

Arts Assessment For Learning

DANCE — 7TH AND 8TH GRADE

REFLECTION: COLLABORATIVE CHOREOGRAPHY

Without judgment, describe what you did. Just the facts:

- The students were randomly assigned to groups of 4-6 students.
- Each group defined a theme around which to create a piece of choreography.
- Within the group, they then had to create movements that would best reflect the theme of the choreography.
- Halfway through the choreographic process, the class came back together and each group shared their experiences of creating a group theme piece, including any obstacles that they encountered while working.
- Back in their groups, the students then had to find a piece of music that best fit the theme of their piece. Each member of the group brought in music and the group determined which song they would use for the piece.
- Students continued to work and put final touches on their choreography.
- Each group then performed their final piece of choreography for the class.
- Once they had performed, each group shared their choreographic process, including how the choreography had changed over time, and how the group members had worked collaboratively.
- The entire process was videoed by a student.

What went well?

- At first the students were upset that the groups were assigned, rather than self-selected, but they eventually grew to enjoy working in those groups. Some students even stated that they learned a lot about themselves and enjoyed working with different people.
- The students really liked the project, especially the fact that they were in control of their own decisions in their dance making.
- I was impressed with their dances. The students make unique selections of music rather than the typical types of music that they normally listen too. The music choices worked well with the choreography and for many of the groups the dances were well choreographed and rehearsed.

What was so-so?

- The students spent too much time discussing the theme as opposed to moving into the movement aspect of the choreography.

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- Some of the themes were too broad and many of the groups had to make a lot of changes. Many of the changes the students made were quite successful, but for some they needed more time to apply the changes.

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

- It was time consuming to give the students enough time to work on the dances, especially of the groups that had to make big changes in their themes and choreography.
- It was difficult to have each group rehearse to their own music. Because of the number of groups, I had to limit their music practice time, and so some of the groups requested more rehearsal time, which ended up being scheduled over into their lunchtimes.

What was the impact of this strategy on student learning? (specific examples)

- Students were able to stay focused on their goals.
- Students who were usually quiet spoke up more and gave input.
- Students completed the task.
- There were many successful group collaborations that made for really good presentations.
- Students were able to explore different types of music.
- Students explored new movement vocabulary.

What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience? (Share with group)

- I found that it was hard for me to give up control over the groups and allow the students to make all of their decisions as a group. When I saw that a group had some choreographic issues, I had to step back and allow them to solve the problems on their own.
- The students liked taking ownership. I constantly talk to my students about working together as an ensemble especially when they have to do a performance. This allowed me to see that they can, in fact, work together.
- Students really enjoyed the dance making process. There was pride and strength, and self confidence in their work.

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- I would like to try this unit again using a different task and see if the outcomes are the same.

How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?

- I found that my students were able to use the tools and do the work to accomplish the task at hand.
- I noticed that the students tried to be very honest about the roles they played in working together as an ensemble. There was definite accountable talk amongst the groups, which I felt led to their successful outcomes.

Documentation to bring (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc.):

- Videos of students working in their groups
- Student generated rubric
- Videos of students filling out the rubric
- Self-Reflection Sheet
- Videos of peer feedback
- Videos of student performances
- Photos of students working together