

## **Dance for Social Justice**

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“Dance is a powerful human force for transforming and living the life we image.”  
~ dancer Anna Halprin (cited by Liz Lerman, *Teaching Dance to Senior Adults*)

### **Abstract**

This dance unit is centered as a conduit for social justice and conceived to start a body/mind/spiritual dialogue as just one stepping stone toward a more ethical and strong democracy. Given the norms of white privilege that have been revealed in 2020, American institutions across the board, including the arena of education, have been working to reexamine and revamp their modus operandi. The pedagogical approach here is an exploration through embodiment connecting creative process with activism and intended toward a grounding in balance and equity – true democratic ideals. As dance-artist educators, where socialization through the arts is inherent, we are poised to reflect on and envision through our creative work a re-entry of our values and practices in our classrooms. A mission in the unit is to de-centralize the teacher and design a student-centered contextualized environment. Such re-centering can add to our continued emphasis in self-care, celebrating and understanding our diversity and inclusivity, and enable us to visualize both a self and a community-focused advocacy for a “new” democracy. By disrupting prevalent stereotypes and instead stressing the power of individual voices and perspectives, it is hoped that students will find ‘variable truths’ as they pertain to various cultural groups, as powerful means of getting to the heart of what it is to be human.

### **Keywords**

Social justice  
Choreography  
Dance  
Diversity  
Perspective  
Democracy  
Artistry  
Collaboration  
Body Mind  
Inclusion

Equity  
Holistic Teaching  
Somatics  
Inclusive Pedagogy  
Embodied Activism

## Content Objectives

### *Problem Statement*

We are living in tumultuous times. There is a social rebellion afoot and a quest for moral truth. Specifically, the issues of social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are at the center. These issues, as they relate to moral truth, are espoused by the philosophical underpinnings of living in a democracy. Currently our democracy is in a state of imbalance. The efforts to *move* to a balanced state is on the minds of our citizenry and our young people in schools in particular.

### *Power of Dance*

Events to effect change in a country are often called ‘movements’ – dance is movement. There is a visceral bodily connection to all of the imbalances in the world today. A look toward ‘balance’ is also inherent in dance as we look for ‘centeredness’ and aplomb. This equates to a sense of safety, freedom, and peace – certainly worthwhile goals.

Art brings to light what we think – what is right, what is wrong – our moral compass undergirds the meaning we make of our human world. The ‘human condition’ is what artists are reflecting upon and giving artistic voice to. Some say it is the ultimate truth to be told. In dance, it is of the body. The body ‘is’ – it is there. Our senses are alive and they can’t be discounted as ‘false.’ We transport these feelings, these sensations, to the viewer. In turn, their reactions and meaning-making is ‘true’ for them. Again, though, it is in the process of uncovering these feelings, and, in an educational environment (which, of course, everything is an ‘education’ as we are always learning about ourselves) such as school, where we can critically analyze and make sense of the world and the people in it.

### *The Philadelphia High School for Girls*

The Philadelphia High School for Girls is located in North Philadelphia with a student enrollment over 800 and is 170 years old. It is a special admit school for academically

motivated students who are college-bound and is ranked among the top 5 in the city. It has a safe and nurturing environment which includes Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment (college credits earned), and strong humanities/arts programs. These courses are for 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade young women.

Our students have been watching history unfold. The multiple issues are paramount and of particular importance to the population that I teach. My students – teenagers - are at a key point in realizing so much about themselves. They are doing this at a time where our foundation as a people is cracking. As an urban and predominately African-American and Asian-American community, it is imperative, particularly now, that they find tools for positive communication and self-knowledge. They understand the issues of today viscerally and the impact on their lives is profound.

This unit of study can help the students with the challenges they face. Dance – really, any art endeavor is about process. It is in the doing that gives us meaning – or purpose. The connection we make with others while creating, or realizing the meaning/work, or even with ourselves, is how we *know* our humanness. Our human senses provide a perceptual and empirical channel of understanding the world around us. This way of knowing – sense perception - combined with personal knowledge (including academic, informal, and experiential knowledge) through our lived experiences provide us yet another avenue toward finding what it is to be human. When, then, we add logic and inference, or ‘reason’, to the knowledge-acquiring framework, a degree of reliable knowledge and self-trust is advanced. We are a compilation of everything that has come before – that is us. We try to understand our unique selves and our individuality is part of a whole – a community, a nation, a world. The interdependence helps to realize our purpose as we don’t exist alone. This notion is at the core of this unit on democracy as a bridge to social change.

The hope, ultimately, of course, is positive change – both in the students and in the world ‘out there’. There is an agenda – a mission if you will that we can make a difference. An intention. This gives the artist purpose and it is hoped, give the students purpose. When topics are relevant to high schoolers, they embrace the learning more wholly. Helping students to see that they, too, have something to offer – that they ‘know’ and can share their knowledge is imperative going forward. In our age we have not been acknowledging or even listening to all people. The disenfranchised are often ignored or their words and ideas are deflected as the social order continues to work in a systemic hierarchy of “truth.” Our young women matter. They want to be heard. Dance can make that happen. Specifically, dance and the arts generally speaking, is a conduit for examining cultural identity through form and content, and can raise consciousness, and even create a vision of a more just society.

### *Rationale - Dance as a Catalyst for Social Change*

Most high school students in urban Philadelphia have experienced racism firsthand and have direct knowledge that something is wrong in our socially-constructed racial world. Giving a voice and something actionable to confront and combat the social injustices manifested in the news and in their lives, in particular, is important in their social and emotional health. Such social activism is needed for healing the ills of racism. Equally important to the catharsis in the arts, is the power of the arts to communicate the truth of what it is to be human. Humans can't fully sustain themselves unless they are both physically safe and mentally safe. This is freedom.

None of our students should feel relegated to a position of 'other'. An aim for freedom can take many forms, including an uncovering and revealing of the lived experiences of our ancestors. The weight of the past is rooted in our bodies as we question, probe and interrogate previously held notions. This uncovering and understanding allows for freedom. The dialogue that ensues will be the personal histories of the Black, Asian, and Hispanic communities, women (as we are an all-girls high school), and even urbanites – all serve as jumping off points to examine the forces at play that combine this community's lived experience.

