

Dance-A-Story

A course description

Unit Goals

This unit is designed to help student reach the following learning goals.

- Demonstrate kinesthetic awareness, concentration, and focus in performing movement skills
- Understand the elements of dance: space, time, and energy
- Understand the concept of composition and develop the ability to use dance as a language
- Apply and demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in dance
- Develop an awareness of the capabilities and limitations of the body and will understand that dance requires discipline and personal commitment
- Develop a positive attitude toward self, others, and the dance experience
- Understand dance as a way of exploring other content areas: social studies, history, and math

Unit Overview

Exploring the Elements

First, students spend approximately two weeks learning and working with loco motor and non-loco motor movements, levels, pathways, directions, and shapes. Students explore these elements and create their own dances based on these new ideas.

Read Through & Roles

Next, we spend approximately two weeks reading the story, making a list of the characters and elements of nature, and assigning roles to each student. I allow students to write down three characters they would like to portray from the story. Then, I assign students to a particular character or element of nature.

Analyzing Character

Next, students analyze their character by studying the character's personality, movement qualities, habits, and role within the story. Students locate their character within the story and begin creating movements to coincide with the story.

Setting Scenes

Once students create their own character's movements, we begin creating scenes. We start putting the characters and story together, part by part. Students spend some time creating a costume for their character, as well. They draw and color the costume on paper, and then we will see if we can recreate the costume.

Rehearsals & Performance

Students spend many days rehearsing the dance on stage using lights, sound (background music and microphones for the narrator to read the story while the dancers are performing), and costumes. Students deliver an evening performance and a day performance at school. Students then watch their performance on videotape and evaluate themselves as well as the process and end result of the production.

Suggestions for Dance-A-Story books:

Chancay and the Secret of Fire: A Peruvian folktale written and illustrated by Donald Charles

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe: Based upon the story by C. S. Lewis and Dramatized by Joseph Robinette

Arrow to the Sun: A Pueblo Indian tale by Gerald McDermott

John Henry: by Julius Lester

Traveling to Tondo: A Tale of the Nkundo of Zaire, Retold by Verna Aardema