

Dance Curriculum Framework

Center For Educator Development In Fine Arts (CEDFA)

<http://www.cedfa.org>

Dance is the hidden language of the soul.
Martha Graham

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FOREWORD

The Texas Legislature, in authorizing the development of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), has as its goal for “all students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across all subject areas. The essential knowledge and skills shall also prepare and enable all students to continue to learn in post-secondary educational, training, or employment settings.”

This framework is provided to help educators, supervisors, administrators, and education service center personnel increase student achievement in dance. Neither the TEKS nor this curriculum framework should be taken as curriculum. Adoption of the TEKS presents an opportunity for Texas schools to examine and modify existing curricula. For students to achieve at high levels, districts must develop local curricula, instruction, and assessment that are aligned with the TEKS for fine arts.

The process of educating students is much like building a house. The TEKS provide a strong foundation, and this curriculum framework constructs the frame. It is up to each district to complete the house in a manner that meets the particular needs of its students. Districts are encouraged to exceed the minimum requirements of law and State Board of Education rules by supplementing these state standards with meaningful activities, resources, and instructional materials.

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PERSPECTIVES ON DANCE EDUCATION

dance (dans, dāns), v., **danced, dancing**, n. –v.t. *to perform either alone or with others a rhythmic and patterned succession of steps, usually to music.* –n. *Rhythmic movement having as its aim the creation of visual designs by a series of poses and tracing of patterns through space in the course of measured units of time, the two components, static and kinetic, receiving various emphasis (as in ballet, natya, and modern dance) and being executed by different parts of the body in accordance with temperament, artistic precepts, and purposes: the art of dancing.* (Webster's Third International Dictionary, unabridged)

Dance is movement, visually organized in space and time. The way a dance shapes movement defines the critical attributes of its style, genre, and place in the history of dance. A dancer's skills and techniques are often based on tradition and passed down from one generation to the next. Nonetheless, dance is in a constant state of self-definition. Dancers, choreographers, and all those involved in studying and performing dance take part in defining and reinterpreting the art form.

Dance education in Texas schools provides all students with the opportunity to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of dance as an art form. Students learn and refine dance skills and techniques in class and in performance, study the historical and cultural significance of dance and its evolution as an art form, and evaluate personal work and the work of others. When all program components are aligned with the TEKS, students in Texas fine arts dance programs:

- Gain significant knowledge of dance elements, principles, and concepts
- Develop and apply an understanding of basic principles of choreography
- Apply knowledge, skills, and techniques of dance in formal dance presentations
- Build personal criteria for the evaluation of non-professional and professional dance performance and study
- Effectively communicate ideas, thoughts, and feelings through dance.

A dance curriculum developed using this framework as a guide should be well planned, comprehensive, and scaffolded. It should be implemented using a variety of appropriate instructional methods, providing students with diverse, challenging experiences in process-centered study. Effective fine arts dance programs support the achievement of all students, despite individual differences in learning rates and/or prior knowledge and skills.

In the process of studying dance, students accomplish many specific tasks and gain knowledge in a number of ways, developing skills that are valuable for achievement in other areas of school and life. Over the course of a dance program, students will:

- Develop meaningful concepts of self, human relationships, and physical environments
- Build critical thinking skills by examining the reasons for dancers' actions, by analyzing individual responses to lessons and performances, and by interpreting the intent of choreographers
- Strengthen and refine creative thinking skills by creating original interpretations of dances, based on response to others' work, and by constructing scenery, props, lighting, and makeup
- Learn to contextualize dance in culture and history by exploring how a dance relates to the time and place of its origins
- Learn the communication methods of different media by carefully examining live and recorded dance performances.

To dance is to be out of yourself, larger, more powerful, more beautiful. This is power; it is glory on earth, and it is yours for the taking.

Agnes de Mille

Scaffolded learning is carefully structured from one developmental level to the next.

THE STATE CONTEXT FOR DANCE EDUCATION

Senate Bill 1, passed by the 74th Texas Legislature, charged the State Board of Education with clarifying essential knowledge and skills in the areas of the foundation and enrichment curricula. At the high school level, as stated in the Texas Administrative Code, districts must offer courses from at least two of the four fine arts areas (art, music, theatre, and dance). Both the Recommended High School Program and the Distinguished Achievement Program require one credit from any of the courses listed in Chapter 117 of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Additionally, students who participate in the Distinguished Achievement Program can gain recognition for outstanding achievement in the fields of art, music, theatre, or dance.

With this role for the fine arts in Texas public schools, the writing committee for the Fine Arts TEKS was established and included representatives of a broad range of expertise in arts education. The thousands of Texans who gave input into the Fine Arts TEKS included:

- Parents
- Business representatives
- Teachers
- State and community leaders
- State and national experts.

Together they reviewed multiple drafts of the Fine Arts TEKS to help ensure that fine arts education in Texas public schools would have relevance and rigor.

The State Board of Education unanimously adopted the Fine Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. The TEKS, a framework of knowledge and skills, articulate high expectations for all student achievement. The TEKS are considered content standards that identify what all students should know and be able to do. However, the TEKS do not constitute curricula and do not prescribe methodologies or strategies for achieving the standards. Rather, they form the basis of local curricula, which are designed individually to meet the particular needs of each district's students.

Dance till the stars come
down from the rafters
Dance, Dance, Dance
till you drop.
W. H. Auden

Even the ears must
dance.
Natalia Makarova

Organization of the TEKS

Chapter 117 of the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, contains the Fine Arts TEKS. The introduction to the TEKS for each discipline and course level presents a summary of what students will do and learn in the study of art, music, theatre or dance, and introduces the four strands of learning that organize all of the Fine Arts TEKS:

- Perception
- Creative expression/performance
- Historical and cultural heritage
- Response and evaluation.

Within each discipline and course level, these four strands function interdependently, and they are most effectively taught when woven together in lessons. All strands should be addressed in each course, but not necessarily in parity. Some courses may focus in great depth on specific strands, while touching on others mainly to demonstrate relevance and relationships. The concept of strands in the fine arts is essential for teachers and district personnel as they develop and implement local curricula.

High school courses are identified in the TEKS by course title and level (I–IV), e.g., “Dance, Level III.” Course levels represent expected levels of student experience and achievement in the discipline, not grade-level classification. For example, a senior without prior coursework in dance would enroll in Dance I, not Dance IV.

“Dance, Level I,” a high school course, is the first dance course addressed in the TEKS. After a brief introduction describing the overall goals of dance, the knowledge and skills for the course are listed, defining the essential components of each strand. In addition to the TEKS for each strand, several student expectations are provided to show how students can demonstrate understanding of the strand’s knowledge and skills. An example of this structure follows:

§117.56 Dance, Level I

(c) Knowledge and skills.

(4) **Historical/cultural heritage.** The student demonstrates an understanding of cultural, historical, and artistic diversity.

The student is expected to:

- A. Analyze the characteristics of dances from several diverse cultures;
- B. Perform dance phrases or dances from several time periods with an understanding of historical and social contexts; and
- C. Identify historical figures and their significance in dance history.

Teachers can use the statements of student expectations in the process of designing their methods of instruction and assessment.

The design of the Dance TEKS provides both horizontal and vertical alignment of learning. Dance I is a general dance survey course and forms the foundation for

Dance II, III, and IV. Increased student expectations at each grade and/or course level are communicated in a variety of ways including:

- The sophistication of language used to describe knowledge and skills
- The scope of knowledge and skills
- The depth of understanding in students' evaluation and response.

The TEKS define what students should know and be able to do in all foundation and enrichment subject areas. Scaffolded knowledge and skills are the basis of quality educational programs for Texas students. Importantly, the TEKS are age-appropriate at each course level. Student expectations are based on careful consideration of the typical cognitive, social/emotional, and physical development of adolescents and teenagers. The TEKS are focused on learners, their present capabilities, and ways to help them progress to higher levels of knowledge and skills. The TEKS emphasize what students should learn rather than what teachers should teach, an important characteristic that distinguishes them from the Essential Elements (EEs).

