

Dancing Your Direction

By Moving Current Dance Collective



An Educator's Guide

Dancing your Direction is an interactive performance for audiences of all ages. This casual yet exciting performance invites imagination and curiosity. The dance adventure begins with Moving Current Dancers performing a short vibrant dance. Then in an informal discussion we tackle the dance together: *What did you see? Do you have any questions for the choreographers?* Now it's the audience's turn to become the choreographer, giving directions to the dancers. Using what they have learned and their own imagination, they ask the dancers to change something specific in the dance. For example: *"What if you did the beginning of the dance without using your arms? What if you faced a different direction?"* The Dancers follow the audiences direction-on the spot! Then on to the next dance and the format is repeated. This performance encourages us to think about the ways in which our experiences shape us and our view point. What we experience gives us our own way of thinking, of seeing, feeling, moving, and really important it gives us our own way of imagining what is possible. **So kick off your shoes, put on your choreography hat and come experiment with us... making dances!**

Total time – Generally 45 – 50 minutes, but we can easily adjust this slightly to accommodate your schedule

An outline of our performance:

This performance is fun, and effective in demonstrating the dimensions of creativity through movement. As those in the audience participate in the process, they gain deeper awareness of expression and communication and language arts. Their fresh experience provides a new perspective on dance. Below is an outline of our show that will be adapted for different grade levels:

- We will begin with quick review of theater etiquette
- **Our Inside View to Making Dances** is a brief discussion on how choreographers make dances.
- We will introduce some of the “ingredients” found in dance. Our dances often include these dance elements: **Shape, Space, Dynamics and Music.** (*Every art form uses its own unique language, verbal and non-verbal, to document and communicate with the world*)
- **Team work** – most of the time we dance with other people. We work together as a team. And that means that everyone does their job, respects others as they do their part, stays alert and is kind to other company members. Dancers are also like athletes, we warm up, and practice or rehearse a lot.
- A solo will performed, after it’s completed the other dancers will briefly discuss “what they saw” and then give a direction to the performer, modeling the process for the student.

Now the students are ready to direct the dancers, influencing the choreography

Pre Performance Activities

Your Role as an Audience Member

The audience is an important part of any performance. Your behavior as an audience member will affect the performance you see. Performers are people too and will be working really hard to perform for you. Their performance and everyone's experience of it will be even better if you follow the following instructions:

- Enter the performance space quietly and take your seat as directed.
- Remember that seeing a live show is not like watching TV or a movie. The performers are in the same room with you and can see and hear you. **Please don't talk during the performance.** The performers need you to watch and listen quietly. Talking to friends disturbs the performers and other members of the audience and is rude and disrespectful.
- Please stay in your seats during the performance. Please show respect for the performers and your fellow audience members by sitting up in your seats and keeping your feet on the floor.
- You can laugh if something is funny and clap at the end of the performance or after a song.
- Using your cell phone, taking pictures or recording is not allowed during the performance.
- Please remain seated at the end of the performance.

This review and discussion supports Florida Standards governing appropriate behavior and Theatre Etiquette. Distributing adult supervision amongst the students will help ensure appropriate behavior. Teacher and chaperone behavior is critical as well so please remember to silence your cell phones and refrain from using your phones for texting or anything else during the performance. Taking pictures or recording during the performance is not permitted. We hope this helps you prepare your students so they will experience a quality performance.

Other Suggested Activities

Lesson - Students can create a list of questions before seeing the concert.

Lesson – Create a criteria to describe the performance



POST PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES for Elementary School

Grade levels:

What did the student observe?

- Summarize one or two dances
- Sequence the events
- Discuss how the *Dances* were organized
- Create your own organization of a Dance
- Compare and contrast two of the *Dances*

What directions did the performers have to follow?

- Create your own list of directions for dancers to follow during a Dance

Using the performance as a Creativity prompt.

- Create a story from one of the word combinations in the performance using details, cause and result. What could happen before and after the word combination?
- Choose an Action word that can be done in your seat or next to your chair (modify to fit your classroom)
- With eyes closed see yourself performing that action in “your minds eyes”, like a movie playing in your head.
- Choose a word that describes that action? Students may need prompting through questions in the beginning. For example is it fast or slow? Big or small?
- Dance the verb and adverb together
- Combine it with another students, linking them together in a duet

Standards that connect to the performance experience.

DA.K.C.1.1 Associate and identify words of action or feeling with watching or performing simple dances.

DA.1.C.1.1: Identify and respond to the feelings expressed in movement pieces. **DA.1.O.1.2:** Demonstrate awareness of expectations in class and at informal performances.

DA.2.O.1.1 Identify the elements of dance in planned and improvised dance pieces to show early awareness of structure.

DA.3.C.2.1 Apply knowledge of basic elements of dance to identify examples in a dance piece.

