larger scaled more active movement.

Sitting Warm-ups

Sitting Shapes /Move to 8

Students begin, sitting on the floor or in chairs in a comfortable way. Ask them to notice the shape they are sitting in. Is it a closed shape? An open shape? Angular? Rounded? Call out “1-2-3 change shape”. Each student then changes from the shape they are sitting in to a new sitting shape. Repeat this several times. Now ask the students to rise on count one from their low level sitting shapes on the floor to a high level standing shape at count 8. The students change shape on each count, moving through 8 distinct shapes from sitting to standing. Collapse to the floor and repeat several times. Repeat rising to a count of 4.

Variations:

Students begin in a small shape and take 8 counts to rise into a large standing shape and 8 counts to melt to the floor.

Repeat the sequence in 4 counts. Discuss whether they moved faster or slower and why.

Repeat the sequence in 2 counts and then in 1 count.

Repeat using specific axial movements (for example, bend and stretch or pull and push).



Source: General Dance Training

Standard:

Axial Warm-ups

Movement in place, moving around the axis of the spine

Standing Combinations

Repeat your selected warm up movement sequences several times each. Use music with a steady, identifiable rhythmic beat . Some examples of axial warm-ups are listed below.

Standing twist: wrapping arms around center torso in each direction, going back and forth several times.

Stretches are used to extend, reach, lengthen, open the space in the body gradually increasing range of motion.

Reach: lengthen arms up overhead moving from side to side body alternate sides 1, 2, 3, 4, reach over side 1, 2, 3, 4

Curl: 1, 2, 3, 4 from the top of the head down

Uncurl 1, 2, 3, 4 from the base of the spine, to lower back, to mid back, to shoulders, then head comes up last.

Rolls: head, shoulder (forward and backward), wrist, ankle, hip (bowl scoops) knees.

Shake: out your hands, wrists, elbows, shoulders, ankles, knees, hips, torso, neck, head - shake down (several counts), shake up, shake slow shake wide, etc.

Open into large standing X, arms reaching up, head looking up, legs grounded

Swing: in place, moving front to back, three counts up, three counts back.

Scrunch: hands, shoulders, eyes, etc. Release.

Source: General Dance Training



Standard:

Locomotor Warm-ups

Locomotor movement patterns create designs in space and travel in different directions. Changes in level include movement low on the floor (low level) to movement off the floor into high level standing shapes (high level). See Exploring Patterns page 30

Walking Patterns

Everyone in the group will move to the same word cues but will interpret how to represent response to the cues differently. The intent of this warm up is to encourage movement throughout the space in response to the provided cues. Each pattern should be repeated aloud by the leader 4-5 times.

Sample Combinations – (Repeat each combination several times)

- Walk, walk, walk, walk, turn, slide, slide, shake.
- High step, high step, low step, low step, slide, skip, skip, skip
- Reach, reach, shake, shake, slide, slide, slide, shape.
- Short, short, long, long, short, short, short, crunch.
- Backwards, backwards, sideways, sideways, pigeon-toed.
- Stretch, stretch, bend, bend, pull, pull, pull, push.

- Run, run, run, run, jump, jump, jump, shake
- Slide, slide, slide, slide, leap, leap, leap, turn.
- Make up your own combinations.

Variations:

Try repeating your movement pattern the first four times then change your movement interpretation the fifth time.

The leader devises a movement pattern but doesn't tell it to the group. Instead, the leader simply moves the pattern for the group. After the group has seen the leader move the pattern a few times the group is asked to name the pattern and then move the pattern.



Source: Alison Marshall

Standard:

2) Pattern Making

This warmup is a variation on the Walking Patterns. Instead of students interpreting a given verbal cue through movement (Walking Patterns) students will now create their own movement phrase- a short pattern that can be repeated several times. Choose music that has a strong identifiable beat. Give students several minutes to experiment with various movements and combinations in order to create and determine one they like. Once students are comfortable with their phrase ask everyone to move their phrase simultaneously, start to finish, three times through. Next, ask the students to name the phrase pattern they have created as they move (right step, rise, turn, etc.)

These two warm-ups provide an opportunity to explore pattern from opposite entries, first basing movement on verbal cue and second creating a movement phrase pattern then naming that pattern.



Source: Alison Marshall

Standard:

Word Warm Ups

This open-ended warm-up provides an opportunity to both stretch and explore shapes through movement and to represent word meanings through shape choices. Begin by asking students to stand in a large circle or to cluster in the open space of the room. This warm-up structure relies on the prompts the leader provides to the students.