Freedom for a dancer means only one thing . . . discipline.

A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO DANCE INSTRUCTION

Dance concepts and principles function interdependently in the TEKS. Although certain concepts and skills are taught and learned in isolation, they are all integrated in performance. A solid understanding of how the elements of dance are related is crucial in creating artistic performance on the basis of classwork. If one component of dance instruction is weak, the quality of performance as a whole is affected. Four basic strands comprise the Fine Arts TEKS: perception, creative expression/performance, historical/cultural heritage, and response/evaluation. The strands provide broad, unifying structures for organizing the knowledge and skills of dance. They are most effective when they are woven together in lessons and learning experiences.

Perception describes the growth of understanding dance as an art form, beginning with students' initial, spontaneous experiences in movement. Students develop an awareness of movement as a means of expression and communication and gain an understanding of dance vocabulary, elements, and principles.

Creative expression and performance defines participation in the art of dance, integrating the application of body sciences and fitness with the principles of dance. Students develop and apply knowledge and skills of dance and choreography in a variety of styles. Students begin learning simple movement patterns and advance to the performance of complex dance phrases.

The roots of dance are deeply embedded in the history of humankind. Dance has been and remains an important means of expressing and interpreting personal and cultural values. Dancers and choreographers connect with the past and present and construct visions of the future, both reflecting and creating culture. Learning the **historical and cultural heritage** of many styles and genres of dance contributes to students' understanding of how dance functions in diverse societies.

Practicing **response and evaluation** enables students to build personal criteria for assessing the study and performance of dance. Students use critical thinking skills to perceive, describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate dance with confidence and credibility. Students learn to assess skills, techniques, and styles based on class instruction, models of exemplary performance, and an understanding of the many elements involved in each dance sequence.

Every group of people that has lived on the American continent . . . has been restless and explosive in expression. This shows in the migration of entire peoples, the moving about of individuals, as well as in the tension and dynamics of dancing . . .

Agnes De Mille

NEW FINE ARTS DANCE PROGRAMS FOR TEXAS

Implementing the Dance TEKS is an opportunity for educators to rethink course offerings, instructional strategies, assessment, and professional development. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills call for two of the four fine arts disciplines: art, music, theatre, and dance, to be offered at the high school level. Rethinking dance instruction involves a shift away from thinking of dance strictly as a production-oriented curricular area for talented students to one that encourages the development of creative and critical thinking in all students.

Anybody can and should dance. . . .
It's good for the body and the spirit.
Isadora Duncan

Curriculum Development

A variety of strategies can be used to prepare for curriculum development based on the TEKS. Effective curriculum development processes generally occur over time and begin with reading the TEKS and discussing them with colleagues. The curriculum development process might proceed with an evaluation of current instruction, curriculum, and program design. Consider the following questions:

- What are the current goals of the dance program? How are they aligned with the TEKS? How do current goals need to be revised?
- To what extent can sequenced content be traced through all four levels of high school dance?
- What are the strengths of the current program? What elements should be retained in a redesigned curriculum?
- What areas of the current program need improvement? What resources are needed to make improvements?
- To what extent do current instructional strategies and materials support new goals? What components need to be retained, deleted, added, or modified?
- How are teacher and student self-assessment used in ongoing program evaluation? What other strategies can be used for assessment?

Many more questions will likely come to mind as you engage in this reflective process. It is easy to become overwhelmed, so focus on major questions, and remember that your program already has strengths to build on.

An in-depth look at the scaffolding of dance knowledge and skills reveals the many benefits for students who participate in a strong dance program. Creativity, self-expression, collaboration, cognitive skills, dance knowledge and skills, and an appreciation of dance are just a few of the benefits for learners who participate in a strong instructional program based on the TEKS.

Dance in the High School

High school dance programs are designed for all students, including those with no prior dance experience and those with differing degrees of formal dance training. Students have many opportunities to discover and develop personal talents and to expand their perceptions of self, community, and the world. Colleges, universities, and private dance companies worldwide offer professional preparation in dance. Dance training in high school is essential for students wanting to continue their education in dance.

Level I, II, III, and IV dance courses may be selected to fulfill the fine arts requirement for graduation. Level numbers represent achievement levels, not student classification. For example, a student in dance for the first time is enrolled in Dance I, regardless of his or her grade level. Because students in secondary level performance classes often have differing skill and experience levels, student expectations are individualized.

Each level of dance instruction builds on the foundation of knowledge and skills established at prior levels. Each course has a unique focus, expanding students' knowledge base, introducing and refining techniques and skills, and acting as a building block for more advanced work. In Dance I, students learn the importance of daily practice for building dance skills and techniques. Advanced students maintain and refine techniques and skills through consistent, structured work. Students apply the discipline, commitment, and problem-solving skills required in dance to other aspects of their lives.

Because TEKS achievement standards are rigorous and classroom space is limited, class size decisions are important. Safety, levels of student development, and range of course activities (e.g., whole class discussions, individual and/or group projects) are essential considerations. Additional factors affecting class size are course content, available staff, and facilities. The following questions might be useful in the decision-making process. Will teachers be team teaching? Do students' development levels vary significantly? Will beginners need lots of individualized instruction? There are multiple influences on scheduling and class size decisions, but strong student achievement should always be the main priority.

Time allotment decisions are also critical in building a strong dance program. Teachers need adequate time to teach the Dance TEKS, and students need adequate time to learn. This should be the primary scheduling consideration. High school schedule configurations vary in length of class time and in pattern of class meetings; however, time allocations and credits given for dance courses should be commensurate with allocations for foundation subjects. A course taken to satisfy a high school graduation requirement must be a full credit course. Two partial courses do not satisfy the requirement of one full fine arts credit.

Graduation Requirements

One fine arts credit is required in both the Recommended High School Program and the Distinguished Achievement Program. These requirements may be satisfied by any of the following courses from 19 TAC Chapter 117.

Someone once said that dancers work just as hard as policemen—always alert, always tense, but see, policemen don't have to be beautiful at the same time.

George Balanchine

Course Descriptions

The following courses are described in broad terms and include many suggestions, which are neither definitive nor all-inclusive. The descriptions and vignettes are provided to stimulate curriculum development at the local level and to demonstrate the wide range of instructional strategies encompassed by the Dance TEKS. This flexibility is provided so that each district and campus can implement the TEKS with the particular strengths, needs, and interests of its students and community in mind.

