BY CELESTE MILLER

CREATIVE MOVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

A mini-Workboook for K-5 educators

Prepared by Celeste Miller for Enhance Arts Project

These materials are designed by Celeste Miller. You are invited to use and adapt these ideas for use in your classroom and other educational spaces.

Creative Movement: Intro to Five Basic Dance Ideas © 2023 by Celeste Miller is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

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ABOUT THIS MINI-WORKBOOK 4

WHAT IS CREATIVE MOVEMENT? 5

THREE BASIC DANCE FUNDAMENTALS

- SHAPES 7
- LEVELS 9
- ACTIONS 10

TWO STRATEGIES FOR CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- ANSWER ME IN MOVEMENT 14
- MOVEMENT STRINGS 15

WHAT ABOUT MUSIC? 16

RESOURCES 17

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ABOUT THIS MINI-WORKBOOK

This mini-workbook contains some basic Creative Movement strategies for arts integration that you can adopt for your classroom. No previous experience necessary.

These FIVE strategies have been identified out of the thousands that comprise Creative Movement, and the millions that comprise DANCE. At the end of this booklet are resources for further learning.

> "Dance is for everybody. I believe that the dance came from the people and that it should always be delivered back to the people."
> - Alvin Ailey

First we start with a definition of dance:

"Dance is movement aware of itself practiced with intent." - Celeste Miller

Notice: There is no reference to beat, rhythm, body types, flexibility, previous training, etc. in this definition.

That is because DANCE IS FOR EVERY BODY.

Some people dance professionally, and for the skill in a particular genre. That is part of our art form. Some people have social, and cultural tradition dances. Dance can also be inclusive for EVERY BODY and CREATIVE MOVEMENT is a pathway.

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WHAT IS CREATIVE MOVEMENT?

- Creative Movement is a DANCE FORM that focuses on the individuality of each person contributing and creating movement ideas.

- Creative Movement is not a “style” of dance, rather it is a way of using movement creatively for exploring ideas, self-expression and creative communication of ideas.

- Creative Movement is for EVERY BODY. There is no limitation on who gets to do Creative Movement. Everything can be done full-bodied, or by a hand, an arm, a leg, or even just the eyes. Anything that is standing can also be done seated or lying down, anything that travels can also be done in one place. Creative Movement is creative adaptability.

- Creative Movement is especially useful as an arts integration tool in K-12 classroom, when we want to teach academic ideas using bodily expression/DANCE.

- Creative Movement is taught by professionally trained dancers, dance educators and teaching artists but there are strategies that anyone can adopt for their use.

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THREE BASIC DANCE FUNDAMENTALS

SHAPES

LEVELS

ACTIONS

THAT *EVERY BODY* CAN DO!

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DANCE FUNDAMENTAL: SHAPES

In **DANCE** a **SHAPE** is the design the body can take. We can identify 4 basic body shapes from which to embellish to make creative choices.

PIN: Tall and narrow

WALL: Wide and out stretched

BALL: Curled in on oneself

TWISTED: Limbs twisting around self or space.

PIN

WALL

BALL

TWISTED

SHAPES

COMBINING: Because sometimes the DANCE SHAPE is a combination all of these, and we leave room for imagination.

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DANCE FUNDAMENTAL: LEVELS

We can dance and describe movement taking place on diffferent levels.

HIGH

MIDDLE

LOW

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DANCE FUNDAMENTAL: ACTIONS

When we move, different actions can be used.

LOCOMOTOR:

Locomotor actions get you from one place to another.

Examples of basic locomotor actions:
walk, march, run, jump, hop, leap, skip, gallop, slide

AXIAL:

Axial actions move a body part or your whole body without traveling from one place to another.

Examples of basic axial actions:
bend, stretch, swing, sway, turn, shake, twist

COMBINING!

Walk while stretching
Swing your arms while galloping
Turn while hopping
Shake your head while marching

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ACTION WORDS

Follow this QR Code for some action word flash cards. Your students can embody these words, increase their vocabulary for action words, and add to this collection.

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TWO BASIC STRATEGIES

ANSWER ME IN MOVEMENT

MOVEMENT STRING

FOR CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

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CURRICULUM CONNECTION STRATEGY: ANSWER ME IN MOVEMENT

Interpreting ideas with body expression. Kids are great at this! As a cue say, “without words, or sounds, show me with your body…” Or “Using just your bodies: answer me in movement”

- A tree, in the wind, and the leaves are falling to the ground.
- A snake climbing up the stairs
- Clouds moving across the sky.
- A moon and twinkling stars in a night sky, then the moon is covered by a cloud.

