

# **PRE-K CREATIVE MOVEMENT**

## **Program Overview**

The Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre's PreK Creative Movement curriculum guide is designed to present a comprehensive look at the program for each of the constituents involved: creative movement instructors, teachers, school administrators, students, and students' families. This guide presents detailed information on specific elements of the curriculum such as philosophical and research basis, connected state learning standards, learning objectives, program goals, conceptual scope, and class structure.

The curriculum materials contained in this guide are the culmination of creative movement classes taught over the course of many years. Based upon previous editions of PBT Creative Movement curriculum handbooks, this guide has been directed by experts in the fields of dance and education.

### **HISTORY OF PBT'S CREATIVE MOVEMENT PROGRAM**

Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre established the Creative Movement Residency Program to provide a ballet experience for children Pre-K through Grade 5 in public and private school settings. A program in collaboration with Pittsburgh Public Schools has been in place for Grades 1 and 2 since 1997. The Early Childhood Education component (Pre-K, ages 3-5) began in 2007-2008.

Initially, the PreK Creative Movement program provided sequential movement classes, in-school presentations, and performances to acquaint children with the classical art of ballet. The program was designed to expose children to basic physical skills necessary in building a foundation of dance and movement. It also aimed at providing children with an understanding of the value of dance and the fine arts to enhance quality of life.

Based on feedback from teachers and administrators who have participated in the program, the model for the PreK Creative Movement program underwent a major revision in the summer of 2013. The key changes to the program include:

- Increased emphasis on professional development for the teacher, allowing teachers to continue utilizing the program throughout the school year
- Increased emphasis on assessment and evaluation of articulated objectives
- Incorporation of family engagement opportunities

### **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

This guide is designed to provide you, the classroom teacher, with the tools both to support the students' learning process in their Creative Movement Residency with a teaching artist from Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, and to give options for including movement in the classroom.

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# **SECTION I: CREATIVE MOVEMENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

## **WHAT IS CREATIVE MOVEMENT AND “MADE”?**

Creative movement is just that: moving our bodies in a creative way. Creative movement requires no formal dance training and is a fun and engaging way to encompass more learning styles in the classroom. Creating shapes with your body or parts of your body, mirroring someone else’s movement, and clapping or marching in a rhythm are all forms of creative movement.

Creative movement is an excellent tool for reinforcing classroom work as well as exploring new material. Through kinesthetically embodying an idea, children may be able to more fully understand the concept at hand. Creative movement classes are designed to encourage a child’s imagination and exploration through movement exercises and improvisation. Creative movement is the initial step into the understanding and enjoyment of the art of dance and can lead to a more enriching classroom experience.

MADE is an umbrella term for all “Movement and Dance Education.” This term encompasses creative movement, as well as formal technical training, such as ballet.

## **WHY DO WE WANT “MADE” IN OUR CLASSROOM?**

### **1. MADE supports the learning process.**

Creative movement and dance capitalize on a young child’s development stage of kinesthetic exploration. A report titled “Child Development and Arts Education: A Review of Current Research and Best Practices” prepared for the College Board for the National Coalition of Core Arts Standards states the following regarding movement and dance education in early childhood:

- “Students are whole-body learners who need to learn through active exploration...Dance instruction at this level typically involves high-energy movement, an introduction to basic dance skills, focuses on gross motor skills including balance and coordination” (4).
- With their short attention spans and need for routines with a variety of activities, “Dance instruction for this age should include repetition of basic concepts, but still allow freedom for students to invent their own movement” (4).
- Students “may begin working in small groups or participating in full-class activities in theater or dance instruction, fostering their cooperative skills and communication abilities” (4).

### **2. MADE teaches and promotes self-regulation skills.**

Further research has documented a link between academic achievement and self-regulation. In a statement derived from many other studies, Shauna L. Tominey and Megan M. McClelland suggest that “the integration of the behavioral aspects of

self-regulation predicts academic success throughout schooling and that children who have difficulties with these skills may be especially at risk for low-academic achievement” (492). Self-regulation skills—attention, working memory, and inhibitory control—can be taught and developed with young students, but “finding developmentally appropriate and engaging ways to help children practice behavioral self-regulation (e.g., through games in a circle time setting) is critical to helping children who difficulty with these skills” or have an accumulation of risk factors that hinder development of behavioral self-regulation (Tominey and McClelland 493-494).

