

DEL MODEL (Updated version Feb 2020 - Ann Biddle)

The DEL model of dance education is a multi-dimensional paradigm that represents best practices in dance education. Rooted in innovative and current educational philosophies, the DEL model is an inclusive and expansive program, which can be applied in a wide variety of dance education contexts and is accessible to all learners and practitioners in dance education. The DEL model is informed by current local, state and national standards in dance and has also been a crucial influence in the creation of these standards over the past 25 years.

There are many different components of the DEL model and each one is equally important; each component links to the others and can exist independently as well as. Each component is like a lens of a different color in the expansive color spectrum. Together these components make up the whole of a comprehensive dance education model for teaching children, teens and adults; separate they are vital and distinct components of a successful dance program.

This current iteration of the DEL model is an updated version to reflect 21st Century thought and trends in dance and education. This is a fluid and evolving model that is designed to adapt to changing times and integrate new developments in education.

The major processes we engage in within DEL ring the outside of the DEL model.

These are active “verbs” which encourage higher levels of thinking and engagement.

Create, Explore, Develop, Analyze, Collaborate, Innovate, Connect, Revise, Perform, Reflect, and Apply.

IN CENTER of the DEL model is the Teacher’s Heart. The teacher’s heart is the artistic core of who you are as a teacher. This represents your vision or mission statement and reflects the core of what you believe as a dancer, educator, choreographer and learner. The teacher’s heart reminds us of who we are and helps us remember why the work we do is so critical to the world. The teacher’s heart grounds us in our own humanity and sees dance education as a vocation where we set an intention to make the world a better place through service, artistry and leadership in the field.

One of the goals of DEL is to build a strong community to support and sustain the growth and professional development of dance educators, so they feel supported to remain in the field for the long haul.

Encircling the Teacher’s Heart are qualities of an impassioned educator: creativity, resilience, humor, flexibility, passion, empathy, respect, patience, generosity, determination.

These qualities represent our core values and help guide us to fulfill our mission as humanistic dance educators.

The seven inner circles represent the various components of the DEL model of a comprehensive dance education program.

Artistry in Dance Making

Dance is a performing art, and is a form of non-verbal kinesthetic expression of ideas and feelings that involves the entire body and emphasizes the creative process. DEL places value on the positive impact of kinesthetic learning in teaching children and teens.

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Dance is viewed as a core discipline that every child and teen should have access to within their education. DEL views dance as a discrete discipline that requires serious scholarship and exists within the realms of artistic, cultural, social and historical contexts.

Holistic dance learning emphasized in the DEL model fosters development in the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and aesthetic domains. Comprehensive dance education goes beyond dance training and technique to include skill and knowledge acquisition in the broad dance vocabulary of LMA that includes study and exploration of multiple styles and genres from around the world. The DEL model believes that artistry in the dance class is of primary importance and encourages an emphasis on collaborative dance making. Dance making is a scaffolded process in DEL, which begins with exploration and improvisation of dance concepts and vocabulary to allow all students, regardless of prior training or experience, to succeed in the dance classroom. The DEL learning arch moves from exploration to the development of dance concepts using the LMA vocabulary as framework for choreography. This process of scaffolded learning in dance engages students in important higher levels of thinking such as synthesis and creation, and cultivates collaborative and problem solving skills to create dances based on a myriad of themes and topics.

LMA: The Language of Dance

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) provides DEL with the framework to organize all human movement as described by Laban. The framework of the four categories of LMA (Body, Effort, Space and Relationship) is a valuable tool for creating a rich variety of dance lessons and units.

The vocabulary of LMA is accessible to all learners and is embedded within the school curriculum. LMA acts as a unifying language of dance that helps support dance literacy through a common vocabulary for describing, analyzing and discussing dance in the classroom. (See handout about the benefits of LMA in the dance program.)

Dance literacy also includes teaching students how to express and communicate their dance process to others and builds important literacy skills that are critical to their overall education. Students learn to observe, reflect upon, critique and describe movement using the LMA framework. Students also learn to notate their dances through using motifs (LOD) or other symbols or invented motifs.

The parallels between the writing and reading process and the dance making process are emphasized in the DEL model and reinforce and support literacy standards in the dance classroom.

