

## Developing Site-Specific Choreography

### Topic, or Concept, and Goal (if the lesson is part of a learning experience or a unit plan)

This lesson introduces students to site-specific choreography and helps them develop an understanding of how to utilize the location to reflect an intended theme or idea.

**Important Note:** This lesson is the first lesson followed the lesson titled “Site-Specific Choreography on Camera”

### Grade

Grades: 9-12

### Class

Part 1 of 2: Site Specific Choreography; 90 minutes

### State Dance and/or Physical Education (dance) Standards

#### Nebraska Fine Arts/Dance Standards:

FA.12.3.1: Students will employ dance elements and choreographic principles, structures, and processes to create dances that communicate ideas, images, feelings, and experiences.

FA 12.3.1.a: Generate movement and create dance phrases to communicate ideas, images, feelings, and experiences based on inspiration from a variety of sources

FA 12.3.1.b: Create a dance sequence that uses a variety of dance elements to implement simple choreographic structures and principles to fulfill choreographic intent.

FA 12.3.1.d: Manipulate movement ideas, choose from a variety of solutions to movement problems, and work with others to create choreography.

FA 12.3.3 Students will understand how to apply performance values (kinesthetic awareness, concentration, focus, and etiquette) to enhance dance performance.

FA 12.3.3.c Understand how self-assessment, teacher, and peer feedback can be used to refine dance performance.

#### Nebraska Physical Education (dance) standards:

PE.HS.13.1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities

PE.HS.13.1.a: Creates and performs a dance sequence that uses a variety of dance elements to implement simple choreographic structures

PE.HS.13.1.c: Performs a choreographed dance individually and/or with others

PE.HS.13.2: Applies knowledge of concepts, principles, tactics, and strategies related to movement and performance to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness

PE.HS.13.2.b: Applies dance terminology to describe how elements of movement and choreographic structures are used to communicate ideas in dance

PE.HS.13.2.c: Investigates dance opportunities that can be pursued in the local environment

PE.HS.13.3: Recognizes the benefits of physical activity and exhibits responsible personal and social behavior in a variety of physical activity settings

PE.HS.13.3.c: Selects and participates in dance that meets the need for self-expression and enjoyment.

**National Dance Society *National Dance Education Standards Framework***

**Strand 4:** Choreography, Performance, and Production

**Standard 4.1:** Choreographic design, principles, and structures

**Performance indicator (9-12)** Student will create a site-specific or environmental movement study at a specific location.

**Learner Objectives or Outcomes** (must include one “real world” objective or outcome for assessment)

**Cognitive:** Students will analyze movement to differentiate between movement components and infer how those movement components affectively develop a movement theme through participation in thoughtful discussions and completion of a theme development worksheet.

**Psychomotor:** Students will synthesize their understanding of movement themes by laying the groundwork for a site-specific dance, as evidenced by developing a movement theme, picking a location to enhance their movement theme, and exploring movement potential within that space.

**Affective:** Students will question their creative process and make revisions to clarify their movement themes/messages by personally reflecting on the theme, observing the audience’s perspective, and communicating with their teammate.

<b>Rubric: Simple Teamwork</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Teamwork</b>	Team members work together well throughout the process and they give equally valuable contributions toward the end goal.	Team members work fairly well together, and everyone gives some contributions to the end goal.	Team members have some difficulties working together and/or contributions to the end goal are either limited or unequally distributed among the group.	Team members struggle to work together and have difficulties contributing anything toward the end goal.

<b>Rubric: In-Depth Teamwork</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Beginning</b>
<b>Listening</b>	Student listens with good eye contact and nonverbal acknowledgments. Gives equal attention to each members’ contributions.	Student usually listens with good eye contact and some nonverbal acknowledgments. Gives fairly equal attention to members of the group.	Student makes fleeting eye contact and minimal nonverbals. Only focuses on the contributions of 1 or 2	Student doesn’t make eye contact or give nonverbals. Struggles to give attention and may often focus on things

