

COLLABORATIVE DANCE MAKING STRATEGIES IN A HIGH SCHOOL DANCE

CLASS: A CHOREOGRAPHY CURRICULUM UNIT

PROFESSIONAL PAPER

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BY

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my Mother, Julie Hart, whose love and support have made me the strong person I am today. I would also like to dedicate this thesis to my Dad, David Hart Brother, Zach Hart, and my Aunt, Denise Smith, for all their encouragement throughout this journey.

ABSTRACT

This paper is a description of dancemaking practices for high school dance students promoting collaborative strategies in a choreography unit. This unit is informed by the key concepts from established research in the area of collaborative practices, choreography processes, education, and the National Core Arts Standards. The goal of this unit is to strengthen student skill sets needed for collaborative activities in creating dances.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is about the research process I undertook to create a choreography unit for use in a high school dance classroom setting. My hope was that the unit would feature effective collaborative strategies for students to use within group dancemaking practices. My interest in this project grew out of my experience in leading a choreographic unit during my time as a student teacher for high schoolers at Little Elm High School in the Fall of 2018. In this teaching experience, I noticed students reacting positively to collaborative strategies and activities as we created choreography together. For example, students used their own experiences to create dances when I had them create choreography based on their personal short stories they wrote in class. Students wrote about a summer vacation, a trip with family or friends, or sharing a family event. Students then combined their stories and began creating movements related to their short stories. I observed students encouraging each other, communicating ideas, and merging their differing styles into one dance. They were excited that they could benefit from the ideas of others. Not only were students able to contribute to the dance in a collaborative way, their focus, participation, and cooperative spirit filled the room while working together to construct their own original dances.

In general, the classroom environment appeared to become less cliquish and more inclusive. This is when I realized that a choreography unit using collaborative dancemaking strategies was something I wanted to develop. As a result of this experience, I became curious about designing a larger, more intentional curriculum that includes collaborative approaches to facilitating dance activities in the classroom. This curriculum is important to the field of dance education because working collaboratively encourages students to construct positive

relationships with one another, encourages freedom to create meaningful movement, and helps shine a light on individual students' ideas.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the components of a choreography unit for use in a high school dance class setting that are informed by current research in the area of collaborative practices and choreographic strategies for group dancemaking?

METHODOLOGY

To research this question, I planned a methodology to gather information and analyze the results. I conducted the following activities: I reviewed the National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) that relate to choreography and collaboration, I conducted a literature review to develop a framework for analyzing information, I reflected on my teaching experience via self-reflective journaling, and I conducted a comparative analysis of choreography activities from an array of teachers in Texas.

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS AND TEKS

The National Core Arts Standards are a set guide for arts education so instructors can help students create and find new ways of thinking in their learning. I examined each of the standards in order to identify those that relate to group dancemaking. I found standards consistent with best practices from the fields of choreographic collaborative strategies in dance education and the choreography lessons I received from dance educators. These standards are:

“Demonstrate fluency and personal voice in designing and choreographing original dances. Justify choreographic choices and explain how they are used to intensify artistic intent”(National Core Arts Standards).

“Collaborate to design a dance using choreographic devices and dance structures to support an artistic intent. Explain how the dance structures clarify the artistic intent” (National Core Arts Standards).

Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS) are the state standards for what students should know and should be able to accomplish by the end of a lesson. It is a guide to help meet the needs of all students in specific content areas. Adhering to these TEKS is a requirement for teachers in the state of Texas. Consequently, these elements are essential when creating this choreography unit. According to the TEKS, the aim for high school dance classes is for students to “challenge their imaginations, foster critical thinking, collaborate with others, and build reflective skills” (Chapter 117. 2013).

Similar to the National Core Arts Standards, I found TEKS for each of my lesson plans. These TEKS regarding dancemaking include:

“create dance studies using original movement based on theme and variation” (TEKS).

“explore, improvise, and demonstrate original movement during the creative process” (TEKS).

These TEKS give the option for students to do this in collaborative groups or as solo work. It appears that the TEKS also value improvisation and encourages students the freedom to create their own dance movements. Both the TEKS and the National Core Arts Standards served as guides to help form ideas when designing my choreography lesson plans. I picked out standards that aligned with my desire to include original movement and personal voice. Once I chose the above standards, I began creating each lesson to make sure they matched both TEKS and National Core Arts Standards.

