ATLANTA DANCE COLLECTIVE

TALES TOLD THROUGH TWISTS, TURNS, AND TECHNOLOGY

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All Ages

Compiled and edited by Melanie Darby

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### About the ARTIST

Founded in 2015, Atlanta Dance Collective is a group of artists with a similar vision to create engaging contemporary work in the Atlanta dance scene. *Dance Canvas 2015* served as the catalyst for Atlanta Dance Collective through the mutual involvement of Britt Whitmoyer Fishel and Sarah Stokes. "site." choreographed by Britt Fishel and commissioned through Dance Canvas, premiered at the Rialto Center for the Arts and featured Sarah Stokes as one of the dancers. Fishel and Stokes shared an interest in creating and performing work and wanted to build a collaborative group of choreographers, dancers, and artists to make dance in the city of Atlanta. Their latest work "too far...thanks a lot jim," choreographed by Sarah Stokes, was featured as part of Breaking Ground's New Dance at the Decatur Arts Festival.

Atlanta Dance Collective strives to connect the world through dance by creating vital new works, collaborating with new artists, and serving the community through their practice.

### About the ART

Traditionally, European and American theatrical dance centered on ballet. However, in the early twentieth century, it became fashionable in dance circles to rebel against the strictures of tradition. The first two well-known American dancers to break away from classical ballet were Isadora Duncan and Ruth St. Denis. Although their styles differed, Duncan and St. Denis's unconventional approaches opened the door to a new era in dance history: the American modern dance movement of the 1920s. Leaders of this movement such as Martha Graham, José Limón, and Katherine Dunham based their works on personal experience, using their bodies as instruments to express such emotions as passion, fear, joy, or grief. Rather than adhering to a set form and a limited range of gestures, as in ballet, the dancer created form as an outgrowth of his or her own communicative impulses.

Over time, modern dance has reconciled itself to other traditional dance forms. Perhaps nothing has helped to integrate various styles of dance more than American musical comedy, which draws on ballet, modern, tap, and ethnic folk dancing. In addition, with the advent of television and improved transportation after World War II, audiences and dancers alike have benefited from a greater exposure to dance styles from all over the world. Dancers today use a broader range of techniques, styles, and source materials than ever before.
SPECIAL TOPIC: Story Telling Through Movement

Storytelling is a time honored means for sharing and interpreting experiences. The Atlanta Dance Collective’s *Tales Told Through Twists, Turns, and Technology* is a creative and interactive program that uses music, movement, improvisation, and screendance to convey phrases, create characters, and underscore genre.

Everyone moves. Humans are made to move. From ballet to hip hop, mime to the Indigenous’ or shaman’s prance, dance is a storyteller. Movement becomes the language while body is the medium for story to emerge. Whether set to music, drums or silence, dance invokes a certain power that can only come from the core of the human body. Often the product is joy merged with awe that is hard to define or perhaps a sorrow that clutches and tears at the human heart—a live and beating part of the very instrument of communication—the body. For that is the instrument the dancer uses to speak to the heart of the observer.

Dance is a conveyance for story and storytelling. For the passing on of ritual and tradition or even forbidden secret knowledge passed down through generations in order to preserve legacy, dance is wordless communication and when it is combined with words evokes a powerful multidimensional response.

Dance in America began with the Indigenous, became an outlet and venue for slaves to humanize themselves for themselves. Vaudeville, tap dance, and mime are all part of American history and the history of dance. The dances of Africa, India and Asia were ceremonial and incorporated ritual movement with meaning. Dance has permeated every culture both ancient and contemporary and has included romance and the classics—ballet, opera, drama, theater; while performance as art gave rise to dance troupes and theaters. Modern choreography grew out of the impulse of dance.

The Elements of Dance: The concepts and vocabulary that help students develop movement skills and understand dance as an artistic practice. The acronym BASTE illustrates this best.

**B: Body**- When we look at a dancer's whole body we might consider the overall shape design; is it symmetrical? Twisted? What part of the body initiates movement?

**A: Action**- Movement can also be improvised, meaning that the dancers make it up "on the spot" as they spontaneously dance.

**S: Space**- Spatial relationships between dancers or between dancers and objects are the basis for design concepts such as beside, in front of, over, through, around, near or far.
T: Time- Rhythmic patterns may be metered or free rhythm. Much of western music uses repeating patterns (2/4 or 3/4 for example), but concepts of time and meter are used very differently throughout the world.

E: Energy- Energy is about how the movement happens. Choices about energy include variations in movement flow and the use of force, tension, and weight. Sometimes called Dynamics.

**VOCABULARY**

_Ballet_: an artistic dance form performed to music using precise and highly formalized set steps and gestures. Classical ballet is characterized by light, graceful, fluid movements and the use of point shoes.

