

## **ARTS FROM THE INSIDE OUT: Dance Education in the Classroom**

### **Introduction**

These materials are designed for teachers who work with preschool through elementary education, and for other early childhood education professionals who are looking for ways to begin to use more concept-based creative dance in their programs for children of all abilities.

Although the sample lessons are available globally, thanks to the wonders of the worldwide web, they were designed and reviewed locally. Development of these materials was made possible by a Community Arts Grant from the Lane Arts Council, based in Eugene, Oregon, USA.

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Anyone seeking more information on working with concept-based dance in their classrooms should visit [www.creativedance.org](http://www.creativedance.org) <<http://www.creativedance.org>> and look into Anne Green Gilbert's latest book: **Brain-Compatible Dance Education** (2006).

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**Arts from the Inside Out: Reading Readiness Lesson**  
**Ages 5-7 (Can be adapted younger or older)**

**Today's Concept:** PLACE (self space and general space)

**Warm up: Brain Dance standing in a circle**

- **Begin with breath**, taking long breaths in and out, to relax and center
- **Tactile warm up:** Individuals do different kinds of self-touch from feet to the top of the head, first pats up and down, then brushes, then pokes, then presses
- **Core-Distal:** Reaching out to the edges of one's self space, and then curling into the center, or the core, repeat three times.
- **Head-Tail:** Curling the spine forward and backwards, and side-to-side. Bring your head to your "tail", or coccyx.
- **Upper-Lower body:** Reaching, stretching, flicking, shaking arms, while legs are still, then switch.
- **Body-Half:** Draw an imaginary line down the middle of your body, keep one half of your body still, while the other moves. Notice your balancing.
- **Cross-Lateral:** Cross arms in front of self, repeat, then legs, then both at the same time.
- **Vestibular:** Allow yourself to move on and off balance, notice your standing and swaying, how far you can move without falling off balance
- **Finish with several breaths**

**Introducing the Concept at the word board:** "Today we are going to explore PLACE. (Point to word on word board.) Let's all say place. Your body is in its own special bubble called your self space. Sometimes your self space is small, and sometimes it can be very big! (Demonstrate with the students.) Now, let's make a self space shape and say Self Space! When you move your self space through the room, you're in the general space. Let's try that! And now, let's say General space."

**Exploring the Concept: Move Through the Elements of Dance:** Explore the elements of dance for brief amounts of time, alternating self and general space. Children may want to hold scarves or plastics, but props are not necessary. When the music is on, move with a new concept, such as SIZE, LEVEL, DIRECTION, SHAPE, BODY PARTS, FOCUS, BALANCE, RELATIONSHIPS, and when the music pauses, make a terrific shape in self space. (Music = Eric Chappelle's Music For Creative Dance Volume III, #20.)

**Shaping:** Use a dry erase board or chalkboard. Say, "Dancers, we are going to explore making some shapes. Now these are special shapes that I will make on my magic board. When you see the shape, I would like you to make this shape with your body." You can make shapes that are geometric, letters, numbers, depending on the age of the children. It is also fun to encourage students to try making the shapes on the floor, or for children 5-6 or up, with a partner.

**Instruments:** "We are going to sing a song that you all know, but we're going to sing it in a special way. Let's make a big circle standing up. (Or stay at our desks) Let's sing the

alphabet song, and see if we can change the shapes of our bodies to match the letter we're singing about. We'll try it nice and slow. And when we get to the end of the song, we'll move through the general space in a new way." Hand held instruments are a must, but if you don't have any, just have the children sing!

**Developing Skills:** "Dancers, we are going to make our bodies into kites. Now, these kites are special, and they have different shapes. The first kite we're going to make looks and feels like a big Letter X." (Dancers and teacher explore moving through the general space as X's, careful to be safe in the general space. "Your kite gets wound around a tree, and then it turns into an O!" Try this new letter, and then ask the students for ideas, or tell them to choose their own letter. Older students enjoy working with a partner to negotiate and navigate! Music = Eric Chappelle's Music for Creative Dance, Volume I, #15.

**Combing Movements:** Use rhymes in a new way. Ask your students to form a large group. Say a rhyme, either familiar or one you create, and ask them to fill in the missing word with their movement. Example = "I bounce my ball over the \_\_\_\_." Older children will enjoy dividing into two teams, and watching each other solve problems.