LITERATURE REVIEW

My literature review focuses on these areas: defining collaboration, choreographic collaborative strategies in the field of Dance and Dance Education, and collaborative strategies that include NCAS and TEKS for high school dance classrooms. After studying these resources, I developed the following theoretical framework: improvisation, storytelling and group discussions are necessary components of collaboration.

Collaboration

Understanding the topic of collaboration was essential for this study. Therefore I researched authors with this expertise. Authors Karen Schupp and Marjan Laal both discuss collaboration and the strategies and activities that support collaboration. These authors believe strong communication and positive relationship building are important when collaborating. The desired objective of collaborative strategies is to diversify perspectives as ideas are shared in the group.

Collaboration is an interaction between two or more people accomplishing a common goal in order to create something. Published research on collaboration in general indicates that students need to have a common goal and be able to practice positive communication in order to collaborate. Laal suggests people need to establish a relationship with one another where there is trust, clear communication, and acceptance of team members' viewpoints. Once students in a group form positive relationships, group roles can be put into place to ensure participation among all members. Roles and responsibilities among group members can be divided among students by the teacher. Students can next take part in different activities that begin to establish relationships where students are communicating and sharing ideas. After exploring these ideas of

communication and relationship building, I imagined dance activities that could utilize this framework.

Collaboration is used frequently when creating group dances in the dance classroom. Schupp believes that if students in a dance classroom are collaborating, they feel empowered, encourage empathy and diverse perspectives. When creating choreography, it appears that a collaborative process can stimulate innovative thinking that could not be accomplished in an individual process. In my experience, integrating collaborative strategies into a curriculum seems to gradually shift the authority in the classroom to the students as they begin taking ownership or responsibility over their movement choices. As a result, students are the ones making the choices on how their dances should look versus the teacher. Including student choice making is important because, according to author Shelese Douglass, it “sends a strong message to students that their ideas, experiences, creativity, and interests are valued...” (Douglass 2017).

Strategies of DanceMaking

Finding effective dancemaking strategies was essential for this study. As I developed this project, I reviewed literature from the fields of choreographic collaborative strategies in the field of dance and dance education. My overall conclusion of this review was that improvisation, storytelling, and group discussions are strategies that are most congruent with what I was seeking to explore- how to help students build relationships with peers and value students' viewpoints. Dance researchers Justine Reeves, Becky Dyer, Karen Schupp, and Kristen Mercer best illustrate these strategies, and I will focus on these. Through each of these strategies, student input appears important while building relationships among their peers.

Improvisation is the act of creating movement spontaneously rather than following teacher-led choreography. Justine Reeves' book (2011) is a resource that offers a variety of dance improvisation exercises to generate movement for multiple purposes. These exercises provide ideas for dancemaking, creativity, and peer interaction. I imagined these exercises could introduce dance movement topics and, at the same time, help students get to know each other in the classroom. These exercises promote collaboration because they have students creating movement in partners or small groups.

Here are two of Reeves' exercises that became a part of my lesson plans:

- “Greeting & Pairing” exercise is helpful when being introduced to a new dance space or class. Students form pairs and introduce themselves with their name and a question. Students will then be guided to work together to explore ways of saying hello through movement. The author describes it as developing one's own language. Students will remember these movements and then develop new movements for a “goodbye” phrase. Students can then pair up with another student and learn their combined phrases. Reeves finds this exercise important because students are able to see and learn how their peers move.
- “Pass the Movement” exercise shows dancers what it feels like to embody movements of their peers while assisting with choreography memorization. This can be done in small or large groups. Students are asked first to form a circle. One student will start and perform a movement that the next student has to embody. Students continue passing on the same movement around the circle until everyone has had a chance to perform that student's movement. Dancers can then be asked

how the movement changed from the beginning to the end of the circle. Then the next dancer will begin their movement. These exercises will help students understand basic dancemaking while building a relationship with peers.

Becky Dyer is a researcher who finds storytelling an important strategy for relationship building and a useful tool for group dancemaking. Storytelling in dance is creating a narrative through the movement of the body and through speaking. Students can use storytelling by making dances based on writing prompts, poetry, or open group dialogues. Dyer feels that narrative storytelling gives more meaning to student's choreography because it seems to Dyer, it creates an "inroad for students to address their challenges and to envision possibilities for social change and personal growth" (Dyer 2010). One activity Dyer presents is dancemaking through creative writing. Each of her students made a dance based on a short narrative story of personal experiences. This activity helped students find themes and topics that became meaningful to them. Thus the author was able to see the importance of the balance between student input and teacher input. I chose to bring storytelling into my choreography unit because it appears that if students can make what feels to them like meaningful choices to their choreography, they will feel like they have a voice in their dancemaking.

