

## **Inspired Creativity: Using various entry points for making choreography**

**DEL Facilitator:** Felice Santorelli

**Intended Age/Population:** 9th-12th grade, Intermediate to Advanced Dancers

**Workshop description:** Choreographic inspiration may come from an infinite number of sources: poetry, a social or political issue, artwork, music, or the physical and kinetic potential for movement. Once inspiration strikes, choreographers often spend time researching, developing, and analyzing their ideas in order to translate various concepts into movement ideas. In this experiential workshop, participants will have the opportunity to engage in a step-by-step process for analyzing a source of inspiration and practice the act of coaching students to connect conceptual ideas to movement actions that communicate a clear artistic intent. Participants will gather ideas and materials for this process and will also have the opportunity to see the result of these ideas in a high school dance class. Discussion about ways to utilize this process in your own unique classroom will conclude the workshop.

### **Enduring Understandings**

1. Choreographers may utilize a specific source of inspiration, or an entry point, for dance making.
2. An analysis of the various elements of the inspirational material may help choreographers identify the conceptual ideas that might be translated to movement.
3. The connection between conceptual ideas and movement ideas is essential for communicating a clear artistic intent.

### **Essential Questions**

1. How do choreographers analyze a source of inspiration in a way that links conceptual ideas to movement?
2. What strategies or tools exist from other disciplines that we might use to assist in this analysis?

### **Goals of Workshop**

*Students will know...*

- Abstract ideas can be translated into movement in many different ways.
- How to utilize choreographic tools and apply strategies for motif and variation on a theme to develop and extend choreography.

*Students will understand...*

- The research process is a critical component to dance making.
- Written and verbal explanation of the choreographic process and intent is a critical component of professional dance making.

*Students will be able to...*

- Conduct research and complete a thorough analysis of a different art form or ideas in order to create a dance.
- Exercise literacy skills by justifying their artistic choices through written and verbal analysis.

## **Standards Addressed:**

### Common Core Anchor Standards

#### *Reading Standards for Literature Grades 9-12:*

##### Key Ideas and Details:

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text

##### Craft and Structure:

4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing Grades 6-12:*

##### Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research.

##### Range of Writing:

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### National Coalition for Core Arts Standards Assessments

Grade Level: 9-12, Level: "Accomplished"

Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work

#DA: Cr1.1 - Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work

#DA: Cr2.1 - Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

#DA: Cr3.1 - Refine and complete artistic work

Performing: Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation

#DA: Pr6.1 - Convey meaning through presentation of artistic work

Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning

#DA:Re7.1 - Perceive and analyze artistic work

#DA:Re8.1 - Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work

Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external content

#DA:Cn10.1 - Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

## **Materials**

- Laban Movement Analysis BESR chart (Body, Effort, Space, Relationship)
- Choreographic Tools for Theme and Development worksheet
- Various graphic organizers for analysis (literature, poetry, artwork, music, stories)
- Student task packet
- Rubric naming assessment criteria
- Video camera, sound system, computer/laptop, projector
- Student journals

## **Handouts**

- Student task packet (with all materials above)

## **Workshop Do Now:**

(3 MINUTES) Gallery Walk: Please walk around the room to visit the stimuli posted (1 minute). After viewing or reading each item, please select ONE and respond by completing a 2 minute freewrite or brainstorm using any of the following strategies:

- Web
- Writing response (don't lift your pen or stop writing for 2 minutes!)
- Looks Like/Feels Like/Sounds Like chart (identify sensory language)

## **Introduction**

How many of you have made a dance before?

Was your dance "about something"? Were you inspired by an idea or a concept when you began? Can you share a few of those inspirations with me today? [student response]

Choreographic inspiration comes from an infinite number of sources: poetry, a social or political issue, artwork, music, or the physical and kinetic potential for movement. Once inspiration strikes, choreographers often spend time researching, developing, and analyzing their ideas in order to translate various concepts into movement ideas. But how do you take an idea, an image, a poem, and translate it into movement actions that communicate a clear artistic intent?