**Choreography:** Antonyms with partners. Using simple words, or graphic images for pre-readers, create word cards that list opposites, such as high/low, loud/soft, fast/slow, tight/loose, straight/curved, still/active, smooth/ jerky, flat/sharp, etc. Have students work together to demonstrate the antonyms with their bodies.

**Reflection:** "What did we see? Did you like being the one who made the movement, or the one who liked to watch the movement today?" Reflection not only helps to ground the individual in the experience, but gives him/her a chance to see how their peers experienced the same activity.

**Leaping:** Using empty milk cartons, short cones or bean bags to leap over, practice using arms that are straight, curvy and zig-zag, or "T", "O", "Y". Have children say the letters as they leap. See what other words you can spell!

**Cool Down:** In a large circle, sitting down, gently trace letters on the back of the person in front of you.

**Arts for the Inside Out: Math readiness lesson**  
**Ages 3-5**

**Today's concept:** SIZE (Big, medium, small) and LEVEL (low, medium, high).

**Warm up:** Rhyming Brain Dance (See Anne Green Gilbert, © 2000)

**Introducing the Concept:** "Today we're going to explore size and level. Can you make a big shape? Can you shrink this shape down to a small size? What about a low shape? And a high shape? Can you make a shape that's low and big? What about high and small?" Music = Eric Chappelle Music for Creative Dance Volume I, #11.

**Exploring:** Move through SIZE and LEVEL. Using stretchy bands (t-shirt ribbing cut into 4 inch strips) explore moving in new ways that are different sizes and levels.

**Shaping:** "Parts on the Floor": Dancers listen for claps or drumbeats, and put that many body parts on the floor. Try two, three, four, five, ten, even 20! Older children will enjoy this activity with a partner.

**Instruments:** "Musical Math" Explore playing big numbers and small numbers. "Dancers, we are going to play our instruments to the music. When you hear the music change, I want you to find all the little beats inside it. Then, when the music gets bigger, I want you to find all the great big beats." Older children can begin to listen to the differences among  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{8}$ ,  $\frac{1}{16}$ , half and whole notes. Music = Eric Chappelle's Music for Creative Dance Volume I, # 14. Here's a tip: if you don't have instruments in your classroom, you might consider using 'body percussion', like clapping or tapping shoulders or legs, or using 'found' objects, like brooms, dustpans, erasers, garbage cans, desks, etc!)

**Developing Skills:** Use simple props, like beans bags or cones, and ask dancers to make shapes next to them. Ask the audience to tell you whether there are more, less or the same number of shapes for the different props. Change mathematical configuration and groups of students until everyone has had a turn.

**Combining Movements:** "Echo Game" Dancers make sounds and movement and we echo and move through the general space.

**Free-dance:** Dancers use stretchy bands (t-shirt ribbing cut into 4 " strips, resembling big rubber bands) to make geometric shapes with a partner or trio. Teacher asks: "Who can make a shape that is angular and low? Or one that is curvy and medium level? Who can make a straight shape that's high?" After students are warmed up to working with their stretchy bands, ask them to make a shape with three sides, or one with four sides. "Do you know the name of this shape?" (Older students will enjoy the challenge of working with other pairs or in groups to make three-dimensional shapes, like cubes and pyramids.

**Cool Down:** "Group Clock" All the dancers form a circle, sitting down. Then the teacher asks for a volunteer to be the number 12, 3, 6 and 9. (These children are sitting in those positions around the circle.) Then the teacher finds a willing minute hand and hour hand. Then the students are asked what time they want to make it on their clock, and they work together to figure out where to put themselves in relationship. It's fun to also assign a second hand, and watch as he or she moves around the circle in real time, with the group watching a wall clock and the dancer. A minute goes by slower than you may realize! Repeat with several more "times" -- This can be a fun activity for circle time or to introduce new concepts that are cyclical, like a round in music, waves in science or rhymes or themes in literature.

