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*The Music Center's Study Guide
to the Performing Arts*

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS FROM THE DANCE SECTION

Just as verbal and written language has an alphabet with words, punctuation and intonation as its base, dance has a vocabulary of movement terms, which includes the dance elements, principles of design and technical terms. It is valuable to know some of these terms and to use them in the correct context when teaching students.

The body is the instrument of the dancer. It enables the dancer to convey ideas, thoughts and feelings, and to show relationships among people and between people and objects.

Dance differs from functional motion, which people use in everyday life, because the movements used by a dancer are selected, developed, abstracted, combined in aesthetic ways and rehearsed. The exception to this is pure improvisation. Transformation also occurs when the dancer enters a heightened state of sensitivity and expression.

The Elements of Dance:

- **Time:**

Time is an idea which helps us to organize activity. Movement can be fast or slow. Dancers must be able to perceive and respond to different speeds (tempos). Time can be thought of musically, internally (kinesthetically), or mechanically.

- **Tempo:**

Tempo can be either the time, speed or rhythm of a piece of music or the pace of any movement or activity.

- **Rhythm:**

Rhythm in dance comes from three sources: movement, music and emotions. Rhythm helps the dancer organize motion by providing a structure. It sets a pulse for the dancer and supports, contrasts and accents the movement. Rhythm can be even, uneven, simple or complex.

- **Space:**

Space is the unlimited area which extends in all directions and within which all things exist. We can describe space in terms of *direction* (forward, backward, sideways, around), *levels* (high, low), and *range* (size, distance). *Focus* is also considered to be a factor in space because the focus of the dancer directs the viewer's eye and can create distance, intimacy or self-absorption. There is also the concept that space can be *positive* (filled) or *negative* (empty).

- **Shape:**

Dancers make shapes or poses with their bodies, both when they move and when they are still. Dancers can move separately, in pairs, trios and in groups to form designs. Moving designs can be created by movements which travel (locomotor) and progress along a specific *path* on the floor, or by the motion patterns performed in the space around the dancer (axial).

- **Force:**

Another word for force is energy. Energy makes dance exciting and interesting. Energy can be loose or swinging, shaking or vibrating, smooth and flowing, bursting and percussive. Energy is affected by body weight and the dancer's relationship to gravity. Dancers use their weight and energy in a variety of ways, such as heavy, light, strong, weak, tight and loose. A dancer controls the flow of energy in a variety of ways. (See 'Tools to Use When Viewing Dance' for more information.)

Some Principles of Form:

- *Contrast*
- *Repetition*
- *Variation*
- *Unity*

AB Form:

Form is the plan, design or procedure for the theme and arrangement of a piece of music. AB form is a two part form.

Abstraction (Abstract is the action word):

Movement which represents feelings, ideas or images in a non-literal form. The elements of dance are used to change, simplify, or exaggerate movement to express the choreographer's ideas or imagination.

Accent:

A strong movement, gesture or sound.

Action/Reaction:

When used in dance, there is an action or movement which triggers or causes a second movement which is a reaction to the first movement.

Action Words:

Refers to movements which have a specific action such as running, twisting or jumping.

Active Stillness:

The state of being still in an energized shape rather than a relaxed one.

Aesthetic:

Something artistic, representing artistic point of view, intent or style.

Aesthetics:

A branch of philosophy dealing with the principles and interpretation of the concept of beauty and tastefulness.

Allemande Left:

A round or square dance term indicating that 'corners' join left hands, turn around each other and go back to place.

Alternating:

To arrange, perform or occur in turns, parts or sides (e.g. they were alternating between sound and silence in their dance).

Ancient:

Referring to times of early human history.

Apache:

A member of a tribe of North American Indians inhabiting the Southwestern part of the United States.

Appalachian:

Referring to the culture of people who live in and around the Appalachian Mountains, in Eastern North America.

Archaeological Dig:

An excavation of historically significant artifacts.

Architecture:

The design or style of a building.

Astronomy:

The scientific study of the stars and the planets and their movements.

Asymmetry (asymmetrical):

An uneven proportion in time, space, or energy, opposed to conventional balance. Not symmetrical.

Axial Movement:

Movement which is stationary; done in place without traveling. Examples are stretching, twisting, falling, turning in place, and gesturing.

Bacteria:

A microscopic plant organism. Three cell types include: cocci (round), bacilli (long and straw-like), spirilla (corkscrew-shaped).