Lesson & Curriculum Design

Lesson and unit planning is a critical part of any successful dance program and gives form and structure to the curriculum. It's the nuts and bolts of teaching; knowing what the plan is and being able to clearly identify what students need to know, do and understand as a result of the lesson or unit.

The DEL lesson plan format emphasizes a scaffolded learning arc that has exploration and development or dance making at its core. The DEL lesson flows organically from an introduction of the theme, to a thorough exploration of key movement vocabulary using the LMA framework, to the development and elaboration of the material in a dance-making context. Students are engaged in deep learning that emphasizes problem solving, collaboration, discovery and reflection. Students are asked to engage with dance on multiple levels beyond skill acquisition and apply their learning in multiple ways. Students reflect

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and revise their dances based on feedback and are able to analyze and describe their dances verbally and in a written form. The DEL lesson plan is flexible yet encourages a scaffolded flow which offers an in-depth learning experience in dance.

DEL encourages multiple entry points into dance, such as thematic based learning, genre or dance technique specific lessons, as well as arts integrated or interdisciplinary curriculum design. One of DEL's mantras is: *You can make a dance about anything!*

DEL values dance as a discrete and essential arts discipline and encourages teachers to build curricula around dance as an art form. In addition, dance makes a myriad of links and connections to other disciplines, which can result in dynamic integrated curriculum design.

Drawing connections between dance and other areas of the school curriculum, such as language arts, history, science or math only heightens the impact of dance education in a school environment. These connections allow for profound learning across disciplines and can enhance the existing curriculum through a movement perspective--through the art of making dances. Teachers can develop key partnerships with other teachers in other disciplines to bring the gift of dance to a school.

Alignment to local, state and national dance standards is critical when developing one's dance curriculum. DEL is informed by current practices in assessment and curriculum design, particularly within the context of Pre-K – 12 public schools.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

One of DEL's goals is to respect and honor diverse perspectives. It is critical in the 21st Century to be a culturally proficient educator and receive training in culturally responsive pedagogy in order to know how to respond to diverse populations of learners with sensitivity, respect and empathy in order to support equity in all areas of education.

In DEL we aim to develop skills and attitudes that help bridge cultural differences and encourage listening without judgment, increased multicultural awareness and cross-cultural communication. As dance is a universal language, we desire to create connections across all areas of dance and dance education. The fact that DEL 92Y is based in NYC, one of the most diverse and international cities in the world, informs DEL's global perspective. DEL is a community of dancers, dance educators, choreographers and teachers from around the globe who share a common passion for bringing the gift of dance to every child!

Stages of Growth & Development

The DEL model is accessible to all learners and makes a strong recommendation that dance teachers are well versed in child development and developmental benchmarks. In order to design age appropriate lessons and units, it is vital to know who the student is and to have an understanding an appreciation for the student as a whole person. It is critical that teachers create lesson plans that are appropriate for the age and population of the child they are working with.

Understanding the different benchmarks for the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and aesthetic domains of different age groups is an indicator of a culturally responsive teacher. Training in special

education and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners are important to being a well-versed and empathetic educator. It is important to understand your students and gain a sensitivity to

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their backgrounds, prior experience, family makeup, and cultural background in order to ensure that all students succeed in your dance program. (See developmental benchmarks handout)

Effective and Inspired Teaching

Art at the Heart of Teaching is the DEL tagline and is a call for inspired and transformational teaching that has a lasting impact on the learner. Effective teaching includes all the nuts and bolts of teaching and must be grounded in solid instructional practices. Inspired teaching goes beyond mediocre teaching to be exceptional and impassioned. DEL teacher training emphasizes passionate and heartfelt teaching that emerges from the Teacher's Heart.

DEL courses model effective and inspired teaching strategies to help teachers have a toolkit to function in diverse teaching situations. This teacher toolkit guides teachers to establish classroom routines and practices that set guidelines and ensure student engagement and participation. These effective teaching strategies are critical to succeeding in the classroom and take years of practice to develop and hone.

Dance Education Resources

The field of Dance Education has evolved over the past 25 years in multiple ways. DEL encourages dance educators to gain access to important dance education resources to enrich one's practice and ensure high quality pedagogy. Many organizations had helped to develop the field of dance education and offer valuable resources for the dance education community.

The DEL mantras are big umbrella statements that represent the essence of DEL core values.

- Art at the Heart of Teaching
- Dance for Every Child!
- You can make a dance about anything!