### Model for dance-activism

It is important to acknowledge that there are various forms of activism and students can choose affirmation and raise their voices in celebration and not choose to focus on the oppression that plague our citizenship. Too often we respond to the violence we see physically, psychologically, culturally and spiritually, but the inequities can also serve to generate civic discourse and be a catalyst for pronouncing change. Dance, as a change agent, can show a reimagined tomorrow. It is the acknowledgement that these aggressions are real that can enhance validating the stories and lived experiences of our students. This amplifies their voices and models in our teaching a collaborative pedagogy - collaboration by integrating our students' ideas versus compromising ideas in the classroom. The intersection of artistically sound dance-making and being socially aware is at the heart of this unit intended to foster intellectual, emotional and physical growth.

### **Content Background**

Many students during their teen years feel disconnected from their bodies, their friends, and society in general; due to the isolation of the last year this feeling has been manifested tenfold. This "new normal" is not, in fact, normal for them or any of us. This unit is intended to help students explore their own body and presence as an individual with cultural connections and as an asset to themselves and their communities. The lesson plans are designed so that issues of identity, social relationships and agency, through the

study of social justice is explored through a shared creative process the result of which it is hoped, for a reconnection with their peers, their school community, and greater citizenry to which we all belong.

*General Objectives:* Students will be able to (SWBAT):

- Value own subjective base and fortify self-preservation and self-esteem
- Combat prejudices and discrimination through authentic exploration and connection
- Enhance thoughts and actions through their personal and collective lenses
- Create a place for self and group expression and a shared sense of community
- Increase body awareness, kinesthetic empathy and comfort level in using movement as a tool for growth
- Enhance “grounding” skills and improve self-care
- Celebrate intellectual, emotional and physical growth
- Develop a strong sense of belonging
- Foster openness and deep listening
- Feel valued
- Desire to connect to others, integrate ideas, and create collectively
- Generate meaningful experiences in addition to meaningful dances
- Identify the need for knowledge (power) to attain freedom
- Imagine and create new possibilities and how to evoke change through dance-making
- Engage in a reciprocal teaching/learning dynamic
- Embrace a culturally responsive mindset
- Transition from thinking to feeling to making artistic choices
- Investigate how a choreography is at the same time a private and public event.
- Experience dance as a means of self-identity, celebration, communication, mourning, activism, and expression

in order to (ITO) invoke a culturally relevant pedagogy while, at the same time, empower students to be aware of, and responsive to, the complexities of the intersections of history and culture.

### Artists as Advocates for Change in Society

Sources of knowledge vary and dance is one such source. We inform – make visible in the case of the performing arts – who we are and what changes we need to make. Now more than ever artists are agents of change as they are going beyond their normal aesthetic frameworks and expanding these frameworks to include and argue for social justice. Advocacy in the arts world is not new. In fact, S.U.N., the Symphony for United Nations, founded by musician and conductor Joseph Eger, had an agenda when bringing nations together through music and dance – world peace; he believed, and thus advocated, that we can live together in harmony if we ‘know’ each other through music

(and the other arts) as our common humanity is at the core. The arts can be a bridge to changing people's hearts. This is, and can continue be, part of what is happening country-wide and world-wide for that matter – protesting injustice. Artists are often our greatest advocates for change. When does change become something we can term as progress? Is this in the eye of the beholder? Can progress be defined as moral truth being realized, our purpose? Artist grapple with and search regularly for answering the old philosophical question: what is the meaning (or purpose) of life? Making the world better seems like a good goal.

### Movement Practitioners /Dancers as Advocates for Change in Healing all Bodies

A vital part of the systemic change that is being purported in our national consciousness is described by somatic movement practitioners such as Martha Eddy (“Calming the Nervous System: Small Steps to Release Stress and Help in Trauma Recovery”) and writers such as Resmaa Menakem (“My Grandmother’s Hands”) and Ta’Nehisi Coates (“Between the World and Me”). Enhancing social change requires healthy movement and a healthy mind. Being aware of racialized trauma and chronic oppression of all bodies determines a ‘distressed body’ – oppression is carried in our bodies consciously and unconsciously. Dance and other movement modalities help people with kinesthetic empathy. This can be therapeutic by design by movement therapists, but in the dance classroom, the ‘healing’ comes as a by-product by its very nature, and readily serves psycho-physical health. As much as dance helps one become physically fit, but as an art form (and not a physical education requirement), the intention is communication about the human condition and not about ‘the exercise’. As students become “somatically aware” they build their capacities to handle the stress and trauma that resides in the body. In this unit we are opening the possibilities of how to access a more just society; by starting with the ‘self’ and developing a knowledge base from which to expand in relationships outside of ‘self’, one develops the freedom that leads to social justice. Once the students can ‘digest’ how they feel and where these feelings reside in their bodies, channels can be opened and energized toward following their bodies wisdom and attaining liberation. This has been described in more detail by the writers listed above and in the general research of how our mind-body-spirit integrates stress and releases generations of social discord (Eddy, Menakem). Dance is an opportune vessel in which to pay attention and understand our bodies and trust in our bodies to reveal our emotions and to communicate our feelings.

The unit will promote an intentional and explicit focus on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Specifically the CASEL Systemic Framework for Social & Emotional Learning delineates a strong connection to dance education:

Self Awareness  
Self Management

Social Awareness  
Relationship Skills  
Responsible Decision-Making (CASEL, 2020)

The way artists ‘think’ is to pay attention to their senses. An awakening occurs when the actor observes how people behave with one another; the painter learns to ‘see’ the world and illuminates what they observe (and feel) in that reckoning; the musician ‘thinks’ in sound and vibration and what that means. The dance student learns to pay attention to their kinesthetic sense and the proprioception skills are enhanced so that they can not only recognize what their bodies are doing and feeling but how to translate the messages they wish to convey through their bodies.

Will some of the conversations be uncomfortable? Sure. There are skeptics and relativists galore – helping our students find the middle ground and becoming critical thinkers is certainly a known goal in education. Education in dance as an art form is one road to travel in finding how the imagination – and answering ‘what if?’ – can produce creative problem-solvers. This unit will be about how we can change and how we can evoke change so that we move ever closer to social justice (while simultaneously meeting the national, state, and city standards in dance).

Many are resistant to change. Making such shifts in our thinking and actually realizing a paradigm shift in how we function as humans is only realized one event, one action, one person at a time. As educators we have a duty to be agents of change. Though change is difficult for both educators and their students, the process helps to identify individual and collective identities and how to ‘make better’ the human condition. Isn’t that what progress is? Today, more than ever, educators are working towards helping students understand what it is to be human and to be all they can be. What actionable steps can and should I take to be “who I want to be” and to pursue happiness and have a purpose? The conversation is evolving, the discourse is relevant, and the need is imperative.