Balance:

Balance can refer to either the balance of weight or the spatial arrangement. Weight or designs which are evenly balanced on both sides of center is called symmetrical and that which is balanced off-center is called asymmetrical.

Ballet:

A highly specialized form of dance spectacle combining the arts of music, choreography and dancing to create an expressive work of art.

Base of Support:

The body part, or parts, of an individual or a connected group which is supporting weight.

Baskethold Position:

Dancers stand in a circle or line and spread their own arms sideways in front of the persons on either side. Hands are joined with persons one beyond the dancer on each side. The underneath arm corresponds to the traveling direction. (If the basket moves right the right arm is under.)

Big Circle:

A large circle formation involving an unspecified number of people, as contrasted with small circles composed of a specific number of dancers.

Break:

A term used in African dance when the drummer plays a transition between movement combinations and it is also used in tap dance as a combination of steps which ends one section of choreography.

Butterfly Position:

This is a partner position, in which the partners can be facing either front to front or back to back, where the arms of both partners are spread widely outward to both sides.

Call and Response:

An African musical tradition, where a leader sings or chants a line to which the groups responds by singing a response or repeating the call. This can also be a call given by the master drummer to indicate that a new rhythm and/or dance step is to be done by the group. It can also refer to a dance leader who calls out or demonstrates dance steps to which the group responds by repeating or performing the correct steps or combination.

Chance Dance:

A dance made up with specific movement, elements or ideas that are created and/or performed in a random way.

Cantilever:

A projecting beam supporting a balcony or similar structure. In dance, it is a counter-balanced position with partners, trios or small groups

Celebration/Bravura:

A term used by the American Indian Dance Theatre to describe a category of Native American cultural dances which are done for the purpose of celebration, challenge and competition.

Center In:

A circle dance term meaning to move into the circle and back out.

Changing Ceremony:

Refers to the ceremonies of the Native American cultural groups which mark the passage from childhood to adulthood.

Chant:

A tune or monophonic song which is sometimes spiritual in nature, or a rhythmic call or shout which is repetitive, and often focuses on collectively saying a message or prayer.

Characteristic:

A distinctive feature showing part person or thing.

Chassé:

A ballet term describing a step in which one foot literally chases the other foot out of its position; done in a series (similar to a gallop or slide).

Choreograph:

The process or action of creating a dance.

Choreographer:

A person who creates dances.

Choreography:

(Literally, 'dance writing.') The creation and composition of dances by arranging or inventing steps, movements and patterns of movement.

Circle:

A round figure used in a variety of ways in dance - it can refer to a formation of people forming a circle together or can refer to the path described by a movement, as well as a body shape.

Circle Left:

A Big Circle or square dance term meaning to join hands and move to the left (clockwise).

Circle Right:

A circle or square dance term meaning to join hands and move to the right (counterclockwise).

Circle Up Four:

A square dance term meaning for two couples or four people to come together, join hands and circle together.

Circle and Square Dance Terms:

(See the AMAN dance Units)

Cinquain Poetry:

A Japanese form of poetry which has five lines. The first line is a one-word noun; the second line are two action words; the third line has three words which are descriptive; the fourth line uses four lines to tell some about the subject; the fifth line is a one-word synonym or simile for the subject of the poem.

Classical:

Dance or music which is from a classic period and emphasizes a specific form and style of a culture and period. It is considered the highest level.

Classical Ballet:

The style of ballet dancing that adheres strictly to the traditions of ballet as developed by past generations of choreographers and dancers.

Clockwise:

A dance term which refers to moving in the direction indicated by the hands of a clock (to the left).

Clog Dance:

A form of tap dance in which the dancer wears clogs - wooden shoes or shoes with thick wooden soles. It developed from folk dances common when peasants wore clogs.

Coda:

The final section of a work or melody.

Code:

A prearranged word or phrase representing a message, for secrecy; a system of words, letters, sounds, gestures or symbols used to represent or indicate a specific movement idea in dance which is performed when that specific code signal is used.

Collage:

An artistic composition made by fixing bits of paper, cloth, string, etc. to a surface. It can also be used to indicate an artistic mixture of bits and

pieces of music and/or dance phrases or sections which are combined together to make an artistic statement.

Color:

What the eye sees when light is reflected off an object. An element of art.

Combination:

In dance, this usually refers to a sequence of dance steps which are combined together into a specific pattern.

