

Unit - Explorations in the Shape, Patterns, and Dynamics of Abstractionism
Grade Level: High School
Duration: 4 Weeks



<p>Unit or Topic:</p> <p>An Investigation of Abstractionism through the choreographic process. This unit will coincide with the students visual arts unit on Abstractionism.</p>	<p>Course/Subject:</p> <p>A Modern Dance Unit that introduces the Nikolais technique while exploring Abstract works of art as stimulus for the choreographic process.</p> <p>Grade Level: 9-12</p>
<p>Established Goals</p> <p>The details of each standard and standards tasks is presented on the separate attachment of the Learning Plan.</p> <p>DARe7.1.I (a) DARe9.1.I (a) DACr1.I (b) DACr2.1.I (b) DAPr4.1.I (c) DAPr5.1.I (c)</p>	
<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choreographers use a variety of sources as inspiration and transform concepts and ideas into movement for artistic expression. • The elements of dance, dance structures, and choreographic devices serve as both a foundation and a departure point for choreographers. • Space, time, and energy are basic elements of dance. • Dance is perceived and analyzed to comprehend its meaning. 	<p>Essential Questions to Guide Learning & Inquiry</p> <p>Diagnostic Pre-Assessment Question: How do you interpret the term Abstractionism? With a partner complete an everyday gesture. Apply your definition of Abstractionism to your gesture and share the gesture with your partner. What transformations occurred in your partner’s gesture?</p> <p>Unit Questions:</p> <p>How do the choreographic works of Alwin Nikolais, Pina Bausch, and the Brazilian</p>

	<p>Company Grupo Corpo use space as their “canvas”?</p> <p>How does the environment (site specific work, props, sets) influence the motion?</p> <p>In what ways does the choreography shape the environment?</p> <p>How do we design and edit air and floor patterns to develop a relationship to our chosen visual art masterwork?</p> <p>What tempo contrasts influence and heighten the choreographic impact of our work?</p> <p>What have we learned from studying the Nikolais technique that assists our choreographic investigations using abstract constructs?</p> <p>How have the elements we analyzed in the Abstract artwork influenced our choreographic work?</p> <p>Return to the opening diagnostic question: What does Abstractionism mean and how have you used this concept in your choreographic process?</p>
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<p>Students will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to apply abstractionism to the choreographic process. • Connections, both observed and experienced, between the visual art field and the choreographic process relative to abstractionism. • Relationships between the emergence of abstractionism in the visual art realm and in the world of dance. 	<p>Students will be able to ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze, and compare and contrast works by Pina Bausch, Alwin Nikolais, and Grupo Corpo using LMA • Apply dance terminology and descriptive language to evaluate these choreographic works. • Create a choreographic study based on an Abstract masterwork. • Articulate the relationship between their choreographic structure and the Abstract masterwork they used as inspiration.
<p>Assessment Evidence</p>	
<p>Performance Task – Group Task</p> <p>In groups of 3-5, students will construct a choreographic work in three sections based on their chosen Abstract masterwork.</p> <p>3 sections will highlight the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Floor & air pathways *Speed changes *Partnering interactions <p>Each group will decide what is the best order of the three sections during the</p>	<p>Other Assessment Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will view and discuss the choreography of Bausch, Nikolais, and Grupo Corpo- using dance terminology to identify artistic elements. • Students written and verbal responses to visual art work and choreographic designs will demonstrate an ability to apply and connect rhythm, flow, and motion to both art forms. • Using the techniques introduced in

<p>course of construction.</p>	<p>their Visual Art class, students will draw responses to choreography and discuss these responses in a pair share format.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will analyze movement experiences during the study of Nikolais Technique.
<p>Key Criteria for Performance Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency at applying choreographic design principles in relation to interpretation of visual art work. • Develop and show ability to edit an abstract movement study through self- assessment, peer review, and video analysis during the choreographic process. • Assist in the development of a rubric or check list that will be used to score student projects. 	<p>Key Criteria for Other Assessments</p> <p>* Students demonstrate an ability to expand vocabulary (dance terminology, and terms learned in visual arts class) when discussing the following:</p> <p>Choreographic works</p> <p>Abstract masterworks from the visual arts</p> <p>Student choreography</p>