### Democracy and Collaboration

Collaboration in creative dance construction is at the heart of this unit. Skills such as cooperation, negotiating ideas, listening, and working synchronistically is at the center of a dance artist. Bearing this in mind, the rhythm of relationships, feelings, and ideas are unearthed in the creative process and through the critical analysis of varying viewpoints and finding where change of thought and notion are needed in order for progress, is a rhythm that keeps the beat for all!

We might ask questions like this: What is the definition of a good leader, a good citizen, etc.? There are underlying values in how we answer the questions, all of which is

good fodder for dance-making projects and understanding principles of democracy that have been at the forefront of much thought this year. Issues regarding disparities and equity, the social justice movement, the Covid19 pandemic, and climate-related issues all address the stress and trauma of 2020-2021. Delving into these issues will help students engage in learning in the 3 domains of dance and general education – psychomotor, cognitive, and affective – in order to address their academic development.

Over the course of general education protocols and reforms, dance has stood out for its coverage of the three widely known domains of learning (Bloom’s Taxonomy, 1956) – psychomotor (the moving body), cognitive (the thinking brain), and affective (feelings and emotions) – as they were named in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. Many people thought that the cognitive or having intellectual skills was by far the most important, but as brain research has become more and more sophisticated, we now know that ‘thinking’ is happening throughout the body and is not an isolated function. Dancers have intuited this for decades. The domains are so embedded in how dance derives meaning in all the artistic and learning processes that one can pursue, that there has long been a conversation about inventing a new word – something that would mean body/mind/spirit all wrapped up in one (Body Mind Centering, developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen and then further developed by Martha Eddy, a somatic dance practitioner, promotes BodyMind Dancing and Dynamic Embodiment (Eddy, 2016), is quickly catching on, but is still 2 words pressed together!). Like in all educational disciplines, we deconstruct the components in order to understand the ‘separate parts’ but then, ultimately, put them back together again so that ‘the thing’ can exist as complete.

Howard Gardner, an educational theorist, also classified knowledge and his theory of “multiple intelligences” also gives voice to the idea of there being many different forms of connections for different people (Gardner, 1983). If someone has a distinct proclivity to one form of ‘intelligence’ doesn’t preclude their abilities in another. If one looks closely at any of the now eleven distinct intelligences that he names, we can see that all three domains of learning are at play. To fully ‘develop’ as a human, learning should be ‘holistic’ and not to divide or divorce “reason” and ‘head space’ with our “emotion” or “heart space”. We can’t expect objectivity without subjectivity – we NEED both. Given this ‘holistic learning perspective and through talking (affective), moving (psychomotor), and thinking (cognitive) about social justice, listening to the students’ ‘truths’ and finding a collective place for empathy as a starting point, is a beginning.

### The Dancing Body as a Thinking Body and Story Teller

Dance education is immediate. Even when dance is taught with ‘technique’ in mind (skill-based) and is at the forefront of a lesson plan, students are still confronted with their own bodies and their own subjective connections to their bodies, with others in that they are dancing with their peers, and even with the music. Such qualitative self-



knowledge – an important beginning place – is important to equip students to transfer knowledge of others.

The intersection of self-knowledge and knowledge-of-others presents itself as the unit segues and transitions to dance-making. In the choreographic process, the students' stories will materialize. It is in the crafting of a dance where the justification for our thoughts on the important issues of the 'day' will be heard, analyzed, critically analyzed and ultimately built to frame a dance and, ultimately, an evening-long dance performance. The power of using movement and finding movement that 'works' to the task is at the heart of both self-knowledge and the interactions and knowledge of others and, ultimately, a collective identity. The power of negotiation in this choreographic process, when ideas are in conflict, is a great metaphor for how democracy is supposed to work. This collaborative learning style reflects the best of the performing arts and why they are a model for our business world and why it should be a model for our political world as well.

#### Democracy – an ideal conception

There are different ideations of democracy philosophically-speaking and a variety of how democracies have been conceived across the globe. However, when most people say that a system is democratized they are projecting an idea of equality. Yet, very few democracies in existence can actually claim that everyone is equal. If all citizens are actually to be represented and "ruled by the people" and their voices heard and, more importantly, considered, then we will have moved into what we tend to imagine is a democracy in its ideal. It is argued in educational, business, and civic-oriented environments, that diverse perspectives actually make a system stronger. To this end - a stronger and more cohesive society – this unit is conceived to start a body/mind/spiritual dialogue as just one stepping stone toward a more ethical and strong democracy.

The notions behind democracy are germane to dance. In this dance unit the idea of equality will be explored as equality requires mutual respect and, consequently, the idea of relationship is built. The commitment to considering and representing an array of ideas and relationship-building in most dance is proffered heartily in professional dance environments as well as dance educational ones and are designed to reinforce the idea of group decision-making. To further investigate the different avenues that democracies take, we will embark on an 'in-house' research project and compare a cross between an "Authoritarian Democracy" and "Representative Democracy" whereby the teacher (expert or the 'elite') will conduct, or control, the class versus a "Direct Democracy" whereby the students and teacher will make decisions together (Rosenfeld, 2018).

As dance-artist educators, we are poised to reflect on and envision through our creative work a re-entry of our values and practices in our classrooms. Such re-centering

can add to our continued emphasis in self-care, celebrating and understanding our diversity and inclusivity, and enable us to visualize both a self and a community-focused advocacy for a “new” democracy.

### Specific Terms used in Unit Plan

Below is a basic explanation of terms used in the Unit Plan; they are illuminated in more detail by the authors in the listed references. The concepts have important connections between democracy and the success of co-habitability and objective knowledge acquisition in society and, ultimately, social justice.

Epistemology: a study of knowledge and how knowledge is attained. Epistemologists study the nature, origin, and scope of knowledge, epistemic justification, the rationality of belief, and various related issues (Grasswick, 2018).

- Epistemic Injustice: This general term signifies an undermining of a person or group which deflates their credibility. When knowledge claims are discounted due to a group’s identity (think stereotypes), this further threatens the democratic ideal of equality for all (Fricker, 2009).

- Testimonial Injustice: This is when the speaker is given less credibility. The dominant group doesn’t employ resources by marginalized groups. There is a tendency to ignore knowledge offered by those that are ‘outsiders’ (Grasswick, 2018).

- Epistemic Oppression: This occurs through persistent exclusion and resistance to the knowledge gleaned from the non-dominant group.

