

Every Day We Write a Dance

Program Description:

DK's *Every Day We Write a Dance* explores movement as a form of communication. Focusing on a basic theme, the students are able to think creatively and critically as all participate in the making of a community dance.

Program Outline:

Objectives:

1. Introduce & share dance exercises and warm-up
2. Discuss & demonstrate different styles of dance
3. Focus on a common ritual, story or theme
4. Explore movements generated out of the theme
5. Create a community dance from movements
6. Perform

Vocabulary:

beat - the accent in the rhythm of words, sounds or music

choreographer - the artist who invents the movement and patterns and decides what music to use

community friendly association or fellowship

cooperation - working together with another person or group for a common reason

general space - community of shared space

locomotor movement - movement that travels from place to place usually identified by weight transference on the feet

pattern - a thing to be copied; a predictable way of doing something like movement

personal space - the space that one occupies; it includes all levels, planes and directions both near and far from the body's center

plie - French word: to bend; a motion of the legs using the knees, when they go from a straight position to a slightly bent position

port de bras - French word: carriage of the arms; position or movement of the arms

rhythm - measured motion; basically the regular recurrence of grouped strong & weak beats

saute - French word: to jump; a small jump

shape - a form or figure; the outward appearance of a form in space or in an object

tendu - French word: to stretch; a motion of one leg while standing on the other leg; leg extends as far away as possible from the body with the toe still on the floor

Preparation Activities & Discussion Topics

1. In a group list how many different dance styles your students are aware of and build on it by having them talk about and demonstrate the differences.
2. Building to communication/story telling through movement
 - a. Body Alphabet—spell 3-5 letter words using students' bodies for the letters—do you clearly see the letters?
 - b. Using short sentences (5-6 words), find movements to represent each word and present to the rest of the class—can they understand the

sentence?

c. Act out a sentence by assigning the subject, verb, adjectives and punctuation to students to express through movement. Show it to another class and see if they understand the message (this is a form of charades)

d. "Tell" a story through 5 frozen poses or tableaux (make it serve your subject areas). Do it solo or in groups, the hard part for the students will be not moving as they show each "picture", but it makes them concentrate, focus and distill each pose's meaning to the most communicative it can be.

e. This exercise is more advanced but the results can be extremely rewarding. Assign groups of students to pick a simple poem or piece of prose and illustrate it through movement only (add music if desired). Show it and refine it. THEN, reverse the process and have the groups present a movement piece about something and the "audience" must describe in poetry or prose how it made them feel. Later share the intended meaning of the piece after all students who watched it offered their responses. Talk about it.

3. Have your students choose an animal and move like it. Have them imagine what it FEELS like to be that animal and NOT just IMITATE it. What makes their animal unique? Decide what kind of space, time and energy each animal requires –establish their environment.
4. Explore how different emotions can be communicated through movement (literal vs. abstract). Start with frozen poses representing the emotion then let movement naturally develop from these. Can music help communicate your ideas?