

Dance/New Jersey

Presents

DANCE EDUCATION ON THE MOVE

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Welcome to the third edition of a new initiative for Dance/New Jersey. Dance Education on the Move is a bimonthly e-blast that includes information about dance education resources, lesson ideas, student comments, fun quotes and information from the field. As a Dance/NJ member, you are invited to submit information for the e-blast. Enjoy this issue.

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Dance Observation: Making it meaningful

Observing dance, whether it is a professional company or student class work, is a valuable component of a complete dance program. Frequently, dance observation is overlooked because the emphasis is on students being actively involved in physically learning or creating dances. Observation can be a valuable learning experience when the teacher prepares the student with questions or a specific focus before the observation. A general statement, such as "Tell me what you liked about the dance after the performance," can precede the observation. The teacher can also state specific expectations by telling the students what to look for in the dance, such as "I want you to look for how the dancers use light and strong energy in their locomotor movements." Additional suggestions for directing the students' observation can include asking the students to look for:

- the different ways the dancers use straight and curved pathways.
- movements that take the dancers off the floor into the air.
- how the dance steps match the beat of the music.
- how the dances are similar to each other
- if the dance tells a story.
- movements and shapes that remind you of clouds, (in a dance about clouds).
- how the dance begins and ends.
- different feelings expresses by the dancers.

Following the observation a discussion in which students can express their thoughts and perceptions and hear a variety of other viewpoints is appropriate. You can guide class discussion by asking questions like the following:

- What did you see in the dance?
- What part of the dance was the most exciting and why?
- Describe the different ways the dancers connected to each other.
- Was there a message of the dance?
- Can you suggest another way to end the dance?
- What part of the dance would you like to dance?
- Did the music go well with the dance?
- What movements did you observe?
- How did the movement relate to the title of the dance?
- What do you feel about what you saw?
- What was original or imaginative about the dance?
- What did the dance tell you about the time period it is from?
- What did the dance tell you about the people and their environment?

Fun Quotes About Dance and Beyond

"We should consider everyday lost in which we have not danced at least once."
Nietzsche

"Great dancers are not great because of their technique; they are great because of their passion." Martha Graham

As dancers, we do not move to fulfill any goal beyond the aesthetic requirements of the dance; we understand and experience our freedom as a release from instrumentally intended movement. In dance, we exercise the sheer freedom of going nowhere and doing nothing. We move for the moving; but more, we dance for the dancing." Sondra Horton Fraleigh [Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics]

Resources:

Featured Dance Education Books

**Bennett, J. & Riemer, P. (2006). Rhythmic activities and dance (2nd ed).
Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.**

A collection of some of the most popular recreational dance forms, geared for teachers of K-12 students and for recreation directors and leaders who want to teach easy rhythms and dances for fun and fitness.

Gilbert, A. (1992). Creative dance for all ages. Reston, Virginia: National Dance Association/American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

The author provides a comprehensive resource of practical activities for teaching dance to students of all ages. The chapters focus on the elements of dance: space, time, force, the body, and movement. The book also includes information on assessment, integrating dance with other curricular areas, props, accompaniment for dance classes, and a music and video list.

McGreevy-Nichols, S., Scheff, H., & Sprague, M. (2005) Building dances: A guide to putting movements together. (2nd ed.) Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

This edition contains practical ideas for creating dances. The activities focus on the different grade levels from kindergarten to 12th grade and include assessments for movement skills, cognitive skills, choreographic and creative process and social and aesthetic skills.

Music Resource

Looking for Circus Music? Try, ***Under the Big Top: 100 Years of Circus Music***. Performed by the Great American Mainstreet Band produced by Angel Records (1993). This CD offers 28 classic selections of music to accompany dances about animals, celebrations, locomotor movements or modern dance combinations. There is music for a march, waltz, two-step, blues, rags, an adagio serenade, and a samba. Available at Amazon.com. Used and new CD's and downloads for MP3s single selections.

Reviewer note from Amazon.com "The liner notes are a true delight - David Foil expertly tells of the history of circus music and the musicians who perform it. He

spotlights the career of Sam Pilafian, a performer with the Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey Circus, who provides amazing insight as to his personal experiences as a band member. He explains how difficult the work is, the traditions involved in planning out a show's musical theme, and, of course, why you'll probably never hear Sousa's "Stars & Stripes Forever". Intensely informative and very entertaining."

If you have music resources please send them to me for future newsletters

Students Speak

Before the school year concludes please send in your students responses to the following question; What is your preferred dance form and why? Send the student's age (no names), your name and the school. Also, you are welcome to submit questions for this section. This section is a great vehicle to include student's voices in the newsletter. Thanks