



Arts Education for Young People

Ailey II

TEACHER GUIDE

Kupferberg Center Performances, Queens College/CUNY

The Teacher Guide provides background information, Learning Standards, and pre- and post-concert activities that coordinate with the Student Guide to encourage learning across the curriculum. For your convenience, this guide is also available as a .pdf on our website. Visit KupferbergCenter.org/revelations and click on "Teacher Zone" to access links to suggested websites.

About the Company

Ailey II is a highly trained dance company that merges the spirit and energy of the country's best young talent with the passion and creative vision of today's most outstanding emerging choreographers. Ailey II began in 1974 as the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble, when Alvin Ailey initiated a workshop composed of the most promising scholarship students from the Ailey School.

The company emphasizes a balance between repertoire, technique and performance. In the past 25 years, under the direction of Sylvia Waters, Ailey II has grown into one of the most popular and critically acclaimed dance companies in the U.S. Over the years, more than 45 Ailey II members have been selected to join the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Many others have gone on to pursue successful careers as dancers, teachers, actors and choreographers with other professional companies. For more information about Ailey II and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, visit www.alvinailey.org.

Curriculum Focus: Dance

Activity: Learn about modern dance

NYS Arts Standards: 1, 4

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmarks for Arts Learning: Dance Literacy, Making Connections

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Getting Ready: What is Dance?"

Before your visit to Colden Center to see the performance by Ailey II, help your students prepare by having a discussion about dance. Alvin Ailey is a modern dance company. It would be helpful to show students videos of this type of dance, and compare and contrast it with other forms of dance. Be sure to check your school library for any materials available on dance. Dance styles may include Native American, Ballet, Jazz, Modern, Chinese, Tap, Waltz, Afro-Caribbean, Tango, Latin, etc.

Activity: Dance to the beat

NYS Arts Standard: 1

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmarks for Arts Learning: Dance Making

Teaching Point: Rhythm is an important aspect of dance

Grades K-6

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Take it Home: Parent and Kid Corner"

Whole Class: Play a beat on the drum or other percussion instrument. Ask students to characterize the beat: is it fast, slow, soft and light, loud and strong? Student will move to the beat (you will need to use the gym or school stage, or do small groups at a time in the classroom). Change the rhythms and dynamics of the drum, while the children adjust their movements accordingly.

Small Groups: divide class into small groups. Each group has one percussion instrument and will make up 16 beats, with one student playing the instrument and the others in the group using movement.
Share Session: Share each group's choreography with the rest of the class.
Follow-up: Provide time at the end of the session for students to share dances their parents taught them.

Activity: Dancing with Props

NYS Arts Standard: 1

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmark for Arts Learning: Dance Making

Teaching Point: Incorporate props into your own dance to add an additional dimension

Grades K-8

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Poetry: Dancing With Words"

Whole Class: Show a variety of props to the class, demonstrating some of the ways they can be used.

Suggested props include scarves, balls, hula-hoops, batons, sticks, flags, streamers, fans, etc.

Small Groups: Each group of 2-4 chooses a prop to use, creating a short movement piece by experimenting with a variety of movements using their prop. You can limit the time by saying "firm it up in 16 counts" or longer, depending on your time frame for this activity.

Share Session: Allow each group to present their work to the class.

Follow-up: Allow groups to experiment with different props or combinations of props.

Activity: Create a literature-inspired dance

NYC Arts Standards: 1, 3,4,

NYC Language Arts Standards: 1d, 3b, 3c, 5a

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmarks for Arts Learning: Dance Making, Making Connections

Teaching Point: Let the words of the Langston Hughes poem in the Student Guide inform your movements, *without* pantomiming.

Coordinate with Student Guide: "Poetry: Dancing With Words"

Whole Class: Read the poem aloud. Explain that individually they will come up with a different movement for each line, joining four lines into one phrase. There will be two phrases in the dance, one for each stanza of the poem. They will hold their last movement for a few seconds longer, creating a final pose. Read one line and allow them to come up with a movement, and then hold it. Go on to the next line and so forth. Reread the first four lines as one phrase. The student should string together their four separate movements as one phrase, holding only at the end of each phrase. Do the same with the second stanza of the poem. Put both stanzas together.

Share Session: Divide the class into two groups and repeat the poem and movements so they can show each other their movement ideas by performing for one another.

Follow-up: students and teacher research other poems that would lend themselves to this activity.

Teacher Resources

■ www.susankramer.com?DanceSeries.html#Body-MindRhythmic (body movement lesson plans)
www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-7390.html ("Rhythm and Body Percussion, K-4")

■ Videos are available from the Ailey boutique, (212) 767-0940 ext. 810.

Ailey Dances: includes "Night Creatures," "The Lark Ascending," "Cry," "Revelations" and commentary by Judith Jamison. Kutler Video, 1982, 90 minutes.

An Evening with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: includes "Divining," "The Stack Up," "Revelations," "Cry" and commentary by Alvin Ailey and Judith Jamison. Danish Film, Home Vision, 1986, 140 minutes.

