

**The Arts: Foundational Skills Progressions**

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**The Arts: Foundational Skills Progressions**

**(Arts Disciplines: Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts)**

# Introduction

## Overview

The ***Foundational Skills Progressions*** model how two specific skill areas may be developed across grades PreK-12 in each discipline of the arts. This document is written to assist arts educators in identifying and teaching some of the competencies that allow students to achieve fluency in the language of the arts, including the lifelong ability to communicate freely in one or more arts disciplines. Teachers are encouraged to provide a variety of hands-on, participatory activities through which these skills are instilled through joyful learning and intentional artistic expression.

The ***Progressions*** document is not intended to suggest that these are the only, or the most important, foundational skills that should be developed in any particular arts discipline; rather, these selected skills should be seen as examples.

**Foundational skills contain critical elements of a comprehensive arts education. Students advance over time through each skill progression, acquiring competencies, habits of mind, dispositions, and understandings necessary for artistic accomplishment and mastery. These skills often result in vital, enduring behaviors and capabilities that informed and engaged adults possess and use throughout life.**

A stated objective of the [2019 MA Arts Curriculum Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/arts/2019-08.docx) is the development of artistic literacy, defined as “…the knowledge and understanding required to participate authentically in the arts. Fluency in the language(s) of the arts is the ability to create, perform or present, respond, and connect through symbolic and metaphoric forms that are unique to the arts.” (p. 13[[1]](#endnote-2)). The “language” of the arts goes beyond solely verbal communication—it also may include movement, sound, form, expression, symbolism, and any other means that artists or performers utilize to convey their ideas. For example, theatre, which relies heavily upon the spoken word, uses the “vocabulary” of body language, facial expression, vocal inflection, lighting, and other visual and auditory effects to communicate the full weight and power of drama.

**“It is not technique that is the essence of art, but the soul. As soon as the soul can communicate freely, without obstacles, a complete musical (artistic) effect is created. Technique sufficient for a free manifestation of the child's soul can be easily mastered under a good leader in any school.” (Zoltán Kodály[[2]](#endnote-3))**

## About the Foundational Skills Progressions

This document is written to provide arts educators with concrete skill development learning strategies along the pre-K—12 education continuum. Each of the skill progressions is in a chart format, aligned to the Framework’s two-grade dyads from Pre-K through grade 8, and then the three high-school Foundation, Proficient, and Advanced levels. Each chart contains three to four columns that detail the development of the skills and habits of mind for that progression. Additionally, there is a final column that highlights potential skill applications within the four Clusters of Creating, Performing/Presenting, Responding, and Connecting. Here is an example using the header of columns for the Dance Movement Improvisation Progression:

| **Dance Foundational Skills Progression 1: Movement Improvisation** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grades** | **Inner Sensing** | **Use Vocabulary** | **Movement Inquiry** | **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** |

Artistic learning is often a messy process. Educators should be cautioned that the chart format used here was chosen to clarify different aspects of the skills being taught. It is not meant to imply that these activities occur in a linear fashion from left to right, or each category by itself. All of these facets of building artistic literacy are interwoven in a rich fabric of active thinking, listening, creating, questioning, modifying, rehearsing, presenting/performing, and connecting all learning.

As stated in the 2019 ***MA Arts Curriculum Framework***, “The standards define what all students should know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. While the Framework provides an overall structure, it purposefully leaves the details of curriculum and instruction to the discretion of district teachers and curriculum developers. Educators are best equipped to design programs that are most appropriate in promoting excellence in their own communities.” (MACF, p. 11[[3]](#endnote-4)).

Keeping this in mind, there may be differing approaches to teaching the foundational skills depending on the philosophy or training of the teacher. However, instructional delivery models are *suggested* in the ***Foundational Skills Progressions***. Along with the specific skills being developed, the ***Progressions*** show examples of how young artists can develop facility in the four key “Clusters” of *Creating*, *Presenting/Performing*, *Responding*, and *Connecting* as delineated in the ***Framework***.[[4]](#endnote-5) These categories are aligned to Framework standards, and exhibit vertical progressions of learning, cultural responsiveness, artistic intent, and developmental appropriateness for students while considering teacher usability.