## **Overview**

Today, I'd like to take you through a choreographic process that you may find relevant to your students and their dance-making. I was seeking strategies to enhance my students' ability to create dance using a specific source of inspiration or stimuli, and wanted to help coach them through the process of translating conceptual ideas into movement.

At the start of the unit, I provided students with the task sheet that I have provided you today. We talked about various sources of inspiration for choreography and about the research process most professional choreographers and artists engage in before they start to make work. I allowed them to choose their own stimuli or source of inspiration from a list of options: a poem, a piece of music, kinesthetic ideas, social justice issues, or artwork.

The stimuli you looked at in the Gallery Walk are samples from my students' selections. I'm going to share with you the analytical process they followed, allow you to try it out, and ask you to work in small groups to make a mini-dance. Parts of the workshop I will talk you through, and explain what you might try. For other parts, we will work in teacher-accelerated time and have an embodied experience, so get ready to move quickly and make rapid decisions!

## **Exploration**

Warm Up: Experiment with asking kids to improvise based on various stimuli, for example using the BESR chart (Body, Effort, Space, Relationship), using different music, using an image to inspire movement, etc.

Basic warm up using traveling and non traveling action words, exploring different levels, various parts of the space, interacting with others in the space in different ways, etc. (Laban)

Play different music: Improvise to the mood of this song. Lead through improvisation using all limbs, all levels, isolating body parts, traveling, non-traveling, etc. Allow students to reflect on different mood of music, what they feel or imagine or see when they hear the song and how it inspires them to move.

Project an image: Silently, take 2 minutes to look at the projected image. What do you see? What kind of mood or feeling do the colors evoke? Do you feel happy, sad, angry, curious, free, scared, etc. when you look at this image? If this image came to life, what do you imagine happened before? After? Take 1 more minute to think about this picture and then I will play music and I'd like you to start to move according to how this painting makes you feel. Share choices

## **Development**

### *Class Session 1*

- Review task sheet and allow students to begin conducting research during class time
- Teacher circulates to check in with students, assist, and redirect if necessary
- Assignment: Write a proposal for your choreographic study (see appendix for provided format and student sample)

### *Class Session 2*

- Complete analysis of your stimuli using 1-2 graphic organizers/analytical tools
- In your journal, identify specific words or concepts that you'd like to focus on for your dance
- Describe what those concepts or words look like in movement terms using dance vocabulary

### *Future Class Sessions*

- Create two phrases based on words selected that can stand alone
- Utilize the choreographic tools for development and motif variation to expand choreography
- Share work with peers and receive feedback
- Experiment with musical choices (teacher assists students in identifying the mood of their dance and music that might be effective)

### *General Requirements over the Course of the Class Sessions*

- Turn in written analyses
- Show your "work in progress" at least 3 times before final showings
- Be prepared with questions for your viewers during these informal showings
- Provide feedback to peers on their work
- Complete three free writing assignments in your journal
- Complete a thorough and accurate spatial notation for your dance

## **Assistive Materials (accommodations, modifications):**

- Graphic organizers: assist in the analytical process
- Research of professional artists that may be making work based on a similar choreographic inquiry
  - Ex: students interested in making work based on physical tasks vs. a narrative might be inspired by artists like Yvonne Rainer or Merce Cunningham; Social Justice: Pearl Primus or Bill T. Jones; Artwork: Shenwei or Martha Graham; Music: Mark Morris

## **Embodied Experience:**

(20 MINUTES)

We're going to focus on 2 of the items posted. Please divide yourselves into equal groups and show me your ready by taking your packet, something to write with and standing quietly next to your item.

4 minutes: As a group, use the graphic organizer provided to complete an analysis of your stimulus. I will give you 5 minutes to complete this process! You can use your notes from your original brainstorm to give your group ideas.

1 minute: Now, circle a few of the most important words that you've identified and write down **action words, descriptive words, space words, or relationship words** that you imagine or see in your mind's eye when you think about these concepts.

10 minutes: Together as a group, you're going to create a phrase that embodies the concepts you feel are most essential, or represent the big idea of this stimuli. You can utilize choreographic tools (look at the list in your packet) to develop your choreography.