- Epistemic Ignorance: Actively constructed domination of the majority as they haven’t cultivated knowledge from outside their groups. This practice reinforces one’s own privilege.

- Social Epistemologists: Social epistemologists examine how societies come to understand truth. “For social epistemologists, the goal is to develop epistemic practices that don’t simply generate an abundance of knowledge, but that generates sound and ethical patterns of knowledge and (Grasswick, pg. 38) ultimately to support healthy relations between people and challenges the ignorance of the dominant group.

### Essentialism, Existentialism and Social Construction:

- Essentialism - the view that humans are defined by specific, inborn essences and that a set of norms for our behavior is our human nature. Essentialists believe that

we are intrinsically different and our characteristic natures or dispositions are there prior to our existence (Detlefsen, 2021).

- Existentialism - aside from being radically free, humans have no innate essences and thus can make themselves into whatever we want. The existentialist believes that we are responsible in determining our own development through acts of the will (Detlefsen, 2021).

- Social Constructionism - is compatible with both essentialism and existentialism, and suggests that in addition to either having an inborn essence or being born with no essence at all aside from radical freedom, that humans are partly constructed by their social milieus (Detlefsen, 2021).

### **Teaching Strategies**

This unit is centered as a conduit for social justice. The vehicle for approaching the unit is through the subject of dance. By disrupting prevalent stereotypes and instead stressing the power of individual voices and perspectives, it is hoped that students will find ‘variable truths’ as they pertain to various cultural groups, as powerful means of getting to the heart of what it is to be human. Some of the traits that may come up in the unit include but are limited to: generosity, compassion, altruism, empathy, tolerance, patience, gratitude, perseverance. These very traits can be fodder for choreographic exploration and, ultimately, dance-making.

- **Topic Stations:** Students choose a station in the studio based on the posted topic of concern. In this fashion the class will consist of smaller groups so that each student’s voice contributes to the discussion with the added benefit of the topic being of interest to the group.

Examples of possible topics:

- Racial discrimination
- Anti-LGBTQ+ hatred
- Ageism
- Bipartisanship
- Climate change
- Equity
- Access
- Inclusion
- Diversity

Immigration  
Gender Bias  
Ableism

- Graphic Organizers: Students can organize their thoughts by ‘cause/effect’, ‘related thoughts’, ‘past/present/future’, etc. as reference for dance-creation.
- Body Mapping: Students can use texts, drawings and movement to share the stories of their bodies and experience.
- Drawing: 2D (drawing, photography, video, collage and mixed media), and later 3D compositions (site-specific, installations, dance, and performance art), to expand their artistic vocabulary and experiences.
- Videos/Photographs: These can be used to demonstrate how other artists advocate for change or disclosure on issues of their day. Additionally, they provide a stimulus for dance-making as the students can ‘take on’ the shape of the depicted people in a photograph or still shot from a video and ‘feel’ the emotion and energy as a starting point to ‘continue’ their own emotional landscape.
- Parking Lot (idea storage): Individuals or groups can post thoughts, concerns, epiphanies, and questions on their topic for future fodder for discussion and connecting the unit between others in their class and in the other dance classes.

### **Classroom Activities/Tools**

- Identity journals
- Guided writings (immediate experience reflections and offering of questions for deeper reflection)
- Poem or self-reflection narrative
- Drawings, Maps
- Ritualistic Activities such as Meditation, Yoga
- Short essay on a dance artist whose work reflected a call for change or a response to personal self-identity
- Choreographing phrases/movement to contribute to dance concert work

- Explore the connection with others through spoken word, sounds, music, and props.
- Extract how memory shapes identity and document the past with a ‘movement pathway’
- Create a ritual to reveal cultural impulses and the union and communion through the idea of celebration.
- Readings, videos, movement exercises, and student-led conversations that discuss dance without privileging one form or genre over another.
- Connect composition tasks to citizenship, current events, and general global concerns.
- Create or find a piece about social justice and discuss it

**Note on the Topic Suggestions in the Unit:** One of the tenets of good teaching and good art-making is to illicit what is meaningful to the student artist. What do THEY need to express and ponder and decipher to acquire selfhood? At the same time, the topics below provide powerful starting points. From these initial jumping off points, my recommendation is to diverge as is appropriate to the conversations that each teacher has with their students. If one is too prescriptive it might fall flat and do precisely what this unit is designed not to do. However, one can use this plan knowing that how it proceeds and just where the creative process takes the group is at the heart of the standards purported by the national dance standards, statewide standards, and our citywide dance standards. These ideas are provided as only one way to approach the topics revealed in the problems of democracy and our lived experience as knowers in this world.

It is helpful to begin with experiential explorations, beginning with self-reflective movement studies and expanding into group interactions. Pedagogy grounded in equity and somatic awareness will help the students explore their identify, creativity, and connect to one another.

Useful Tip: Dance cuts through the spoken narrative and gets to ‘feeling and emotions’ but generating a written and verbal vocabulary that stimulates movement ideas tends to reach students in their movement discoveries. Elicit your own list from the class discussions, but some of these words and phrases might come up and could be good fodder for movement discovery.

Validation  
Aggression  
Protect

Resist  
Judge  
Label  
Blame  
Fix  
Defend  
Demanding  
Struggle  
Apprehensive  
Silenced  
Flight  
Shattered  
Dismantle  
Freedom  
Resistance  
Empowerment  
Stability  
Thrive  
Grounded  
Resolution  
Otherness/alienation  
Choice-making  
Invisible racism (white privilege) – “normalized bigotry”  
“Gets under the skin”

## **Lesson Plan #1**

Theme: Freedom Matters

Objective: SWBAT (students will be able to) define and understand what ‘freedom’ means and the barriers that undermine the idea of equality in democracy ITO (in order to) ultimately in this unit, communicate through dance creation and performance the problem of social injustice and other tangential topics.

Goals: Ultimately, students will be able to use the knowledge from readings and class discussions to frame ‘in movement’ how liberties are thwarted in order to communicate to an audience how this feels. In this particular lesson, developing language about the limitations of ‘otherness’ will be learned and how the disparities that exist are at play in society today.

Procedure: Students will see signposted, around the dance studio, topics to consider: social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, climate change/environmental pollution, access, human rights violations, homelessness, racial profiling, terrorism, free speech, child labor, immigration, political polarization, oppression [racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, classism], other (student has their own idea that they write on an empty sign).

Idea to emphasize: We dance ideas, not steps. Explore ideas.