Composition:

A dance or piece of music or work of art which has been created and the way in which the parts are put together to form a whole.

Concentration:

To employ all one's thought, attention or effort onto something.

Cone:

A solid or hollow round body that narrows to a smaller end point.

Connecting Points:

Can refer to parts of a body or sculpture which touch another part.

Constellation:

A group of fixed stars.

Contemporary:

Up-to-date, current.

Contemporary Dance:

The dance as a reflection of the period in which it is composed; a manifestation of the world and time in which the choreographer lives.

Contract:

In dance this word refers to a movement which shortens the muscles and is the opposite action of extend.

Contraction:

A specific term in Martha Graham technique that coordinates with the intake of breath.

Contrast:

To compare or oppose two things so as to show their differences. In dance, two contrasting movements might be different in energy, space (size, direction, level), design (open/close, symmetrical/asymmetrical) timing (fast/slow, even/uneven).

Corps de Ballet:

The dancers in a ballet who do not appear as soloists.

Costumes:

The fabric, masks and props which are worn by the dancers. The costumes make a difference in how the dancers can move. They can even change the shape and size of the body.

Counterbalance:

A weight which balances another weight. In dance, it usually refers to one or more dancers combining their weight in stillness or in action to achieve a movement or design which is inter-dependent.

Counterclockwise:

A dance term which indicates that the dancers should travel in the opposite direction of the hands of a clock (to the right).

Create:

To originate or bring something into existence.

Creativity:

The process of formulating a fresh and distinctly personal statement or form.

Criticism:

A reasoned opinion, implying careful judgment.

Culture:

The customs and civilization of a particular people or group.

Dance Captain:

Refers to the person who rehearses or teaches routines or choreography to the other dancers.

Dance Movement:

Movement that serves the purpose of any dance form is dance movement. In dance as art, movement is selected and organized on the basis of its function as a medium of expression rather than its function as work or play.

Dance Study:

A simple dance composition, usually based on a specific concept or movement idea which is explored, developed and sequenced.

Dawota Bell:

A double gong bell from West Africa. The two parts produce two different pitches.

Design:

A combination of lines or shapes to form a decoration; the general form or arrangement of something; a mental plan, a purpose.

Design Elements (Visual Arts):

The visual characteristics of the design elements are line, color, value, shape, texture and space.

Dialogue:

Words spoken by a character. In dance, a conversation can also be communicated in a movement dialogue.

Dimension:

The apparent size of a movement, relative both to previous movement and to the stage space.

Diplomat:

A member of the diplomatic service of a country.

Direction:

A term indicating relative lines of movement. It can be from the perspective of an individual dancer's body or from the perspective of a traditional stage.

Diorama:

A small three-dimensional representation of a scene, viewed through a window or hole.

Director:

The person who is responsible for making the final artistic choices in how a work is presented.

Distortion:

A change from the normal or average, whether by extraordinary length, complexity of movement, abruptness or some other means.

Djellidoun:

A dance of celebration from Mali.

Djimbe Drum:

Mushroom-shaped drums made from a hollowed out log with goat skin across the top. Fan-shaped pieces of metal are anchored across the top to capture the sun's rays.

Djun djun:

A drum shaped like a barrel, made from a hollowed-out log with animal skin stretched across both ends.

Dome:

A rounded roof with a circular base.

Dos-a-dos:

Partners face each other, then pass each other - right shoulder to right shoulder - moving around each other back to back and returning to their original positions.

Dream:

To imagine, envision or invent.

Duplicate:

To copy the movement or shapes of someone else. This can be done simultaneously or after the original.

Duration:

The length of a musical sound or movement.

Dynamics:

The energy of movement, expressed in varying intensity, accent and quality.

Eight Effort Actions:

(See 'Tools to use when viewing dance,' pages 13,14 of Dance Addendum) They include press, flick, punch, float, slash, glide, wring and dab.

El Dia De Los Muertos:

Spanish meaning 'The Day of the Dead,' which is a holiday celebrated in Mexico, North America and many Central and South American countries.

Elements of Design:

Color, line, value, shape, form and texture.

Elements of Dance:

Time - beat, rhythm, tempo, meter, accent, phrase, etc.
Space - direction, level, size, range, focus, locomotor and axial, etc.

Energy/Force - quality and quantity of energy as well as use of weight, etc.

