

Arts Assessment For Learning

DANCE — 5TH GRADE

REFLECTION: CREATING CHOREOGRAPHY

What went well?

- They already knew about the collaboration criteria from the previous project (Alvin Ailey dance unit), therefore they seemed more open to use their newly acquired dance making and collaboration skills and I didn't have to spend so much time going over the criteria.
- They worked much faster this time around. They were more efficient in applying the feedback.
- Their working relationships improved greatly. Most of the time, they talked to each other respectfully, used a lower voice volume and seemed to share their ideas in a more democratic way.
- The timing in which the tools were introduced was much more efficient this year.

What was so-so?

- Elementary students come to the dance studio only 45 min per week. By the time they warmed up and got into their groups, there was little time for them to work in their dances, get feedback and revise their work.
- There was never enough time to allow all groups to share their dance studies and get peer feedback. Some students got upset every time they had to wait until next week to perform their work for their peers and get feedback.

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

At this time of the year, classroom teachers and 5th grade students are involved in the ELA and Math tests. After this end of the year trips are planned. It was very challenging to see the fifth graders every week. The class fell behind three lessons and we couldn't finish the unit on time. That's why, for the purpose of this research, I had to record a dance study from [Lesson 4](#) instead of their final choreographic project. We couldn't finish the entire dance unit before the end of the school year.

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What was the impact of this strategy on student learning?

By assessing their dance making skill using the rubric, the students became more aware of the criteria they had to fulfill to complete their assignment successfully.

- Using the collaboration rubric helped them develop great collaboration skills that foster a positive and supportive work environment in which they respect each other's ideas. In general, they became more focused and efficient during the dance-making task.
- The feedback protocol guided their comments in a way that their feedback was clearly geared to help each group to improve their dance study.
- The three formative tools worked much better this year. The strategic time, in which the tools were introduced during the dance-making task, helped create a cycle of CREATION, FEEDBACK, and REVISION authentic to the discipline of dance that could have been repeated over and over. The dancers became more reflective about their choreographic process as well as their collaboration.

What questions were raised for you as you implemented the assessment practice?

- How could a change in scheduling allow elementary students to come more often to the dance studio?
- Could I see some classes twice per week in the fall and other classes twice in the spring by switching schedules with another art specialist?
- Would seeing dance students twice per week help them stay more connected to the task from week to week?
- How early can I introduce the dance making and collaboration rubrics to my
- K-3 grade students?

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

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- The collaboration criteria give students clear expectations of how they should interact with each other when they work together creating a dance. Because they are so much more focused in the work and less concerned with each other's issues, they are able to create a first draft of the dance much more quickly. This new level of time efficiency, inter-connection and focus, allows each group to use their time more meaningfully for feedback, revision and rehearsal, which eventually improves the quality of their choreographic work.
- Once more, I noticed that the "natural leaders" were the students who seemed to polish their collaboration skills the most. Their "bossiness" and their impulse to tell everyone what to do softened into a friendlier mode of leading the group. The rest of the dancers in the group became more active contributors.
- The strategic time in which the tools were introduced during the dance-making task and the way they worked in synergy was much more successful this year. Beginning with the Dance Making rubric gave them the criteria to create their dances and to inform their feedback. The feedback protocol helped them to focus their comments on supporting each other in the process of improving their dances. The Collaboration rubric's criteria established the guidelines for a more efficient working relationship among the members of the groups.

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

- Fifth grade dance students can and should be challenged to be more reflective in their dance practice.
- Introducing self and peer-to-peer formative assessment tools to dance students allows them to engage in their work in a more meaningful way, taking responsibility for their own creative process as well as their peers'.
- The value of each formative assessment tool used in this research increased greatly by using them in conjunction.

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

- Video recordings of students working in their dances
- Dance Making and Collaboration rubrics filled out by students

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