			members of the group.	outside of the group.
<b>Communicating</b>	Student voices ideas with respect for their teammates. Encourages group cohesion with their verbal & nonverbal communication.	Student usually voices ideas with respect. Occasionally encourages group cohesion with their verbal & nonverbal communication.	Student sometimes voices ideas but doesn't do much to contribute to the group's cohesion.	Student struggles to give ideas or make comments that are on-task/appropriate. Often detracts from the group cohesion.
<b>Contributing</b>	Student openly shares ideas, builds off other's ideas, synthesizes information, and/or makes decisions in order to progress the group's goals.	Student usually shares ideas, builds off other's ideas, synthesizes information, and/or makes decisions, but may show some hesitancy.	Student sometimes shares ideas, builds off other's information, and/or makes decisions, but often hesitates to engage.	Student doesn't offer ideas or make decisions. Student may sit with the group but is not consistently engaged.
<b>Collaborating</b>	Student shapes group's outcomes to not just represent their ideas but include full group consensus and representation in the final product.	Student usually helps shape outcomes to include full group consensus and representation but may show some resentment for the process.	Student begrudgingly agrees to the group's outcomes but may exhibit behaviors that make reaching a consensus difficult.	Student openly tries to defy the consensus of the group or refuses to give any input to the process.

<b>Rubric: Creative Process</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Beginning</b>
<b>Investigates the Topic</b>	Student and/or group thoroughly explores possible themes surrounding the chosen topic by evaluating personal, group, and societal experiences	Student and/or group adequately explores possible themes surrounding the chosen topic by evaluating personal, group, and societal experiences.	Student and/or group somewhat explore possible themes surrounding the chosen topic. Decisions may be made with only a few suggestions offered.	Students and/or group do not explore possible themes. They either go with an example provided by the teacher or discuss unrelated topics.

	involving the topic.			
<b>Designs a Theme</b>	Student and/or group considers all the information gathered while investigating and chooses a theme that clarifies the group's perspective on the chosen topic.	Student and/or group considers most of the information gathered while investigating and chooses a theme that the group can agree on.	Student and/or group considers some of the information gathered while investigating and chooses a theme that some of the group agrees with.	Student and/or group doesn't consider information gathered while investigating and either picks a theme arbitrarily or does not pick a theme at all.
<b>Plans Logistics</b>	Student and/or group thoughtfully choose a location, consider audience's vantage-point, decide on the relationship of the dancers to the space and each other, and gather resources to personify the theme into a performance.	Student and/or group choose a location, consider audience's vantage-point, decide on the relationship of the dancers to the space and each other, and gather resources with some thoughtfulness.	Student and/or group give minimal consideration to the logistics necessary to personify the theme into a performance.	Student and/or group give little to no consideration to the logistics necessary to personify the theme into a performance, often making choices that are convenient rather than thoughtful.
<b>Creates Dance</b>	Student and/or group begin to choreograph movement in the space that reflects the chosen theme, being mindful of the audience's perspective and the logistics of the location.	Student and/or group begin to choreograph movement in the space that generally reflects the theme, being fairly mindful of the audience and location.	Student and/or group begin to choreograph movement in the space that minimally reflects the theme, being only somewhat mindful of the audience and location.	Student and/or group doesn't create movement that reflects the theme. They may not be creating any movement or the movement that is created is unrelated to the theme.
<b>Evaluates Process</b>	Student and/or group constantly assesses throughout the	Student and/or group occasionally assesses during	Student and/or group minimally assesses during the creative	Student and/or group do not assess or reflect

	creative process to make sure that their artistic choices reflect the chosen theme clearly and effectively.	the creative process to make sure that their artistic choices reflect the chosen theme clearly and effectively.	process to make sure their artistic choices reflect the chosen theme clearly and effectively.	during the creative process.
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**Materials, Resources, Space Requirements, Media and Suggested Music**

**Teacher Materials:**

Computer/projector

Theme cards

Bag or box to draw the cards from

Points of Reference for Observing Movement Information Sheet (Handout Included)

Developing a Theme with Movement Worksheet (Handout Included)

Storyboard Worksheet (optional) (Handout Included)

**Students:**

Clothes to move easily in

Writing instrument

**Vocabulary terms** (definitions—for additional vocabulary see NDS *National Dance Education Standards Framework Glossary*)

Flow — Category under Laban Efforts that clarifies the amount of control used in movements. Flow can be “Free” (low amount of control) or “Bound” (high amount of control).