Emotion:

An intense mental feeling such as love, hate, fear or sadness.

Energy Quality:

The way in which energy is released, rather than the amount of energy released. In dance these terms can be swinging, vibrating, percussive, sustained, etc.

Environment:

The surroundings, including sounds, atmosphere and objects, of any given place.

Essence:

All that makes a thing what it is; it's nature.

Ethnic Dance:

The dance of a people of common cultural, racial and/or religious heritage. Essentially, such dance has its time, place and context for function and performance within the culture of which it is a part. Ethnic dance staged and presented in a theatrical setting solely for audience entertainment demonstrates traditional material in a different context for a different purpose.

Ewe People:

A cultural group of people living in Togo and Southeast Ghana in Western Africa.

Exhale:

To breathe out.

Expand:

To unfold or spread out.

Exploration:

Experimental effort in the search for movement, sequence or form.

Expressionism:

A style of painting, drama or music seeking to express the artist's or writer's emotional experience, rather than to express the physical world realistically.

Figure:

A pattern traced in dancing or a formation of a group, such as a circle or square.

Focus:

In general, a gathering of forces to increase the projection of intent; in particular, 'focus' refers to the dancer's line of sight.

Folk Dance:

The dance associated with nationalistic purpose, usually performed today as a surviving portion of a traditional celebration.

Form:

The organization or plan for patterning movement; the sequence of the movement.

Flow:

The way in which energy is released in performing any given movement or phrase. Rudolf Laban initiated the words Free-flow (movement which is free and natural) and Bound-flow (movement which is restrained).

Freedom:

The condition of being free and independent. In dance, freedom is best expressed within specific limitations of form and also requires discipline to develop physical and expressive abilities (and capacity) and personal responsibility toward the safety of oneself and others as one moves in space with energy.

Gesture:

All movements of the body which are not supporting weight.

Ghana:

A country in West Africa.

Goddess:

A female god who is thought to have supernatural powers.

Grand Chain:

A square dance term indicating that all four ladies place right hands in the center to form a star as they catch hands, and move to the left around circle to the opposite man. The man puts his right arm around lady's waist and turns her around counterclockwise to face same couple again. Ladies return to partner in the same manner.

Grand Right and Left (right and left grand):

Partners face, grasp right hands, move forward to the next person grasping left hands, move to the next grasping right hands and so on around the circle until partners meet. Ladies move clockwise, men counterclockwise around the circle.

Grapevine Step:

A three-part folkdance step: e.g. R foot crosses in front of L foot, L foot steps to left side, and right foot crosses behind the left.

Healing Song:

A song or chant which is thought to have magical or healing powers and is a form of prayer.

Illusion:

Something which appears to be real, but is not. In dance and theatre, illusion is created with lights, film, sets, and the manipulation of space, weight, time or motion.

Imagery:

Symbols created to project a statement or emotion from imagination into visual form.

Images:

A representation of the outward form of a person or thing or the optical appearance of something projected or reflected in a mirror or through a lens.

Imagination:

The ability to imagine creatively, or to use this ability in a practical way to solve problems.

Imitation:

To copy a movement, design or style.

Improvisation:

The invention of movement without previous preparation, but within the structure of the dance format as a whole.

Improvise:

To compose, express or create something spontaneously (impromptu).

Inhale:

To breathe in.

Inner World:

The world within ourselves; inner consciousness.

Intensity:

Presence of a greater or lesser degree of energy; relative level of energy concentration.

Isolation:

Movement done with one body part or a small section of the body. Examples are: rolling the head, shrugging the shoulders, and circling the pelvis.

Jig:

A bright dance, involving a series of springy steps on the toes. Especially popular as a folk dance in Ireland.

Journey:

A continued course of going or traveling.

Karanga People:

A cultural group of people who are part of the Shona group in Zimbabwe.

Lamentation:

An expression of grief.

Leader:

One who leads or takes the principle part.

Leadership:

Taking on the role of a leader.

Level:

An aspect of space dealing with height from the floor, ranging from a prone position to the greatest altitude of a leap; usually thought of in terms of horizontal planes.

Lifts:

When one or more dancers are suspended in the air, supported by one or more dancers.

Line of Direction:

A term used in circle dances which means counterclockwise.

Line:

The path of a dot through space. (One of the elements of art.) In dance, the line of the body design or the pathway taken.

Living Photograph:

Refers to an individual or group design which is still, but has active energy being projected outward.