Course Title: Dance I Course Sequence: Introductory Credit: 1	
Strand and Content/Processes	Vignette
<p>Perception: Dance I is an introduction to the genres of ballet, tap, modern, and ethnic dance presented in cultural and historical context. Learning the vocabulary, principles and elements of each style is important. The class focuses on students' development of kinesiological body awareness, technical facility, spatial expressiveness, and personal creativity. Skills learned in Dance I are refined and reinforced in all upper level classes.</p>	<p>Throughout the school year, Heather Thompson's students journal their progress in written and video formats. By the end of the school year, students are expected to perform basic technique in ballet, tap, modern, and ethnic dance.</p>
<p>Creative Expression/Performance: Fundamental dance skills and techniques are demonstrated by the teacher and practiced by the students during class. Students learn by comparing and contrasting their movements with those of their instructor. Safety and the importance of warm-up are emphasized. Barre and floor exercises are taught. Students memorize movement sequences representative of several dance styles. Students perform short movement sequences to demonstrate technique and create phrases (patterns of dance sequences) in beginning improvisation and choreography.</p> <p>Many of the exercises have live and/or recorded accompaniment. The concepts of personal space and shared performance space are explored with three exercises: individual demonstrations that traverse the studio along horizontal and diagonal lines, partner activities, and activities in which dancers cross paths. Exercises for building awareness of shared space combine students' comprehension of personal space with an ability to anticipate and gauge the movements of others. Students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in the use of Level I basic skills with a variety of accompaniment, tempo, and movement sequences at the conclusion of Dance I.</p>	<p>With that goal in mind, Ms. Thompson designs a weekly assignment focusing on a particular technique or step. Students describe in writing the process involved in learning to execute the step. Students also identify critical attributes involved in the correct execution of the step. Journal entries indicate areas of strength and areas that need improvement. Problems or challenges are accompanied by possible solutions. Students justify their opinions with well substantiated rationales.</p> <p>Then, at designated intervals, students tape segments for their video journals. At the end of the school year, students select examples from the tapes that demonstrate the proficiency they gained in the various genres of dance.</p>
<p>Historical/Cultural Heritage: Examination of the origins and development of each Dance I genre accompanies students' technical and creative work. Students review the research of dance historians and study important trends, milestones, and figures in dance history. Regular attendance at dance performances enables students to situate contemporary dance in an historical context and to draw connections between their own study of dance and dance history and what they see on stage. The historical component of Dance I includes examination of the broader cultural and historical contexts in which each genre exists. A body of dance history resources aids students in their research.</p>	<p>The journals provide powerful documentation of student growth that Ms. Thompson uses in a variety of ways. On an individual basis, she uses the journals in conferencing with students about goals and areas of intensive study. With student permission, she uses excerpts from student journals to create her own teaching portfolio.</p>
<p>Response/Evaluation: Evaluation of student progress is continual, integrated into the daily teaching process, and made in three primary ways: teacher critique, student self-assessment, and peer response. Students learn to identify the essential elements of each skill or sequence performed by their instructor and to examine their own movements in terms of these elements. They use mirrors to observe their actions and to make adjustments of their form. The teacher helps the class learn evaluation techniques by analyzing her own movements aloud while teaching. Rules of etiquette are established and maintained to ensure all students have equal opportunity to learn.</p>	

Course Title: Dance II Course Sequence: Follows Dance I Credit: 1	
Strand and Content/Processes	Vignette
<p>Perception: Dance II builds on the basic technical facility and kinesthetic body awareness attained in Dance I. The class reinforces and refines fundamental skills and allows students to individually choose genres for focused study.</p>	<p>Students in Michael Romano's Dance II class spend much of the first semester researching in-depth the dance style they have chosen for intensive study. For example, Leah Turner, who is studying modern dance, studies the development of modern dance and how it was influenced by different cultures and other genres of dance.</p> <p>Leah cites key contributions of dancers and choreographers to the evolution of modern dance. Additionally she includes in her study significant performances of the last five years.</p> <p>Her final presentation to the class uses a multimedia format to illustrate her predictions of future developments in modern dance based on contemporary trends and historical development. She provides strong rationales for each of her predictions.</p> <p>Mr. Romano and Leah's classmates critique her presentation based on criteria they generated as a class for an effective multimedia presentation of content knowledge and understanding.</p>
<p>Creative Expression/Performance: Dance II students may choose a genre among ballet, tap, modern, or ethnic dance as a focus of training. Their skills, movements, and sequences are more complex, and their sequences are longer, memorized, and executed with greater technical skill and emotional expression. Dance II focuses on the physical conditioning of the dancer, emphasizing the importance of agility (which enables precise arm and leg extensions), strength, and endurance. Students practice maintaining focus, energy, and dynamics over the course of a performance. They work individually, in pairs, and in small ensembles, developing timing and rhythmic acuity. Stage placements used in the studio allow students to address the issue of audience perspective. Tempo, dance sequence patterns, and transitions are important areas of experimentation. Students create and choreograph simple dances according to teacher guidelines (which may be determined by concepts such as style inversion and retrogression) and study abstraction by improvising phrases.</p>	
<p>Historical/Cultural Heritage: Dance II explores the development of different dance styles and the cultural and historical environments in which they exist. Ideally, the focus of inquiry corresponds to the specific style or styles studied in Dance II. Students learn to identify and describe dances according to stylistic characteristics and to locate them within their cultural contexts. They examine the roles of dance in media such as film, video, and musical theatre. They study theoretical approaches to dance and learn to make connections among the history, theory, and practice of dance.</p>	
<p>Response/Evaluation: Assessment remains a daily, integral part of class work in Dance Level II. Students identify particularly challenging areas of their training and devise ways to strengthen their performance in these areas. Dance students focus on learning self-assessment skills and seek peer evaluation to foster awareness and communication of their ideas and work. Portfolios including media such as videos, journals, and written evaluations may be compiled to aid in assessing progress. Attending community dance performances assists students in establishing personal performance goals and in developing criteria for evaluating dance performances. Vocational and avocational opportunities for dancers may be taken into account when formulating curricula and student assessment criteria.</p>	

Course Title: Dance III Course Sequence: Follows Dance II Credit: 1	
Strand and Content/Processes	Vignette
<p>Perception: Dance III emphasizes development of the total dancer by integrating each student's physical, analytical, and creative growth. Students choose specific genres for in-depth, individualized training; they observe and discuss their own and each other's work in the process of developing their own particular artistic vision.</p>	<p>Katrina Rowan's Dance III students research a professional dance company prominent in each of their selected areas of interest. They identify audition processes, stylistic characteristics of the dancers, the history of the dance company, the repertoire that is performed, and avenues that various dancers in the company utilized in preparation for their professional careers. Students present their findings to the class, demonstrating aspects of the company's unique style as part of their presentations. Ms. Rowan and the other students assess the presentation using established criteria. Students videotape their presentations, review their own videotape, and self-assess on the same criteria.</p>
<p>Creative Expression/Performance: Students continue the warm-up, barre, and floor exercises with heightened attention to body alignment in all aspects of training. Interpretations of traditional dances are based on research into the dances' cultural and historical contexts to ensure the work accurately represents its tradition. Consideration of costume, lighting, music, set, and props is part of all performance planning. Students focus on integrating disparate elements of a performance into a cohesive whole and research others' interpretations to shed light on their own work. Solo and ensemble work are both essential to Dance III. Students examine the concepts of theme, gesture, and motivation of movement. They build their own bases of criticism and re-evaluate previously learned arrangements, improvisations, and original creations from this new perspective. Learning the audition process is important for Dance III students.</p>	
<p>Historical/Cultural Heritage: Traditional dances are identified by specific techniques, sequences, and phrases developed over years of performance. Students learn the dances alongside studies of the cultures from which they originated. They become familiar with different schools of dance by the schools' particular techniques and methods, and they pay particular attention to learning the nuances of each dance.</p>	
<p>Response/Evaluation: Assessment centers on observation and discussion of student work. Journals, portfolios, individual research, and notes on vocational opportunities may be part of the review of student progress and discussion of their goals. The sophistication of assessment criteria grows in tandem with the artistic growth of the student, and students extend their assessment of work to include examination of the creative process. In becoming independent thinkers and consumers in the dance community, students evaluate the live and video performances of others and apply their evaluative skills to reflections on their own work.</p>	