When creating dances in groups, communication through discussions by group members is important. Author Karen Schupp concluded that "Students who are more readily able to engage in thoughtful discussion, respect others' ideas, and focus on the positive intentions of the group are most often viewed as being strong leaders and collaborators" (Schupp 2015). Schupp suggests responding to questions in group work that include, "What do we want to accomplish? Why is this our group goal? How can I contribute to this goal? What do I hope to learn?"

(Schupp 2015). This is helpful for students to share ideas when there may be some with more dominating voices while some are hesitant. The teacher can facilitate open discussions on their group topic. The author suggests allowing journaling time to record thoughts on paper before talking to group members.

Kristen Mercer included group discussions in her work because she believes it helps develop creativity (Mercer 40). Mercer learned that in order to teach students about collaboration, she needed to help facilitate discussions on what positive group work looks like. She stresses for instructors to prompt discussion questions like “what makes for good communication and collaboration” (Mercer 43)? It appears that it is important to talk with students about these questions before they can do the collaborating itself. I wanted to include group discussions in my lessons because it helps students organize their thoughts, ideas, and develops critical thinking skills. I decided that incorporating this throughout my choreography unit would be an essential component to include.

Improvisation, storytelling, and group discussions all support my project of effective collaboration because, according to research, these strategies include communication, relationship building, and student input, which are all a part of the collaborating process. Mercer believes collaboration is developed through relationship building and “evolves when individuals are called upon to integrate and combine their individual perspectives and ideas with the perspectives and ideas of others” (Mercer 40). All of these strategies allow students to make choices on how they want to create their dances. I wanted to include these strategies so students can have the freedom to create dances in structured activities.

SELF REFLECTION

After gathering this new information from the literature review and the NCAS and TEKS, I compared it to my own student teaching choreography unit I developed and administered during student teaching. I journaled my thoughts as I reflected on this student teaching experience. I reflected on the experience that the students responded well when working with their peers. At the beginning of my teaching experience, I remember students were unengaged when I exclusively did teacher-led activities. They were reluctant to participate. From my observation, I knew I had to make adjustments to my teaching strategies. I decided to integrate more collaborative work and student input, which allowed freedom for students to contribute to the creative process. I did this by letting students add their own choreography to the dance phrases. As a result of this lesson plan adjustment, students then appeared more excited to come to class each time. I concluded that it was important for students to create dances that valued student input. Next, I reflected on what I could have done differently during student teaching. One change would be to incorporate different groups or partnering activities to establish relationships. I recall students being resistant when it came to including group members that were not their friends. Activities that helped students get to know everyone might have made students more comfortable when I assigned the groups. Although there were areas of strengths and improvements, I was able to see how my unit compared to Texas dance educators' units.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TEXAS TEACHING PRACTICES

For this leg of my research process, I emailed Texas dance educators in order to obtain their choreography lesson plans. I received fifteen lesson plans from dance educators across the state of Texas. Next, I organized them into a chart with three columns: Class Plan Performance

Description, Strategy Used, and Learning Outcomes. This way of organizing helped me compare each activity being described in the lesson plans. As I was charting each one, I began noticing similarities between lesson plans obtained and activities discovered by my literature review. It appeared that many of the group choreography activities encouraged students the freedom to be creative. For example, the activities let the students make their own dances that included original choreography, formation, and choice of music. Seven out of the fifteen lesson plans I acquired from educators included moments of structured student input. Although it appeared students could create their own dances, they had a structure that included a dance time limit and making sure music was school appropriate. The most common group choreography activities received from educators were about creating dances based on movement vocabulary, lessons using the Chance Dance method, and lessons on storytelling that included writing, history, and poetry. These activities appear important when designing a choreography unit.

I noticed that some teachers included rubrics on how they assessed each student, and others did not. The rubrics gave me a better understanding of what the teacher's goals were throughout the activity. Out of fifteen lessons, three educators sent me their learning objectives for group activities, which all stated "students will learn to work respectfully in groups," but the lessons did not include instructions on how students were to accomplish this objective. I felt the lack of explanation of the above objective was a missing factor in these choreography lesson plans. I wanted to now not only share group choreography activities, but implement ways students can learn how to collaborate and respect all group members. Based on these lesson plans, literature review, and past student teaching experience, I created my own choreography unit.

