

DANCE



NEW JERSEY

DANCE EDUCATION ON THE MOVE

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Happy New Year 2010

"Dance is the art to express time and space. That is what our universe is about. We can hardly make a sentence without signifying some expressions of distance, place or time. Dance is the art that human beings have developed to express that we live, right now, in a world of movements and varying tempos."---Jacques D'Amboise.

"To watch dance is an opportunity to encounter the uniqueness and vitality of dance....when a dance is there for us, we intuitively know that it is there; something alive and vibrant is happening on the stage, and as we are totally engaged in our experience of what is happening, so we too are alive and vibrant; we have a lived experience."---Maxine Sheets.

Dance Performance

Dance is a performing art form. Students can perform improvised dances that occur in the moment or perform choreographed works that they have created or perform works created by others. Performance is part of the learning process although it is not the dominant goal of the total dance curriculum. Through performance, students demonstrate their technical

skills, their knowledge of how to use movement to express an idea or feeling, and their ability to communicate to and with others. However, dance performance also includes the critical skill of responding to one's own performance or responding as an audience member. This critical performance component emphasizes thinking skills where students are describing actions and structures, noting similarities and differences among dances or dance styles, explaining personal reactions, stating preferences, and accounting for opinion or judgments.

As a result, a cyclical artistic process is manifested. Students create or learn a dance, they perform it in an informal or formal setting, and then they reflect. Ideally, students would have an opportunity to apply their reflection and make revisions and perform again. Completing the full cycle is not always possible due to time and space constraints.

Each performance experience needs to follow an appropriate developmental sequence that meets the curricular requirements balanced with students' needs. In the pre-K to early elementary level, students may perform dance movements all together as a whole group during the class session without an audience. In this way, the process of performance is emphasized. Students improvise to a task presented by the teacher and perform their response. For instance, the teacher states, "Everyone find a way to make three round shapes, one at a low level, one at a medium level and one at a high level." Through the process of improvisation student explore and try out different solutions. The teacher can then ask for all students, at the same time, to perform their three shapes. Another performance strategy for young children is to have them "show" their classroom teacher a dance movement or a short improvised dance when the classroom teacher arrives to pick up the class. For students in the intermediate elementary grades who are able to perform longer movement sequences or complete dances their performances can informally occur during class time or shared with another class. During the class session, peers can perform for each other, or small groups can perform for each other. Students can be in both the role of observer and performer. Individuals, pairs or small groups who volunteer to perform in front of the entire class can be offered that opportunity. The goal is to support students as performers without having them feel uncomfortable in front of their peers.

At the middle and high school level students should have opportunities to perform informally in a class session and, for those who choose, perform in a formal setting such as a school or community performance in a theater or stage-like setting. The formal setting adds elements of performance protocols, stage directions, and production elements such as sets, costumes, lighting and programs. These formal performances may occur once or twice during a school year while informal performances happen frequently during class sessions.

This newsletter is an effective way for you to share how your program incorporates dance performance during class sessions and in formal theatre settings. Please send me a short

description or dates for Spring Performances for your school and what type of dances are on the program. This will allow all of us to share ideas and benefits from the wisdom and experience we all have as educators, choreographers, performers and audience members.

Check out these websites and videos

International Dance Council <http://www.unesco.org/ngo/cid/index.php?Lid=English>

Dance and the Brain <http://www.dana.org/news/cerebrum/detail.aspx?id=23500>

The Pink Glove Dance <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEdVfyt-mLw>

Workshop Information

Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) Weekend Workshop

Classroom Management: A Dance Teacher's Essential Bag of Tricks

Martie Barylick, MA, CMA, Ana Nery Fragoso, MFA, and Catherine Gallant, MA

Saturday-Sunday, January 16 and 17, 1 – 6 pm, 2 sessions,

92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Center, Lower Dance Studio

Cost \$185 until January 9, \$200 after

Discounts available for NYCDOE teachers & Foundations of Dance Education alumni

SUNY Empire State College credits: 1 undergraduate

Expand your teaching repertoire with classroom management skills and practices, turning challenges into teachable moments. Veteran educators will share valuable tips to support your teaching and your students' learning.

For an application or more information visit us online at www.92Y.org/DEL or call 212.415.5551.

[John-Mario Sevilla Director, Dance Education Laboratory \(DEL\)](#)

[National Dance Education Organization Outstanding Program 2009](#)