### 3. MADE creates positive social and cognitive connections.

Dance, as a kinesthetic vehicle for learning and exploration, is furthermore not only developmentally appropriate and poised to be an engaging tool for building self-regulation, but is also “uniquely capable of providing rich opportunities in exploring creativity, creating connections with peers, supporting critical thinking in youth at all stages of development and encouraging positive self-image through embodied learning” (College Board 14).

Taken altogether, movement and dance education provides students—and teachers—with tools for exploring their world with the thing that everyone possesses—the human body and mind!!

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participating in the PreK Creative Movement program benefits students, families, and teachers in multiple ways.

By the end of the PreK Creative Movement program, **students** will be able to:

- Understand and demonstrate basic MADE concepts--how the body moves in space (e.g., levels, directions) with different energy qualities (e.g., smooth/shake) at different times (e.g., different rhythms, fast/slow);
- Better self-regulate their bodies through starting and stopping on cue, following multi-step directions, and waiting their turn to move by knowing that dancers, themselves included, are always in control of their bodies (when and how they move);
- Respond appropriately with their bodies to other people’s bodies by understanding the concept of person and general space, and spatial boundaries; and
- Understand that dance and movement express ideas, emotions, etc.

Individual unit objectives for students are listed within Section 3 on page 8.

By the end of the PreK Creative Movement program, **families** will be able to:

- Begin dialogues with their children about the importance and value of dance and

movement.

By the end of the PreK Creative Movement residency, **teachers** will be able to:

- Understand basic MADE concepts;
- Incorporate exemplary lessons and model activities that utilize MADE concepts;
- Reflect on how and begin to utilize MADE activities in their classrooms for a variety of purposes.

## **SECTION 2: RELATED STATE LEARNING STANDARDS**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education and Department of Public Welfare have created early learning standards for children in pre-kindergarten, first, and second grades as a means to inform and guide educators, administrators, and parents in the design and implementation of instruction. The Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre utilizes and connects these state standards to the Creative Movement curriculum. The following are a few of the standards which the Creative Movement curriculum fundamentally incorporates into every single session; other standards may be addressed depending upon that module's or unit's focus.

### **PRE-K EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS (2009)**

#### Approaches to Learning Through Play

15.2: Organizing and Understanding Information

15.3: Applying Knowledge

#### Creative Thinking and Expression

9.1a: Production and Performance: Music and Movement

#### PA Common Core: Mathematics

2.1: Numbers and Operations

2.2: Algebraic Concepts

2.3: Geometry

#### Health, Wellness and Physical Development

10.1-3.2: Body Awareness

10.4: Physical Activity: Gross Motor Coordination

#### PA Common Core: English Language Arts

1.5: Speaking and Listening

## SECTION 3: CREATIVE MOVEMENT CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

### BASIC CLASS STRUCTURE

Creative movement classes have a consistent structure that builds upon itself. Certain elements may remind students of activities from their gym or music classes. The students are encouraged to work with a minimum of talking—unless directed to do so—as they progress through the residency. The reason for this goes beyond etiquette, as the students are learning to express concepts and ideas with their bodies instead of relying on their voices.

Each class begins with a **warm-up**. This section of class prepares the students' bodies for the work (and play) to follow, and is very similar to the warm-ups that professionals do before they begin to dance. Warm-up often includes a section of isolation of body parts and may incorporate shaking, swinging, and other non-locomotor movements.

**Module and Unit Main Activities** follow the warm-up. One or two activities will be chosen by the PBT instructor and/or the classroom teacher from the curriculum map that will best address the module the teacher is learning as well as the unit the students are investigating.

Every class will end with **Closing Rituals**. Typical closing rituals in PreK Creative Movement include participating in a "Ballet Bow," clapping for and thanking the instructor and accompanist, and handing out stickers to students who participated in the session.

Part One	Dance Class Warm-Ups -Reinforces module's vocabulary and outcomes -Can be opportunity to assess recall of vocabulary and concepts -Start with imitation, work towards students leading and choosing parts of warm-ups	5 min
Part Two	Module and Unit Main Activities (1-2 activities)	20 min
Part Three	Closing Ritual and Rewards -Returning to space while reviewing of concepts -Ballet Bow -Claps -Stickers for participation	5 min

## **OVERALL CURRICULUM STRUCTURE**

The PreK Creative Movement curriculum is constructed to address the educational learning objectives of both the teachers and students and is broken down into two aligned curriculums—one for the student and one for the teacher. This open curriculum (as opposed to a managed curriculum) allows flexibility for the PBT instructor and classroom teacher to make decisions that best satisfy the needs of their particular classroom.