### **Culmination/Sharing**

5 minutes: Each group shares their choreography. After performing, audience has opportunity to give feedback. Group shares briefly their process of translating concepts to movement.

*In my class: after performance, audience and dancer/choreographer write in journal for 1 minute to get down all of their thoughts, then everyone has to share something - positive feedback, questions, things they might be pondering, etc.. We are working together on using the language and format of Liz Lerman's Critical Pedagogy. After performance and feedback, choreographer may ask questions.*

### **Reflection**

- What happened surprised me:
  - Almost all students went directly to a very personal place. They selected the story of their parents' experience with oppression, expressed the account of an illness they overcame, or went directly to a poem or short story that they had been introduced to in another class, and wanted to continue to explore its meaning through a physical and movement perspective.
  - A personal connection to the subject of their work helped them to feel invested in the process. Returning to work they'd previously analyzed and already understood on a deep level allowed them to move into an embodied experience more easily.
  - The greatest gift I discovered in this unit: Integration! Next time, I will go directly to my Language Arts Teachers and ask them for suggestions from work they're currently, or have in in the past, read with students.
- My students' response to this process:
  - Initially I think they felt like this process was rudimentary. Many of them are advanced dancers who train in studios and make a lot of choreography that includes movement that is quite technically advanced. They make a lot of dance but it lacks attention to choreographic intention and and their response to dance lacks attention to meaning-making. Because they work together often, they have (subconsciously) developed a shared movement vocabulary and these "steps" or "moves" are go-tos, but don't really have any meaning.
- Their reflection:
  - "I hated this process at first" - in the end I felt like I was able to actually select ideas that were interesting to me and explore them in detail.
  - I loved this process - I felt like it was the perfect amount of structure. I felt really connected to the inspiration I'd selected so I was able to really stay engaged in making a dance.
  - You can't just pick something and become inspired - you have to wait for inspiration to find you.

## **Application**

How might you utilize this in your own classroom?

What ages are you teaching? How could you translate this to any group/age/ability?

What modifications might you make?

- Ex: I teach 7th and 8th grade, too. If I were to do this project with my students of that age, I would provide them with the stimuli instead of asking them to find it themselves
- I would walk them through a simple analysis and a step-by-step process:
  - Discuss the MCA Process Ann and I utilized

## **Summary**

Choreographers are often inspired by a specific idea or concept that is represented in a outside stimuli, like a painting or poem. Dedicating time to research and analysis is critical in truly understanding the meaning of a the work. The result, or product, is a choreographic study with a clear artistic intention.

## **Closing**

Do you have any questions or would you like to share thoughts, reflections or ideas this workshop may have sparked?

## **Evaluation**

Feedback? Ways to improve?

## **APPENDIX**

1. Choreographic Proposal Format
2. Choreographic Proposal Student Sample
3. Choreography Lab Task Sheet (student handout)
4. Graphic Organizers & Literary Analysis Resources
5. Laban Movement Analysis BESR chart
6. Development and Theme & Variation Choreographic Tools
7. Sensory/Imagery Chart
8. Spatial Notation Mapping
9. Rubric
10. Student Reflection Journal Prompt
11. Statement of Work Assignment and Sample

**Choreographic Proposal Format:**

"I am interested in creating a choreographic study that is inspired by [the painting, the musical composition, the story, the poem, etc]. I plan to analyze my entry point using [name analytical tools/graphic organizer(s) they will use]. Overall, I am interested in [state the general idea or essences of this inspiration].

**Choreographic Proposal Student Sample:**

"I am interested in creating a choreographic study that is inspired by the poem "Mirror" by Sylvia Plath. I plan to analyze this poem using the POEM graphic organizer and the Close Reading assignment. I am interested in exploring the ideas of different perspective on oneself, especially girls' perspectives on themselves and the changes in their opinion as they grow older. I am also interested in exploring the contrast between someone's opinion of themselves and other people's opinions on them."