CHOREOGRAPHY UNIT

The goal of this study was to create a choreography unit where students learn to work collaboratively while creating dances that are meaningful to them. As a result of this research, I designed a choreography unit that consists of five lesson plans ending in a final group dancemaking project. I decided on five because I wanted there to be enough time to include discussions between activities on positive ways to collaborate with group members. I created each lesson following the Understanding by Design lesson plan template (UbD) by Grant Higgins. The template's organized, detailed structure provides educators a step by step learning plan with lesson goals and why these concepts are essential to students' learning.

In my choreography unit, each lesson will begin with an improvisational warm-up, taken from Justin Reeves's book "Dance Improvisations: Warm-Ups, Games and Choreographic Tasks." "Pass the Movement" and "Greet & Pairing" can provide ideas for dancemaking and have students begin learning how to develop their own movement. Reeve's improvisational activities are followed by a student discussion addressing the instructional strategies. The purpose of the discussions is to talk to students through how improvisation can help generate movement.

After the improvisational warm-up, students will take part in a small dancemaking activity. These group dancemaking activities, such as chance dance and storytelling, are inspired by Texas dance educators and researchers in the literature to effective activities. The purpose of these activities are to guide students in creating their own movements. Each activity will end in a group discussion to hear student's takeaways and check for understanding. I will continue to

include a variety of improvisational warm-up activities and dancemaking activities throughout each lesson.

These lesson plans are about having students work together to create dances.

Collaboration is being used as a teaching strategy throughout each activity. Here is a brief summary of each lesson plan created for my choreography unit:

Lesson 1:

- Students will be introduced to the choreography unit by pairing up into partners and discussing the elements of dancemaking. Students will explore this concept through identifying and writing about the elements of dance including costuming, lighting, and how music and movement respond together. They will do this by viewing examples of dances in order to identify what they see in a performance video.

Lesson 2:

- Students will be introduced to movement strategies that can be used throughout the choreographic process. These include a partner improvisation activity called “Greet & Pairing” and a group dancemaking activity called “Chance Dance.” This gives students a chance to learn beginning steps to creating their own movements in collaboration with peers and how they will be able to develop a small dance phrase to be used in the final project. At the end, students will circle up and we will discuss what was surprising when putting together the phrase and what was challenging about it. Students will take turns sharing their experiences.

Lesson 3:

- Students will continue working on exploring movement strategies that can be used throughout the choreographic process, with another improvisation activity called “Pass the Movement.” Students will then be given rubric guidelines as a way to introduce the parameters of their final choreography project in order to apply what they have learned. Students will research a chosen topic and create a group dance based on their topic. The teacher will assist in facilitating ways for students to brainstorm ideas and collaborate with one another.

Lesson 4:

- Students will continue working on their final choreography project while the teacher serves as a facilitator, ensuring students are on track. Students will have already completed the research portion and will now begin creating their dance on their chosen topic. The teacher will lead a short group discussion and review positive ways to communicate and work together in groups.

Lesson 5:

- Students will have completed both the research and movement portion of their final choreography project. Students will explore what it looks like to present their final dance that includes the performance, title, and a description of their chosen topic and audience etiquette.

My goal is that through this choreography unit, students will be able to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph a dance.

CONCLUSION

Working collaboratively in groups appears to have a positive effect in dance classrooms, according to Becky Dyer, Tanja Raman, Karen Schupp, and Kristen Mercer. Through creating this choreography unit, I learned that in order to create a dance, it is important to have students construct relationships with each other and include time to teach students what it means to collaborate with group members. While looking back at the lesson plans received from Texas educators, it appeared that they were missing an explanation of how students are supposed to work together in groups. For example, in some Texas educator's lesson plans, their rubric graded on if they worked respectfully in their groups but did not further explain how they were supposed to accomplish that. I have come to realize that students may not know the steps to successful collaboration.

I also learned that ending each session with a group discussion assists with higher-order thinking and is an important takeaway. Researcher Tanja Raman believes that "instructions that promote critical thinking, self-discovery and frequent use of discussion in the dance class have a particularly positive impact" (Raman 2009). I concluded that I would set aside time in my lesson plans for discussions between each activity. This is to ensure that they are engaged and understanding the lesson.

The research process I undertook to create this choreography unit was successful. However, there were some limitations to this study. For example, I was unable to test my lesson plans in a high school dance classroom. I structured my unit on what I believed most useful from the literature review, my past experience teaching, and the fifteen dance educators' choreography lessons. Not knowing the outcome of the fifteen lesson plans I received was challenging.