Course Title: Dance IV Course Sequence: Follows Dance III Credit: 1	
Strand and Content/Processes	Vignette
<p>Perception: Dance IV trains the total dancer by integrating students' technique, perception, artistic interpretation, and cultural/historical analysis. Students attain greater awareness and control of their bodies, a keener ability to "read" performances, stronger interpretive skills (including dynamic qualities), and the understanding of dance as creative expression in cultural/historical context. This final level of class work challenges students to become leaders, independent thinkers, and role models for younger students.</p>	<p>Marion Simon designs an assignment for her Dance IV students to challenge and expand their understanding of the discipline of dance and how it compares with other art forms. First, Ms. Simon asks each of her students to describe art, music, theatre, and dance in writing. She asks the class to discuss the ability of each discipline to communicate thoughts, feelings, ideas, concepts, and narratives.</p> <p>After the class generates some initial ideas about the characteristics of each fine arts discipline, they individually research themes that have historically been addressed in dance. Each student writes an essay in which he or she determines which subjects are best suited to be explored through movement. Ms. Simon asks her students to examine at least two major dances in their repertoire and to discuss in detail the thematic content of each. She encourages them to critique the appropriateness of each dance's content, to cite illustrations in each dance that are excellent examples of communicating through movement, and to point out themes that prove extraordinarily difficult to examine through movement.</p> <p>Ms. Simon uses the student essays as the basis for class discussions.</p>
<p>Creative Expression/Performance: Dance IV students continue intensive, individualized training in their areas of specialization and may do additional work in outside genres. Each student develops a personal conditioning program in accordance with the technical requirements of her or his genre and level of training. Program design should be discussed with the instructor and peers. Dance IV focuses on developing students' leadership and independent thinking skills. Students take turns leading warm-up, barre, and floor exercises. Preparation for special performance events gives students additional responsibilities in areas such as costume, props, and makeup. Students are expected to be highly proficient in their areas of specialization and competent in related areas. Proficiency includes technical facility, emotional expression, and the communication of ideas to an audience. Students may prepare performance notes for dance presentations by describing a dance, its history, and other relevant information.</p>	
<p>Historical/Cultural Heritage: In independent study, students may research and create projects illustrating the historical/cultural influences on specific genres. Attention may be focused on the description of contributions made by dancers, choreographers, and patrons and on the impact of these contributions on succeeding work. Original thinking based on research is encouraged. The format of presentations may vary and should be pre-approved by the teacher. Students may choose a traditional dance to study and create an original piece representative of its tradition.</p>	
<p>Response/Evaluation: Self-assessment and teacher and peer critique of original and choreographed work aids students in refining performances. The health and physical training of the dancer should be considered and incorporated into assessment. Development of assessment criteria continues to influence how students view their own, their classmates', and professional performances. Students who plan to continue in dance assemble resumes and portfolios to seek outside performance, training, and study opportunities.</p>	

Credit by Examination

A school district provides six days per year when examinations for acceleration will be administered. A school district may not charge for these examinations. If a student in Grades 6–12 scores 90% on a criterion-referenced test for the applicable course in which he or she has no prior instruction, the student must be given credit. If a student earns credit in a subject based on the examination, the school district enters the examination score on the student’s transcript.

Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP)—Advanced Measures

A student wishing to complete an advanced high school program (Distinguished Achievement Program) must take the courses outlined in the Texas Administrative Code, §74.13, and also satisfy the requirements of four of the following advanced measures, in any combination. Original research/projects may not be used for more than two of the four measures. The measures specify demonstrated student performance at the college or professional level, and student performance must be assessed through an external review process. The advanced measures and their requirements are as follows:

Original research/project:

- Judged by a panel of professionals in the field that is the focus of the project, or
- Conducted under the direction of mentor(s) and reported to an appropriate audience, or
- Related to the required curriculum set forth in 19 TAC §74.1 (relating to Essential Knowledge and Skills).

Test data:

- A score of three or above on a College Board Advanced Placement examination
- A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate examination
- A score on the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT) that qualifies a student for recognition as a Commended Scholar or higher by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation; as part of the National Hispanic Scholar Program of The College Board; or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program for Outstanding Negro Students of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT may count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student.

College courses:

- A grade of 3.0 or higher on courses that count for one college credit, including tech-prep programs.

The Distinguished Achievement Program gives students the opportunity to gain recognition for outstanding achievement in dance by producing individual projects. Each participating student independently designs a proposal, conducts in-depth research, prepares products, performances, and/or findings of professional quality, and presents the work to invited audiences. Students are encouraged to work with mentors who are recognized experts in their areas of study. Proposals should include the names and brief biographical sketches of mentors, and mentors must be approved by each student’s advising teacher and review committee.

The four strands of the Dance TEKS provide a broad, unifying structure for organizing the knowledge and skills that students acquire in the program. Among the skills gained, students demonstrate original thought, communicate expressively and insightfully, and demonstrate college or professional level technical skills and

I think perhaps I've learned to be myself. I have a theory that all artists who would be important . . . must learn to be themselves. It takes a very long time.
Margot Fonteyn

Good
choreography fuses
eye, ear, and mind.
Ariene Croce

knowledge in their performances and presentations. Over the course of their projects, students demonstrate the ability to:

- Work with a mentor and teacher to design a project, develop a time line, and produce a presentation and performance
- Analyze pertinent aspects of historical and cultural heritages
- Research recognized dancers and choreographers from the past and present
- Investigate and develop technical skills in various media unique to dance
- Synthesize all facets of a project in an original, formal presentation
- Reflect on both the process and product(s) to make recommendations for future personal work and to assist future DAP participants.

The following account of a DAP project describes how the best programs successfully extend learning beyond the classroom and recognize exceptional student work.

Project Description

Cathryn Lempke discovered Martha Graham’s autobiography *Blood Memory* in the summer before her senior year. She had studied ballet as long as she’d been in high school and became interested in Martha Graham during her junior year. She was fascinated by the drama of Graham’s choreography, the costumes, colors, and intense expressions of the dancers.

In the spring of the same year, Cathryn was investigating the possibility of designing a DAP dance project to work on during her senior year. Her dance instructor, Ms. Splawn, encouraged her to take some time to think about what she’d like to study and about the ways she would explore her subject. Cathryn was uncertain about committing to a year-long project until she read Graham’s book. Cathryn felt an immediate connection to the themes and problems Graham wrestled with and was curious about the relationship of the American modern dance movement, which she’d read was originally a “women’s movement,” to the social history of American women of the same time period.

Cathryn was excited about her DAP project and completed her project proposal during the first month of her senior year. She proposed to research the influence of Martha Graham on the American modern dance movement, to examine several contemporary schools of dance, and to choreograph a dance investigating a theme or problem historically important to modern dance. Ms. Splawn helped Cathryn find an expert in modern dance in the Houston area to serve as her project mentor, and Cathryn included a brief biographical sketch of her mentor, Mr. Wallis, in her proposal. The requirements of Cathryn’s project included:

- A written statement of intent for the project
- Journal entries tracing the development of the research and final dance
- Videotapes of several rehearsals
- An original, choreographed dance
- Performance of the original dance
- Presentation on the development of the project
- Response, justification, and recommendations for future work following the final performance and presentation
- Evaluation and assessment of the performance by the panel, Ms. Splawn, and Mr. Wallis.

Cathryn and Mr. Wallis outlined a project time line and, with Ms. Splawn, determined the criteria to be used for assessing the quality of the final performance and presentation.

After extensive research on Martha Graham and several of her dancers, including Paul Taylor and Merce Cunningham, and on the social context of Graham's work, Cathryn established the conceptual basis for her original dance. Her research included watching videos of Graham's dances, listening to recordings of accompanying music, reading interviews with Graham's dancers and collaborators, and reading Graham's writings. Cathryn, Ms. Splawn, and Mr. Wallis met regularly to discuss the project's development and to talk about the evolution of Cathryn's ideas on dance and choreography. Cathryn researched the theoretical bases of different schools of dance and included justifications of her own theories of choreography in these discussions.

After a challenging and rewarding year of research and work with three student dancers, Cathryn spent the late spring making final preparations for the performance. She organized her presentation on the research and project development. She wrote program notes, invited guests, and confirmed a panel of experts to critique the performance.

On the night of the performance, Cathryn, Ms. Splawn, Mr. Wallis, friends, family, guests, and the panel of experts gathered in a small performance hall. Cathryn gave her presentation on the history of Martha Graham's modern dance, its relationship to early 20th century America, to contemporary modern dance, and to her own choreography. She included a video clip of Graham's *Appalachian Spring* and discussed the origins of the themes and problems in her own dance. After the presentation, the dancers performed Cathryn's piece, and following the performance, Cathryn answered the panel's questions about her plans for future work and her suggestions for other DAP participants. The panel asked Cathryn challenging questions about her project, referenced the pre-determined assessment criteria, and reviewed notes taken during the presentation and dance prior to evaluating the total project. The panel carefully and thoroughly assessed the results of Cathryn's year-long project before accepting her work and ensuring her an award of a measure of distinguished achievement.