Possible Accommodations – Performance task	Possible Accommodations – other assessments
<p>* Students are at varied technical levels (all beginner to low intermediate). Therefore, all group members are not required to dance through out movement study. Entrances and exits and modified phrases can accommodate all learners. The key is challenging each student to push their physicality in ways that enhances and contributes to the choreographic work. For example, some of the very overweight students have difficulty moving in and out of the floor. Instead of seeing this as limitation, students can explore contrasting levels, directions, formations or speeds as variation tools.</p>	<p>Students who have difficulty writing with descriptive fluidly could work with a partner that acts as a scribe.</p> <p>Oral responses could first be brainstormed in small group discussions before presented to the whole class.</p>

LEARNING PLAN

WEEK 1 Day 1

DA: Re.7.1. I (a) PERCEIVE AND ANALYZE ARTISTIC WORK. – analyze recurring patterns of movement and their relationships in dance in context of artistic intent.

- Brief verbal introduction to Nikolais Technique-motion versus movement/ motion versus emotion.
 - **THEME: SHAPING SPACE** Center work and across the floor introducing basic elements of Nikolais technique emphasizing negative and positive shapes in space.
- Meeting in the circle for observations and reflections: How do you define Abstractionism based on today's dance experience? What movement experiences stand out for you and why?

Day 2

DA: RE.9.1. I (a) APPLY CRITERIA TO EVALUATE ARTISTIC WORK. – Analyze the artistic expression of a dance. Discuss insights using evaluative criteria and dance terminology.

- View clip from Nikolais's *TENT*
- Questions: Use dance terminology to describe the actions you see.
- How is space shaped by the dancers and the set? What choreographic design principles are implemented?
- Use mini-white boards to sketch a response to *TENT*. Use geometric shapes, lines or abstract forms in your drawn response.
- Pair share-compare and contrast your drawing responses. Photo student drawings for future reference.

DA: Cr1.I (b) GENERATE AND CONCEPTUALIZE ARTISTIC IDEAS AND WORK. 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 or dance.

- **IMPROVISATION I – EXPLORING NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE SPACE**
Students will remain with their pair share partner to explore Slo-mo improves investigating negative and positive space. Beginning in a low level shape formation, 1 partner creates a shape with their body attending to the positive and negative space formation. When the drum accompaniment stops the shape former freezes while their partner delineates the negative space using a body part called out by the instructor. This continues as the dancers ascend.

- **IMPROVISATION 2 – INVESTIGATING INDIRECT FLOOR AND AIR PATHWAYS** Students will take a shape upstage, attending to negative and positive space. On sound cue, students will implement indirect pathways traveling downstage following a slow motion tempo. When sound ceases they are to find stillness. What angles and curves of their bodies are formed and how do these shapes design the negative space?
- **IMPROVISATION 3 – DUET SHAPES THAT LOCOMOTE** Return upstage and create a shape with your partner. On sound cue, duo will travel indirectly downstage following a slow motion timing, interlocking, melding, and shifting as they travel, intermittently freezing to sense shape formations of duet.
- These 3 improvisations will introduce the three elements (air and floor patterns, use of a timing extreme, and partnering possibilities) that dancers will highlight in their projects. Gathering material from these experiences will also begin to build bridges between the visual masterwork they choose as stimulus and their choreographic designs.

WEEK 2 Day 1

DA: Pr4.1. I (c) SELECT, ANALYZE, AND INTERPRET ARTISTIC WORK FOR PRESENTATION. – Connect energy and dynamics to movements by applying them in and through all parts of the body. Develop total body awareness so that movement phrases demonstrate variances of energy and dynamics.

- **THEME: SHAKING UP BODY PART ZONES**
- Emphasis during this week's classes will focus on body parts to each other and to space, rearranging their relationship that in turn will promote inventive motional patterns. First half of class over the 2 days will be a continuation of Nikolais Technique.
- Day 1 second half of class: View male solo in ***PINA - Dance, dance, otherwise we are lost (a film for Pina Bausch by Wim Wenders)***
- Questions: What are the various relationships of the dancer's body parts in the actions identified? What surprises occur and how does the environment influence the dance patterns?
- Sketch an abstract response to this solo. What colors, shapes, and patterns are in contrast and in common to the sketches from last week's drawing response to ***TENT?*** Record observations in dance folders.