Although I received lesson plans from Texas dance educators, the lessons only explained the activity and did not state whether or not it was successful. The lessons also did not talk about what the students learned from the lesson. I had to reflect on my own about what they possibly gained from these activities. In the future, I would love to bring these lessons into the classroom where students will be able to engage in this learning experience.

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APPENDICES

Choreography Unit Plan Overview

Goal of this Unit:

This unit is meant to introduce intermediate level high school dance students to create their own group choreography. This will allow students to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph their dance. Students will gain creative movement skills and begin building relationships among group members through improvisation activities. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills through open group discussions, contribute ideas among members and problem-solve by brainstorming potential movement strategies. This unit will conclude with students creating a final group dance using narrative storytelling on their given topic.

Essential Questions:

- What does choreographing a dance in groups look like?
- What are the steps dancers complete when they create a dance?
- What does it look like to collaborate with my group members in order to create a dance?

Assessment:

Students will verbally present their chosen topic and perform their group choreography in order to assess the movement skills, group performance and how their expressed movement ideas relate to their topic. Students will turn in their research, how each student contributed to the project and have an end class discussion, regarding their groups creative dancemaking process.

Lesson Plan 1

Dance Teacher's Name: Molly Hart

Subject: Choreography Unit

Lesson Title: Choreography

Grade Level: 9-12 Intermediate

Time Frame: 50 Minutes

Essential Vocabulary: Choreographer, Improvisation

Brief Summary of the **Unit**:

This unit is meant to introduce intermediate level high school dance students to create their own group choreography. This will allow students to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph their dance. Students will gain creative movement skills and begin building relationships among group members through improvisation activities. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills through open group discussions, contribute ideas among members and problem-solve by brainstorming potential movement strategies. This unit will conclude with students creating a final group dance using narrative storytelling on their given topic.

Brief Summary of the **Lesson**:

In this lesson, students will be introduced to the components of choreographing a dance through group discussions, pair & share, and video activity. Students will explore this concept through research and viewing examples of dances in order to identify what they saw in the video.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goal(s)/Content Standard(s): National Core Arts Standards

- **DA:Re7.1.HSIII**
 - a. Analyze dance works from a variety of dance genres and styles and explain how recurring patterns of movement and their relationships create well-structured and meaningful choreography.

Transfer Skills:

- Listening Skills
- Writing

- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration

Understanding (s):

Students will understand:

- The roles and components of choreography in order to create a dance.
- The beginning strategies and steps dancers can use to create a dance.
- That choreographers can obtain ideas to create dances in many different forms (through writing, storytelling, song etc..).
- How to identify and write about the dances they see including costuming, lighting, and how music and movement respond together.

Essential Question(s):

- What is the role of a choreographer?
What are the components of creating a dance?
- What are the steps dancers can implement to create their own dances?
- How do choreographers develop ideas when creating a dance?
- How can I Identify movement, costuming, lighting, and performance in order to write about it?

Student objectives (outcomes):

Students will be able to:

- Discuss the roles of a choreographer through a pair and share activity and class discussion.
- Discuss the components of choreographing a dance through a pair and share activity and class discussion.
- Share their own thoughts and ideas about ways to choreograph a dance through a class discussion.
- Talk about different strategies to come up with new ideas to create a dance with their partners and class discussion.
- Explain what they see in their chosen dance videos that include movement, lighting, costumes and music in order to practice identifying components in a dance performance through a partner activity.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Participating in group discussion.● Talking with peer partners about components in a dance.	Other Evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Asking Questions● Teacher walking around room.
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Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Organized sequence of learning to maximize engagement.

Introduction- 15 min

The teacher will introduce the choreography unit by having students pair up into partners and have them discuss what they think the role of a choreographer is and the possible steps they take in order to create a dance. Students will then come together as a large group and discuss their ideas. Students will learn about the different ways dancers and choreographers are able to get movement ideas from that include improvisation, writing and storytelling.

Explore Concept- 25 min

Students will get with their same partner and be able to use their phones or a computer to find one dance video that is inspiring to them. Students will watch their chosen video and write down the type of movements they see, costumes, lighting and if the dance is portraying a story.

Closing- 10 min

Students will circle up and we will discuss their findings in the videos they found and what they enjoyed about their videos.