Educators should note that the **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** at each level are *suggested* models which they are free to use, modify, replace, or omit as appropriate for their own arts programs. Integration of the arts with other arts disciplines or other across content areas under the *Connect* Cluster is recommended in the Framework; teachers are encouraged to make meaningful connections to other relevant bodies of knowledge whenever possible.

The **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** give rich examples of performing and visual arts creators and their works. These applications are not intended to be all-inclusive; we encourage educators to research their own choices. The preambles of each arts discipline suggest recommended ways to access these and other reliable resources. It is important to emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students in all five arts disciplines. The ***Progressions*** call for using artworks from a large variety of cultures, genres, and historical periods. It is up to each teacher, school, and district to utilize the unique cultural variety and assets in their own communities as well as the broader world, and to find exemplary, authentic resources to support this important goal.

**A Note on “Play”**

The term, “play,” is used frequently in this resource. It is the structured work of visual and performing artists and should not be misinterpreted as indicating random, amorphous activities. Attributes of “play” include:

* Open-ended exploration, risk-taking, and the embrace of errors as opportunities for developing new strategies and ideas using improvisation, games, and routines.
* Kinesthetic/full body learning, imagination, auditory processing, and visual representation as human beings learn most effectively through experiential encounters.
* A desire for deeper and different kinds of understandings in addition to reasoning and logic.[[5]](#endnote-6)

The concept of play is part of the Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten, which includes 8 different standards on how to approach Play and Learning, such as demonstrating eagerness and curiosity, exhibiting creativity, cooperating with others, and seeing multiple solutions to a question, task, or problem.[[6]](#endnote-7) These 21st-century skills are worthy of cultivation well beyond the pre-K and K age levels. As Dana Mitroff Silvers explains, “play is essential for innovation, creativity, and collaboration… the most successful design thinkers are the ones who embrace the notion of play.”[[7]](#endnote-8)

|  |
| --- |
| **“Play” is a term that has been used for centuries to describe various kinds of artistic work. Some examples: A “play” is a work created by a playwright; "wright” means work.[[8]](#endnote-9) Actors “play” a character in such a work through vocal inflection, speech patterns and accents, movement, facial expressions, gesticulations, and body language. Musicians “play” their instruments in a piece of music which is an opus—a work. And collaborative artists from all disciplines constantly “play off” one another, to affect, alter, and enhance their joint performances and shared creative work.** |

**Foundational Skill Progressions for the Arts, Pre-K—12**

# Foundational Skill Progressions for Dance

This document suggests ways that two foundational skills in dance– (1) ***Movement Improvisation*** and (2) ***Making Meaning*** – can be developed across grade levels. These two skills were selected to sequence throughout the curriculum because they are essential for creating, performing—participating, viewing—understanding--responding, connecting, and assessing dance across a continuum from beginners to experts and pre-K through grade 12. These dance skills can lead to lifelong enjoyment of and engagement in dance. The model learning experiences suggested in the **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** column align with Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework standards for dance and connect to disciplines such as science, ELA, History and Social Sciences, and all arts disciplines. Standards identifiers follow each example (e.g., 7-8.D.R.09). Some examples of historical, contemporary, and diverse dance performers, choreographers, and compositions are listed in this column. The use of these diverse resources is encouraged because they can often create relevant and meaningful connections to current issues, concerns, and interests in students’ lives. All resources are suggestions only. The examples hope to inspire opportunities to cultivate students’ divergent thinking and doing from places of curiosity and problem solving. Whenever possible, educators are encouraged to use examples as sources of inspiration for solving problems.