Site-specific dance — A dance that is designed to be performed at a specific location. This dance utilizes the natural structures of the chosen environment to enhance the choreography. Site-specific usually refers to locations outside the traditional stage performance spaces.

Size — How big a movement is. Movement may range from barely big enough to be seen to as large as the dancer is able to move in their body.

Topic — Subject. The topic is developed into a theme by the artist deciding what message they want to say about the topic.

Theme — The statement/idea/message that is central to the creative work. A theme is developed from a topic and broadened to clarify what the artist is wanting to say about the topic.

Weight — Category under Laban Efforts that clarifies the amount of force or pressure used in a movement. Weight can be classified as “Heavy/Light” or “Increasing Pressure/Decreasing Pressure.”

Time  
Space  
Level  
Pathway  
Energy  
Body  
Emotion  
Relationship

### **Dance Lesson Instruction**

The **dance lesson instruction sequence** includes **Introduction** or **Warm-up** (time), **Exploratory Experiences** (time), **New Material** (time), **Recap of Learning** (summary) and **Cool Down** (time), **Closure** (time), and **Assessment** (time). Time of each dance lesson section may be determined by the teacher.

Each of these instructional topics **may** require **management** (diagrams), **transition** (between each lesson component place and content), **teaching process** (the how), and **teaching points or cues** (technique or music).

Teacher's pre-assessment of the students in class is ongoing observation and assessment throughout the dance instruction sequence.

### **Warm-up/Anticipatory Set** (15 min)

Show students the video: [Dances for Small Spaces - Ame](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Ra5Z168Cg&list=PLENpFZ7EvNFkdziaNo_DHDgOKC)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Ra5Z168Cg&list=PLENpFZ7EvNFkdziaNo\\_DHDgOKC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Ra5Z168Cg&list=PLENpFZ7EvNFkdziaNo_DHDgOKC)  
[BXQH1Le](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Ra5Z168Cg&list=PLENpFZ7EvNFkdziaNo_DHDgOKC)

\*Teacher may search YouTube for other examples of site-specific dances to give a broader perspective

Ask questions after the video and be open to a variety of answers:

What do you think the mood of the piece was?

How did the dancer interact with the space?

What was the dancer's relationship to the other person or the space?

What images came to mind when watching the movement?

What kind of a message did the dance have to you?

How did the space help tell that message?

Did other student's ideas/thoughts influence how you saw the dance?

Other questions

### **Exploring the Concept** (30 min)

#### **Explain what site-specific dance is:**

A dance that is designed to be performed at a specific location. This dance utilizes the natural structures of the chosen environment to enhance the choreography. Site-specific usually refers to locations outside the traditional stage performance spaces.

These dances are created to step outside of the stage and find other non-traditional performance venues

These dances change the relationship of the dancer(s) to the audience

These dances expand on the potential for movement because the landscape and architecture may offer alternative movement options not found on a stage.

These dances may create movement to enhance the surroundings of the location or find a location that helps better convey the message being performed.

### **Teacher and Students talk through how to breakdown a theme:**

1) How to observe movement:

Talk through the *Points of reference When Observing Movement* information (Give examples)

Watch a portion of the above or selected video clip (1-2 min) and have students again practice how to analyze the movement using the criteria from the notes (they already did some analysis during the discussion, but seeing the same clip will allow them to look again at the dance and see more specific attributes)

\*Remind students that they will not see every movement component covered in their “Points of Reference” notes, but encourage them to comment on what stood out the most to them.

\*Also remind students that saying blanket statements like “It was bad/good/weird/stupid/etc.” is a judgement. Ask them to reframe statements into “I feel” statements and give reasonings for their opinions. For example: “I feel like the dance felt confining because it was all danced between two narrow barriers.”

2) Breaking down a movement theme and differentiating between a theme and a topic:

*Theme:*

Main Idea that develops a topic

Teaches a lesson or moral

Thought or idea artist presents to the audience

Usually needs to be figured out

Example: “Love conquers all” or “Death is not the end”

*Topic:*

One word or subject

Subject that a theme is centered on

Has no judgement or bias

How to find the theme:

Ask — What is the artist trying to convey to me in this work?

