

Mila Parrish

Dancers Connect

Unit Plan for Motif Lesson

Title of Unit: Motif Writing and Chance Approaches to Dance-Making

Lesson One		
	Theme	Creative process in dance making and the similarities of creative processes to art and music.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Discover how dance is expressive of ideas and images. Discover how to transfer their own ideas into movement. Become aware of the relationship of creating in dance to creating in other arts (music and visual art).
	Description	The class will view/listen to the work of Jasper Johns and music of John Cage and discuss what happens when an artist is creating a work of art and what is required to become an artist. Artwork of these artists will be presented and discussed. Further, the students will be asked to define similarities and differences between the two art forms and dance making.
Lesson Two		
	Theme	The different jobs involved in creating a dance.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Discover who creates dances. Become aware of the responsibilities and role of the choreographer Become aware of the responsibilities and role of the dancers and audience members
	Description	The class will discuss the essential individuals who contribute to the process of making a dance. The identified jobs and responsibilities are listed on the board. Focusing on the performer, choreographer and audience member triad the students will break into small groups and discuss the importance and function of each of these jobs and share their finding with the class.
Lesson Three		
	Theme	Meeting choreographers who make dances employing chance methods and learning basic notation symbols for creating in dance.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Be introduced to three choreographers (Cunningham, Tharp and Rainer) who use chance methods in dance making. Improvisationally practice motif symbol recognition. Use motif with symbol to movement accuracy. Apply their knowledge of motif in choreography games and to employ chance dance methods on their own.
	Description	The student will be introduced to the dance making and the aesthetics of three choreographers (Cunningham, Tharp and Rainer). The class will discuss possible ways to use chance procedures in their own dances. In small groups the students will play motif games and create a dance using chance methods.
Lesson Four		
	Theme	With a partner create and notate a dance using chance methods.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Review and embody review motif symbols Discover motif symbols for space (level, direction, and pathway) Discover how to notate a dance using motif writing. Create, practice, and record a dance using chance procedures with a partner.
	Description	In the class the student will learn how to record a dance using motif writing notation. Students will be introduced to Rudolf Laban (the father of Labanotation)

		and with a partner they will use notation symbols to create and record a short dance.
Lesson Five		
	Theme	Perform and discuss dances.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Review and embody motif symbols. Discover the motif symbols for space (level, direction, and pathway). Share and discuss chance dances. Students read and check one another's notation.
	Description	Students will perform their motif writing dances while other students check the accuracy of the motif dance scores. The class will discuss each dance and provide feedback. Questions in the discussion will address what was most interesting, and the areas that need some work.
Lesson Six		
	Themes	Research and investigate chance procedures used in performance.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: View a short dance on video (3-min) by Merce Cunningham, which employs chance procedures. Discuss ways of integrating chance in improvisational performance. Define procedures and employ chance procedures in a performance.
	Description	The class will view a dance by Merce Cunningham, a modern dance choreographer known for his inventive use of chance strategies employed in performance. After viewing the class will discuss and investigate processes of chance for dance, including spatial and time based relationships, verbal and visual cueing and randomization. Student will then create five different strategies to be used in their own chance dance.
Lesson Seven		
	Themes	Perform and discuss dances.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Perform their dances. Will discuss their experience of employing chance procedures in performance. Will analyze and critique the presented dances.
	Description	Students will improvisationally perform a dance which incorporates chance performance procedures. The class will discuss the process and give feedback to each group as they complete their dance. During the performance, audience members will analyze and describe the interesting characteristics in the dance being presented. While performers will discuss the decision-making process which occurred during their presentation.
Lesson Eight		
	Themes	Written reflection and synthesis.
	Overall objective(s)	The students will: Examine the relationships between concepts (chance used in dance making and chance used in performance). Review their experiences and write a reflective essay based on the experience.
	Description	Students will write a reflective essay either on (a) the application and effectiveness of motif symbols in dance making or on (b) the application and effectiveness of chance procedures employed in performance.