## Choreography Lab Task

**Sources of Inspiration:** Choreographic inspiration comes from an infinite number of sources. This choreographic study is based on utilizing a specific source as inspiration for work: The desire to communicate through motion, the physical and kinetic potential of the human body or the joy of virtuoso dancing may inspire one choreographer; The desire to explore emotional expression through dance may be what motivates another to create.

Some choreographers are driven to use dance as a way to speak about social or political issues. A classic example of this approach is Pearl Primus and her work “Strange Fruit” set to the famous poem of the same name (go watch it!). Yvonne Rainer was inspired to protest specific types of art making and choreographic structure with her dance “Trio A” (watch this one, too!).

Choreographers often spend a period of time **researching and developing** their ideas. They may travel, studying architecture, art work, landscapes or dance forms new to them. They may read, listen to music or look at paintings, absorbing information from other artists or art forms.

### EXAMPLES:

- **Images from nature** may be a source of inspiration and metaphor
- **A poem or story** may provide a starting point. Images that generate movement ideas may come from mythology, from classic or contemporary narratives and even from the life stories of dancers
- A choreographer may be so moved by **a piece of music** that he or she decides to create a dance expressing its qualities
- **Works of visual art** such as paintings or photographs may fire a choreographer's imagination
- **Choreographic structure or tools** that might be used to explore a new creative process.

### Completing this Task:

\_\_\_ Select an inspiration

\*If you are using something written or a photograph/drawing/painting, it may be in your best interest to print it out and put it in your journal so you can look at it often!

- **Write it down: Commit to it, love it, live with it!**

### Describe the reason for choosing this inspiration:

What about it speaks to you, moves you, inspires you, motivates you, drives you to create? Be detailed and specific and put it in your journal!

### Free Write:

Complete at least 3 separate free writes throughout your process. I will provide you with other journal writing prompts as we go through this process. Be thorough, detailed and thoughtful in your submissions!

### Analysis:

In order to make work based on a specific impetus, you must analyze the source! Complete an analysis of the work and share with me. (Felice has some forms for this process...)

**As you make a dance...** Think about the following resources available to you:

Laban Movement Analysis (Elements of Dance)

Theme and variation

Choreographic Devices and tools

Phrase development

## Laban Movement Analysis Language:

| <b>BODY / ACTION</b>   | <b>DYNAMICS/EFFORT DESCRIPTIVE</b>   | <b>SPACE</b>  | <b>RELATIONSHIP</b>   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b><u>What</u></b></p> <p><b>Action:</b><br/>           Running<br/>           Stillness<br/>           Turning<br/>           Jumping<br/>           Twisting<br/>           Swinging<br/>           Shaking<br/>           Gliding<br/>           Skipping<br/>           Floating<br/>           Punching</p> <p>Shapes<br/>           Round (ball)<br/>           Wide (wall)<br/>           Narrow (arrow)<br/>           Twisted (pretzel)<br/>           Symmetrical<br/>           Asymmetrical</p> <p>Base<br/>           Standing/Sitting<br/>           Kneeling/Lying</p> | <p><b><u>How</u></b></p> <p><b>EFFORT -</b></p> <p>Weight:<br/>           Strong v. Light</p> <p>Time:<br/>           Sudden v. Sustained</p> <p>Space:<br/>           Direct v. Indirect</p> <p>Flow:<br/>           Bound v. Free</p> <p>Dynamic Actions<br/>           Punch<br/>           Press<br/>           Flick<br/>           Float<br/>           Slash<br/>           Glide<br/>           Wring<br/>           Dab</p> | <p><b><u>Where</u></b></p> <p>Space:<br/>           Everywhere vs. Located</p> <p>Extensions<br/>           Far or Near</p> <p>Levels<br/>           High<br/>           Middle<br/>           Low</p> <p>Directions<br/>           High/Low<br/>           Forward/Backward<br/>           Right/Left<br/>           Diagonal</p> <p>Floor/Air Patterns<br/>           Straight<br/>           Angular<br/>           Circular<br/>           Curvy</p> <p>Space Words<br/>           Over, Under, Around, Near,<br/>           Far, Through, Behind,<br/>           Beside, In front<br/>           Toward, Away, Focus</p> | <p><b><u>With Whom/What</u></b></p> <p>Situations<br/>           Unison, solo, duet, trio,<br/>           group, leading, following<br/>           Shadowing, mirroring,<br/>           copying, matching,<br/>           action/response, echoing</p> <p>Spatial Relationships<br/>           Meeting, Parting, Linkng,<br/>           Connecting</p> <p>Spatial Formations<br/>           Line, Circle, Scattered,<br/>           Triangle</p> <p>Time Relationships<br/>           Metered (with the beat<br/>           Non-metered (not with the<br/>           beat/against the beat)</p> <p>Body Relationships<br/>           Body parts to each other<br/>           Individuals to each other<br/>           Groups to each other</p> <p>Other<br/>           Music, Props, Costumes,<br/>           Environment, Audience</p> |