Begin by asking students to create a shape that reflects some aspect of a word prompt you provide, i.e. create a shape that reflects the word gargantuan, curious, astounded, magical, etc. To extend the warm-up aspect of the work you might then ask them to make that shape bigger- turn it to face in a different direction- change the level of the shape, etc. Explore several different word choices through shape. Try using vocabulary words from

a story you are reading, the weeks spelling words or words from your current science topic.

Math word warm-ups could include the following prompts:

Create a shape that includes two parallel lines. Change those parallel lines to a perpendicular line. Create a triangle shape as a solo. Create a triangular shape as a duet or trio. Transfer that triangular shape to a new level. Move the triangular shape into a rectangular shape, etc.



Source: Alison Marshall

Standard:

Dance and Movement Learning Experiences

Move Shape Move: Exploring the Basic Elements of Dance (**Body,Space,Force/Energy,Time**)

All dances are made from the combination of MOVES (walking, running, turning, leaping, etc.) and SHAPES (open, closed, symmetrical, asymmetrical, low-mid-high level, etc.) that the dancer makes.

The activity Move Shape Move incorporates individuals improvised movements through the space in response to verbal cues from the leader.

Using music or word cues and rhythmic clapping, the group moves in a free form, improvisational way throughout the space following the word cues given by the leader. Responding to the word cue “move,” everyone in the group moves throughout the designated space based on their own movement choices, eventually paying attention to pathway, movement, flow, patterns of movement, speed, level and relationship to the others moving in the space. This is a great opportunity to reinforce the idea of personal and group space.

When the word SHAPE is called out (or music is silenced) everyone will FREEZE in place. Ask the dancers to notice the shapes they have made. Take a moment to look at some of the other shapes around the room.

Continue with the SHAPE-MOVE-SHAPE pattern, adding instructions and questions you ask of the dancers during SHAPE segment. Sample instructions and questions are listed below.

- Feel the shape you are in.
- Where do you feel your point of balance?
- Hold your shape but change the direction your shape is facing.

- Add a rounded element to your shape.
- Where is your point of focus? Change it.
- Create a shape that has curved lines.
- Add an angle to your shape. Two angles.
- Change the level of your shape. Make it bigger - smaller.
- Add a moving part to your shape.
- Make your shape strong enough for an eagle to land on it.
- Make a brand new shape you've never made before.
- Connect your shape to someone else in the group.
- Expand your shape. Contract it. Make it tighter, looser.
- Move your shape to the space behind you.
- Change your shape to an asymmetrical shape - a symmetrical shape.
- Where do you feel tension in your shape? Do you change the points of tension when you change your balance? Where do you feel the tension (pull) and compression (push) in your shape?
- Move over, under, around and through the shapes made by individuals and the joined shapes of partners and small groups.

Source: Mary Joyce, First Steps to Teaching Creative Movement
and Alison Marshall

Standard:



Problem Solving Through Movement

Choreographers, the people who design dances, are problem solvers. They consider a problem they want to solve (How will I show a story or a character's feelings through movement? or How can I move three more dancers in a low-level group shape onto center stage?) and figure out various solutions to that problem through movement.

This activity can be used as a warm-up, as a team work/community building activity or can be adapted to address specific curriculum content.

Break your class into small working groups of 5-7 students. Assign each group a problem to solve. They will develop their solutions and show their solutions through movement. Each group may work on a different problem to solve, or you can assign the same problem to several groups and see the alternate solutions and representations of solutions they found.

Sample Problems:

- Create a group shape that moves from asymmetrical to symmetrical, elongated to compressed, jagged to smooth.
- Travel from one corner of the room to the opposite corner staying connected as a group. Change level, timing and direction one time each.
- Show setting, character and action from the tornado scene in The Wizard of OZ.

- Represent through movement similarities and differences in the quality of sound made by percussion, string, brass and wind instruments.
- Create as long a line as possible on two levels, maintaining one or two contact points between each person in the line.
- Show Big, twice as BIG, three times as BIG, four times as BIG.
- Create a group shape that moves from a triangle to a diamond to a parallelogram.
- Represent through movement the 6 traits of writing: convention, organization, voice, work choice, ideas/content and fluency.
- Identify a specific health risk and a way to address or solve that risk/problem.
- Represent a cause and an affect of flooding.

Source: Alison Marshall

Standard:

Shape Phrase Dances

Ask each student to move to an open space in the room. Direct each student (dancer) to create a series of three shapes they will be able to remember and repeat. The three shapes should be interesting, distinct and sequential. Work quickly. Once everyone in the group has created their own 3-shape sequence ask the whole group to simultaneously perform their sequence. Repeat this several times so that everyone is familiar and comfortable with the movement sequence they have designed/choreographed. Have the dancers move to different places in the space to perform their shape phrase. Ask them to have different points of focus or to face in different directions as they repeat their shape phrases. Once they are comfortable with their phrase, begin working with variations. Ask dancers to vary their phrase: moving quickly, moving slowly, moving from this third shape to first shape in a flowing pattern.