Lesson Plan 2

Dance Teacher's Name: Molly Hart

Subject: Choreography Unit

Lesson Title: Choreography

Grade Level: 9-12 Intermediate

Time Frame: 50 Minutes

Essential Vocabulary: Dancemaking, Improvisation, Collaboration

Brief Summary of the **Unit**:

This unit is meant to introduce intermediate level high school dance students to create their own group choreography. This will allow students to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph their dance. Students will gain creative movement skills and begin building relationships among group members through improvisation activities. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills through open group discussions, contribute ideas among members and problem-solve by brainstorming potential movement strategies. This unit will conclude with students creating a final group dance using narrative storytelling on their given topic.

Brief Summary of the **Lesson**:

In this lesson, students are working to explore putting movement strategies into practice through a partner improvisational activity and group dancemaking activity. Students will be introduced to creating their own movements with peers and how they are able to develop a mini dance.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goal(s)/Content Standard(s): National Core Arts Standards

- b. Expand personal movement preferences and strengths to discover unexpected solutions that communicate the artistic intent of an original dance. Analyze the unexpected solutions and explain why they were effective in expanding artistic intent.
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Transfer Skills:

- Listening Skills
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration

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<p>Understanding (s): Students will understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ways to explore creating different movements with a partner ● That improvisation can be a helpful tool to generate new ways of moving. ● How to begin communicating and problem solving with group members in order to create a small dance phrase. ● The beginning steps of creating their own dance. 	<p>Essential Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can I explore different ways of moving in order to create a dance with my partner? ● What are ways improvisation can help develop new ways of moving? ● What are effective ways I can work together with my group in order to create a small dance phrase? ● What are the beginning stages of creating your own dance?
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<p>Student objectives (outcomes): Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore and create new movements in the body through a partner improvisation warm-up activity. ● Explain how improvisation can be an effective tool for creating movement through discussing what they created with their partner. ● Communicate and begin problem-solving with their group members through a chance dance choreography activity. ● Explain and identify the beginning stages of choreographing their own dance through a chance dance activity and ending group discussion.
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Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

<p>Performance Task(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in creating movement with their partner. ● Talking with a partner about their movement. ● Participating in Chance Dance 	<p>Other Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asking Questions ● Teacher walking around room.
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<p>activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in group Discussions 	
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Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Organized sequence of learning to maximize engagement.

Introduction- 15 min

Students will circle up and quickly review what was discussed previously. Students will be paired with a new partner and be guided through an improvisational activity called, “Greet & Pairing”.

In partners or groups of 3 if needed, dancers will face each other and introduce themselves by stating their name. The teacher will then guide them to use different body parts such as elbows, knees and/or head to trace out their names to their partners. Students will begin to develop their own creative sequence of their very own “introduction dance”.

Explore Concept- 30 min

Chance Dance:

Students will each be given one piece of paper and be told to write down one action word and put it in the bowl. Once everyone has turned in their action words, the instructor will put them in groups of four. Each group member will draw from the bowl and receive an action word at random.

Students will create a short 3 8-count phrase based off everyone’s action words they drew. Students will have to work together in their groups to come up with ideas and create movements that go along with their action words. They will add on until it becomes a small dance phrase.

Students will show their phrases and state what their action words were.

Closing- 5 min

Students will circle up and we will discuss what was surprising when putting together the phrase and what was challenging about it. Students will take turns sharing their experiences.

Lesson Plan 3

Dance Teacher's Name: Molly Hart

Subject: Choreography Unit

Lesson Title: Choreography

Grade Level: 9-12 Intermediate

Time Frame: 50 Minutes

Essential Vocabulary: Dancemaking, Storytelling, Collaboration

Brief Summary of the **Unit**:

This unit is meant to introduce intermediate level high school dance students to create their own group choreography. This will allow students to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph their dance. Students will gain creative movement skills and begin building relationships among group members through improvisation activities. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills through open group discussions, contribute ideas among members and problem-solve by brainstorming potential movement strategies. This unit will conclude with students creating a final group dance using narrative storytelling on their given topic.

Brief Summary of the **Lesson**:

In this lesson, students are continuing working on exploring movement strategies through an improvisation activity. Students will then be given a final choreography project where students will explore researching a chosen topic and creating a group dance based on their topic. The teacher will assist in facilitating ways for students to brainstorm ideas and collaborate with one another in order to create their final dance.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goal(s)/Content Standard(s): National Core Arts Standards

- a. Collaborate to design a dance using choreographic devices and dance structures to support an artistic intent. Explain how the dance structures clarify the artistic intent.
- b. Use established research methods and techniques to investigate a topic. Collaborate with others to identify questions and solve movement problems that pertain to the topic. Create and perform a piece of choreography. Discuss orally or in writing the insights relating to knowledge gained through the research process, the synergy of collaboration, and the transfer of learning from this project to other learning situations.