First comes the sweat;
then comes the beauty.
George Ballanchine

INSTRUCTION

A successful dance curriculum, horizontally and vertically aligned according to the TEKS, is built on careful selection of instructional materials, the professional development of dance teachers, and good strategies of instructional delivery. Additionally, the student expectations articulated by the TEKS provide a framework for performance-based assessment, a strategy long used by dance instructors to analyze student achievement in course content. The integration of instruction and assessment and the interdependence of the four TEKS strands help make dance concepts more relevant to students as teachers help them make essential connections in their study of the art form.

Motivation

One goal of public education, in every discipline, is to make students life-long learners motivated by internal drives to know, do, and accomplish. School motivation techniques greatly influence students' desire to be self-directed learners in school and out. Two types of motivational strategies are common in school:

- **Extrinsic motivation**, such as grades and rewards, which are often successful in the short run but may have negative effects on long-term student self-direction
- **Intrinsic motivation**, cultivated by the use of choice, collaboration, and meaningful content, which fosters long-term self-direction and achievement.

Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.
Thomas Jefferson

Too often, motivation is based solely on extrinsic rewards and/or gimmicks that only temporarily boost student achievement. Unless learning is made relevant to students' lives through the use of intrinsic motivation techniques, formal education will not foster long-term knowledge retention or continued creative and intellectual growth.

The right motivation stimulates student response to and desire for expression and lays the groundwork for learning. One of the best motivators for any student is the feeling of success that comes from meeting a challenging goal. There is no euphoria greater than a student's, or teacher's, at the realization that a difficult goal has been reached through commitment and effort. Once a student feels this exhilaration, the experience will be sought time and time again. This reward, an intrinsic motivator, builds a solid foundation for future educational pursuits.

Kindergartners who have many experiences of "the light bulb coming on" are building confidence and motivation skills to face more complex learning situations in the future. However, if students reach high school without this base of successful learning, it is not too late to introduce them to these experiences. Success in learning motivates students in many ways, including inspiring them to stay in school and continue their pursuits in dance. Parents, peers, and communities all contribute to a student's drive and direction, but students who have a series of triumphs in learning situations and who can identify the reasons for their successes strive for additional learning. Here are some questions teachers might ask themselves or discuss with their students to develop intrinsic motivation in class and to encourage the self-direction of class members:

- In the last several weeks, what concept-based activity did students like best? Why?
- What skills or concepts did students learn through the activity, and how did it affect their performance techniques?
- How could activities with similar qualities be used to teach other content, skills, or techniques?

I never wanted to be anything else. I really don't care what happens to me when I'm through. There is a certain amount of anxiety, which is constant, and which is part of all our lives.

We strive for perfection; . . . that's part of dancing. But there is also this tremendous amount of joy.

Joseph Duell

The Dance TEKS provide a framework for teachers to build intrinsic motivation. Some suggestions to gain students' attention in an active learning environment include:

- Making learning relevant by helping students recall personal experiences, relate their work to important personal or social issues, and relate elements and principles of dance to their own lives
- Connecting the study of dance to other areas of learning
- Beginning with activities that allow students to be successful and building toward more demanding assignments as trust and confidence grow
- Maximizing the value of the assignment by giving the reasons for an assignment and helping students see connections between the current assignment and topic of study and past ones
- Challenging students by asking questions with more than one plausible answer, introducing new and challenging materials, and encouraging experimentation
- Setting an example by talking about dance experiences that are important to the teacher and that illustrate meaningful engagement in dance
- Recognizing student achievement through classroom performances; documenting growth in portfolios, notebooks, and journals; and providing *feedback*, or specific information about how the student is progressing
- Welcoming mistakes, recognizing that they provide valuable information for planning future instruction.

Strategies for teaching the Dance TEKS

Critical Thinking

In the process of exploring the art of dance, students develop their communication skills and acquire new symbolic literacy. Dance classes build problem-solving and creative thinking skills. As students focus on perceiving, comprehending, imagining, and evaluating, they develop strong interpretive, analytical, and critical thinking skills.

By learning to make choices within structure, dance students learn to develop individual and group solutions to complex problems. Dance curricula provide many opportunities for students to articulate complex problems and to practice divergent and nonlinear thinking in order to generate solutions. Learners provide rationales for the decisions they make when creating and evaluating performances and, as a result, better understand the artistic process.

The following instructional strategies support the development of critical thinking in the context of learning the Dance TEKS:

- Ask “why,” “how,” and “what if” questions rather than “who,” “where,” and “how” questions.
- Discuss different types of questions with students.
- Ask probing questions.
- Continue to elicit student response even after a “right” response has been given.
- Use student-generated “why” questions on quizzes.
- Compare opposing critiques of a dance and discuss the differences of opinion.
- Use writing to help students generate thoughts before class discussions.

Problem Solving

By exploring complex movement relationships, interacting with peers, and solving choreographic dilemmas, dance students develop sophisticated problem-solving skills. Following is a list of steps, included in a number of different theoretical models, for successful problem solving.

1. Identify the problem.
2. Analyze the cause and scope of the problem.

The most important thing is to never stop questioning.
Albert Einstein

3. Brainstorm a variety of solutions.
4. Evaluate the proposed solutions.
5. Come to consensus on the most viable approach.
6. Implement the solution.
7. Evaluate its effects.

When students seem to be at a loss in generating solutions to a problem, provide them with this framework, or a similar model appropriate for their developmental level, to help them arrive at their own solutions.

Creativity

With the new Dance TEKS, Texas public schools have the potential to create dance studios that foster imagination and creative expression in student demonstration of knowledge and skills. Teachers who actively explore and develop their own ideas of what it means to be creative will, in turn, model their beliefs and practices for their students. The following teaching strategies and suggestions are intended to help students develop emergent creativity.

A dance classroom that fosters creativity may have the following characteristics:

- Natural light, harmonious colors, and comfortable work areas
- Climates that encourage risk-taking and expressive freedom within the structure of the Dance TEKS
- Long-term, open-ended projects that utilize collaborative modes of work and study
- A variety of materials, including inexpensive, found, or recycled materials incorporated into projects.

Cooperative Learning

Research shows that students who complete cooperative group tasks tend to have higher academic tests scores, higher self-esteem, stronger social skills, and greater content knowledge and skills. When cooperative learning is used well, teachers ensure that tasks completed in small groups truly result in learning for all group members. Cooperative learning has been a traditional method of study in dance classes; nonetheless, dance instructors may find the following guidelines useful in practicing cooperative learning in their curriculum:

- Clarify specific student learning outcomes.
- Give students opportunities to “buy into” the targeted outcome.
- State instructions clearly before students begin their group efforts.
- Use heterogeneous groups.
- Make sure each group has an equal opportunity for success.
- Structure tasks so students must rely on one another to complete the task and learn new content and skills (e.g., assign specific roles to individuals).
- Expect positive social interactions.
- Provide access to resource materials.
- Provide sufficient time for working in groups.
- Make sure each student is held accountable for individual learning.
- Provide time during and after project completion for reflection and/or debriefing.

Individualized Instruction

Dance classes, especially at the beginning levels, potentially have a wide range of student knowledge and skill levels. Students may exceed or fall short of a course’s general student expectations for a number of reasons, such as dance studies outside of school or newness to a school’s dance program. Additionally, the learning environments of dance classes support diverse approaches to exploring ideas and

You can’t make it alone; you have to have loyalty and commitment from others to play this music.

