

Dance Composition Curriculum
Grade Level: Higher Education (Post Secondary)



Overview:

- **Enduring Understanding**
Making dance is a highly personal process that benefits from compositional principles but remains individual and inspired.
- **Essential Question**
How do choreographers find their creative voice and share their vision with the audience effectively?
- **Final Project**
A final original dance that uses community members and incorporates not only the elements of dance composition, but at least one other element of composition from another discipline e.g. art, music, poetry.

Standards

[DA.Cr.2 1.I b: Develop an artistic statement for an original dance study or dance. Discuss how the use of movement elements, choreographic devises, and dance structures serve to communicate the artistic statement.](#)

UNITS

Unit 1: What does it take to make dance?

Enduring Understanding:

Dance has many elements. Dynamics, Movement and Rhythm are a few but there are many others than deserve exploring.

Essential Question: How do my technical strengths limit my choices?

Assessment:

Start out with an in class quiz that assesses the base line of the class. Based on the Units and semester schedule (midterms etc.) determine appropriate forms and timing for assessment. Be sure to give value to all of the assignments as students need to feel they are not doing “busy work”. Use rubrics for written work and group assessment vehicles for group work. Experiment with engaging students in developing rubrics for certain projects. Use “exit cards” at least once a week to get the pulse of the class and revise as needed.

Metacognition:

Carve out time every class for some writing and reflection in class, even if it is minimal. Give writing prompts that speak to the essential questions being explored and have students hand in their writing, or share it with their peers is there is time.

Unit 2: What does it take to make a dance?

Enduring Understanding: Composing dance is different from dancing. It uses many of the same elements of tempo, dynamics and movement but it has a unique perspective that takes it to a different place, needing different skill sets.

Essential Question: What sort of approach does a choreographer need vs a dancer?

Assessment:

Be sure to give value to all of the assignments as students need to feel they are not doing “busy work”. Use rubrics for written work and group assessment vehicles for group work. Experiment with engaging students in developing rubrics for certain projects. Use “exit cards” at least once a week to get the pulse of the class and revise as needed.

Metacognition:

Carve out time every class for some writing and reflection in class, even if it is minimal. Give writing prompts that speak to the essential questions being explored and have students hand in their writing, or share it with their peers if there is time.

Unit 3: What does it take to share a dance?

Enduring Understanding: Making a dance for yourself is only half the art form. Sharing it with other dancers and with the audience is a large part of both the process and what makes it transcendent.

Essential Question: Why do we share dance, why not just keep it to ourselves like an artist or writer?

Assessment:

Be sure to give value to all of the assignments as students need to feel they are not doing “busy work”. Use rubrics for written work and group assessment vehicles for group work. Experiment with engaging students in developing rubrics for certain projects. Use “exit cards” at least once a week to get the pulse of the class and revise as needed.

Metacognition:

Carve out time every class for some writing and reflection in class, even if it is minimal. Give writing prompts that speak to the essential questions being explored and have students hand in their writing, or share it with their peers if there is time.

Unit 4: What is the point of making dance?

Essential Understanding: Dance has a magic all its own. It has the power to change not only the doers but the viewers.

Essential Question: What does it take to make a dance that touches the heart and ignites the soul?

Assessment:

Be sure to give value to all of the assignments as students need to feel they are not doing “busy work”. Use rubrics for written work and group assessment vehicles for group work. Experiment with engaging students in developing rubrics for certain projects. Use “exit cards” at least once a week to get the pulse of the class and revise as needed.

Metacognition :

Carve out time every class for some writing and reflection in class, even if it is minimal. Give writing prompts that speak to the essential questions being explored and have students hand in their writing, or share it with their peers is there is time.

Unit 5: What does composition look like in other disciplines?

Enduring Understanding: The act of creating shares many similarities across disciplines.

Essential Question: Can learning about the creative process in other disciplines help in your chosen field?

Assessment:

Be sure to give value to all of the assignments as students need to feel they are not doing “busy work”. Use rubrics for written work and group assessment vehicles for group work. Experiment with engaging students in developing rubrics for certain projects. Use “exit cards” at least once a week to get the pulse of the class and revise as needed.

Metacognition:

Carve out time every class for some writing and reflection in class, even if it is minimal. Give writing prompts that speak to the essential questions being explored and have students hand in their writing, or share it with their peers is there is time.

The NCAS Standards in Dance Resources include lessons, units, Model Cornerstone Assessments (MCAs), and curriculum maps as well as guidance documents to help you understand and implement the National Core Arts Standards for Dance. Contributors include members of the dance standards writing and leadership teams and participants in the OPDI courses Implementing the National Core Dance Standards for Dance and Developing Cornerstone Assessments for the New Dance Standards. The contributor's name and bio is provided at the end of each document. Contributors represent all NDEO sectors, teaching in K-12, Higher Education, Private Studio, and Community and Performing Arts organizations. This cross sector representation demonstrates that the standards provide essential content to all constituents.

These standards resources were partially funded by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

BIO: Hilary Harper-Wilcoxon, MFA, BA has been an Associate Professor of Dance and Director of the Dance Program, as well as Department Chair for seven years, at Principia College. She is now leaving the classroom to consult on issues regarding teaching quality in higher ed, using Understanding by Design® (UbD) and Peer-Instruction™ as her guides. She received her college's "Teacher of the Year" award in 2014 and has integrated UbD practices into her classroom and into her work on *The Antony Tudor Dance Studies Committee*. Hilary has presented at *Corps de Ballet International* regarding the Dance Studies' objectives, has been a frequent guest artist in Paris at *Academie Americaine de Danse de Paris*, and is working on a book entitled, *What dancers know that you should too*. Her work has extended to the business world through her workshop, *Dance as Metaphor in Leadership Training™*, which has been presented to major corporations around the world. She has collaborated in developing an innovative and highly successful program for learning-differences adults through the use of dance and theatre. She has published on the *Antony Tudor Ballet* website. She received her MFA in Performing Arts from The University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee and her BA in Political Science from Columbia University.