A Tribute to Alvin Ailey: includes "For Bird, With Love," "Witness," "Memoria," "Episodes" and commentary by Judith Jamison. USA, RM arts, 1990, 120 minutes.

☞ Alvin Ailey: A Life In Dance by Jennifer Dunning. Addison-Wesley, 1996.

Alvin Ailey, Jr. A Life in Dance by Julinda Lewis-Ferguson. Walker Publishing Co, 1994.

Dancing Spirit by Judith Jamison. Doubleday, 1993.

Alvin Ailey, Jr.: Changing Our World by Kathilyn Solomon Probosz. Bantam Skylark, 1992

Student Bookshelf

Reaching for Dream: A Ballet from Rehearsal to Opening Night by Susan Kuklin. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Books, 1987.

Dancing with Wings by Debbie Allen. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2000.

Color Dance by Anne Jonas, Greenwillow, 1989.

Curriculum Focus: Visual Arts

Activity: Write an essay on dance

NYC Language Arts Standards 1c, 2a, 4a, 4b

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmarks for Arts Learning: Dance Literacy, Making Connections

Teaching Point: When writing an essay about a style of dance, choose one that interests you, one you would like to learn more about.

Grades 4-8

Collect a variety of research materials about dance including books, magazines, pamphlets and websites.
Whole Class: Instruct the class in the method of writing essays that they will be asked to do on their standardized tests.

Small Groups: Each group (made up of 2-4 students) will select an appealing style of dance to research. They can make group notes and share the "legwork."

Individual work: Each student writes an essay on the dance style they selected to research, including name of style, its characteristics, history, particular choreographers or companies who have added to the body of work in this style, and compare it with one other style of dance.

Share session: Present essays orally.

Follow-up: revise, rewrite, publish and display completed work on bulletin board.

Activity: Create a dance collage

NYS Arts Standards: 1, 4

NYS Social Studies Standard: 2

Blueprint for the Arts Benchmarks for Arts Learning: Art Making, Making Connections

Teaching Point: Dance in our society is used ways both similar and different from other societies.

Collect photographs from dance magazines, family magazines, National Geographic, and family photos from the students.

Whole Class: Show several of the photos you have found of people dancing. Make a KWL chart of what we know about why people dance, and what we would like to know, especially when it comes to another culture. You can include: Social dance for events with family and friends; Dance forms like ballet, jazz, and tap used in formal training and performance; Ritual dance for ceremonial purposes and folk dance, or traditional dances from our different cultures danced at festivals and celebrations.

Group Work: Students will locate and cut out pictures of people dancing.

Share Session: Bring pictures back to the meeting area. Have four or five large sheets of colored paper, labeled (you may take the titles from the students' wording on the KWL chart): 1. "People dance during social or ritual moments in the community," 2. "People dance to tell a story or educate" 3. "People dance to express feelings or ideas" 4. "People dance for fun" 5. "People dance for exercise." Each group discusses into which category their pictures fall. They will take turns pasting each of their pictures under the correct category until you have four separate collages to include on the bulletin board.

Follow-up: How are some of the reasons for dancing the same in our culture as compared with other cultures? Return to the KWL chart. Did we learn anything new about why people dance?

Teacher Resources

- <http://www.colleenmurray.com/10good.html> (10 good reasons people dance)
- <http://www.artsedge.org/content/2319> (Why dance?)
- http://library.thinkquest.org/20443/g_dance.html (Dance in China)
- <http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m13/notes.php> (Dance in Africa)
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dance_in_Australia (Dance in Australia)
- <http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/ent/A0857679.html> (Dance in Europe)
- <http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/ent/A0857680.html> (Dance in the Americas)

☞ Anthropology and the Dance: TEN LECTURES by Drid Williams. University of Illinois Press, 2004

Moving History/Dancing Cultures: A Dance History Reader by Anne Dils, editor. Wesleyan University Press, 2001

Student Bookshelf

Brothers of the Knight by Debbie Allen. Dial Books for Young Readers, 1999.

Curriculum Focus: Mathematics

Teaching Point: Patterns are everywhere around us.

Coordinate with Student Guide: “Patterns.”

Review the concept of patterns, encouraging students to look for patterns of movement when they attend the concert. Help them learn to recognize other sequences of patterns in the world around them. These can include patterns of activity, patterns in nature, patterns in dance movements, patterns in musical compositions, etc.

Activity: Solve and make a Magic Square

NYC Math standards: 1a, 3a, 5a, 5b, 6a, 6h

Grades 3-8

Teaching Point: Discover what “pattern” will release the secret of the magic square to reveal the magic number.

Whole Class: Explain that the magic square puzzle is over 4,000 years old and has been found in archaeological sites all over the world.

Individual work: Discover which math function will solve the problem: addition, subtraction, multiplication or division. Each row, column and diagonal must have the same number as its solution.

Answer: The magic number is 15.

Group Work: Can you create your own magic square?

Share Session: Share the results.

8	1	6
3	5	7
4	9	2

Teacher Resource

📖 *Discovering Patterns (Math for Fun)* by Andres King, Tony Kenyon.
Copper Beech Books, 1998.