APPLY TO CURRICULUM:

“Without words, or sounds, show me with your body…”

- The difference between a mountain, a plateau, a valley
- A sunny day, a rainy day, a snowy day
- Solid, liquid, gas
- A tadpole becoming a frog
- A catepillar becoming a butterfly
- A dormant volcano to an active volcano
- Geometric shapes: circle, square, triangle, rectangle
- Three forms of transportation: a car, a bike, an airplane
- The difference between push and pull

Let them apply their knowledge of shapes, levels, actions to enhance critical thinking skills:

What kind of shape is best for your tree? Is it pin shape, ball, wall or twisty shape? What would be the best level for a tree? High or low? What action would best show a tree branches in the wind? Sway for the branches and rustle for the leaves?

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CURRICULUM CONNECTION STRATEGY: MOVEMENT STRINGS

Stringing

movement ideas

together

to make a dance.

Once you have created a movement idea - whether it is a shape, an action, or a movement response you can put them together as a MOVEMENT STRING by performing one idea after the other. Memorize this sequence in order and you have a MOVEMENT STRING, a dance!

Example: Start with a high twisted shape, then do a middle level ball shape, and end in a low level wall shape.

Example: Create an action word list. Make an order for the actions. To a steady beat do each action for 4 beats.

Example: Make a list of the phases that a catepillar goes through to become a butterfly. Create a movement for each part of the phase, put together as a Movement String.

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MORE

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

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SHAPES: CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

BEGIN: Start in a low, twisted shape (BALL). Stretch your limbs out one at a time until you are in a tall, narrow shape with your arms reaching upwards (PIN). Jump up and land in a wide shape (WALL) with one arm stretching overhead, and the other out to your side. END. What does this Movement String remind you of? Examples: A bird hatching and taking its first flight. Or maybe it is a person asleep, waking up, then jumping out of bed.
You have made a Movement String with a focus on SHAPES, and also used LEVELS (low, high), AND ACTIONS. (stretch, reach, jump, land)

BEGIN: Curl up like a seed under the soil (BALL, LOW LEVEL), imagine pushing one limb through the soil like a sprout breaking the surface (PIN, MEDIUM LEVEL). Let the growing continue until you are like a flower (PIN, HIGH LEVEL), turn your face to the sun like a gentle rain is coming down on the flower. END.
You have made a Movement String with a focus on SHAPES and also used LEVELS (low, middle, high), and ACTIONS (curl, push, sprout, grow, turn)!

BEGIN: What is a letter that is tall? Can you make your body into a shape like the letter “T”? (PIN, with WALL arms, HIGH LEVEL). Now make a circle shape with your arms. (OPEN, BALL). End with your “T” shape. What word did you spell?
You have made a Movement String with a focus on SHAPES TO BODY SPELL A WORD!

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ACTIONS: CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Find a poem with ACTION words, and make a MOVEMENT STRING.

*I **wandered** lonely as a cloud*
*That **floats** on high o'er vales and hills,*
*When all at once I **saw** a crowd,*
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
***Fluttering** and **dancing** in the breeze.*
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

wander
float
see
flutter
dance

Use non-fiction text and find the ACTION words to make a MOVEMENT STRING.

- "The four main stages of the water cycle are ***evaporation, condensation, precipitation*** and **runoff.**" Make a movement idea for each stage and then make a Movement String.

Use a recipe to choose ACTION words to make a MOVEMENT STRING.

- *Stir, chop, pour, boil, simmer, melt, knead, sift, sprinkle*

Use math words for ACTION words to make a MOVEMENT STRING:

- *Add, divide, subtract, multiply, equal.*

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WHAT ABOUT MUSIC?

- It may be hard to imagine dance without music! And yet, dance does exist on its own.

- In these strategies, we have not included the use of music but that doesn't mean you can't layer music into these experiences!
  - Have students begin working without music
  - Gradually add in instrumental music to set a mood in the background or
  - Collaborate with a music teacher to play live music for class

- Suggestion: use music without lyrics. Search for music that creates a mood.

- A good place to begin: (available on Spotify)
  - *Movement for Music and Imaginations*, by Richard Maddock
  - *Jazz for Children*, by Infant Piano Music Ensemble
  - *Musique sans Paroles*, various artists

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RESOURCES

BOOKS AND WEBSITES

There are thousands of resources - this is a SHORT list just to get you started.

Website:
Elements of Dance for Teachers, Students. A comprehensive online resource.
https://www.elementsofdance.org

Books:
“Inclusive Creative Movement and Dance” by Karen Kaufmann
“Dance About Anything” by Marty Sprague, Helene Scheff, Susan McGreevy-Nicols

Book Series:
Shell Education: “Integrating the Arts in Science”, “Integrating the Arts in Mathematics”, “Integrating the Arts in Social Studies”, “Integrating the Arts in Language Arts”. Each book contains a Creative Movement chapter written by Celeste Miller.

BRING A DANCE TEACHING ARTIST TO YOUR SCHOOL!

To further enhance Creative Movement Curriculum Connections, bring a Dance Teaching Artist to your school.

Contact your local or regional arts council for a roster of Dance Teaching Artists.

Your local Dance Companies might also have Education programs with qualified Teaching Artists.

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