Dance is adaptable to a wide variety of facilities and spaces, as long as safety and health issues are consistently considered. Additionally, some physical activities described throughout these skills progressions may have to be modified for students with mobility, sight, and hearing differences in accordance with student Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

## Dance Foundational Skill Progression 1: Movement Improvisation

Movement is everywhere. On a cellular level, every aspect of one’s living, breathing, bodily selves exist because of movement. Research on human babies shows that humans are born with a predisposition to move rhythmically (Zentner, Eerola & Purves 2010). Movement improvisation cultivates unique self-expressions and non-verbal communication through using the creative processes. How individuals move varies greatly, depending on gravitational force; structure, form, function, or ability of each person’s body, and personal intentions for moving. Movement improvisation is a foundation from which individuals can build and assemble movement/dance vocabularies based upon one’s own movement abilities and preferences. Movement vocabularies can include using the dance concepts of Body, Space, Time, Effort/Energy & Relationships (Bartenieff 1980; Preston-Dunlop 1980). Movement improvisation also requires the use and development of embodied awareness (consciously thinking through the body and bodily senses) and movement inquiry (Minton & Farber 2016). Using diverse movement improvisation skills can assist in negotiating changing situations and environments and can be applied in dance and throughout one’s life.

The three skill elements for this progression include: 1) ***Inner Sensing*,** 2) ***Using Movement Vocabulary*,** and 3) ***Movement Inquiry***. ***Inner Sensing*** skills are abilities to perceive sensations in one’s body, mind, and emotions as a whole and one's holistic self in relation to others and the environment. These skills vary greatly among students and over one’s lifetime. They are integral to effective functioning and expression in dance and in everyday life. ***Using Movement Vocabulary*** is critical to creating, performing, responding, and connecting through the moving body. The movement vocabulary is both genre specific (e.g., ballet, tap, jazz, modern, hip hop, ballroom, contemporary, Irish Step, ​​Bharatanatyam, African Dance terminology, etc.) and goes beyond codified dance terminology (e.g., concepts from Laban Movement AnalysisSM: Body, Space, Time, Energy/Effort and Relationships). Using movement vocabulary is necessary for developing dynamic ranges of movement and movement expression: for composing, discussing, analyzing, and critiquing diverse dance/movement, and for cultivating artistic literacy. ***Movement Inquiry–***cultivating skills in exploring and examining through the body can assist in motor, cognitive, social-emotional, and artistic-aesthetic skills development, and integration. Using the body as modes of inquiry is essential to support students’ developmental progression in all areas, and for growing lifelong curiosity and appreciation of dance/movement.