_Choreography_: the sequence of steps and movements in dance

_Folk Dance_: a popular dance, considered as part of the tradition or custom of a particular people.

_Improvisation_: the process of spontaneously creating movement; something that is improvised, especially a piece of music, drama, etc., created without preparation

_Modern Dance_: a free, expressive style of dancing started in the early 20th century as a reaction to classical ballet. In recent years it has included elements not usually associated with dance, such as speech and film.

_Screendance_: alternatively called 'videodance', is a genre made for the camera where movement is the primary expressive element in the work rather than dialogue (as in movies) or music (as in music videos).

_Tap Dance_: a form of dance characterized by using the sounds of tap shoes striking the floor as a form of percussion.
ACTIVITIES

ENGAGE

1. Stand in front of the class and tell them that you are going to "speak" to them without using any words. Tell them that you will point to someone who should tell the class what you are "saying" or feeling.

Wave to the students with a smile on your face. Point to a student. (The student should say "hello."). Then, frown and pretend to cry. Point to a student. (The student should say "I'm sad."). Finally, furrow your brow and fold your arms. Point to a student. (The student should say "I'm angry.")

2. Next, tell the class that you are going to pretend to do something. They must guess what you are trying to communicate. Pantomime the process of getting into a car, starting it, and driving it. When you have finished, ask the students what you were doing.

3. Explain to students that you are doing something called "pantomime." Tell them that pantomime is a way to communicate without using words. Instead, you use your face and your body to help show actions, thoughts, or feelings.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE

1. Tell the students that they will now do a pantomime. Have them get up and start moving by walking around the room. Tell them to pretend that they are walking to school.

2. Next, give the students the following prompts. (Give them about a minute to adjust to each new scenario):

You are walking to school in the pouring rain.
You are walking to school after a big snowstorm, and there is a foot of snow on the ground.
You stayed up late, so you are very tired when you are walking to school.
It is the last day of school, and you can't wait to get there.

3. When you have finished the exercise, ask the students to talk about the things they did to show the different situations. How did they change their body movements to show that they were walking through snow? To show that they were tired?

4. Ask students if they think it would be possible to tell an entire story without words. Tell them that you are going to read them a story. As you read, they should listen carefully and think about how they could tell it without words. After you have read the story, tell the students that you are going to re-tell part of the story through pantomime. Their job is to guess which scene you are miming.
CROSS CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS and STANDARDS

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<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MK-5GM.6</td>
<td>Listening to, analyzing, and describing music a. Identify specific music events in an aural example, given appropriate terminology. b. Identify characteristics of musical elements in music which represent diverse genres and cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MK-5GM.7</td>
<td>Evaluating music and music performances. a. Evaluate musical performances of themselves and others. b. Explain personal preferences for specific musical works and styles using appropriate vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6-12GM.9</td>
<td>Understanding music in relation to history and culture a. Perform, listen, move and/or distinguish between music from various historical periods and cultures (e.g., various world regions). b. Describe how music and musicians function in various cultures. c. Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior for the context and style of music performed</td>
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Program Focus

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<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ELACCK-5SL1.c.</td>
<td>Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELACCK-5RI8</td>
<td>Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELACCK-5L3.c</td>
<td>Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELACCK-5RI3</td>
<td>Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELACCK-5 RL7</td>
<td>Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELACCK-5RL3</td>
<td>Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions]</td>
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<tr>
<td>DK-5FD.1</td>
<td>Identifies and demonstrates movement elements, skills, and terminology in dance</td>
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<td>DK-5CR.2</td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of dance as a way to create and communicate meaning a. Improvises movement based on own ideas, feelings, concepts, and kinesthetic awareness b. Recognizes and accurately describes movement and dance elements. c. Moves expressively to music or other accompaniment (e.g., sound, text)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DK-5CO.3</td>
<td>Integrates the use of technology and new media a. Explores dance as an art form through the use of media and technology</td>
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<td>DK-5CO.1.g.</td>
<td>Describes the similarities and differences in various dance styles (e.g., ballet, jazz, tap, folk)</td>
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<td>TAMS6-12.7</td>
<td>Integrating various art forms, other content areas, and life experiences to create theatre a. Identifies similarities between theatre and other art forms</td>
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<td>TAMS5.K.11</td>
<td>Engaging actively and appropriately as an audience member in theatre or other media experiences a. Models appropriate audience behaviors b. Analyzes the relationship between an audience and a performer</td>
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REFERENCES and RESOURCES

http://smithsonianeducation.org/spotlight/dance.html

http://www.eatgoodbread.com/Interpretive%20Dance.pdf

http://voiceseducation.org/node/5993

https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Telling_a_Story_Dance