- Teacher will 'define' broadly some of the key terms that appear on poster boards around the studio.
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- Students will congregate in front of the topic they wish to discuss with others
- 
- The teacher will suggest that while listening to whomever is speaking that the witness jot down any body-based movement and if the speaker notes, too, how their body responds to their own words that they jot this down as well.
- One person will be the note-taker and record important aspects of the discussion
- 
- As a group they will come up with an answer(s) to this question:
  - What do you want to get across to the audience about your topic?
  - Note: This lesson may, in fact, be a two-day or even three-lesson experience, thus holding off on the answer to this question and answering it more organically and after some good sharing of personal thoughts.
- 

Evaluation: Students will complete an 'exit ticket' describing the most impactful thought expressed in the conversation they had with their group. A gesture (and word) will be assigned for homework to bring to the class the following day.

Homework: Read poet Claude McKay's *If We Must Die* written during the Harlem Renaissance (in Appendix)  
Claudia Rankine (writes about micro-aggressions)

## **Lesson Plan #2**

Theme: Creating a Motif

Objective: SWBAT use themes to create movement motifs ITO express the emotion and circumstances of issues chosen by the students.

Goals: Students will continue to work in groups to brainstorm movement ideas and work cooperatively and collaboratively on finding individual and group movement motifs.

Procedure:

*Background:* This lesson is actually a multiple week 'lesson plan' in that it will develop over time. Reading assignments and class discussions on what these epistemological terms mean will enhance discussions, themes, and movement development.

*Themes:* Students will choose from the topics below. Around the periphery of the studio posters/signs will designate to what theme is of interest and a definition of each 'term'. Students will work in groups to brainstorm movement motifs and structures to symbolize one of these themes or a theme of their own choosing.

Possible Title of Dance: Yours, Mine and Ours: Constitution

- Epistemic Injustice/Testimonial Injustice (silencing, smothering)  
Movement Idea: We turn our backs on the 'knowledge' we don't want to see.  
Name of Section: "Blind's Eye"
- Epistemic Oppression (resistance, confinement, disparities exist, Loss of 'self')  
Movement Idea: "Get in the face" – "Listen to me" – Repeat 'knowledge'  
Name of Section: SEE ME, SEE US or My Voice
- Epistemologies of Ignorance  
Movement Idea: Building an impenetrable wall
- Social Epistemologists: generate ethical patterns of knowledge (Affirmation)  
Movement Idea: 'dance conversations' – smooth back and forth of contributions (inclusive and responsive dialog with diverse movement patterns)  
Name of Section: Crossing the Bridge Together or Repairing the Broken

Bridge

Evaluation: Just like in any creative endeavor, watching the students' processes while solving the movement assignment is equally valid as is what product, as it were, gets produced from the creative process. There might be productive output or it may take multiple days to evaluate a product. During this formative assessment time the teachers might notice the following:

- Are the students communicating effectively with one another?
- Do the students try out their ideas physically
- Are the students involved with an energy toward discovery?
- Do the students offer ideas of their own and do they consider ideas offered by others
- Do the tried-on movements identify the emotions that are at play



## Continued Lessons to develop in the Social Justice Unit – Lesson #3 – on

'Grab Bag' of lesson material to develop. Note that each of the concepts below can be developed into a lesson plan for the day. A general warm-up should be provided to make movement exploration safe and accessible for the body/mind/soul. Short improvisational structures can be suggested by the teacher and/or the students. Lesson: 1/3 warm up, 1/3 improvisational structures, 1/3 composition of thematic movement ideas.

- Image/Theme/Movement explorations to consider:
  - Opening doors (liberation, emerge)
  - Deflating (oppression) vs. Free (elevator, light, buoyant)
  - Despair vs. Staying Upright (anti-gravity image, sinking, tug-of-war)
  - Labels – stereotypes ('breaking down' – interrupt the 'negative' phrases – replace with 'good' phrases)
  - Don't Put Me in a Box
  - Sit at the Table
  - Ideas that might pop up in class discussions or ideas that might give powerful movement possibilities:
    - Crossroads
    - Push-Pull
    - Inclusion
    - Restricting rights
    - Repair
    - Knitting Back Together
    - Polarization
    - Avoidance
    - Resilience
  - Individual uniqueness – motif for each dancer to find (identity marker)
    - Movement idea: accumulation of each motif to make a whole phrase (a hole if one individual is removed) – we need everyone
    - Movement Idea: blur (smooth out) 'markers' as we are not wholly defined by these should we wish to be 'other' (we can be both distinct and we can blend in)
  - Name of Section: Consensus or The Human Matrix
- Exploration on Cultural perspectives and social structures:
  - Competition (Dance title idea: Getting Ahead)
  - Accumulating (adding on to original motif – becoming more enriched -or appropriation...what story do you want to tell?)
  - Take on the characteristics of the group as in 'we think together'

- Emphasize, at different times, individuals (stand out... 'sing own tune')
- All in 'own world' and, thus, 'not going anywhere' – dancing in own circle or in a chaotic mess (depending on the story at hand)
- “Survival of the fittest” – how do you want to tell this story?
- “Conduit to the Stars” -again, open for interpretation....

Another Dance:

Dance Title: Conspiracy Theory (or “Obstruction” or “Extinguished Truth”)

- Disinformation (trolling, swarming) – demolishes trust

Movement Idea: confusion, anarchy, following the blind, disorganized, triggered anger.

Parasite (people attaching to each other)

Obstruction Technique: one dancer holds onto a part of the body limiting greatly what the other mover can accomplish ‘in their established phrase’

Movement Idea: Robot-like (no thinking) and just ‘do’ what leader does (like flocking but without notice or care if someone falters and can’t keep up)

Resolution: stop conforming and find your individuality (motif)

Another Dance:

Dance Title: Intersections or Parallel Worlds

This could comprise a series of solos (especially if we are still in ‘pandemic mode’) that illustrate commonalities between and among humans. The push and pull of our inner struggles help us to understand and offer empathy and solutions. If these solos can become duets, and then trios, and quartets, our paths of knowledge can intersect as we become a stronger community of many.

Evaluation: As students are responding authentically to the world around them and their personal feelings, evaluating such qualitative processes can be challenging and potentially invasive if not done with a sense of collaboration and care. Students can be asked to respond in writing to the following three steps about their process:

*The Planning Phase*: Inspiration/Preparation – How did the idea for the choreography emerge? How did the idea grow? What life experiences were highlighted?