Marcus Roberts

media. The combination of different experience levels and diverse learning styles makes individualizing instruction an important teaching strategy. Here are a few ideas on individualizing instruction in the dance classroom:

- Within a larger group, individualizing instruction allows each student to progress through the curriculum at his or her own pace.
- If the diversity of student needs is considered in the design of teaching strategies and curricula, advanced students can move ahead while others work on the basics.
- One means of individualizing instruction is to explain a lesson or demonstrate a technique to small groups of students at a time.

Other strategies dance instructors might use include:

- Contracts for independent learning
- Learning centers
- Computer-aided instruction.

Competition

Used constructively, competition can improve a student's enthusiasm and motivation. Entering competitions has the potential to stimulate students to try their best; however, the thoughtfulness and quality of student work will suffer if competition is valued above all else, without emphasis on the importance of individual growth and personal goals in the context of learning the Dance TEKS. The following questions can be used by dance educators and program developers as guidelines to evaluate different types of competition:

- Is student learning the activity's primary goal?
- Are the rules and criteria for judging aligned with the standards outlined in the TEKS and the local curriculum?
- Will the competition challenge students too far beyond their current range of skill and understanding, causing them to neglect their process of creative development?

Competitions that promote student learning and encourage creativity and originality may be extremely valuable for some learners, especially advanced high school students who plan to continue their studies in dance. Some competitions may award scholarships that will enable serious dance students to further their education. Ultimately, the value of a competition lies in the approach taken by teachers to ensure that the competition enhances, not detracts from, students' developing knowledge and skills.

Study Trips

Carefully planned field trips reinforce and broaden students' dance education, but they cannot replace classroom instruction of carefully scaffolded course content. After establishing solid dance courses for all grades, teachers might use outside performances to demonstrate specific concepts. All outside activities and projects should relate to planned course content. Students can have difficulty processing events unrelated to their studies, and the experiences are less likely to contribute to the students' growing understanding of dance.

Study guides can help students connect concepts studied in class to live performances. Drawing on earlier course content, older students attending professional performances can research productions and create their own study guides. Designing evaluation criteria based on course content enables students to form opinions and make judgments supported by specific production details. It is important for study guides to be aligned with class instruction. Study guides prepared by outside companies are only beneficial if content is aligned with the students' curricula and methods of learning.

I see dance being used as communication between body and soul, to express what is too deep to find words for.
Ruth St. Denis

Safety

Dance teachers must encourage student attitudes that support safe practices in the classroom. It is imperative that instructors model and discuss safety procedures and regulations. Safe practices ensure the welfare of students and teachers and prevent damage to equipment and facilities. Consistently enforcing safe practices within the framework of school and district policies facilitates teaching and learning of course content.

The following recommendations for teachers suggest ways to keep a classroom environment free of accidents and injuries:

- Establish safety procedures and make sure that students understand and observe them.
- Use emergency procedures established by the school, such as evacuation plans for the stage and auditorium, and make it clear to students what to do in case of an emergency.
- Inspect facilities regularly.
- Use posters and bulletin boards to emphasize potential dangers and safety procedures.
- Inspect all tools and equipment; discontinue use of defective or unsafe equipment.
- Supervise students using potentially hazardous equipment.
- Model safe behavior by conducting demonstrations.

The following recommendations for school administrators suggest ways to support a safe dance environment:

- Schedule regular inspection and maintenance of equipment and facilities.
- Provide teachers with current information on accident liability and insurance.
- Ensure that students are given and tested on safety guides.
- Provide safety glasses, face shields, earmuffs, gloves, aprons, and safety belts for technical work or construction.
- Maintain fully stocked first-aid kits in each work area.
- Set examples through biomechanical and physiological instruction.
- Provide sufficient time for proper warm-up of muscles and joints.
- Provide spotters, mats, and spotting belts when necessary.
- Be sure students understand the bio-mechanics of safe lifting.
- Require appropriate clothing for class (correct attire does not restrict motion and allows teachers to quickly spot incorrect body alignment, placement, and/or movement patterns).
- Require appropriate footwear for proper support of the foot during high impact activities (shoes must be in good repair to prevent injury).
- Instruct students in the proper first-aid for sprains and blisters.
- Inspect dance floors to make sure they are clean and splinter-free.
- Instruct students in how to maintain a safe performance area; discuss traps, platforms, and risers.

Dance facilities must be accessible to everyone. Adjustments may be required to make facilities barrier-free. Telephone access is important for dance rehearsals and performance activities outside of regularly scheduled school hours. Emergency numbers and procedures should be permanently posted, legible, and accurate.

Learning . . . should be seen much more as a kind of apprenticeship than it normally is—learning how to do something alongside the successful practitioner, by imitating, by subjecting oneself to correction and to direction.

R. Pring

Special Considerations

Texas public schools are responsible for helping all students develop to their full potential. The content and structure of dance curricula provides opportunities to involve all students in the learning process, regardless of their language, cultural background, disabilities, or familiarity with course content. Dance classes can be designed to recognize and utilize students' abilities, rather than their disabilities. Teachers can modify instructional methods, pacing, and materials to meet the individual needs of their students.

Special Education

Teachers of students receiving special education services should participate in the development of each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and take part in students' Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings. By getting involved in IEP and ARD consultations, dance teachers can share students' progress and achievements with parents and other educators. The following considerations and classroom strategies are provided to help teachers unaccustomed to modifying their instruction for special education students:

- Students who receive special education services are not a homogeneous group. Each individual has unique strengths, needs, and interests.
- Despite the presence of a disability, every student can learn skills in dance classes that enable him or her to participate more fully in school, recreation, and career preparation.
- Students with severe disabilities require the greatest support and individual attention. Special education teachers, sign language interpreters, orientation and mobility instructors, or instructional aides may provide support in the context of the class.
- Students with moderate disabilities may need to have materials and activities adapted to meet their individual strengths and needs.
- Some students may have disabilities that require only slight modifications in the classroom--such as special seating or assistance with reading.

Educators may be daunted by the challenge of teaching a classroom of students with diverse, individual needs. The following suggestions should help teachers establish the full participation of every learner:

- Align the content with the developmental level of the learner.
- Give instructions through several modalities (e.g., visual and aural).
- Summarize key content points before moving to new topics.
- Ask leading questions to encourage self-assessment as work progresses.
- Establish a peer tutoring system to assist students with disabilities and to allow them to help others.
- Assign appropriate roles for cooperative learning activities.
- Use adaptive devices and technology.
- Adjust pacing and time requirements for work completion.
- Allow students to demonstrate proficiency using their best means of expression.

Multicultural Perspectives

Dance classes are ideal environments for building multicultural understanding. Activities based on personal experience give students opportunities to share their individual and cultural ethics, goals, and forms of expression. When given the chance, students love to explore new ideas and interests and to discover the many gifts and abilities of students from diverse backgrounds.

As students learn about the contributions of the world's societies to the art of dance, they find that in many societies, such as the United States, the cultural roots of dance run broad and deep. Studying dance expands multicultural understanding and encourages cross-cultural connections by helping students to:

I learned that along
with the towering
achievements of
the cultures of
ancient Greece and
China there stood
the culture of
Africa.
Paul Robeson

- Transcend verbal language barriers by expressing perceptions and ideas through dance
- Understand the importance of dance and the arts in conveying a society’s hopes, desires, values, beliefs, and rituals
- Develop a broad vocabulary to describe the contributions of many cultures to dance
- Apply evaluative judgment to contemporary and traditional dance forms
- Discover how dance serves as enduring cultural and historical records, documenting the progression of people’s thoughts and emotions over time
- Examine an idea from multiple and diverse viewpoints.

Assessment

Learning in dance may be demonstrated in a variety of ways, including paper/pen format, presentation/performance, scenery construction, costume design, and a video or audio log of works in progress. Though educators often think the primary purpose of assessment is grading, assessment also can facilitate learning by:

- Aiding in planning, e.g., by indicating when to reteach
- Developing a base of evidence documenting student performance
- Providing tools for student self-assessment
- Evaluating overall teaching performance.

