



Program 1: Principles of Artful Teaching Creating Rich Learning Environments Nurturing Independent Thinkers

SEGMENTS 4 AND 7 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Michael O'Banion - DANCE
20 years teaching

About the School

Denver School of the Arts
Denver, CO

Type:
Urban/Arts-focused

Grades:
6-12

Students:
900
Very mixed socio-economic status

Majors:
Creative Writing, Dance, Theatre,
Instrumental Music, Stagecraft & Design,
Video & Cinema Arts, Visual Art, and
Vocal Music

About the Dance Program

Faculty:
2 full-time + resident and guest artists

Students:
115

Facilities:
Above Average in the Area
• 3 large dance studios
• 2 theatres (178 seats, 550 seats)
• Full light grid
• Dressing rooms

Required Courses:
Modern, Ballet, Jazz, African & Spanish,
Improvisation, Composition, Repertory,
Performance Technique, Partnering, and
Senior Seminar

Elective Courses:
Tap, Hip Hop, and Pointe

Audition:
Technique Master Class, individual
choreography showings, and interview

About the Featured Class

Intermediate Dance:

Students, mostly eighth- and ninth-graders, learn the fundamentals of partnering, including weight-sharing, lifting, and contact improvisation.

All dance majors take this course and are expected to integrate the lessons into their movement vocabulary and choreographic process.

In Segment 4, students explore the concept of partnering.

In Segment 7, students receive informal feedback.

Preparations/Prerequisites:

Beginning Level Dance or equivalent

Student Motivation:

High. This is a required course with a performance outcome and must be completed before moving to the Advanced Level.

In the Teacher's Words

How does partnering class fit into the language of dance?

The students go through a series of partnering classes, where they learn how to deal with body weight and how to share weight, so that the duet form becomes part of their vocabulary. Duet forms speak to personal relationships of one on one. Group choreography speaks more about the tribe or the group or society. The solo is much more personal. We try to get those three forms very strongly under the students' belts so that they understand when to use each one. That way they're making choices. They're not feeling that those groupings are dictated out of some abstract, intangible place.