## **EXPANDING MOVEMENT MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THEME & VARIATION**

### **DEVELOPMENT**

To isolate an aspect and carry it to a new choreographic intention. In music: The unfolding of the thematic material, designed to bring about a feeling of evolution and growth, of increased intensity and higher “temperature”, of dynamic stress and climax”. (Eg: Adding more and more body parts. Adding more and more actions, Adding more and more space. Adding more qualities, Adding more and more relationships)

### **AUGMENTATION**

To increase range or to add gesture or to travel the whole phrase  
To lengthen and significantly change time values (Eg. Very fast, slow motion, stillness)

### **DIMINUTION**

To reduce in size, to condense in time

### **MIRRORING**

To do on the other side, to change the facing, to travel on a line

### **REPETITION**

Repeating an action (for emphasis)

RECAPITULATE: shortening it

REITERATE: close repetition

RE-ECHO: Something done comes back in a new context

REVISE: pick out a detail and stress it

REINFORCE: augment material (Eg: with size, with stops)

RECALL: making an association or reference to something previous

LEVEL CHANGE: Changing level (Eg: All aerial, all on the floor)

BODY CHANGE: Changing rotation of body parts (Eg: change from turned out to parallel, arms rotated in/out)

### **ISOLATION**

Only one aspect of the phrase (Eg's: only doing the focus and head movements of the phrase. Only do the porte de bras, or transfer of weight's. Only do the leg gestures or torso movements. Only do the directional changes)

### **ACCUMULATION**

A sequential repetition. Starting at a specific point in the phrase and gradually adding on, beginning from where you end up (Eg: 1; 1,2; 1,2,3; 1,2,3,4 etc)

### **DE-ACCUMULATION**

Opposite of accumulation (Eg: 1,2,3,4; 1,2,3; 1,2; 1)

### **TRANSPOSITION**

To put the movement on a different body part (Eg: have the arms do what the legs did, etc.)

### **EMBELLISHMENT**

To add on top of, or to give a special emphasis to one aspect of the phrase, to enliven, expand on

### **TRANSFORMATION**

Change the personality of the phrase, the dynamics (Eg: meter changes, dynamic/quality changes)

### **INVERSION**

To perform the spatial opposite (Eg Up becomes down, in becomes out)

### **RETROGRADE**

A backward reading, beginning with the last movement and ending with the first, as in running a film backward  
Performing the momentum or energy of the movement in reverse

### **CANON**

Starting the phrase at different points (Eg: porte de bras starting 4 counts later than legs)

### **SPLICING IN OR INSERTION**

To insert or splice in new material

### **SCRAMBLING OR REARRANGING**

To shuffle up the movements

## SENSORY IMAGERY

Consider what your impulse looks like, feels like and/or sounds like  
This might help you decide on movement ideas...

| Looks Like | Feels Like | Sounds Like |
|------------|------------|-------------|
|            |            |             |