*The Designing Phrase:* Exploration/Trial & Error - Describe composition decision-making based on: Who/Body, What/Action, Where/Space, When/Time, How/Energy, and Why/Relationship

*The Implementing Phase:* Expression/Selection – Reflect on: How do I feel now? What changes still need to be made? Is my message clear? How did my movements convey my message? Were my intentions realized? This includes revision and reflection even after ‘performance’ – just like a good democracy!

***Lesson Plan Ideas and General Teaching Ideas leading to Choreography for this Unit:***

Elicit from students ‘what makes for a good relationship’ or what puts limits on a good relationship. From this discussion create a list of words that could provide a movement score. (Example: Listen, interlace, in sync, heartbeat, reliance, support, love, compassion, harmonious, balance, positivity, etc. Each concept can be examined in movement motifs to express how humans unite and exist well together....or don’t: fear, grief, dread, sadness, loneliness, anxiety, disgust, despair, etc. Again, depends on the story you want to tell and how you want to tell it).

- General Teaching Ideas re choreography to use in this unit (insert in any of the dances where it ‘works’:

Adjustments: people moving around to ‘find themselves’ – where do they ‘fit’

Pathways: exploration of different pathways to arrive in ‘a good place’

Tell Your Story (fodder for solos)

Shifting Perspectives: Group is so powerful in their movement that others add to the group and leave behind the movement that was ‘in a negative zone’

Movement ideas stimulated by: ‘confusion’, ‘doubt’, ‘fatigue’, ‘restraint’, ‘divisive’, ‘inflamed’, ‘constricted’, ‘obstacles’, ‘sending secrets’, ‘masks we wear to hide behind’ ‘constricted’ - VERSES – “trust’, ‘openness’, ‘hand-in-hand’, ‘settled’, ‘heart- opening’, etc.

Title idea: The Common Good

Title Idea: Esprit Philosphique

- Oppositions (good dynamic qualities of tension) to explore:
  - Constriction/expansion
  - Pain/Ease
  - Energy/numbness
  - Safe/dangerous
  - Constrict/release

- Fight/flee/freeze (as is described in “My Grandmother’s Hands” by Menakem  
Title Idea: Transformations

- Another Dance (about our senses and how we know)

Concept: We view reality from different perspectives. Such alternative perspectives reveal personalities, dispositions, privilege, social-constructed expectations, variations in interpretation. Much of our ‘truth’ is discovered by what choices we make.

Dance Title: The Human Story – Humans Looking at Humans or In Our Own Skin

Movement Idea and Dance Concept: Live (but rehearsed and ‘choreographed’ ahead of time): Multiple people teach a phrase of movement (a short dance) and multiple “interpretations” of given phrase are highlighted

- Some ‘hear it described’ with words only
- Some ‘see it’ with only movement
- Some see it and hear counts
- Some see it and hear a story (with images) told
- Some are led by someone through partnering (touch) to learn it (this could signal to some audience members the most ‘compelling’ version as these two would be totally interdependent on one another, the ‘teacher’ and ‘student’ being one)

### **In-House “Research Project”**

- Teaching Idea and Possible Exploration with Students

*Note:* I would recommend the following project to be done before all the dance-making proposed above. During the past year, art institutions and university programs (dance and many other fields of study) are re-envisioning and revamping curricula as well as other public organizations are reframing their operations to combat systemic racism.

We are socially constructed to expect certain behaviors in specific environments. Much of this unit is about re-imagining our pedagogy - a different way to think and behave. Even in education, and especially in the arts, we are being challenged to re-think teaching practices. To activate such a re-thinking and re-tooling of our agenda and how a safe space where introspection is encouraged, I would like to see the students engage in

an ‘experiment’ of sorts. Ultimately, we are looking for a collaborative pedagogy which could even include the idea of cooperative grading.

There is an ‘old school’ – or ‘command style’ teaching (Muska Mosston, Spectrum of Teaching Styles), that dance teachers used to adhere to. This style was the traditional mode of teacher-centered and was ‘top down’ as it were. A more student-centered approach has been in the works for many years now but even how that mode has been embraced needs attentional honing.

Proposed Open Experiment: Students would be privy to knowing everything about this experiment upfront. A general note should be made clear to the students how important it is to ‘think outside of the box’ and to not fear failure when taking risks. If we worry about failing we won’t find ‘what can be’ that works better!

“Fact-based” (Theory of Essentialism) - The teacher would teach for a selected period of time in the ‘old school’ manner – facts and skill-based at the core. With beginning students, sound movement principles must be taught and this would ‘start the process’ of giving credence to their ‘knowledge’ base and their perspectives on how they learn. This would be a good segue to the matters of the unit described – in a sense it would be practicing what ‘is preached’ about the topic of this unit. Expectations from the moment of entry to the classroom (dance studio) until the final dismissal would be absolute and required. Behaviors, dress codes, a no-talking policy (unless there was a question) would be absolute. The teacher would ‘give’ the movement material to ‘master’. Students who ‘mastered’ said material would be invited to ‘be in front’ of the class as a model of ‘how it is done’. There would be little ‘student input’ with regard to contributing to the learning of others as the ‘teacher knows best’ would be the operational agenda. Basically, this approach would be about imitating the teacher and tends to be formulaic and has a hint of dogmatic certainty with a heavy dose of ‘authority’.

After the requisite allowance for this part of the experiment, the students would fill out a survey that would ascertain aspects of their learning and their enjoyment and satisfaction with this approach. The survey document could, in fact, be cut and dry with a Likert scale and no space for a narrative (open-ended response) to keep consistent with the more objective-approach to the material and experience at hand. Perhaps, though, a space for ‘other thoughts could allow some important data to be ascertained. It would be quite telling if students used this space, in fact, to disclose how they felt about this part of the experiment.