Locomotor Movement:

Movement that progresses through space; movement that travels from one spot to another.

Los Viejitos:

A Spanish word meaning 'old men' or 'old people.'

Main Figure:

A square dance term meaning the pattern of movement done by the head couple. The main figure is usually repeated by each of the other couples, as well.

Map:

A plan for the path patterns and movements of a dance and the number of people involved.

Master Drummer:

A term which refers to a highly skilled percussionist in an African musical group.

Mental Image Pictures (Mental Image):

Pictures which one has in one's mind.

Metaphor:

The application of a word or phrase to something that it does not literally apply in order to indicate a comparison with a literal usage; e.g., food for thought.

Mime:

The art of dramatic representation by movement and gesture only without words; also, a performer specializing in this art.

Modern Dance:

A 20th century art form, serving to project the choreographer's intent through the medium of bodily movement, with no arbitrary restrictions on the choice of movement available to the choreographer.

Motif:

A recurring design or feature in a literary, musical or artistic work.

Motif Writing:

(See *Artsource*® Unit, Eugene Loring, Sample lesson III)

Motivation (motivate):

An incentive or inspiration to do something.

Movement Theme:

A formulation of movement representing a central concern or unifying intent; such a theme is the basis for development and manipulation.

Myth:

A traditional story containing ideas or beliefs about ancient times or about natural events; an idea that forms part of the beliefs of a group but is not founded on fact.

Mythical Creature:

An animal or creature which does not exist in reality, but only in the imagination and stories.

Nature Poems:

Poems inspired by, or about nature.

Negative Space:

Space which is unfilled. It is often defined by the positive space around it.

Oppression:

Continual cruel, harsh and unjust treatment or conditions.

Outer World:

The world outside the dancer; outer consciousness; communicating to others or an audience.

Palette:

A spectrum of available movements and energy choices used by a dancer.

Papier Mâché:

Moulded paper pulp used in art projects.

Passion:

A great enthusiasm for something.

Path or Pathway:

A line along which a person or a part of the person, such as an arm or head, moves; e.g., her arm took a circular path or he traveled in a geometric path.

Pattern:

Can refer to a repeated sequence of movement ideas, a rhythmic movement sequence, a spatial design on the floor or in the air and a specific relationship or grouping of people.

Penny Whistle:

A metal, end-blown flute popular in the British Isles.

Percussion:

One of the four instrumental families whose sounds are produced either by hitting, scraping or shaking. Percussion music is usually rhythmic and has a steady beat.

Percussive Movement:

A quality of movement characterized by sharp starts and stops; staccato jabs of energy.

Performance Energy:

A higher-than-normal level of concentration and directed energy.

Persia:

The ancient geographical area and country of Persia which is now called Iran.

Phrase:

A short movement theme made up of one or more movement motifs.

Pitch:

The location of a tone on a tonal scale (low to high).

Poem:

A literary composition in verse, especially one expressing deep feeling or thought in an imaginative way.

Points:

Refers to the different points of balance of a piece of sculpture or balance points of a dancer.

Positive Space:

Space which is filled; often used as a design mechanism for defining negative space.

Premier dancer:

A ballet term which refers to the soloists.

Principles of Design:

Balance, symmetry, asymmetry, contrast, dominance, repetition, rhythm and theme and variation.

Private:

Something personal, or anything belonging to a particular person.

Projection:

Refers to sending one's energy outward in a general or specific direction. In art, can also mean something which extends outward from the surface of an object.

Promenade:

Couples move counterclockwise around the set or large circle in promenade position (partners stand side by side, holding right hand to right, left to left).

Quality:

The characteristics of movement determined by the way energy is used (examples are swinging, percussive, suspended, sustained and vibratory).

Range:

The relative scope or extent of movement.

Rap: (Music)

A contemporary style of music incorporating rhythmic chanting and percussion sounds. Born out of the young, urban hip-hop culture, it's rhymed verbal (often poetic) messages are performed against cool, rhythmic patters driven by a strong basic beat. The message often addresses social and political concerns. It's sources reach back to West African cultures.

Reach:

To extend a part of the body outward or toward someone or something; to establish communication with another.

Reclining:

To have, or put, one's body in a more or less horizontal or leaning position.

Reconstruct:

To recreate a dance from the past.

Reel:

A lively group dance, originating among Scottish Highlanders and later developed into American and French Canadian dances which incorporate cultural adaptations into the original dance form.