### ***Student Curriculum***

The focus for students revolves around learning key fundamental MADE concepts. The fundamental MADE concepts are derived from Laban Movement Analysis (LMA). LMA is a system of categorizing and observing physical movement in the body. The following definitions make up LMA's "Effort Actions."

- Energy/Effort: how movements are intended, such as with weight (if movements are strong or light in weight) or flow (if movements are bound or free-flowing)
- Space: if movements are direct or indirect in space
- Time: if movements are sudden (quick) or sustained over time. Also related to "tempo" in music (speed or rate at which music is played) and how movement works with the tempo to create steady, rhythmic movements

Body is not included as an "effort action" but is of course essential to movement. LMA considers "body" to be in its own separate category.

### ***Teacher Curriculum***

The teacher will choose creative movement activities within the Creative Movement syllabus that they are interested in teaching. Each activity will also highlight a skill, which will be the focus of the class. The teacher curriculum is focused on principles of embodied cognition, which provide a framework of body-based learning strategies in a classroom context (6).

The teacher will investigate the activities chosen each week, and will work with the teaching artist to co-lead activities throughout the residency. This focus on co-facilitation offers teachers continued opportunities to learn through doing, providing them with direct experience of applying Creative Movement principles in the classroom.

In addition to facilitation experience, the teacher will be asked to complete pre-residency and post-residency evaluations, as well as at least one reflection assignment during the residency itself. These assignments provide an opportunity for debrief for the teacher and additional support and education for the teaching artist.



## **SECTION 4: “MADE” TEACHING TIPS**

MADE does not need to be limited to specific classroom activities. Ideas for utilizing MADE techniques in a variety of informal ways include:

- Create an attention-grabbing call and response in order to regain the students' attention between activities. This can be vocal, percussive, or gestural.
- Give the students a high level of responsibility for following precise directions. For example: when transitioning from a circle formation to one side of the room a teacher could say, “When I say go, I would like you all to stand up quietly without touching the floor, walk quietly on your tiptoes without talking or touching anyone, and sit down on the red line (or other landmark) without touching the floor and leaving space around you for your bubble.” After repeating the sequence and asking them if they remember it, even very young students can follow movement directions meticulously.
- Modeling examples helps to get the ball rolling creatively. Sometimes asking, “What are some ways we could move across the room?” can be met with shyness or silence. Instead, a teacher can model a few examples to spark creativity. “I could run, or slide, or crawl across the floor. What are some other ways I could move from here to there?”
- Creating boundaries helps students to access ideas that they might not have come up with otherwise. To say “Please make a low-level shape with your body” might always result in a bunch of kids lying on the floor. Instead try saying, “Please make a low level shape without touching your belly or your back to the floor” or “Please make a low level shape where one hip is touching the floor, or both elbows, or only one foot.”
- When working in a large space it sometimes helps the students to create a frame for free movement by sitting in a circle. Smaller groups can move freely inside the circle and not get lost or distracted by other things in the room. It also affords the students a chance to practice good audience behavior.
- When working in a small space it is definitely possible to do movement on a smaller scale. Students can stand at their desks and practice non-locomotor movements, and shapes can be made with the upper body while seated. If desks can be pushed aside the same circle that created a frame in a large gym can create a frame to keep things from growing too unruly for the classroom as well.

## SECTION 5: CREATIVE MOVEMENT VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS

### Fundamental MADE Concepts

#### **Body**

- *Body part isolation* exercises are used to help the student understand proper body alignment and gain a balanced muscular strength throughout the body.
- *Gross motor skills*, which travel across the floor, are used in combination with each other and/or one or more of the following: body parts, level changes, and body facings.
- *Shape* exercises explore how the body can be molded into different shapes, both literal (square, diamond, triangle), and more abstract (curvy, rigid, angular).
- *Line* exercises work with how the body creates straight lines in movement.

#### **Energy**

- *Energy* exercises explore the qualities of how the body can move. Four energy opposites will be explored during the PreK Creative Movement Residency (there are many others):
  - Curl/stretch
  - Smooth/shake
  - Wiggly/choppy
  - Light/heavy
- *Energy* exercises also show how the body can express different feelings, such as happy, sad, angry, afraid, bashful, tired, or excited, or ideas such as success.