Next ask the dancers to get into small groups of 3-5. Have each dancer in the group show their shape phrase to the others in the group. The dancers now create a short piece that includes or incorporates some aspect of each of the individual three-shape phrases. Dancers can begin to experiment with sequence, staggering start and finishing times, repeating phrases, etc. This is a chance to try out choreographic tools and choice making. How will the movement study begin and end? When each small group has finished making their piece, show the pieces to the whole group. As a variation try joining 2-3 of the small group pieces together.

Variation: This is a good opportunity to include discussion about watching dance; what did you see and what made it interesting to you? These two questions form the framework for the feedback response: 1) What did the group watching notice about the dance? 2) What questions do those who watched have at the end of the piece? Each dancer should have the opportunity to be both dancer/presenter and audience.

Extension: Everyone returns to their own individual 3-shape phrase. Now play several short cuts of music, in quick succession, varying the musical styles – Latin beat, blues, traditional Celtic, etc. Move to each musical selection repeating the 3-shape phrase. Ask the students how the music impacts their quality and style of movement? How did you vary your movement phrases as you moved to the music?

Use the original phrase created by the group to make variation phrases- i.e.: call and response, ABC (rondo) form, theme and variation.



Source: Alison Marshall
Standard:

Understanding Dance

- 1) Dance is non-verbal expression through body movement.
- 2) Dance is learned by members of a particular culture or group of people.
- 3) Dance movement is influenced by everyday behavior.
- 4) Dance usually has a specific pattern and is sometimes repetitive.
- 5) Dance communicates information about the culture within which it exists.
- 6) The people in a culture create dances that fulfill specific needs.
- 7) Dances are continually influenced by many factors and changes may occur over a certain period of time.

XI. What to Look for in a Dance Study Performance

Questioning Techniques- Protocol

Questions help guide students' reflective thinking about the work they make and the work they observe. Open-ended questions prompt students to engage more deeply in the thinking process and help to guide their inquiry. By open-ended we mean problems without clearly defined solutions and without one right answer. These are the kinds of problems that professionals in the arts work on. No one tells a painter what to paint or how to paint it; nor does anyone tell a conductor how to interpret and to conduct a score. Students too can be given problems that they must define and solve for themselves. In looking at performances or fine art work we want to ask students "What's going on here?" or "What did you notice in watching the pieces?" "In looking at the work, what do you wonder?" "What questions do you have about the piece?" and "What do you see that makes you think so?" (evidence/ assessment).

Good questions help students to be energetic thinkers.

- How did the dancers move? (quickly, slowly, sharply, smoothly?)

- What kinds of feelings or emotions were the dancers expressing? What did you feel watching the dance piece?
- Did you notice the lighting? Was it bright or dark? What colors were used?
- Did the dancers use props? If so why do you think they choose to use them?
- How did the dancers use the space? Did they move around the entire stage or did they stay in one place? Were they always moving or were they sometimes still?
- How did the dancers use their bodies to make shapes?
- What was the music like? Was it the same for each dance piece? Did the music cause you to feel any particular way?
- Did the dancers tell a story? Is it possible to tell a story without words?

Some Suggested Dance Music

Artist

Album Title

Instrumental Mix

Liz Story	Solid Colors
Rachel Portman	Chocolat Soundtrack
Yo Yo Ma	Classic Yo Yo
Yo Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer	Appalachian Journey I and II
Mark O'Connor	
Tuck Andres	Reckless Precision

World

Oliver Mtukudzi	Tuku Music or Vhunze Moto
Putumayo World Music	Africa
Putumayo World Music	Music from the Coffee Lands
Putumayo World Music	Travel the World with Putumayo (Celtic, Scottish, USA, S. America, Central America)
Afro Celt Sound System	Volume 2: Release
Kodo	Best of Kodo (Japanese Drumming)
Lokua Kanza	Wapi Yo (Instrumental + Vocal: African French)
The Chieftains	Santiago (Irish / South American)

Vocal

Scissor Sisters	
Joe Jackson	The Collection or Laughter and Lust
Van Morrison	How Long has this been Going On (Jazz)
Sonia Dada	My Secret Life
Annie Lennox	Diva

Varied Compilations

Hear Music	Volumes 1 and 9: (Starbucks)
Windham Hill Records Sampler	1992, 1994

Jazz

The Dave Brubeck Quartet	Time Out
Starbucks Jazz Classics	Hot Java Jazz
Blue Note	The Best of Blue Note