

Dance Maps

Objective: Create purposeful paths inside of everyday spaces and routines

Materials: Paper and Markers/Colored Pencils/Crayons

Vocabulary: Dance Map

Most Appreciated By: K-6

Time Estimate: 20-30 minutes

Procedure

1. Start by having your students take a tour of your classroom (or the room they are in if virtual) and ask them to notice the details. Where are the doors and windows, how are the desks positioned, where are any standalone items (rug, teacher's desk, etc.)?
2. Have them pull out a piece of paper and whatever coloring material is most easily available.
3. Set up the dance maps
 - Ask them to draw some simple markers on their paper that help them see the piece of paper as the classroom. I like to demonstrate this part on my own paper for them. I usually mark where the door is and where the windows are and any other symbols that help me visually. Feel free to hold up your paper and ask them to pretend they are a bird looking down at it. Give students a moment to draw their own markers.
 - Use your utensil to mark a starting and a stopping place for your dance. This might be signified by an X, stick figure, etc. Give students a moment to draw their own spots.
 - Then draw a path between these two points. Your connecting line should not be a continuous line, but instead should show some scribbles, swoops, spirals, dotted lines. Explain that, that line is the dance.
 - Demonstrate how the map works by going over to your starting spot and dancing your line to your ending spot. Take your paper with you and show students that you are really paying attention to when the texture of the line changes *and* how you have to avoid classroom obstacles as you go. Show them your dance again and see if you can look away from your paper sometimes. Talk about how your dance might change each time as you get more comfortable and memorize your map.
 - Have students take some time and draw their own maps out. They might use a single color or several colors.
4. Work through the dance maps
 - You can either have students get up once they are ready and start moving through their maps or you can wait until the entire class is ready.
 - As students are working through their maps, remind them to look out for objects and each other. If you have too many students for this to work all at once, have half of the students stay at their desk and observe the others working (then switch). Give students a few minutes to work through their dances and ask them to think about eventually memorizing their dance. Once they've got it in their body, they can leave their dance map on their desk and continue to work. Encourage them to add things to make their dances more dynamic (levels, moments of pause, etc.).

5. Share the dance maps

-Have students leave their maps on their desk and give the class two minutes to take a tour of the maps by walking around and looking at them like in a museum. If doing this virtually, have half of the students hold their maps up so the other half can look, then switch.

-Split the students in half and have them share their dance maps one group at a time. They can keep their paper with them if needed or leave it on their desk.

-If you have time ask the observers to talk about what they saw and noticed in other students' dances.

Moving Forward

It's great to let their first dance maps be an organic exploration of the room. Once they get the hang of this activity, you can use this to make your classroom transitions more creative. Have them create a dance map to use at the end of the day to get them from their desk into a line at the door (perhaps gathering their items along the way). Or create a dance map to use from their favorite spot on the playground into a line to return inside. However you use it, encourage them to create a nontraditional path inside of their routines.

Dance Sandwiches

Objective: Assess/celebrate student understanding of dance vocabulary and curricular concepts

Materials: Music

Vocabulary: Levels, Speed, Efforts, Distance

Most Appreciated By: Grades K-6

Time Estimate: 20-30 minutes

Procedure

1. Have students find their own space to move. This can be done individually or with a partner.
2. Set up the Dance Sandwich formula. In the following set up, the goal is to create a sandwich that explores the movement concepts you've been working on. You can easily modify this for curricular connections (see end of lesson). Be sure to have a visual of this up for your students.

BREAD: frozen shape

INGREDIENTS: three pieces from the following list

-Levels: low, medium, high

-Speed: one to five (or narrow it to a moment of slow motion or super speed)

-Efforts: wide, narrow, long, short, heavy, light

-Distance: very close to desk or very far away

-A surprise: can you find a way to surprise your audience?

BREAD: frozen shape

*For younger students, you may prefer having only a few ingredient options OR you may want to guide them in making an exploratory dance sandwich as a group several times first before having students make them on their own.

3. Work Time

-Give students ten minutes to work and go around to check in with each student/partner set. I encourage you to play one track on repeat during this so they get used to hearing the music they will use when they share their sandwich. When work time comes to an end, have all students review their sandwiches simultaneously (this lessens the pressure of showing the entire group their work).

4. Share the dance sandwiches

-You can choose to split the group in half and have one half show and one half observe at a time. You can also have a few groups or students show at a time. If working in pairs, encourage them to work up their bravery towards showing one at a time.

-Ask each group to start in their frozen shape before you begin the music. Let them know you won't stop the music until they are in their final frozen shape.

-If you have time, ask the observing students what they noticed in each sandwich.

Moving Forward

This activity can serve as a great assessment tool to see what movement vocabulary has stuck with your students after exploring other activities. It can be repeated many times throughout the school year to see how they have grown in confidence as individual dancers, but also as collaborators with their peers. You can also change up the ingredients as often as you would like or make up your own. All that matters is that they have a way to bookend the piece and that the ingredients are clearly defined.

Notes & Modifications

Rather than always selecting the music for your students, you can play samples of two or three pieces of contrasting music and have them select which piece they'd like to dance to after they create their sandwich. Play all of the tracks during work time.

Curricular Connections

Switch up your ingredients to fit whatever curricular content you'd like to assess. This might mean including math symbol shapes, punctuation dance movements, certain biomes or topography elements, etc.

Bonus Business

If an Activity Doesn't Go Quite as Planned

Many of these activities may not go quite as you hoped the first time around. It is always tricky to translate something into your practice (especially if you are still teaching virtually). As you venture forward remember the following things.

- Be transparent with students. If you are nervous or miss a step and need to rewind don't be afraid to let them know that you are trying something new and that you are excited, but it may not go perfectly the first time.
- If it doesn't work the first time, adjust it and try again later.
- Take what is on these pages and alter them to fit your students' needs. You are the expert on how they work together and what objectives you want to meet.
- Do integrate curriculum into these activities, BUT also remember that dance for dance's sake is just as valuable and critical to the health of your students. If you can help it, don't pile on pressure to make these activities academically justifiable all the time.

Assessment and Documentation

As you begin to explore dance activities in your classroom, find ways to document and assess what you are doing, as well as how your students are responding to the work.

- Take pictures and video if you have permission and share them with your students.
- Create a rubric with your students to examine the skills they are building (spatial awareness, body control, ability to collaborate with others, willingness to try).
- Use movement along with voice as a tool for reflecting with your students.
- Have students write you letters about the work they are doing and write a letter back to the class.

Music Groups I Like to Use that are (Mostly) Non-Verbal and (Very) Dynamic

Zap Mama	Polyrhythmics	Balkan Beat Box	Ratatat
Penguin Cafe Orchestra	Jungle By Night	Barbatuques	Mr. Scruff
Devotchka	London Dance Collective	Gunild Keetman	
Yann Tiersen	Natureboy Flako	Explosions in the Sky	
Gold Panda	James Last	Jean-Jacques Perrey	
Bixiga 70	Zoe Keating	Daniel Pemberton	