Movement and Choreography Activity

Grades: K-12
Time needed: one or two 45-minute class period (depending upon explorations)
Materials needed: cd player, ambient music
PA Academic Standards: 1.6, 2.4, 9.1, 9.3, 9.4, 10.5

By the end of this activity, students should be able to:
- correctly demonstrate relational terminology through bodily movement
- create a short movement piece using relational terminology around a topic chosen by the teacher and/or students
- compare and contrast movement choices made
- evaluate the effectiveness and applicability of movement choices with respect to the topic

Introduction
Choreography, like many other art forms, is concerned with how content, form, technique, and projection come together to create a meaningful dance.

In dance,
content = the central concern of the work;
form = the structure of the piece from beginning to end;
technique = the technical ability of the dancer; and
projection = the interaction between the audience and the performer.

Choreographers will experiment extensively with movement in order to create a new work. The following movement exploration focuses on relational math terms in preparation for creating your own dance piece!

Part One--Movement Explorations
Educator’s role:
- Facilitate and guide students through explorations using oral instructions and side-coaching
- Model concepts if necessary
- Make mental observations about students’ movements for reflection and assessment
- turn on ambient music to help focus students
- facilitate reflection discussion

Students pick an inanimate object from the classroom. They do not need to vocalize what the object is, and it’s okay if multiple students pick the same object. Have students react to the object in the following ways, moving:

- Toward
- Under
- Through
- Over
- From bottom to top
- Around
- Away
- As if it were not there
Next, have student choose another student in the room to be their “silent” partner. They should not vocalize who their partner is, and it’s okay if multiple students pick the same object. If you are working with young children, have them chose a partner for this activity to work with at this time. Have students relate to their “silent” partner in the following manner, moving:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toward</th>
<th>With</th>
<th>In contrast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under</td>
<td>Around</td>
<td>As if he/she was not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through</td>
<td>Away</td>
<td>there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over</td>
<td>In opposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then have students partner up with someone whom they can maintain focus and concentration with for this next exploration, “Body Question and Answer.” One student is Partner A, one student is Partner B. Partner A initiates a movement, Partner B responds using the following (and don’t forget to switch leaders throughout the exercise!):

| Mirroring | Contrasting | Extending | Reversing |

**Sidecoaching Suggestions:**
- Think about relating to the objects with different parts of your body (i.e. How does your head go toward the object? How does your knee go away from the object? How does the torso go under the object?)
- Think about using different levels—high, middle, and low (to the ground if you need to!)
- Think about the speed with which you are moving. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being the slowest, 10 being the fastest, move at a _________. How does this change the movement and your interaction with the object?
- Try repeating your movement again and again and again (at different speeds, at different levels, etc.) How did the quality of the movement change?

**Reflection Questions for Part One—Movement Explorations**
- What was exciting about that activity? What was challenging about that activity?
- How did it feel differently to be relating to an inanimate object versus another person?
- Describe the process of moving with another person. How did you have to change and adapt?
- (for middle and high school students) What scientific forces were at work while you were moving? (gravity, levers, balance, etc.) How did you adapt to these various forces while you were moving?

**Part Two—Create your own dance!**

**Educator’s role:**
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- Facilitate and guide students through the creation of their dance pieces using oral instructions and side-coaching
- Model concepts if necessary
- Make mental observations about students’ movements for reflection and assessment
- turn on ambient music to help focus students
- facilitate reflection discussion

Give students a topic that they will create a 5-8 movement dance sequence about or brainstorm topics with students. Topics can be taken directly from your curriculum. Here are some ideas if you’re stuck:
- Language arts--fairy tales or another genre
- Math--geometric shapes, patterns
- Science--seasons, weather, life cycles, physical forces
- Social Studies--historical events, famous people
- Social and Behavior Education--friendship, bullying, teamwork

Break students into groups of 3 to create their own dance sequence around the chosen topics. Give students an appropriate amount of time to create their dance based upon their age, the length of the sequence, and their enthusiasm. Things for them to consider:
- Do you all do the same movement all the time in the same direction? What happens if you choose not to?
- How long do you do each movement for?
- Do you do a movement more than once or repeat it later?
- How do you create a beginning, middle, and end to your dance? (starting and ending poses are a great place to start!)
- How do you transition from movement to movement?

Sidecoaching Suggestions:
- Use previous suggestions.
- Explore your movement options. Figure out the best way to tell your topic without words!

After students have created their dance and rehearsed it a few time, have students share their dances for each other. While observing the dances, have students pay special attention to the similarities and differences in the dances and be prepared to discuss.

Reflection Questions for Part Two--Create your own dance!
- What was exciting about that activity? What was challenging about that activity?
- Compare and contrast the different dances. What was similar and you saw in many pieces? What was different or unique to just one dance?
- How did the dancers relationship to one another (far away, close together, under/over, etc.) in each piece support or not support the topic?
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- What movements did you think really fit the topic? What movements did you think did not fit the topic? How could they be adapted to better fit the topic?
- How was the topic accurately displayed through movement?

Assessment options:
- Observation by educator during exercises
- Self-reflection by students (journal writing, oral discussion, etc.)
- Video tape the movement pieces and have students assess themselves based on rubric