DA.4.O.3.2 Use accurate dance terminology as a means of asking questions, discussing dances, and learning new dance pieces.

DA.5.C.1.1 Identify and discuss, using background knowledge of structure and personal experience, concepts and themes in dance pieces

Dance standards connected to the post performance activities

Standards for Language Arts connected to Critical Thinking - Analyze, interpret, and synthesize details and facts to examine relationships, infer meanings, and predict outcomes.

LAFS.K.L.3.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

LAFS.K.RL.1.2 With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

LAFS.K.SL.2.6 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

LAFS.K.W.1.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic persuasively.

LAFS.1.SL.2.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly. **LAFS.1.SL.1.2** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.



LAFS.2.RL.2.4 Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

LAFS.2.SL.1.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

LAFS.2.W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

LA.3.4.1.2 The student will write a variety of expressive forms (e.g., chapter books, short stories, poetry, skits, song lyrics) that may employ, but not be limited to, figurative language (e.g., simile, onomatopoeia), rhythm, dialogue, characterization, plot, and appropriate format.

LA.4.4.1.2 The student will write a variety of expressive forms (e.g., short story, poetry, skit, song lyrics) that employ figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, and personification), rhythm, dialogue, characterization, plot, and/or appropriate format.

LA.5.4.1.2 The student will write a variety of expressive forms (e.g., fiction, short story, autobiography, science fiction, or a haiku) that employ figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, hyperbole), rhythm, dialogue, characterization, plot, and/or appropriate format.

Standards for Dance connected to applying knowledge to identify and analyze through discussion written work or other.

DA.K.C.1.1: Associate and identify words of action or feeling with watching or performing simple dances.

DA.K.C.3.1 Express preferences from among a teacher-selected set of dances.

DA.K.C.3.In.a: Identify preferred dances.

DA.K.O.3.2: Respond to a dance through movement and words. **DA.1.O.3.2** Use accurate dance terminology to describe specified movements and shapes.

DA.1.C.3.1 Share personal opinions on selected movement pieces, recognizing that individual opinions often vary. **DA.2.O.1.1** Identify the elements of dance in planned and improvised dance pieces to show early awareness of structure.

DA.2.C.1.1 Explain, using accurate dance terminology, how teacher-specified elements of dance are used in a phrase or dance piece.

DA.2.O.3.2 Describe a dancer or dance piece using words, pictures, or movements.

DA.2.C.3.1: Share personal opinions about a dance piece, using a mix of accurate dance and non-dance terminology.

DA.3.C.2.2 Share and apply feedback to improve the quality of dance movement.

DA.3.O.1.1 Relate how the elements of dance are applied in classwork to how they are used in dance pieces.

DA.4.C.3.1 Evaluate a dance by examining how effectively two or more elements were used in the piece.

DA.4.C.1.3 Identify points within a dance piece at which mood, character, or meaning change abruptly or evolve. **DA.5.O.3.3** Use accurate dance terminology and/or movement vocabulary to respond to movement based on personal ideas, values, or point of view.

DA.5.C.3.1 Critique a dance piece using established criteria

DA.5.C.1.1: Identify and discuss, using background knowledge of structure and personal experience, concepts and themes in dance pieces.



POST PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES For Middle & High School Grade levels

Organizational Structure (Big Idea DA.68.O // DA.912.O)

Choreographic Principles, and Processes

What are the choreographer's "tools" to create a dance?

When a choreographer sets out to create a dance, he or she may use tools just like a carpenter might use wood, hammer and nails to make a house! The tools a choreographer uses are much different from a carpenter. Examples could be the use of: shape, improvisation, theme and variation, canon, ABA.

Dance as a Way to Create Meaning

How does a choreographer make meaning out of a dance? How does he or she communicate a thought through the use of movement?

Modern dance can be a literal form of art, but most of the time, dances are abstract. Choreographers use their keen observation skills to look at everyday life and see it in a different light. Sometimes, these observations are then abstracted with the use of their choreographic "tools" and movement choices and their quality and energy.

Written



Written or Discussion Activities:

Lesson - Describe the programming by explaining:

- How the costumes contributed to the dance performance.
- How the blocking, or positioning of the dancers on the stage, affected the performance.
- How the music contributed to the performance of the dancers.

Lesson - (*Identify and recall*) Describe one or two dances by telling in one or two words:

- Who was in the dance?
- Were there solo dances, small groups, or did the whole group perform together?
- What was the main idea or theme?
- What was the beginning, middle and end or sequence of the events?
- Where onstage were they in the performance space?
- List the movement qualities?

Lesson - (comprehend) In your own words, describe one or two dances. What was the main idea of these dances? Qualify your explanation by describing the movement qualities and how or why they illustrated the main idea.

Movement Activities:

Lesson - Discuss these elements with students and guide them through the choreographic principles as they create their own dances based on the choreographer's "tools".

Lesson - Students generate a study based on the principles of *improvisation*.