The following table shows assessment tools appropriate for dance.

Assessments for Dance
Observation
Inquiry
Class discussion/group critique
Interview
Portfolio
Demonstration
Self-assessment
Checklist
Audio/video recording
Projects
Oral critique
Written critique
Oral test
Written test
Oral research report
Written research report
Physical skills test
Auditions
Dance productions
Rehearsal notes
Audience response
Outside observation

To be creative requires a grasp of the criteria of validity and value in the activity in question. Originality is given its sense only against a background of the traditional; . . . imagination is imagination only in so far as it operates within limits.
D. Best

Whatever assessment tools are selected, dance teachers should align their assessment practices with the following principles:

- Teachers continually monitor student performance, so that instruction and assessment are integrated.
- Students are not to be assessed on content or skills that they have not had an opportunity to learn.
- Multiple sources of evidence on student performance are preferable to any single source.
- Students are aware of criteria for satisfactory performance before beginning a task.
- Students learn strategies for self-assessment and explain their thinking processes.
- The teacher communicates student performance clearly to students, parents, and other professionals.
- Targeted feedback is much more helpful in improving performance than non-specific praise.

Sample Portfolio Design for Dance

This sample portfolio design is one of many that might be developed to promote and structure the self-reflection, analysis, and communication skills of dancers. The response/evaluation strand at all four course levels of the Dance TEKS specifies student expectations that can be met in the process of developing a portfolio similar to the one outlined below. However, the expectations of Level IV dancers are most closely aligned with the tasks involved in building a portfolio. Level IV students are expected to “evaluate personal work and the work of others, using a valid rationale and demonstrating sensitivity toward others” (§117.59(c)(5A)). There are many more examples in the Dance TEKS of student expectations that can be fulfilled and demonstrated with portfolios. Teachers should use the Dance TEKS to help students plan portfolio entries.

Each of the following entries consists of two types of evidence:

- Narratives, or reflections, that tell individual students’ stories of dance experiences and strengthen critical evaluation skills, and
- Artifacts that support the assertions made in journals/reflections. Artifacts are actual student work samples, such as videotapes and program notes.

Entry 1: Context of Learning. A set of questions guides students to briefly introduce themselves and to discuss their backgrounds and interests in dance. Questions address student goals in dance for the school year.

Entry 2: Performance 1. Documentation of a performance follows student learning from the beginning stages of learning a new dance, with the requisite acquisition of step sequences, through its public performance. A written journal and videotapes document the learning process. Students investigate the historical and cultural contexts of the dance and research its influence on contemporary choreography and dance education. The entry culminates in a student assessment of the performance based on predetermined criteria developed individually or with the guidance of the dance teacher.

Entry 3: Study Trip Review. Over the course of the school year, students attend several professional performances. Each student chooses one performance for in-depth research of its history, culture, and previous performances. The student examines how the dance evolved from its origins to its contemporary interpretation and writes a review of the current performance in light of research findings.

Entry 4: Performance 2. A second performance in the portfolio demonstrates what the student has learned about choreography and performance. The student works with a group of three other students in the selection of music, choreography, costume design, and performance of an original dance. Dance journals document each

Think of the magic of
that foot,
comparatively small,
upon which your
whole weight rests.
It's a miracle, and the
dance . . . is a
celebration of that
miracle.
Martha Graham

student's role in the group, individual reflections on the group process, and rationales for group decisions. Videotapes provide evidence of the dance's development and final presentation. The videotape of the final performance is accompanied by program notes, written by the group, to introduce their work. Students evaluate the process of creating the dance and its final production based on predetermined criteria.

Entry 5: Growth in Dance. Students respond to a set of questions that help them analyze their experiences in dance over the school year—including analyzing progress and how goals have changed since beginning the school year. Questions prompt dancers to address the relevance of specific techniques to the presentation of specific dances.

Entry 6: Future Goals. Students articulate possible future directions—in dance and in other areas relevant to dance—that may form the basis of the next school year's portfolio.

Dance teachers should develop timelines to establish the due dates of each entry and of the total portfolio. Students receive feedback after the submission of each entry and may revise entries based on the feedback. High school dance teachers may invite other dance teachers, college-level dancers, and dance professionals to review the cumulative portfolio. Reviewers receive training in the criteria each portfolio is expected to demonstrate.

Rubrics

One way of implementing effective assessment is by using rubrics that clearly communicate acceptable levels of student performance and aid students in assessing their own progress. Though rubrics can take many forms, they are often represented in tables. To develop a rubric, first determine the critical dimensions of the performance to be assessed. Place these dimensions in the left-hand column of a table. Next, decide on the number of performance levels to be described. This number determines the number of additional columns.

Now describe the differences in performance levels along a continuum. This is easiest if a sample of performances is already available. The sample can be separated into groups by common characteristics and by level of performance. Without a sample, teachers have to make their best prediction of levels. Involving students in this process really encourages them to “buy into” the structure of their education and assessment.

Once a rubric has been set up, it can be revised for further use. Keep performance samples that illustrate desirable achievement levels on hand for future classes. Having many examples of strong performances shows learners that there are multiple creative ways to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Effective scoring rubrics might include the following characteristics:

- A scale of assessment criteria that accurately reflects the learning outcomes demonstrated by the task
- Specific information about learning that helps the teacher make instructional decisions and communicates to students what they have learned and what they still need to learn
- Descriptors that are clear and easy to understand
- Ease and efficiency of use
- Examples of student performances
- Reliable scores (i.e., ratings of various scorers are fairly consistent).

Technique—bodily control—must be mastered only because the body must not stand in the way of the soul's expression.

La Meri

Educators learning to use rubrics may get frustrated. Consider these cautions when integrating rubrics for the first time:

- Don't expect to get the rubric exactly right the first time. Like all assessment tools, a rubric must be field tested and revised based on actual use.
- A rubric is not a checklist. The descriptors for each level are taken as a whole.
- A performance may not fall neatly into one level. It may have characteristics of more than one level of performance. In this model of scoring, the score assigned should be the one that most closely resembles the overall performance.

CAMPUS/DISTRICT-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS

High school fine arts dance programs are designed for all students—those with no prior dance experience and those with different degrees of formal training. Quality high school dance programs provide students with the training necessary to understand and evaluate dance performances, pursue dance as an avocation, and/or study dance at the college and professional levels. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Dance define the parameters of effective programs focusing on:

- Utilizing the body’s movements through techniques in ballet, modern, tap, and ethnic dance
- Understanding the history of dance, including the study of influences shaping different dance traditions
- Learning and demonstrating a comprehensive knowledge of dance vocabulary for clear descriptions of positioning feet, legs, hands, arms, and torso and of basic step sequences
- Studying and demonstrating understanding of concepts such as time, space, dynamics, rhythm, motivation, and gesture in relation to dance performance
- Developing and utilizing personal criteria to understand and communicate responses to and evaluation of dance.

Scheduling

Course content, along with health and safety considerations, is a key factor in scheduling dance. The optimum class size is around 25 students. To help prevent injury to the dancers, sufficient time should be allotted for appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities. Certified teaching staff and adequate facilities are needed to safely teach students in each class. Grouping Dance I students apart from more experienced dancers establishes a solid foundation for beginners, helping them succeed in future classes. With teacher approval, advanced courses can sometimes be combined into one class. However, smaller classes may be necessary to individualize expectations and assignments to ensure that all students attain the TEKS at each course level.

To sing well and to dance is to be well educated.
Plato

Facilities

For safety and optimum student learning, dance facilities include a studio; showers; restrooms; and storage space for costumes, props, and equipment, along with office space and a workroom for constructing and maintaining costumes. Most schools have a theatre or auditorium with a proscenium stage. Locating the dance studio and dressing rooms adjacent to the stage is important for smooth, uninterrupted performances.