Transfer Skills:

- Listening Skills
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Collaboration

Understanding (s):

Students will understand:

- That improvisation can be a helpful tool to generate new ways of moving.
- The importance of positive ways to communicate ideas and goals among group members when working on a group project.
- How it is important to research their topic first before creating the dance.

Essential Question(s):

- What are ways improvisation can help develop new ways of moving?
- What are effective ways I can communicate ideas, make decisions and reach goals in order to create a final dance?
- How do I begin researching my topic with my group members?

Student objectives (outcomes):

Students will be able to:

- Identify how improvisation can be an effective tool for creating movement through an improvisational warm-up activity.
- Positively communicate, reach mutual decisions and goals with their group members through brainstorming activities facilitated by the instructor.
- Research and learn new information about their chosen topic through the instructor giving them computer time in class to look up helpful sources.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence**Performance Task(s):**

- Participating in improvisation activity.

Other Evidence:

- Asking Questions
- Teacher walking around room.

- Participating in group discussions
- Working together with group members.

Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Organized sequence of learning to maximize engagement.

Introduction- 10 min

Students will start the class with a fun warm-up activity called “Pass the Movement”. The teacher will explain that this exercise shows dancers what it feels like to embody movements of their peers while assisting with choreography memorization. Students will begin in a large circle. The first dancer will create a movement that will then be passed to the next dancer to embody. Once everyone has had the chance to embody this movement, it will be the next person’s turn. This will keep going until everyone will have a chance to create their own movement to be passed around the circle.

Explore Concept- 35 min

The teacher will gather students in a large circle and have an open discussion on what it means to collaborate in groups. We discuss 3 important concepts which are equal contribution, having an open mind to new ideas and respecting others viewpoints.

Students will be ready for their directions on their final choreography project that will focus on Storytelling. Students will be creating their own dance that will be 1 minutes long portraying a story from their chosen topic.

- Students will first draw a number from the bowl. Once everyone has drawn, students will find their group members with the same number. There will be 4-5 students per group.
- On the overhead, students will see a list of topics to choose for their dance. Students will be given a few minutes to talk it over with their group and select a topic.
- Once all groups have selected their topic, students will research the topic more in depth. The teacher will facilitate and guide students through small group discussions. Students will ask each other, “Why is this issue important? What do we want to accomplish? How can I contribute to this goal?”
- Students must have at least 5 well thought out questions and answers regarding their topic on a piece of paper by the end of class.

Closing- 5min

Students will circle up and the teacher will do a check-in on each group and as a whole making sure students are prepared for the movement portion tomorrow.

Lesson Plan 4

Dance Teacher's Name: Molly Hart
Subject: Choreography Unit
Lesson Title: Choreography
Grade Level: 9-12 Intermediate
Time Frame: 50 Minutes

Essential Vocabulary: Dancemaking, Storytelling, Collaboration

Brief Summary of the **Unit**:

This unit is meant to introduce intermediate level high school dance students to create their own group choreography. This will allow students to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph their dance. Students will gain creative movement skills and begin building relationships among group members through improvisation activities. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills through open group discussions, contribute ideas among members and problem-solve by brainstorming potential movement strategies. This unit will conclude with students creating a final group dance using narrative storytelling on their given topic.

Brief Summary of the **Lesson**:

In this lesson, students continue working on their final choreography project. Students will have already completed the research portion and will now begin creating their dance. The teacher will lead a short group discussion and review positive ways to communicate and work together in groups.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goal(s)/Content Standard(s): National Core Arts Standards

- a. Collaborate to design a dance using choreographic devices and dance structures to support an artistic intent. Explain how the dance structures clarify the artistic intent.
- a. Demonstrate fluency and personal voice in designing and choreographing original dances. Justify choreographic choices and explain how they are used to intensify artistic intent.
- b. Use established research methods and techniques to investigate a topic. Collaborate with others to identify questions and solve movement problems that pertain to the topic. Create and perform a piece of choreography. Discuss orally or in writing the insights relating to knowledge gained through the research process, the synergy of collaboration, and the transfer of learning from this project to other learning situations.