Lesson - Students work in groups to create a dance using *canon*.

Lesson - Students make an observation of something you do every day and *abstract* that task. (Brushing your teeth, combing your hair, eating lunch) Try not to pantomime, make a dance movement for each move you make while executing your task.

Lesson - Students investigate through *improvisation*, which *movement qualities* best describe the following: a cloud (light and sustained), spaghetti (free and indirect), popcorn popping or a man with hiccups (quick and percussive)

Lesson - Using the performance as a Creativity prompt, create your own dance from one the themes in the performance using details, cause and result. What could happen before and after the dance?

Critical and Creative Thinking in Dance

(Big Idea DA.68.C // DA.912.C Critical Thinking and Reflection)

How does a choreographer evaluate his or her work?

Critical and creative thinking is an important skill for the choreographer. He or she needs to recognize if the movement choices they have used are communicating their thoughts or ideas in the dance. These same skills are used by audience members as they view the dance from an outside perspective. They ask themselves very similar questions: Does one part of the dance stand out? How do I feel after seeing the dance? How does the movement support the intent of the dance? Does the dance have a theme?



Written or Discussion Activities:

Lesson - Discuss the choreographer's choices in movement, music, and costume. Evaluate their ability to effectively communicate, the dancer's ability to execute the movement and overall physical and conceptual ideas.

Lesson - Students create a list of their own *aesthetic criteria* for movement. With that list, evaluate the performance.

Lesson - Use the above information as a basis to write a critique of the performance.

Standards that connect to understanding the organizational structure of an art form.

1 DA.68.O.1 & 1 DA.912.O.1: Understanding the organizational structure of an art form provides a foundation for appreciation of artistic works and respect for the creative process.

2 DA.68.O.2 & 2 DA.912.O.2: The structural rules and conventions of an art form serve as both a foundation and departure point for creativity.

3 DA.68.O.3 & 3 DA.912.O.3: Every art form uses its own unique language, verbal and non-verbal, to document and communicate with the world.

DA.68.H.3.1 Demonstrate response and reaction, through movement sequences, to various sources of inspiration.

DA.68.O.1.5 Identify, define, and give examples of the elements of dance and/or principles of design to show how they give structure to a dance piece.

1 DA.912.S.1: The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art.

DA.912.O.1.1: Compare dances of different styles, genres, and forms to show understanding of how the different structures and movements give the dance identity. Understanding the organizational structure of an art form provides a foundation for appreciation of artistic works and respect for the creative process.

DA.912.O.1.Pa.c: Recognize specified elements of dance in planned dance pieces to show awareness of structure.

DA.912.O.1.5 Construct a dance that uses specific choreographic structures to express an idea

Standards that connect to understanding Critical Thinking and Reflection

1 DA.68.C.1 & 1 DA.912.C.1 : Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

2 DA.68.C.2 & 2 DA.912.C.2: Assessing our own and others' artistic work, using critical-thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, is central to artistic growth.

3 DA.68.C.3 & 3 DA.912.C.3:: The processes of critiquing works of art lead to development of critical-thinking skills transferable to other contexts.

DA.68.C.3.1: Analyze an artist's work, using selected criteria, and describe its effectiveness in communicating meaning and specific intent.

DA.68.C.1.3 Evaluate, using personal and established criteria, how choreographic structures and/or production elements were designed to impact mood or aesthetic value within a dance piece.

DA.912.C.3.1: Critique the quality and effectiveness of performances based on exemplary models and self-established criteria. The processes of critiquing works of art lead to development of critical-thinking skills transferable to other contexts.

DA.912.C.1.3 Develop and articulate criteria for use in critiquing dance, drawing on background knowledge and personal experience, to show independence in one's response. **Enduring Understanding:** Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

DA.912.C.2.2 Make informed critical assessments of the quality and effectiveness of one's own technique and performance quality, based on criteria developed from a variety of sources, to support personal competence and artistic growth. **Belongs to:** Assessing our own and others' artistic work

About Moving Current

Since incorporating in July of 1997, Moving Current Dance Collective has found an important voice by offering the highest artistic level of modern dance and arts education to Tampa and its surrounding Bay Area communities. With a group of talented and diverse directors and dancers, Moving Current has established itself as one of the "Southeastern Region's top modern dance companies". Moving Current is focused on building a modern dance community at home and has successfully produced annual performances from formal concerts to tailored shows for specific audiences and also created and implemented a variety of educational programs. We have produced 97+ evening concerts presenting local and national choreographers, dancers, musicians, poets, actors, and visual artists. Along with original work by the directors, we have also presented the work of nationally and internationally renowned choreographers and dance companies. For each season concert, we include a Friday morning performance, for grades 6-12, followed by a question and answer session. A major force in Moving Current's long success in the community is our commitment to arts education for people of every age and ability.

WWW.movingcurrent.com