Reflection:

To focus one's deep thoughts on an idea, dance, project or action.

Rehearsal:

A practice or trial performance.

Rehearse:

To practice before performing in public.

Release:

Part of the technical vocabulary of Martha Graham in which movement of a contraction is released and the spine and center of the body extended or lengthened.

Repertoire:

A collection of dances which a company knows and is prepared to perform.

Repetition: (Repetitive)

To repeat a movement or phrase one or more times.

Representation:

To symbolize something and represent it through your creativity and expression in an artform.

Rhythm:

A structure of movement patterns in time.

Rhythm Pattern:

A structure of beats or movements which can be repeated.

Ritual:

A procedure regularly followed; the series of actions used in a religious or other ceremony.

Round Dance:

A general term for any group dance in which the dancers move in a circle.

Score:

A term used in dance to record, illustrate and identify the parts or sections of a dance.

Sculptor:

A person who sculpts; makes sculpture.

Sculpture:

The art of carving in wood or stone or producing shapes in material such as paper, clay, stone or cast metal; a work made in this way.

Seasonal/Functional:

One of the terms used by the American Indian Dance Theatre to categorize the dances of different cultural groups which have to do with seasons or functions, such as preparing for a hunt.

Self-Expression:

An unstructured and natural manifestation of personal feelings.

Sequence:

The continuation and order in which a series of movements and shapes occurs.

Shekere:

A versatile rattle made from a gourd wrapped in a beaded macramé net.

Shape:

In dance this refers to the positioning of different body parts, or configuration of the body and its parts.

Signature Piece:

(See *Artsource*® Unit, Alvin Ailey, Sample Lesson II). Refers to a piece of choreography that has become a representation of the style and essence of a specific dance company or choreographer.

Signing: (Sign Talk)

A general term which refers to the gestural, non-verbal language used by those who are deaf.

Size:

Relative magnitude, established by enlarging, maintaining or limiting the amount of space used for a movement within a given area.

Spacial Pattern:

The gestural movements above the ground, or traveling on the ground, made by a dancer in space.

Spell:

Words or actions which have magical power.

Spiral:

In dance, this term refers to either a gestural movement or a path which advances, ascends or descends in a continuous curve that winds round a central point or axis.

Spirit:

A person's mind or feelings or animating principle as distinct from the body; life and consciousness not associated with a body.

Spiritual/Ceremonial:

A term used by the American Indian Dance Theatre to categorize dance and music of different Native American cultural groups which have a spiritual and ceremonial function.

Stop-Action:

Action which is stopped quickly and held in active stillness.

Story Structure:

The use of a book or story to sequence and give an outline of structure for a dance; narrative form.

Style:

A personal or characteristic manner of performing or choreographing as opposed to the subject or content of a dance. Also can refer to different approaches to dance which distinguish it in terms of a certain set of characteristics usually developed within a certain period of time and/or culture. (Examples include classical, jazz, modern, folk, social, contemporary.)

Suite:

A musical term describing an instrumental sequence made up of a series of pieces. Used in dance to indicate a sequence of related dances.

Suspension:

A quality of movement that occurs in a moment of resistance to gravity, such as the instant in which the dancer hangs in space at the top of a leap.

Sustained Movement:

A quality of movement that is smooth and unaccented. There is no apparent start or stop, only a continuous energy flow.

Swinging Movement:

A quality of movement established by a fall with gravity, a gain in momentum, a loss of momentum and the repeated cycle of fall and recovery, like that of a pendulum or playground swing.

Symbol:

A mark or sign embodying certain characteristics to convey specific meaning.

Symmetry (also symmetrical):

Parts which are divided in such a way that they are the same in size and shape and similar in position on either side of a dividing line or central point.

Tableau: (pl. is tableaux)

A picturesque grouping of persons; form a 'living photograph.'

Tango:

An Argentinian ballroom dance in 4/4 time with elaborate posturing and a characteristic rhythm

Technique:

The physical skills of a dancer which enable him or her to execute the steps and movements required in different routines, dances or choreography.

Tempo:

The pace or speed at which movement progresses and which is relative to an individual dancer or group.

Theme and Variation:

A form in which an initial theme is established and then is followed by variations. The variations are excursions from the basic theme, without altering its essential character.

Timbre:

The color or tonal quality of a sound.