The dance floor requires airspace, or a cushion, between the building foundation and the wooden floor. A sprung, or floated, wood floor has the resiliency to cushion landings from elevated movements and prevent student injuries. The floor should be non-slippery, yet not too sticky. Ordinarily, Folklorico and tap classes cannot use the same floor surface as ballet, modern, or jazz dance classes unless special sprung floors are used. Otherwise, tap mats may be used.

The dance studio should consist of 100 square feet per student. A studio of 3,000 square feet will accommodate a class of 30–35 students. If the studio also serves as a performance space, it should be at least 4,800–5,000 square feet. A ceiling height of 20–24 feet is ideal, with at least a 16-foot-high ceiling required. There should be no posts or columns in the interior space. Each dancer requires a minimum of five feet of barre. The barres should be 36"–48" from the floor to accommodate students of various heights, and the barres should be mounted 6"–8" from the wall. If necessary,

freestanding ballet barres, made of aluminum or iron pipes provide an acceptable and less expensive alternative to wall barres, and they can be easily stored against a wall when not in use. The dance studio should also be equipped with mirrors to enable students to easily observe personal progress and make self-initiated corrections during each class period. Placing mirrors on two adjoining walls allows students to analyze movements from two perspectives. 6'x8' mirror sections should be attached to the wall approximately six inches from the floor.

Additional considerations can make the dance studio a safer and more effective learning environment: dimmers for lighting and heavy duty wiring; numerous, strategically placed electrical outlets; safe locations for pianos and sound and video equipment; secure storage for equipment and collections of CDs, records, tapes, and videos; additional storage space for costumes, materials, mats, and other equipment; temperature and ventilation controls on dedicated circuits; and ceiling fans, if ceiling height permits.

Staffing

Skilled, knowledgeable teachers are at the heart of all exemplary dance programs. In certifying to teach dance in Texas public high schools, instructors must demonstrate their knowledge of dance content and their ability to model and teach fundamental dance techniques. As part of meaningful dance instruction, teachers help students make connections between the content and skills of diverse dance traditions and the personal interests that students bring to their study of the art form. Dedicated dance teachers are committed to working with all students to increase knowledge and skills and to build and sustain dance programs capable of serving their students' communities. Collaboration with other fine arts teachers is essential for dance teachers in the process of shaping cohesive, and comprehensive, programs.

The dance teacher not only sets up the situation and suggests the material to be explored, but through suggestion and questions opens up a world of possibilities to be experienced by the child. . . . The teacher therefore acts as guide rather than director.

J. Russell

The support of campus and district administrators is essential to the development and maintenance of a quality dance program. Without continued vision and foresight, efforts to advance student achievement in dance, as a participant or an appreciative consumer, will not be possible. In larger districts, central office staff may have responsibilities for working with dance programs throughout the district. Their responsibilities may include:

- Maintaining a quality dance program
- Developing criteria for program evaluation
- Connecting dance programs with relevant goals and plans of the district
- Staffing schools with qualified teachers
- Supporting teachers with quality professional development opportunities relevant to dance
- Coordinating off-campus dance performances and events
- Gathering data to support existing programs and substantiate additional requests for future development
- Mentoring new staff and those whose students are having trouble demonstrating the Dance TEKS.

Professional Development

Professional development is a continual process of helping teachers define direction and implement change in their dance programs. It is essential for setting and achieving new goals, such as those outlined by the TEKS. Some professional development activities relate to all teachers, but dance teachers benefit from additional seminars and programs that specifically address dance content and the particular concerns of dance instructors.

Though workshops and presentations are still the predominant mode of professional development for teachers, the definition of professional development has expanded

to include activities other than workshops and college courses. Teachers have found great benefit from writing curricula, mentoring beginning teachers, scoring student or teacher performance assessments, and serving on district and/or state standards committees. Administrators and teachers should strive to incorporate this broader definition of professional development into their programs.

The Appendix contains a checklist to assist in designing staff development sessions that meet the needs of dance teachers and help them effectively teach the TEKS. The checklist is also designed to help educators choose and present workshops for maximizing student learning.

Effective professional development programs contain practical knowledge that directly influences student learning and provide specific models and approaches for teaching the TEKS. Professional growth activities should be carefully developed to emphasize scaffolded curricula targeting specific dance content at each course level. Professional development should also provide ongoing assessment strategies that emphasize student achievement and critical and creative thinking processes. Models of excellence inspire teachers to try new ideas and to grow professionally. Ideally, master teachers with expertise in the teaching areas of their audience share and teach their effective techniques.

Professional development is critical for the growth and development of curricula and instruction in Texas schools. School districts, regional educational service centers, universities, and state and national dance associations may plan and conduct workshops and seminars, often for advanced academic credit. Districts and campuses support continuing professional development by providing release time and funding for teachers to build their knowledge and skills.

Program Evaluation

What are the characteristics of a quality fine arts dance program, enabling all learners to demonstrate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Dance? Dance instructors, supervisors, coordinators, principals, and other campus and district administrators can explore answers to this and many other questions to initiate an ongoing, thorough process of evaluating fine arts dance programs. Results can be used to develop a strategic plan for enhancing learning in high school dance programs.

- Are dance classes offered and available to every high school student?
- How can current offerings be expanded to meet the needs and interests of more students?
- What are the demographics of enrollment in dance classes? Are minority student populations (e.g., English as a second language learners, special education) represented in at least the same proportion as in the school as a whole?
- How does dance enhance student learning in other subjects and skill areas?
- How does assessment in dance complement student assessment in other content areas?
- How can the school(s) capitalize on the use of new technologies in dance?
- What do the physical facilities of the school(s) say about its commitment to dance education?
- How does the school interact with other dance efforts in the community?

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
Eleanor Roosevelt

The empires of the future are the empires of the mind.
Winston Churchill

APPENDIX

Checklist for Quality Professional Development

CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum/Content

- Will the teacher's new learning directly impact student learning, providing teachers with multiple models and approaches for teaching the Dance TEKS?
- Are professional growth activities carefully structured to reflect the scaffolded dance curricula with specific dance content targeted for each grade or course level?
- Will participants have opportunities to experience new ideas and curricula that extend beyond the requirements of the TEKS?
- Will multiple examples of student products be exhibited and discussed?
- How will connections be made between teachers' current knowledge and new learning?
- Will connections be made to other subject areas? If so, how?
- Will the instruction be experiential?
- How will follow-up be provided to participants as they apply new skills or strategies?

Assessment

- Will a variety of assessment models be shared?
- Will models for oral and written critiques be given? Practiced?
- How will the new methods or strategies help students reflect on their own creative process?
- Will methods of maintaining journals, sketchbooks, and portfolios be provided?

Thinking Process

- How will creative thinking processes be encouraged in participants? In their students?
- How will these strategies/methods facilitate critical thinking in participants? In their students?
- How will these strategies/methods encourage participants to think divergently? Their students?

Presenters

- How does the presenter model exemplary teaching practices?
- Will a facilitator and a resource person be available to assist the presenter?
- How will the facility and equipment enhance the quality of the session?
- How can younger teachers be encouraged to present professional development sessions early in their careers?

Audiences

- Are the needs of diverse populations of dance educators addressed in separate sessions?
- How will the special needs of classroom teachers who teach dance among many other subjects be addressed?

Alternative Formats

- Are beginning teachers and teachers new to the district paired with experienced mentor teachers in the same discipline?
- Are teachers provided opportunities to observe or team teach with master teachers on other campuses or in other districts?
- Are dance teachers funded to attend and present at state and national professional conferences?
- Do dance teachers have access to the Internet?
- Do dance teachers have opportunities to participate in satellite conferences with teachers on other campuses, with dancers, and/or with choreographers?
- Are satellite conferences provided for dance teachers who share common interests, such as advanced studies?