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Transfer Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Listening Skills● Problem Solving● Collaboration
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Understanding (s): Students will understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● How to collaborate with one another in order to create a group dance.● The importance of positive ways to communicate ideas and goals among group members when working on a group project.● How to construct their own dance in their groups.	Essential Question(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What are ways I can collaborate when creating a group dance?● What are effective ways I can communicate ideas, make decisions and reach goals in order to create a final dance?● How do I create a group-dance?
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Student objectives (outcomes): Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Collaborate with one another while creating a group dance through their final project.● Positively communicate, reach mutual decisions and goals with their group members through brainstorming activities facilitated by the instructor.● Create and put together their own dance through their final group choreography project.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence

Performance Task(s):	Other Evidence:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participating in group discussions ● Working together with group members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asking Questions ● Teacher walking around room.
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Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Organized sequence of learning to maximize engagement.

Introduction- 10 min

Students will start the lesson in a big circle. The teacher will go over the different improvisation activities we have done as a class and how these are ways they can generate movement for their dance. The teacher will remind students of the chance dance they did and that they are welcome to look at key-words in their written research to help create movement as well.

Explore Concept- 38 min

The teacher will facilitate and have frequent check ins with each group ensuring they are on track and working together.

- Students will create a 1-minute dance in their groups portraying their topic. Students have already completed the research portion of this project.
- Students should have a title, a brief description about their topic. Music and costumes are encouraged but not required. Music will be approved by the teacher.

Closing- 2 min

The teacher will have a quick group check-in asking how their progress is.

Lesson Plan 5

Dance Teacher's Name: Molly Hart
Subject: Choreography Unit
Lesson Title: Choreography
Grade Level: 9-12 Intermediate
Time Frame: 50 Minutes

Essential Vocabulary: Dancemaking, Storytelling, Collaboration

Brief Summary of the **Unit**:

This unit is meant to introduce intermediate level high school dance students to create their own group choreography. This will allow students to explore and understand what it means to collaborate with one another in order to choreograph their dance. Students will gain creative movement skills and begin building relationships among group members through improvisation activities. Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills through open group discussions, contribute ideas among members and problem-solve by brainstorming potential movement strategies. This unit will conclude with students creating a final group dance using narrative storytelling on their given topic.

Brief Summary of the **Lesson**:

In this lesson, students will have completed both the research and movement portion of their final choreography project. Students will be exploring what it looks like to present their final dance that includes the performance, title and a description of their chosen topic and audience etiquette.

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Established Goal(s)/Content Standard(s): National Core Arts Standards

- a. Demonstrate leadership qualities (for example commitment, dependability, responsibility, and cooperation) when preparing for performances. Demonstrate performance etiquette and performance practices during class, rehearsal and performance. Post-performance, accept notes from choreographer and apply corrections to future performances. Document the rehearsal and performance process and evaluate methods and strategies using dance terminology and production terminology.
- a. Collaborate to design a dance using choreographic devices and dance structures to support an artistic intent. Explain how the dance structures clarify the artistic intent.

Transfer Skills:

- Listening Skills
- Problem Solving
- Collaboration

Understanding (s):

Students will understand:

- What a finished dance looks like when presenting their dance and research topic.
- How to give positive constructive feedback to their peers that are performing.
- What it means to have audience etiquette.

Essential Question(s):

- How can I be prepared to perform my final dance with my group members?
- What are effective ways I can communicate ideas, make decisions and reach goals in order to create a final dance?
- How can I demonstrate audience etiquette while other groups are performing?

Student objectives (outcomes):

Students will be able to:

- Present their final choreography project by discussing their topic, title of the dance and performing the dance in their groups.
- Articulate with words the positive things they noticed during their peer's performances through a short feedback session.
- Demonstrate what it looks like to have audience etiquette through listening and participating in a short feedback session.

Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence**Performance Task(s):**

- Participating in group discussions
- Perform the final group dance.

Other Evidence:

- Asking Questions

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Stage 3 – Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Organized sequence of learning to maximize engagement.

Introduction- 2 min

Students will gather in a large circle. The teacher will let students know that they will have part of class to rehearse in their groups before presenting.

Explore Concept- 40 min

Students will be getting ready to present their final choreography project. Students will be prepared to discuss briefly about their chosen topic, state the title of their dance and then perform in front of their peers and teacher.

Before students perform, the teacher will go over proper audience etiquette that includes, sitting up quietly watching and supporting your peers by clapping at the end.

After each group performs, students will have a chance to say positive things they saw in their peer's performance.

Closing- 7 min

Students will circle up altogether and share briefly the challenges and exciting moments while creating their dances.