Time:

Beat, rhythm, tempo, meter, accent, phrase, etc.

Transformation:

To make a great change in the physical appearance, character, expression or spiritual aspects; a shift of consciousness. A heightened state of sensitivity and expression.

Translate:

To express something in another language or through an art form. Or to explain the meaning of something not understood.

Transition:

The process of going from one movement idea to another.

Traveling Movements:

Actions which take a dancer from one spot in space to another spot (e.g., walk, run, gallop, slide).

Two-Step:

A dance combination which is a step with one foot, followed by a step next to it with the other foot and a third step in the same direction by the first step (step-together-step). It can progress from side to side, forward or backward.

Unique:

Being unusual or remarkable; distinct.

Unison:

Movements which are performed identically by more than one dancer.

Unity:

The feeling of wholeness in a dance which is achieved when all of the parts work well together.

Variation(s):

A repetition of a movement or melody in a different form. Changing aspects of the piece while keeping its essential ingredients.

Variety:

A quantity or range of different things.

Vibratory Movement:

A quality of movement characterized by rapidly repeated bursts of percussive movements.

Visualization:

The process or technique of creating mental visual images.

Withdraw:

To pull away from someone or something.

Work Song:

A song which is sung in order to maintain a rhythm to help ease the stress and strain of hard, tiring and repetitive work.

Zimbabwe:

A country in Southern Africa.

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Definitions for this glossary of dance terms were drawn from the following sources:

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TOOLS TO USE WHEN VIEWING DANCE

THE LABAN EIGHT EFFORT ACTIONS

Effort Action Vocabulary: The Effort Action vocabulary is part of a system for looking at movement which was conceived by Rudolf Laban, a dance pioneer from the early part of the Twentieth Century. His body of work on how to analyze movement and teach modern educational dance is quite large and in-depth.

Historically, Rudolf Laban conceived his movement research during World War II when he was asked to observe and increase the efficiency of workmen operating machines. He designed a new way to observe movement, which was later applied to the study and observation of dance movement. The principles which he discovered are applied to the teaching and documenting of many forms of dance technique and movement exploration today. This knowledge promotes the mastery of movement in both its bodily and mental aspects.

These are two examples of “Labanotation” - a method used for diagraming dance movements. (Courtesy of International Library of African Music, Grahamstown, South Africa.)



IBO Dance, Nigeria



BUGALOO, American popular dance

It is very helpful to understand the way in which Laban identified eight basic effort actions. These actions are analyzed in terms of weight, time, space and flow factors. On the next page is a summary of how each action is broken down into these elements. This system is a very useful tool to use when working in dance.

THE EIGHT EFFORT ACTIONS

- Every action has a *weight factor* which is either *strong* or *light*.
- Every action has a *time factor* which is *sudden* (quick) or *sustained* (slow).
- Every action has a *space factor*, which is *direct* or *indirect* in the path it takes.
- Every action has a *flow* which is either *bound* or *free*, meaning that the action goes with the flow of energy or restricts the flow by increasing the resistive tension.

<u>Action</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Space</u> (path)	<u>Words</u>
PRESS	Strong	Slow	Direct	Firm, Resistive, Sturdy, Pushing, Powerful, Deliberate
* The Flow is obviously bound				
FLICK	Light	Quick	Indirect	Flickering, Sparkling, Crisp, Fluttering, Stops, Starts, Twitching
* The Flow is obviously free (tap dancing is an example)				
PUNCH	Strong	Quick	Direct	Thrust, Lunge, Strong & Straight, Jab, Poke, Shove
* The Flow can be either bound or free				
FLOAT	Light	Slow	Indirect	Undulating, Buoyant, Hovering, Suspended
* The Flow can be either bound or free				
SLASH	Strong	Quick	Indirect	Swiping, Whipping, Beating, Throwing, Flinging, Splashing
* The Flow is usually free				
GLIDE	Light	Slow	Indirect	Smooth, Sliding
* The Flow is usually bound				
WRING	Strong	Slow	Indirect	Twisted, Screwed, Powerful, Writhing Stretching, Pulling
* The Flow is usually bound				
DAB	Light	Quick	Direct	Bouncing, Darting, Shooting, Tapping, Shaking
* The Flow is usually free				

DANCE CRITERIA AND RUBRIC

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE BASED ASSESSMENT?