The second part of the experiment would be framed more heavily with the student at the center and a more subjective and inclusive-approach will be inevitable. Additionally, this approach moves the skill sets more into inquiry, creating, analyzing, reflection and self-evaluation – adding the psychological or social component next to the physical and cognitive domains of learning. To co-create knowledge and build such a

culture with students is not new but it does take an effort to break prevailing assumptions and be open; it could look very different from one classroom to another. Some of the ways one could inhabit this approach include:

- Create a safe space to share what each person already ‘knows’. We all have different movement histories and can learn from a true ‘listening to’ and observing of each participant.
- Students choose what music to use.
- Depending on the level and knowledge-base of the class, student lead in the warm-up activities.
- During an improvisation exercise, the teacher asks the students for how to structure the next improvisational exercise or how we can make the one given one more interesting.
- During compositional exercises, the teacher has stations set up around the room with suggested prompts. Students can decide where they want to go and talk with others that chose the same station and work out the prompt or change it as they see fit
- During class, students can sit down and watch if they are tired, dress in whatever clothing make them comfortable, help another student they notice is having trouble, and generally speaking, be ‘relaxed’ about class rules.
- Groups could be formed and, in the group, students take turns ‘teaching’ each other different movement patterns. This could be the way the warm up is done rather than everyone doing the same thing at the same time and being led by the teacher.
- Multi-sensory learning: move, perform, write, research, read, view, integrate other art forms, and dance – involve the whole student
- Include student voices when determining the requirements and processes of evaluation.
- 

Summary: peer mentoring, reciprocal learning, brainstorming, creative process, problem-solving

After the requisite allowance for this part of the experiment, students would, of course, fill out a new questionnaire and respond to it based on their experience learning in this mode. This questionnaire should embrace some of the same questions (with the Likert scale) but have additional allowances for narratives about their feelings about the two different modes of learning. I would further suggest that the results of the questionnaires be open to the students ‘to make sense of’ and discern results.

*Research Results:* Each teacher can establish the specifics of what questions they are looking to answer as it could be different from place to place. Knowing which of the

following examples (or ones of your own design) will help determine the questionnaire each teacher gives their class(es):

- Do the students prefer the command style or more 'objective' and quantitative style and why?
- Do the students prefer the more 'subjective' and qualitative style that is more student-centered and why?
- Are the teachers happier with what is 'accomplished' by one teaching-learning style than the other and why.
- Are the students more engaged with their learning in one style versus the other?
- Is the motivation for 'succeeding' impeded or increased by one style versus the other? Is this motivation manifested with more skill acquisition in technique and/or composition?
- How do students feel emotionally and socially after engaging in one style versus the other?
- What is most important to the students after learning through command-style? What is most important to the students after learning in the more 'open' classroom?

## **Lesson Plan**

Objectives: SWBAT create and perform solo studies based on the realities of their lived experiences ITO gain strategies and new frameworks for knowing themselves within the national consciousness and, it is hoped, shifting landscape of social reform.

Goals: Students will use improvisation as a tool for movement discovery, empowering them to see themselves as part of their history and culture but also as a unique individual. By raising their consciousness about their individual stories, the goal is to help students find the story they want and need to project to others through a celebration of who they are. Note: Each student can tell whatever story they wish to tell – these, it is predicted, will run the gamut. What is important is that each is valid and organic.

Procedure: Improvisational structures to motivate students to move openly allowing authentic self-growth and development. Improvisation will help the dancers break free from habitual movement patterns and repetitive thought processes. Enable students to explore new and creative ways of self-expression while encouraging self-acceptance.

There are any number of ways to proceed. The teacher can suggest drawing or writing a memory, an autobiography, or an envisioned future for the student. [The solo does not

have to be about what happened in the past but it can be a projection into the future. Part of art-making includes altering how we project and think about ourselves and our world.] From there the student will move along the pathway of the picture or writing, extracting shapes/words/feeling what feels important in communicating their individual stories.

**Parking Lot:** Students can post their written stories, poems, pictures of their 'autobiographies' for others to respond to in kind as a means of acknowledging the person or watch them as they improvise. When the dancer stops moving, the observer-dancer, without talking, can show the original mover what spoke to them and replicate in movement (in their own way) what they witnessed.

Homework: Suggested Reading and Research

Read about the following artists:

Trisha Brown

Anna Halprin

Gutai Group

Katherine Dunham

Evaluation: Students are intersecting with their writing and/or art work and improvising to find their story in movement. Movement should feel organic – that it is found 'anew'. The student's spontaneous movement is without judgement or self-dialogue and censoring. After the movement has 'flowed' students will more consciously decide what they might 'keep' if this lesson plan is to go forward with solo-dance making.

## **Resources**

### **A Note to the Teacher:**

The concepts that motivated this unit came out of a philosophically-based course. The unit, however, is not a philosophy course but, instead, a dance course. Though the teacher using this unit plan can benefit from understanding the concepts that stimulated my thinking and, thus, creation of the unit, it is not in the purview of the class itself to spend a lot of time on the concepts re 'instructional' time in and of themselves. The students – the developing dance artists – will instead be using the concepts as jumping off points for discussion, writing, drawing, etc. as preliminary fodder for dance-making. The place for an in-depth dive into how these concepts developed and manifest in our society is in the history class, literature class, and philosophy class. Whereas, in the dance class one addresses the 'feelings' that



emerge in the body from the lived experiences that these concepts explore. The goals for the dance education classroom are about dancing and dance-composition. Due to this, the resources about the concepts are for the teachers so that they can facilitate the discussions that will be foundational for the dance-creations and, of course, understanding the role of the artist in social activism as a legitimate expression.

### Bibliography

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2020, SEL: *What Are the core Competence Areas and Where are they Promoted?*

Access through: <https://asel.org/sel-framework/>

The details on how this organization promotes social and emotional learning is highlighted and charted clearly.

Cordova, V.F., What It Is To Be Human in a Native American Worldview?, The Native American Philosophy, *The University of Arizona Press*, pp 147-157. Here one will find examples and discussion surrounding the idea of essentialism as well as social construction.

Detlefsen, Karen. Lecture video, Teacher's Institute of Philadelphia, Spring 2021

Eddy, Martha., "Mindful Movement: The Evolution of the Somatic Arts and Conscious Action", *Intellect, Ltd.*, 2016.

This book traces the complex investigation of the field of somatics. In *Mindful Movement*, exercise physiologist, somatic therapist and advocate Martha Eddy uses original interviews, case studies and practice-led research to define the origins of a holistic field - somatic movement education and therapy – and its impact on fitness, ecology, politics and performance. Another book is on its way dealing with trauma and how to use mindful movement in the efforts to heal traumatized bodies.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, *Oxford University Press, USA*, 2009.

Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. *New York: Basic Books*, 1983. Print.

Gordon, Lewis R., 2010, Black Existentialism, *The History of Continental Philosophy*  
Edited by: Alan D. Schrift, *University of Chicago Press*, pp. 199-219.

This reading looks at existentialism and examples of social construction as well.

Grasswick, Heidi, 2018, Feminist Social Epistemology, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, pgs 30-42.

Access through: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/feminist-social-epistemology/>

Hill Collins, Patricia, 1989, The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought, Summer, 1989, Vol. 14, No. 4, *Common Grounds and Crossroads: Race, Ethnicity, and Class in Women's Lives* (Summer, 1989), *The University of Chicago Press*, pp. 745-773.