**Arts from the Inside Out: Science Readiness Lesson**  
**Concept: Energy and Emotion**  
**Ages 7-9**

**Exploring Earth Science and Nature through dance is a wonderful way to introduce children to a new perspective on how their world works**

**Warm Up:** The Brain Dance, Anne Green Gilbert, © 2000

**Exploring the concept:** "Exploring the Earth" Using plastics (large pieces of plastic tablecloths, cut-up), encourage students to explore moving in as if they're landing on different terrains in the earth. With each change in the music, imagine moving on molten lava, dry sand, a sticky marsh, crystallized ice, crunchy dirt, wet ocean, rushing rivers, etc. Use the plastics to articulate the feeling of the environment, changing the way you dance with them, and also the way you make noise with them. (Music: Eric Chappelle's Music for Creative Dance Vol. IV, #6)

**Shaping:** Use a large sheet or piece of fabric as a rudimentary stage. The instructor holds the fabric up horizontally, creating a small space for students to work behind. Or the instructor can ask a parent volunteer, or even a student, to help to hold the curtain up. Ask dancers to go behind the curtain to solve problems with their bodies, by asking them riddles about various animals, such as: "What animal moves low to the ground?" When one of the dancers has an answer, ask him or her to come up and do their movement behind the curtain, then reveal the shape or movement to the audience, without telling what it is. Have the audience guess what animal s/he is being.

- Can you make the movement of an animal that's very tall?
- One that moves very quickly?
- One that moves in the sky?
- Moves very slowly?
- Is very strong?
- Uses its horns for protection?
- Uses its claws?
- Protects itself with poison?
- Protects itself with odor?
- Protects itself with its body surface?

In the "shaping" section, if you have instruments available, have the dancers partner up, and choose an instrument to accompany their animal's movements. One could match the instrument sounds to the other's dancing, then they could trade. Or this could be done with the locomoter/ non-locomotor part of the lesson.

**Folkdance:** Folkdance can be an exciting introduction to world music and cultures. Your public library has dance videos featuring movement from around the world. It can be fun and informative for students to observe dancing in relationship to nature, such as aboriginal people dancing in Australia, or West African or Native American dances that are centered on nature and animals. Research these resources in your community, and

see if you can locate a video, or even better, a person, who can share these riches with your students.

**Developing Skills:** As a group, students work with the facilitating instructor to choose two locomotor movements and two non-locomotor movements from their word board, and put them in an order. As a teacher, you can encourage that the students look for contrast in ordering their movement. After they've made an order, they can try the movement with different emotions. What does it feel like to try moving with slithering, slicing, creeping and curling? Can you move in a sad way as you do these movements? Can you move in a sleepy way? What about a scared way? Can you move this way with sharp energy? Smooth energy? Shaky? Swingy? Larger groups can divide in half, and take turns dancing and being the audience. More experienced movers can choose their own dance concepts and create improvisational new choreography based on their selections.

Beginning list of movement in general space and self space:

**LOCOMOTOR**

Walk  
Run  
Jump  
Leap  
Hop  
Skip  
Crawl  
Creep  
Gallop  
Tip-Toe

**NON-LOCOMOTOR**

twist  
bend  
poke  
flick  
press  
pull  
carve  
stretch  
shake  
swing

**Combining Movement:** "Weather" Solicit ideas from students on different kinds of weather that you can explore physically, with sound and movement. As a group, or in smaller groups with audiences watching, explore moving like this weather. Use sounds, scarves, or plastics to add to the excitement! Another fun variation is to challenge students to work together to enact "natural disasters", like tornadoes, blizzards, tsunamis and earthquakes.

**Reflection:** "Nature objects" Share objects from nature with your students. In a circle, create a large "canvas" on which each student will place a nature object. After everyone has had a turn, ask for comments about the shapes and qualities they see in the objects, and what energies or emotions the objects evoke.

## Sparkplug Dance Resources, Websites, Books, Videos and Music

### Web Sites:

#### **Dance, Education and the Child:**

*Creative Dance Center, Seattle, WA* – classes, workshops and teacher trainings: [www.creativedance.org](http://www.creativedance.org)

*Dance and the Child International USA (daci USA)* promotes dance and the child, irrespective of race, color, gender, religion, national or social origin: [www.daci.org](http://www.daci.org)

*A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years from the American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance:* [www.aahperd.org/naspe](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe)

*JABADAO*, Based in the UK, an organization dedicated to further research into movement and the mind: <http://www.jabadao.org/devmov/dev.html>

*National Dance Educators Organization (NDEO)* for info about dance in education, dance educators directory and books and videos: [www.ndeo.org](http://www.ndeo.org)

*National Dance Association* for arts and education standards, books and dance videos: [nda@AAHPERD.org](mailto:nda@AAHPERD.org)