The term *assessment* encompasses all the ways that a teacher checks on the progress and understanding of students as they learn. It involves questions which cause them to reflect on the experiences they have just had and encourages them to make connections to their lives, or other things they know about.

Performance Based Assessment places responsibility for learning on the students and helps them pick up new threads of understanding and perception, encouraging them to weave these threads, textures and colors into the larger tapestry of their total experience.

Ideally, assessment questions should be embedded throughout the lesson, rather than just at the end. It is important to note, however, that you do not want to disrupt the flow of energy in a dance lesson by interrupting the physical energy which has been created. The balance between assessment and flow of energy is one which requires intuition and experience.

WHY ASSESS THE ARTS?

The arts are core subjects, K-12 grades. In order to present them with integrity and meaning, the skills and knowledge gained by students must be assessed. Art lessons need to be more than just an activity, or recreational. Rather, the arts should be presented as an authentic learning experience with clear objectives and measurable student outcomes.

When an art task is presented to students, the teacher should provide criteria. Work with the students to develop a rubric which can measure their success in achieving the criteria. Then, students are clear on what they are working toward, the elements and principles which should be included in the project, and other pertinent information.

When the students understand the criteria and how it will be measured, they are more focused and motivated to do their best. It also objectifies the work so that students themselves can see what they need to work on.

CRITERIA: It is very important that the specific criteria components are the same for each level of the rubric. The same ingredients must be measured at each level of the score, but with differing degrees of fulfillment and quality in completing the task.

SUGGESTED COMPONENTS FOR BUILDING DANCE CRITERIA

When designing a culminating task or study for a lesson, think about what you want the students to know and do, then create criteria which clearly identifies each aspect of the task. See the *Assessment* section, page iv, in the Artsource Introduction for definitions of *assessment*, *criteria*, and *rubric*.

SUGGESTED COMPONENTS FOR BUILDING CRITERIA AND A RUBRIC IN DANCE

1. concentration
2. beginning, middle, end for the study or work
3. degree to which the criteria for the specific assignment was met and fulfilled
4. elements of dance integrated into assignment (time, space, force or energy)
5. artistic principles demonstrated in the assignment (unity, variety, balance, contrast, etc.)
6. innovation, imagination and expression are apparent in work
7. coordination and effective use of body and flow of energy
8. cooperation demonstrated between partners or group members

RUBRIC SAMPLE based on a score of 1-4, with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest.
This is a way that students can score themselves or a teacher can score them on an assignment.

4 Above Proficient

- demonstrates a consistently high level of focus and concentration throughout
- has a very clear beginning, middle and ending for the assignment
- goes beyond the assignment in fulfilling criteria for the assignment
- incorporates many dance elements such as level changes, rhythm, direction changes, floor pattern, energy, spatial designs and patterns
- integrates three or more artistic principles such as: contrast, variety, unity, emphasis, balance,
- demonstrates exceptional innovation, expressiveness, imagination and originality in work
- exceptional use of the body with coordination and flow of energy
- effectively cooperates with partner or group and shows a strong commitment to the work.

3 Proficient

- demonstrates a high level of focus and concentration throughout
- has a clear beginning, middle and ending for the assignment
- does a very good job in fulfilling all the criteria for the assignment
- incorporates some dance elements such as level changes, variations in rhythm, energy, time, spatial design and patterns
- uses two or three principles such as: variety, unity, contrast, emphasis, balance
- demonstrates innovation, expressiveness, imagination and originality in work
- very good use of the body with coordination and flow of energy
- cooperates with partner or group and shows a commitment to the work

2 Approaching Proficient

- demonstrates adequate focus and concentration throughout; needs to be more consistent
- has a beginning, middle and ending for the assignment, but needs some clarity
- fulfills most of the criteria for the assignment
- incorporates a few dance elements in the work
- uses one or two principles in the work
- demonstrates some innovation, expressiveness, imagination and originality in work
- good use of body with coordination and flow
- mostly cooperates with partner or group , mild commitment to work

1 Below Proficient

- demonstrates no focus or concentration
- has a beginning, middle and ending, but needs to be clearer and stronger
- leaves out most aspects of criteria for the assignment
- incorporates one or two dance elements, but needs more development
- may use an artistic principle, but needs more refinement
- demonstrates little innovation, expressiveness, imagination and originality in work.
- inadequate use of body with coordination and lacks flow of energy
- has many problems cooperating with partner or group, needs more commitment to the work.