Access Through: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3174683>

Lammer-Heindel, Christoffer, 2019, Facts & Opinions, *Philosophy Now*, Issue 115.

Access through: [https://philosophynow.org/issues/115/Facts\\_and\\_Opinions](https://philosophynow.org/issues/115/Facts_and_Opinions)

This offers good background information to distinguish between facts and opinions, and the notion of alleged facts.

Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands*. Central Recovery Press

This book provides a history of trauma in bodies mainly due to racial divides but also addresses other issues that explain how we have come to have dangerous and embedded problems impeding our social harmony. Menakem goes further to give actionable means to heal said trauma-it being deep in our bodies-and move forth with positivity and peace.

Nussbaum, Martha C., 1992, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, *Oxford University Press, Incorporated*, pp. 262-270.

Access through" <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/upenn-ebooks/detail.action?docID=694035>.

Prado, C.G., 2017, Post-Truth, *The Philosopher's Magazine*, 79 (4).

This provides discussion with reference to politics.

Rosenfeld, Sophia, 2018, Democracy and Truth: A Short History, University of Pennsylvania Press, pgs. 2-19.

Access Through: <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/upenn-ebooks/detail.action?docID=5612788>. Created from upenn-ebooks on 2021-02-11 06:13:38.

**Teachers:** This unit of study provides many different ways to access individual needs, interests, and levels. It is intentionally not prescriptive, but instead establishes a way to present material that is student-centered and discovered in the teaching/learning moment. Bearing this in mind, I have included general data bases below where you can find additional definitions and explanations of the concepts in the unit or find other meaningful fodder for dance creation. You may find good assignments for student reading that highlight what you decide to focus on in your teaching.

*General Philosophy articles:*

- [philpapers.org](http://philpapers.org)
- Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- On-line encyclopedia: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

*Peer-reviewed accessible sources*

- Think: Philosophy for Everyone, a journal from Cambridge University Press available electronically
- Philosophy Now: A Magazine of Ideas, a journal available for purchase, or available electronically

Websites/Blogs/Available On-Line (good for everyone, and very good for K-12 students):

- The Philosopher's Zone: Australia Broadcasting Corporation's radio program on philosophy and current issues
- Ethics Matters: Dan Halliday's Australia Broadcasting Corporation's television series on ethics for pre-college students
- The Stone: New York Time Op-Ed Forum written by philosophers for a public audience

### Book Recommendations for teachers and students:

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

Gay, Geneva. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Teachers College Press, 2018.

Menakem, R. *My grandmother's hands*. Central Recovery Press, 2017.

### Article Recommendation:

Bennett, Jessica, and Loretta J. Ross. "What If Instead of Calling People Out, We Called Them In?" *The New York Times*, *The New York Times*, 19 Nov. 2020.

## **Appendix**

### Basic Definitions as jumping off points for further investigation and research:

**Epistemic injustice** is injustice related to knowledge. It includes exclusion and silencing; systematic distortion or misrepresentation of one's meanings or contributions; undervaluing of one's status or standing in communicative practices; unfair distinctions in authority; and unwarranted distrust.

**Testimonial injustice** is unfairness related to trusting someone's word. An injustice of this kind occurs when someone is ignored, or not believed, because of their sex, sexuality, gender presentation, race, or, broadly, because of their identity.

**Epistemic oppression** refers to persistent epistemic exclusion that hinders one's contribution to knowledge production. The tendency to shy away from using the term "epistemic oppression" may follow from an assumption that epistemic forms of oppression are generally reducible to social and political forms of oppression.

The emerging field of **epistemologies of ignorance** examines the complex phenomenon of ignorance, which has as its aim identifying the different expressions that ignorance takes, examining how they are produced and sustained and what role they play in knowledge practices.

## POEM

If We Must Die

BY CLAUDE MCKAY

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our accursèd lot.  
If we must die, O let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!  
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!  
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one death-blow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back!

### **Academic Standards:**

Note: All of the above lesson plans incorporate an array and balance of the National, State, and Citywide dance standards listed below. Those teaching in the field of dance education will emphasize one aspect more prevalently than another depending on what their objectives are for any particular lesson plan and their particular group of students. Much of what this unit proposes is to 'listen to the students' and to not be too prescriptive in order to develop knowledge more collaboratively and organically. The beauty of this unit is in its possibilities. Any creative art endeavor has room for interpretation, augmentation, and going 'off course'! Much like the scientist, we don't always know what we will discover or invent re our knowledge.

These published National Dance Standards are available to any member of the National Dance Education Organization. The details of the encompassing language of these broad standards are also provided in depth of what any teacher wishes to emphasize in their teaching (and later evaluation). They also align with our state (PA) and citywide (Philadelphia) dance standards.

- I. *Performing:* Execute original or existing artistic dance movement or works of art using elements and skills of dance. Students will: Identify, Define, Select,

Learn, Focus, Relate, Coordinate, Repeat, Understand, Synthesize, Rehearse, Demonstrate, Refine, Perform, and Present.

- II. *Creating*: Express ideas, experiences, feelings and images in original and artistic dance. Students will: Imagine, Improvise, Explore, Discover, Generate, Develop, Plan, Prepare, Choreograph, Analyze, Evaluate, Reflect, Refine, Revise, Communicate, Present, and Share.
- III. *Responding*: Demonstrate critical and analytic thinking skills in the artistic response to dance. Students will: Observe, Respond, Identify, Describe, Interpret, Select, Analyze, Synthesize, Compare, Evaluate, and Communicate.
- IV. *Interconnecting*: Relate and transfer ideas, meanings, and experiences from other disciplines and areas of knowledge to dance and movement experiences. Relate and transfer dance and movement experiences to other disciplines and areas of knowledge. Students will: Understand, Learn, Relate, Connect, Synthesize, Compare, Transfer, Respond, and Express.

Interconnect Performing with other dance arts processes. a. Integrate the process of Performing with Creating, Responding, and Assessing dance. b. Explore Performing in cultural and historical contexts. c. Relate the process of Performing to other arts, disciplines, and writing.

### **Evaluation Tools:**

As a member of The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), one can access rubrics for assessing the standards. Though this isn't a direct link, you will find on their website this information in detail.

[Standards for L\\_T Dance in the Arts.pdf](#)

Rubrics in this document cover all the above standards. Each teacher should isolate and determine what they are emphasizing in their particular lesson plans and from the unit described in these particular suggested strategies.