#### **Space**

- *Personal and general space* exercises explore the differences between the space one dancer moves in by themselves and the designated shared space many dancers move within.
- *Level* exercises work with three spatial levels: high, medium, and low. Levels are used with various exercises to increase body strength and flexibility.
- *Direction* exercises work with body directions: front, back, and left and right (sides). They engage in movement which designates one or more of a combination of these directions or combines directions with levels.
- *Pathway* exercises work with the floor patterns in which dancers move (circle, square, curvy, zig-zag, etc.)

#### **Time**

- *Speed* exercises explore how the body can move with slow, medium, and fast.
- *Rhythm* exercises work with how the body can move with and against different rhythms in conjunction with music.
- *Sequence* exercises explore how movements are put into certain orders and/or patterns.

**Non-Locomotor Gross Motor Movements:** Movements where the body stays largely stationary and does not travel.

- Bend
- Stretch
- Rise
- Fall
- Jump
- Balance
- Swing
- Lunge
- Twist
- Turn
- Shake

**Locomotor Gross Motor Movements:** Movements where the body travels in space from a point A to point B.

- Walk
- Run
- March
- Slide
- Gallop (chassé)
- Jump (sauté)
- Hop
- Spin
- Skip
- Waddle
- Leap (jeté)

### **Gross Motor Movements**

Gross motor movements are movements that travel from one place to another. Listed below are some gross motor movements in ballet that you may not be familiar with:

- Gallop (chassé): to chase. Similar to a gallop; a slide forwards, backwards, or sideways with both legs bent, then a spring into the air with legs meeting and straightened.
- Jump (sauté): to jump. A jump from two feet.
- Leap (jeté): to throw. A jump from one foot to the other.

### **Other Ballet Terms**

- Plié: to bend. A bending and straightening action of the knees while standing on two feet.
- Relevé: to rise. Rising from any position to balance on one or both balls of the feet.
- Révérence: the formal “ballet bow” at the end of a ballet class or performance

## SECTION 6: “MADE” RESOURCES

### PRINT RESOURCES

The following list contains a wealth of options and examples.

Boyd, Kassandra Schmutz, Melanie Schmutz Chalk, and Jennifer Schmutz Law. *Kids on the Move: Creative Movement for Children of All Ages*. Flower Mound, TX: Creative Publishing, 2003.

Brehm, Mary Ann, and Lynne McNett. *Creative Dance for Learning: The Kinesthetic Link*. McGraw Hill, 2008.

Gilbert, Anne Green. *Creative Dance for All Ages*. Reston, VA: The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, eleventh printing 2007.

Joyce, Mary. *First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, third edition 1994.

Tominey, Shauna L. and Megan M. McClelland. “Red Light, Purple Light: Findings From a Randomized Trial Using Circle Time Games to Improve Behavioral Self-Regulation in Preschool.” *Early Education, and Development* 01 June 2011: 489-519. Print.

Fugate, J., Macrine, S. & Cipriano, C. (2018). The role of embodied cognition for transformational learning. *International Journal of School and Educational Psychology*, 7(4), 274-88.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

The College Board. *Child Development and Arts Education: A review of Current Research and Best Practices*. New York, NY: Jan 2012. <http://goo.gl/bqRbnD>

“Dance and Creative Movement Fitness.”

<http://fitness.preschoolrock.com/index.php/dance-and-creative-movement-fitness>

“Dramatic Play and Creative Movement Activities”

[http://pbskids.org/ptframe/pt\\_content\\_shell.html?arthur/parentsteachers/activities/movement.html?cat=movement](http://pbskids.org/ptframe/pt_content_shell.html?arthur/parentsteachers/activities/movement.html?cat=movement)

“Theatre Arts/Creative Movement Lesson Plan”

<http://www.performingartsworkshop.org/pdf/rc.CreativeMovement2.pdf>

“Watch Me Move: Creative Movement Activity 1 of Thematic Unit "All About Me."

<http://www.vsarts.org/x588.xml>

Created and revised by current and past PBT personnel (listed alphabetically):

Kerra Alexander Sullivan	Kati Gigler, Ph.D.	Mary Miller Rene
Mastriano-Polanco	Carol Meeder	Jamie Murphy
Christina Salgado	Alyssa Herzog Melby	Lindsay Pierce
Laura Stokes		

Assistance from: Kimberly Dellefemine, Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Program