

CAST Model District Unit Template

Unit Title: How Music Inspires Choreography	Subject: Dance	Grade Level: 3-5
<p>Brief Description of Unit: In this unit, students will explore improvisation to create and perform original movement to a selected piece of music. The choreographic process of Martha Graham will be explored to provide concrete examples of choreographic development, motivation and to inspire student creativity.</p>		
<p>Standards:</p> <p>Creating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiment, identify and build content for choreography (for example, music/sound, text, objects, images, notation, observed dance, experiences, literary forms, natural phenomena, current news, social events. DA:Cr1.1.3, DA:Cr1.1.4, DA:Cr1.1.5 <p>Performing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change use of energy and dynamics by modifying movements and applying specific characteristics to heighten the effect of their intent. DA:Pr4.13 - Analyze movements and phrases for use of energy and dynamic changes and use adverbs and adjectives to describe them. DA:Pr4.1.4 - Contrast bound and free-flowing movements. Motivate movement from both central initiation (torso) and peripheral initiation (distal), and analyze the relationship between initiation and energy. DA:Pr4.1.5 <p>Responding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find a movement pattern that creates a movement phrase, style and theme in a dance work. DA:Re.7.1.3 - Find meaning or artistic intent from the patterns of movement in a dance work. DA:Re.7.1.5 		
<p>Enduring Understanding(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choreographers use a variety of sources as inspiration and transform concepts and ideas into movements for artistic expression. - Space, time, and energy are basic elements of dance. - Dance is perceived and analyzed to comprehend its meaning. 	<p>Essential Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do choreographers get their ideas for dances? - How do dancers work with space, time and energy to communicate artistic expression? - How is dance understood? 	
<p>Knowledge: Students will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Martha Graham was a choreographer who incorporated her own technique of Modern Dance into her choreography - Aaron Copland was an American composer - What a choreographer is and what it means to choreograph - Choreography can be a collaborative process between artists such as dancers, composers and sculptors - The musical influence a composer has on the choreographic process - Music can influence individual movement preferences and styles - The role improvisational dance plays in the choreographic process 	<p>Skills: Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore preferred personal movement styles - Identify pathways, use of space, level changes, body shapes, dynamics, tempo and incorporate them into movement phrases - Explore various movement dynamics - Identify various genres and dynamics of music - Physically and emotionally respond to a selected piece of music and verbally articulate those responses - Communicate emotionally through movement - Understand and count a musical phrase of 16-32 counts - Use elements of choreography/composition - Create and perform personal movement phrases inspired by music - Demonstrate knowledge of the choreographic process - Analyze movement and verbally articulate ideas and opinions 	

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Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Learn about a collaborative choreographic process between dance and music or choreographer and composer
- Identify a selected genre of music
- Explore improvisational dance to learn how music influences their personal movement choices
- Create original movement phrases (choreography)
- Gain performance experience by performing their movement phrases for their classmates
- Analyze movement and verbally articulate ideas and opinions based on movement phrases observed
- develop critical thinking skills

Learning Plan/Instructional Strategies:

Part one:

- Teach the class what the terms Choreographer, Choreography, Composer and Musical Composition mean.
- Present the class with a brief history of Martha Graham and Aaron Copland and chronicle their works and accomplishments.
- Read aloud to the class “Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring” to introduce the concept of choreography and artistic collaboration.
- Provide visual examples of Graham’s Appalachian Spring and facilitate a group discussion about what was observed:
 - What movement qualities did they notice?
 - Did the music influence the movement?
 - How did the music and dancing make them feel?
- Write down ideas expressed by the students and encourage them to provide a physical demonstration of their interpretation.
- Lead the class through 16-32 counts of exploratory movements (stationary and in various pathways around the room) to explore body shapes, level changes, use of personal space, tempo, movement dynamics, directional changes, etc. For this exercise, select a musical excerpt of Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*.
- Instruct students to improvise to the same selected piece of music in a stationary position to explore individual movement qualities.