#### **Brain Growth and Development and the Arts as a Tool for Learning**

*ACSD:* Brain books, teacher resources, conferences, etc: [www.acsd.org](http://www.acsd.org)

*The Brain Connection:* BrainBuzz, books, resources, articles, etc: [www.brainconnection.com](http://www.brainconnection.com)

*The Brain Store:* [www.thebrainstore.com](http://www.thebrainstore.com) - resources by Eric Jensen

*Childcare Info-line:* brain research and information for parents and caregivers

[http://www.divine-design.biz/childcareinfo/brain\\_development.htm](http://www.divine-design.biz/childcareinfo/brain_development.htm)

*DANA:* [www.dana.org](http://www.dana.org) - brain related matters, including “Arts and the Brain” on NPR.

*Early Child:* [www.earlychildhood.com](http://www.earlychildhood.com) - info on early childhood education

*Love and Logic:* [www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com) - resources for parents and teachers on class management and care for children

*The Learning Brain:* [www.learningbrain.com](http://www.learningbrain.com) - brain research, training tips, future of learning!

*National Association for Child Development (NACD):* [www.nacd.org](http://www.nacd.org)

*Talaris:* Brain development 0-3, simple monthly articles on key points of child development: [www.talaris.org](http://www.talaris.org)

*Zero to three:* useful info on cognitive, emotional and social development

<http://www.zerotothree.org/brainwonders/parents.html>

#### **Learning Disabilities and Developmental Movement Therapy:**

*Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA):* [www.add.org](http://www.add.org)

*Attention Deficit Information Network:* [www.addinfoonetwork.com](http://www.addinfoonetwork.com)

*American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:* [www.asha.org](http://www.asha.org)

*Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD):* [www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

*Council for Exceptional Children (CEC):* [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

*Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD):* [www.cldinternational.org](http://www.cldinternational.org)

*Dyslexia Awareness and Resource Center (DARC):* [www.dyslexiacenter.org](http://www.dyslexiacenter.org)

*Developmental Movement Therapist* Bette LaMont’s website: <http://www.developmentalmovement.org/>

*International Dyslexia Association (IDA):* [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org)

*Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC):* [www.ldac-taac.ca](http://www.ldac-taac.ca)

*National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD):* [www.nclld.org](http://www.nclld.org)

*National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY):* [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

*Nonverbal Learning Disorders Association (NDLA):* [www.nlda.org](http://www.nlda.org)

*Northwest Neurodevelopmental Training Center*, Florence Scott, Dir., Woodburn, OR: 503-981-0635

*Schwab Learning:* [www.schwablearning.org](http://www.schwablearning.org)

## Books:

- Bowlby, J. **A Secure Base**. New York, NY: Basic Books, 1988.
- Brandt, R. **Powerful Learning**, [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org)
- Brown, M., Keynes, R., Lumsden, A. **The Developing Brain**. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Conkling, W. **Smart-wiring your baby's brain: What You Can Do To Stimulate Your Child During the First Three Years**. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2001.
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- Hannaford, C., **Smart Moves**, Arlington, VA: Great Ocean Publishers, 1995.
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- Root-Bernstein, R. and M. **Sparks of Genius: The Thirteen Thinking Tools of the World's Most Creative People**, Houghton Mifflin, 1999.
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- Wolf, P., **Brain Matters: Translating Research Into Classroom Practice**, ASCD, 2001. ([www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org))

## VIDEOS:

- Teaching Creative Dance** (video) Anne Green Gilbert, [www.creativedance.org](http://www.creativedance.org), 2002.
- BrainDance** (video), Anne Green Gilbert, [www.creativedance.org](http://www.creativedance.org), 2003.

## MUSIC:

- Music for Creative Dance Volumes 1-4**. Eric Chappelle. [info@ravennaventures.com](mailto:info@ravennaventures.com)
- I am the Song**. Kerri Lynn Nichols. [treefrog@thurston.com](mailto:treefrog@thurston.com)
- Music for Dancers**. Kerri Lynn Nichols. [treefrog@thurston.com](mailto:treefrog@thurston.com)
- Gradual Motion** Peter Jones, PO Box 294, South Hadley, MA 01075
- John's Music Center**, Seattle, WA, [www.johnsmusic.com](http://www.johnsmusic.com)