Day 2

- After the technique portion of class, students will museum walk to observe replicas of three Abstractionist masterwork prints. On large sheets for brainstorming, students will record observations concerning the motion, rhythm, flow, line, and color of the works. Students will improvise, using their observations and musical stimulus by various composers to explore motional portrayals of these paintings.

WEEK 3 Day 1

- **THEME: TIME**
- Continuing with Nikolais technique, students will encounter greater challenges in center & floor work, and traveling patterns, highlighting awareness to dynamic shifts in timing.

DA: Re.9.1I (a) APPLY CRITERIA TO EVALUATE ARTISTIC WORK – Analyze the artistic expression of a dance. Discuss insights using evaluative criteria and dance terminology.

- Video clip from Grupo Corpo **O Corpo**. What are the relationships observed between sound, set, and motion? How do these elements shape the choreographic impact?
- Students will return to the replicas of 3 Abstractionist masterworks, choosing 1 painting to act as the stimulus for their group choreographic project. Students will work in groups of 3-5 dancers.

Day 2

DALCr1.1. I (a) GENERATE AND CONCEPTUALIZE ARTISTIC IDEAS AND WORK. Explore a variety of stimuli for sourcing movement to develop an improvisational or choreographed dance study. Analyze the process and the relationship between the stimuli and the movement.

DA: Pr5.1. I (a) DEVELOP AND REFINE ARTISTIC TECHNIQUES AND WORK FOR PRESENTATION. – Embody technical dance skills (e.g., functional alignment, coordination, balance, core support, clarity of movement, weight shifts, flexibility/range of motion) to replicate, recall, and execute spatial designs and musical or rhythmical dance phrases.

Using Julianna's funhouse idea, a portion of the room will be taped off creating the boundaries of our funhouse. Individuals and groups will use this space to explore and problem-solve using exaggeration and distortion during the creative and rehearsal process of the dance studies.

- Students will review the brainstorm sheets they created in the previous class concerning their chosen masterwork.
- Students will select ideas that they feel speak to one of the required sections of their dance study which are indirect/direct air and floor patterns, extreme speed shifts, and partnering work.

- At the conclusion of rehearsal time each group would have explored the funhouse to stimulate inventive shifts in their choreography.
- Each group will complete a video of the day's choreography to use as an assessment tool and choreographic catalog for following rehearsal.

The following three weeks of 6 classes will be used to complete their movement study design, including peer & instructor feedback, analysis using Laban language, editing, and rehearsal. Students will choose the order of their 3 sections. Each class will begin with Nikolais technique. The exact nuances of theme presented in technique class will be based on the needs of the class. Direct connections between the themes presented in technique class and the choreographic process will be essential. Not only does the class provide a warm-up but the patterns will address problems the students are encountering during the choreographic process.

WEEK 4

DA:CR2,1. I (b)

- Each rehearsal students will receive and give feedback on the dance elements, structures, and devices used to support their choreography through peer assessment, video review, and instructor/group discussions.
- Over this time frame students and instructor will devise a rubric or check list to be used for scoring the final performance of choreographic studies.

WEEK 5

- Experiment with sequence order of developed sections
- What supports a sense of climax and resolution for your dance study?
- How does the order relate to your masterwork painting?

WEEK 6

- Invite members from the visual arts class who do not take dance, to see the nearly finished choreographic studies.
- Which dance study do the guests think goes with which painting and why?
- What language learned in visual arts class can be used to support opinions of the choreographic work?

The students will perform their choreography at the beginning of week 7, one group at a time. Throughout the creative process, music will be explored to accompany the movement studies. Some of Nikolais's original musical compositions, as well as possibly the work of Schoenberg will be introduced to support and accompany the students' choreography. Each presentation will be videoed allowing for later scoring against the rubric/check list. Prior to performing each group will state an answer to the original question given as pre-assessment: HOW DO YOU DEFINE ABSTRACTIONISM? WHAT ELEMENTS OF ABSTRACTIONISM HAS YOUR CHOREOGRAPHIC STUDY ADDRESSED? Students are to respond to each others' ideas-comparing and contrasting their observations, conclusions, and approaches to investigating Abstractionism during the choreographic process and visual arts explorations.

The NCAS Standards in Dance Resources includes 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.

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.