Part two:

- Provide students with 4 different instrumental songs of contrasting genres of music (for example, Jazz, Classical, Drum & Bass and Big Band) so that they can select a piece of music that they personally relate to. Be sure to make the students aware of the various tempos and musical qualities by counting the music out for them.
- Instruct the students to create a short solo movement phrase (16-32 counts) that they will individually perform for the class. (Record the student choreography to view after the class to evaluate the student’s process and development of their composition)
- Lead the class through discussion after each student has shared their solo composition to analyze and cultivate ideas about how the music influenced their choreography. Encourage the students to respond to the choreography by providing feedback to their classmates.

Resources:

Building Dances: A Guide to Putting Movement Together, by Susan McGreevy-Nichols and Helene Scheff

Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance App

Martha Graham’s *Appalachian Spring*:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmgaKGSxQVw&list=PLZ_hyz_fvE1ELZy4jCct10e8NbfCCqyeY

An interview with Aaron Copland about his collaborative process:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_LcjNe9fMQ

Repertoire/Media & Materials:

- Dance area: an open, safe environment with appropriate space and floor for movement.
- Book: *Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring*, by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan
- Video recording of Martha Graham’s *Appalachian Spring*
- Musical recording of Aaron Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*
- Recordings of Jazz, Classical, Drum & Bass and Big Band music
- Recordings of varying genres of music
- Smartboard/TV/DVD player
- CD player/Ipod
- Sound system/speakers
- Video camera with tripod
- Dry erase board (or easel with easel pad) and markers

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Academic Vocabulary:

Abstract, aesthetic, analyze, artistic criteria, artistic expression, artistic intent, artistic statement, body-mind principles, bound movement, choreography, choreographer, choreographic devices, composer, dance structure, dance study, dance work, dynamics, embody, energy, evaluative criteria, explore, genre, free-flowing, general space, kinesthetic awareness, levels, locomotor, movement characteristics, narrative, perform, respond, personal space, movement phrase, phrase, space, stimuli, tempo, tempi.

Differentiation/Modification:

In order to ensure that the unit is inclusive for those participating, instructors may wish to integrate the following strategies:

- provide study guides/visual aids
- facilitate peer mentoring
- provide verbal cueing during movement exploration
- address preferred learning styles
- ask questions to foster critical thinking
- repeat information
- allow for extended time on activities
- make use of equipment to stabilize the bodies of students with physical disabilities
- focus on fine motor and verbal skills of students with physical disabilities

Formative Assessment:

Through observation and facilitated discussions, the instructor will be able to assess if the students have demonstrated an understanding of the above-stated standards and objectives. Class discussions will provide a venue for student feedback, teacher feedback and a culminating conversation about the unit. Review of the recorded choreography will provide the instructor with a demonstration of student understanding of the activity.

Summative Assessment:

Please refer to the attached rubric

Notes:

This lesson can be modified and/or developed for all grade levels. The role of sculptor, Isamu Noguchi, can be explored further to integrate his contributions to the making of Appalachian Spring. Also, there are a wide range of choreographers and composers that can be used to demonstrate collaborative creative processes.

The length of the unit can vary and can be extended over 2-3, one-hour classes.

Assessment Rubric – How Music Inspires Choreography

Name: _____

Criteria	Yes	No
I learned about the choreographic process and how artists collaborate		
I explored my own personal movement style		
I created shapes with my body		
I created shapes with my body while moving through space		
I explored level changes		
I explored dynamics		
I explored moving in different speeds/tempo		
I expressed and communicated an idea or feeling through my movement		
I interpreted the feeling of a piece of music and created movement to express how it made me feel		
I created a personal dance phrase		
I practiced my personal dance phrase		
I performed my personal dance phrase with confidence		
I shared my dance phrase with an audience		
I discussed my dance phrase with classmates		
I observed and discussed movement phrases of my classmates		
I was a respectful audience member		

What have you learned about your preferred movement style?

Assessment Rubric – How Music Inspires Choreography

What feelings were expressed through your movement?

What challenges did you face?

How can you apply this experience to future dance making?