Ask — What is the significance of what the artist showed?

Ask — What is the artist saying about a topic through their movement?

Break students into small groups:

Have students draw a topic from the bag

Have students fill out the *Developing a Theme with Movement section in the Points of Reference When Observing Movement Worksheet*

\*Teacher will probably need to go around to the groups to help them decide on a message/theme.

For example: Students may choose the topic of “love”. Teacher helps students develop their theme by asking students what they want to say about love. For instance, are they wanting the theme to be “love conquers all” or “love is destructive”? Explain that the theme can be a broad message or something more specific. Once they have the catch phrase for their theme, ask students what kinds of movements would help tell the story of that message. This will help students circle the movement options that best display the message of the theme.

## **Developing Skills** (30 min)

Once students have their worksheet filled out and a fairly clear sense of their theme, they will think about the kind of environment/location that could help tell their story/theme best.

Pick a location in or around the dance space that would help tell their message more clearly.

For example: If a group has a topic of growing up, they may want to pick a stairwell that allows for an upward gradation (giving the sense of literally moving upward). How they move up those stairs will convey the theme/message of that topic.

Have dancers go to that location to get a better sense of the space

Dancer make initial plans for the dance:

This may include:

Where the audience will be in relationship to the dancers

Beginning movement phrases

How the dancers may travel through the space

The relationship of the dancers to each other in the space

Plotting the storyline in the space

Other plans

\*Advanced Option: Teacher can offer blank storyboard worksheets (see handout) to the students if they want to map out a rough outline of how the dance will go in the space.

Throughout this process:

Teacher will check in with each group and offer assistance as needed.

Students will give a general overview of their ideas to the teacher.

Students will identify what their next steps will be in making their ideas into a site-specific dance.

Students will ask any questions they have about the process, movement, theme, etc.

Students reconvene in a central location

Teacher will express the timeline for completing their projects and inform students that their next class/rehearsal will take place in their site-specific location.

Teacher will summarize the progress of the groups and give any advice that may be needed

\*Teacher may offer advice not to get stuck in the planning phase too long. Let students know that by the end of the next rehearsal/class, they should have some movement phrases created that reflect their theme.

\*Teachers may also explain that changing the initial theme and plans for that theme is fine and part of the creative process (as is creative blocks). Encourage students to find ways to work through these changes and blocks.

## **Cool Down** (5 min)

Take deep breathes together

Reach up, take a bow

Clap as people leave the space



## Assessment

See rubric and review for informal assessment or use the rubric for formal formative assessment. Attendance and participation in discussions may be given points by the teacher; however, other teachers may choose not to assign points for participation.

Teachers will be looking for participation in learning the exercises and openness in listening and applying corrections. This lesson doesn't require a formal assessment.

Developing a Theme with Movement worksheet should be graded for a completion grade. This worksheet should also be handed to each group before every site-specific rehearsal as a reference guide.

\*If a storyboard worksheet was completed, that can also be graded for completion as well.

\*Optional rubrics for assessing other attributes in the lesson are found under *Learner Objectives or Outcomes*

Assessing Teamwork

Simplified Assessment

More In-Depth Assessment

Assessing Creative Process

### **Modifications** (Gifted and talented students)

Accommodations and Modifications for Gifted Students:

More independent work within the process

Requiring students to storyboard their ideas

Adding video-recording to the final presentation

Adding other production elements to the final presentation (costumes, lighting, etc.)

Requiring students to return after the first day with starting movement phrases

Individual accommodations will be made on an a

### **Accommodations** (Individuals with disabilities)

Students may draw already developed themes instead of topics

Teacher talks through the Developing a Theme with Movement with the class. Teacher goes line by line and waits for everyone to complete each section before moving on to the next part.

Teacher may assign locations based on the themes

Individual accommodations will be made on an as-needed basis

### **Extensions** (Interdisciplinary topics)

Finishing the site-specific dance (this will take several rehearsals), Storyboard story ideas for the dance, add costume, lighting, and videotaping to the final production, Invite a community audience to the final production

### **Lesson Reflection and Next Teaching Steps**

Students will learn how to start the process of developing a site-specific dance and utilizing the location to enhance their theme. Students can finish their choreography and move on to record the performance.

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