

Lesson Plan
Poetry as Inspiration for Student Choreography
Grade Level: High School



Overview: This lesson is for 11th and 12th graders in an introductory dance class. This would be used as an initial choreographic activity in a modern dance unit, which integrates other art forms as a connective force in the creative process. The concentric circle as an initial exploratory structure supports collaboration and comfort in working with many different individuals.

Description of Student Work:

Students will use a Haiku poem (predominately based on the natural world) or Senryu poem (thematically grounded in human nature) to support a choreographic exploration. Laban language will function as a bridge between the poetry and student choreography. The use of tableaus and movement transitions will be the framework for the choreographic process, while Laban Movement Analysis will be the mechanism for identifying, reflecting and editing choreographic material as it relates and develops in relation to the poems. Students will:

- Design a tableau (a still image created by the dancers that reflects the poetry) for each line of the poem.
- Assess and edit impact of tableaus using Laban language.
- Each choreographic group will give feedback to another group by identifying Laban components that strongly support the relationship between poems and motion/image.
- Post Laban laminates that have been given during feedback sessions. Alongside, in the suggestion column, post 2 or 3 Laban ideas that would strengthen the group choreography that can be considered during editing rehearsals.
- Share dance studies and assess how the interchange between poetry and choreographic design influenced artistic intent.

Essential Questions: Where do choreographers get ideas for dances? What influences choice-making in creating choreography? How do we use our dance terminology to impact the strength of our choreography?

Standards or Outcomes Met by Student Work:

DA:Cr 1.1 I Experiment with the elements of dance to explore personal movement preferences and strengths and select movements that challenge skills and build on strengths in an original dance study.

DA:Cr 2.1 I Develop an artistic statement for an original dance study or dance. Discuss how the use of movement elements, choreographic devices, and dance structures serve to communicate the artistic statement.

Assessment Criteria/Documentation:

- Choreography reveals tableaux and transitions reflecting imagery evident in the poem.
- Choreography demonstrates a clear beginning, middle, and end that integrate elements of Laban- body, dynamics/effort, relationships, space.
- Self-assess and evaluate the work of other peers using Laban terminology and descriptive language.
- Support peer editing using Laban language and video reflection.

Teaching Required

Assessing Prior Knowledge/Warm-up Activity

Students will briefly discuss the predominate features noted in the introduced haiku and Senryu poems- this may include rhythm, structure, image. Students will relate and post Laban laminated concepts next to the poems. These words will guide a mirroring warm-up completed in two concentric circles. For example, if rising and falling were identified by the students, these actions could initiate slow motion mirroring with their concentric circle partner. The concentric form allows students to interact with multiple partners before working in a larger group for poetry/tableau choreography. The inner circle faces the outer circle. To easily shift to a new partner each dancer takes one step to their right.

Exploring New Knowledge

1. During discussion of haiku/senryu poetry students will relate and map their observations of the poetic structure to dance elements.
2. The two concentric circles will be divided into quarters to devise choreographic groups after improvisational warm-up.
3. Students will explore and design a tableau for first line of poem. Group members will choose two or more elements from Laban Body category to guide the creation of their transition into tableau 1.
4. Students will design tableaux for each line of poem highlighting 2 Laban elements during their transitions between tableaux.
5. Students will assess an adjacent choreographic group charting the Laban components observed on the laminated Laban charts, as well as noting contrasts and similarities between the two groups' choreography.
6. Groups will use peer feedback and video viewing to design choreographic edits.

Cool Down / Reflection on Student Learning

Students will have the opportunity to record their reflections concerning the day's creative process in their dance folders. As classes proceed, students will have the opportunity to share their choreography with the other two groups. At the conclusion of this class, dancers will challenge their imagination by writing their own Haiku or Senryu poem in response to one of the choreographic projects.

Resources Needed:

- I-phone for music
- I-pad for video
- Laban charts of Body/ Dynamics/Effort/ Relationships/ Space
- Laminated charts for posting

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.

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Educator Bio: Randa Broughton (MA, BS) is the Co-Director and Dance Educator of the Arts Centered Program of Teachers Preparatory School in Brooklyn, New York. This 6-12 public school integrates dance, theater, and visual arts into the academic curriculum. As dance educator for Teachers Preparatory School she teaches, choreographs and directs dance performances and a yearly multi-arts festival. Participating in DEL's (Dance Education Laboratory) first Facilitators Training Program serves as a strong springboard for her teaching collaborations. She has studied extensively with multiple artists ranging from Alwin Nikolais, to Zvi Gotheiner, while performing in venues such as St. Marks's Danspace, 92nd Street Y, DIA, BAX, and Washington Square Church.