### Spatial Pathways and Movement Notation:

Please complete a notation for your spatial pathways as you create your work. I'd like you to turn this in when your dance is complete. It's also helpful for your process as you'll be able to see the parts of the stage you tend to use more often than others.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Phrase 1</b></p> <div data-bbox="131 1318 691 1564"></div> <p><b>Phrase 2</b></p> <div data-bbox="131 1640 699 1885"></div> | <p><b>Phrase 3</b></p> <div data-bbox="824 1318 1393 1564"></div> <p><b>Phrase 4</b></p> <div data-bbox="824 1640 1393 1885"></div> |
|---|---|

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Standards Based Grading Rubric**

**Choreographic Study: Selecting a Source of Inspiration**

| Learning Objective   | Exemplary<br>4  | Accomplished<br>3   | Developing<br>2  | Beginning<br>1  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Analysis and Choreo Process</b></p> <p><b>LIT.1</b><br/>Analyze, critique and describe dance and aesthetic components</p>  | <p>Multiple tools utilized to analyze entry point (graphic organizers, brainstorm, free writing, flowcharts, etc.) Journal writing reflects deep self reflection of the choreographic process and goals for development of work. Reflection of work of other artists (masters, peers) verbally and in writing</p> | <p>Analysis of entry point and translation from concept to movement is thorough and thoughtful both prior to and during the choreographic process, including journal writing and dance notation</p> | <p>Analysis of entry point and translation from concept to movement is not thorough and may not have been revisited throughout the choreographic process. Journal writing and notation is lacking thoughtful analysis and reflection</p> | <p>Analysis of entry point and translation from concept to movement is not thorough and thoughtful; evidence missing that analysis was revisited throughout the choreographic process. Journal and notation are missing or incomplete</p> |
| <p><b>Revision and Editing Process</b></p> <p><b>MAK.3</b><br/>Respond to, reflect on and revise movement studies and dance works based on feedback from self, peers, and teacher assessment</p>                                   | <p>Choreographer shares revision process with audience during feedback sessions, and discusses how they made developments, changes, edits to their work based on their choreographic intention and audience feedback</p>  | <p>Choreographer consistently takes feedback into consideration and makes thoughtful choices regarding revision and editing</p>   | <p>Choreographer often disregards feedback or does not consistently make the effort to consider incorporating feedback into choreographic process. Choreographer does not appear a committed to revision and editing</p>                 | <p>Choreographer did not make appropriate revisions and edits to improve and develop choreographic ideas. Development of choreography is lacking</p>  |
| <p><b>Performance Quality</b></p> <p><b>MAK.1</b><br/>Demonstrate effective technique through proper alignment, coordination, strength, dynamic range, musicality, and artistic intention in a variety of performance contexts</p> | <p>Performer/choreographer demonstrates strong connection to the music or sound score, and has made intentional and deliberate choices about dynamics and movement phrasing. The artistic intention is conveyed through use of body expressivity, focus and energy.</p>   | <p>Performs with clarity, intention and attention to dynamics, musicality, and phrasing</p>   | <p>Performance often lacks clarity, intention and attention to dynamics, musicality and phrasing.</p>  | <p>Performance appears unrehearsed, dancer is unprepared, artistic intention is not conveyed, and attention to dynamics, musicality and/or phrasing is lacking</p>  |

**Choreography Lab Final Reflection**  
**Choreographic Study: Work with an Inspiration**

Please complete a 1 page journal reflection considering the following prompts:

1. In what ways was this process of making dance different for you than processes you've either used or seen a choreographer use in the past?
2. What were the challenges of working in this process (researching an entry point, analysis, journal writing, sharing, receiving feedback, edit and revision, spatial notation)?
3. Was the product (the final dance) different than you'd expected at the start of the process? How?
4. Do you feel that this process of research and analysis was beneficial for you as a choreographer in expressing your artistic intent? In what ways? If not, explain.
5. What was the most surprising feedback you received that made you feel successful?

**Artist Statement:**

Please write a 2-3 sentence artist statement about your work. Imagine you are interviewed by a dance critic and your work is about to premiere. In the paper, they are going to use a quote from you. The question:

“How would you describe this work?”

Example: This work, *[Title]*, examines our relationship to nature, using the stage space as a metaphor for our tiny planet. I utilized text as a tool to frame the work's message in way that choreography alone cannot.