| **Dance Foundational Skills Progression Area 1: Movement Improvisation** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grades** | **Inner Sensing** | **Use Vocabulary** | **Movement Inquiry** | **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** |
| **Pre-K and K** | * Isolate and move different body parts in one’s kinesphere (personal space). e.g., What does it feel like to move my head by itself? * Isolate and move varied body parts in general space. * Observe body stillness. e.g., What does being still feel like? How do you know when you are still and when you are moving? | * Identify and demonstrate different body parts. * Identify and demonstrate near-reach space, mid-reach space, and far-reach space movement in one’s kinesphere (personal space) and in general space. * Identify use of different body parts in personal and general space of peer’s movements. | * Explore movement connections between two different body parts. e.g.,   - What happens when you move a hand and a foot at the same time? or,  - How does movement of your hand in near-reach space differ from moving your hand in far-reach space? | **Creating:**   * Create movement responses to the teacher’s selected body part. * Identify and distinguish between body parts in movements, such as feet and toe, elbow, and wrist. e.g., Use movement songs ***One Little Finger*, and *If You're Happy and You Know It*** or watch ***Amaranto*** by Irene Rodríguez. (PK-K.D.Cr.02a) (PK-K.M.Cr.02.b) * Initiate body stillness and movement using different body parts based upon differing prompts. e.g., clapping; music; & verbal sound cues. (PK-K.D.Cr.02a)   **Performing:**   * Maintain personal and general space safely and respectfully while moving, such as stop, start, and control one’s own body. e.g., ***Personal Space Camp*** by Julia Cook or ***Tiny Tots Boys-2019 Gathering of Nations Pow Wow***. (PK-K.D.P. 05)   **Responding**   * Explain peers’ body part movement in personal and general space in the moment with a partner. Share observations in a discussion after watching the dance performance done by their peers. (PK-K.D.R.09) (PK.L.6) (K.SL.6)   **Connecting**   * Examine examples of dance in daily life such as within one’s family culture, on television, on social media, YouTube, in private and social settings, and on a television commercial. e.g., the **Hora** from Jewish culture; **Ghanaian** **Dancing Pall Bearers;** **Haka** dance from the Māori culture; **Kin-narras** dance from the Philippines. (PK-K.D.CO.10) (PK.SL.4) (K.L.6) |
| **1-2** | * Improvise locomotor and non-locomotor movements while using different body parts and demonstrating selected effort elements. * Improvise movements using effort elements to demonstrate different moods. | * Identify and demonstrate locomotor and non-locomotor movements. * Identify and demonstrate effort elements. e.g.,   - Bound- Free, Strong-Light, Direct-Indirect Space, Quick-Sustained (movement qualities) | * Explore gestures of the varied arms and legs while using locomotor or non-locomotor movement. * Utilize locomotor and non-locomotor movements, body part use, and effort elements in a dance work. * Make the connection of the dance movement to personal experiences. | **Creating:**   * Create a phrase using locomotor or non-locomotor movements, varied effort elements and/or different body parts. e.g., walk with strong arm movements. (1-2.D.Cr.02)   **Performing:**   * Move to cues, directions, and feelings/emotions in ways that express meaning. e.g., “when I move slowly, I feel sad;” “when I hear this sound, I choose quick movements.” (1-2.D.P.06) (1.SL.4) (2.SL.4)   **Responding:**   * ​​​​Observe and respond to the mood in diverse dance works. e.g., Gregory Hines - ***I Got Rhythm/Fascinating Rhythm*** (Gene Kelly Tribute); **World of Dance 2017 *-*** Fik Shunqualifiers performance; ***Danse Haitienne avec Le Group***. (1-2.D.R.08) (1.SL.1) (2.SL.2)   **Connecting:**   * Improvise a movement phrase using locomotor and non-locomotor movement and different body parts to make a connection between a personal experience and the movement. e.g., favorite sport, outdoor activity, game to play with friends. (1-2.D.Co.10) |
| **3-4** | * Perceive varied rhythms and tempos in your body while improvising to selected music from two different classical[[9]](#footnote-2) dance forms from around the world. e.g.:   - How does it feel when moving to music from a classical dance form?  - How does your body respond to different rhythms and tempi?  - What choices does your body make in gestures of different body parts? | * Describe and demonstrate the uses of gestures while doing locomotor and non-locomotor movement. * Demonstrate the use of varied effort elements while using gestures and doing locomotor and non-locomotor movement. | * Improvise movement ideas that explore gestures of face, hands, feet and use varied effort elements. e.g.,   - quick, sustained, free and bound flow, strong and light, etc. | **Creating:**   * Compare and contrast the use of face, hands, and feet gestures while moving to music from two different classical1 dance forms such as Tchaikovsky’s ***Waltz of the Flowers*** and The International Centre for Kathakali Ensemble ***Kathakali Dryodana-Badham***.e.g., “What are differences and similarities in use of gestures of face, hands, and feet, effort elements and/or locomotor and non-locomotor movement when improvising and/or performing different classical dance forms and their music?” (3-4.D.Cr.01)   **Performing:**   * Move expressively to a musical beat and respond to changes in tempi to selected music from two different classical1 dance forms from diverse culture. (e.g., classical **Bharatanatyam** dance and classical ballet or ***Shen Yun***, Classical Chinese Dance. (3-4. D. P. 06) (3-4.M.R.09)   **Responding:**   * Observe and respond to videos of classical1 dance forms. e.g., Find videos where children are dancing: The New York City Ballet full length production of ***The Nutcracker***and ***Apsara***, the Classical Dance form of Cambodia. * Create two drawings based on your feelings after moving to and observing the two selected classical dance forms from around the world and compare the two drawings. e.g., “Now that we have moved to and watched a performance of classical **Bharatanatyam** dance, how did you feel about classical **Bharatanatyam** music and dance? How did you feel when moving to and observing classical ballet dance and music?” (3-4.DR.07)   **Connecting:**   * Students distinguish their own preferences in each of the two classical dance forms through “Think-Pair-Share” where students compare and contrast drawings with a partner. (3-4.D.Co.10) (SCLA.1.d) (3-4.V.Co.10) (3.SL.1) |
| **5-6** | * Perceive the muscles and bones in parallel and externally rotated leg positions or pronation and supination of the arms. If unable to use arms or legs, the head could be used for right lateral or left lateral flexion.[[10]](#footnote-3) e.g.,   - What muscles initiate the movement from parallel to external rotation in the legs or from pronation to supination in the arms?  - How do different positions of the legs or arms or head affect your balance in standing, seated, or lying on the floor on different surfaces of the body? | * Discuss and utilize ABA and rondo patterns with movement sequences that includes parallel and externally rotated leg positions or pronation and supination of the arms. | * Discover a variety of ways the muscles and bones in the legs or arms can move in space. e.g.,   - parallel  - rotation  - circumduction  - flexion  - extension  - abduction  - adduction, etc. | **Creating**   * Create a repeatable sequence of movement in small groups. e.g., use a varied range of motions in the arms and legs, inspired by different time periods such as the Roaring 20s or Colonial America, and including unison, repetition, contrast, and climax. (5-6.D.Cr.03.b)   **Performing:**   * Demonstrate understanding of flexibility, alignment, movement initiation, weight shift, and balance by reproducing movement inspired by different time periods and genres. e.g., **Jitterbug**; **Disco Dance**; **Hip Hop**. (5-6.D.P.05)   **Responding:**   * Observe videos on selected influential dance works from different time periods and respond by generating movement inspired by the dances of the different periods. e.g., ***Don Quixote***originally choreographed by Marius Petipa*;* ***The Blue Danube***by Isadora Duncan; ***The Stair Dance***by Bill Robinson. (5-6.D.R.07). (5.SL.2) (5.SL.2) * Discuss uses of repetition, contrasting patterns, phrases, and themes in the dances from different time periods and how they support the choreographer's choice of movement. (5-6.D.R.07) (5-6. M.R.07)   **Connecting:**   * Compare and contrast influential works of dance from different periods, genres, and cultures, and write an essay to describe how they impact current dance forms. e.g., “Duke University Professor, Dr. Thomas F. DeFrantz’s ***Buck, Wing and Jig***; also compare Brazil's **Capoeira** to **Breakdance**; compare Irish **Clogging** to **Tap** or Guatemala’s ***Danza de Vaqueros*** (5-6.D.Co.11) (5.W.1.a) (6.W.2) |
| **7-8** | * Observe and interpret the meaning of movement while mirroring a partner. e.g.,   - What messages can movements communicate? | * Identify movement dance concepts that combine multiple varied artistic elements. e.g.,   - Relationships-dance concepts under, over, around, through, above, below, near proximity, far proximity, etc. | * Interpret a choreographic work by describing a dancer’s emotions in the form of a movement narrative. e.g.,   - What emotions or inner thoughts are expressed by the choreographer?  - How are dance concepts applied to express emotions or inner thoughts? (Such as Relationships-dance concepts, shapes, levels in space and force). | **Creating:**   * Improvise with a partner mirroring movement in which one dancer is the leader and another is the follower and where dancers must reciprocate their partner’s movements in succession. e.g., Relationships-dance concepts such as under, over, around, through, above, below, near proximity, and far proximity. e.g., ***Pika Miga*** from Dance and the Child International2022 conference; the ***Cha-Cha*** or ***Bambuco***. (7-8 D. Cr.01)   **Performing:**   * Perform movement phrases in small groups interpreting the intentions of varied artists’ outdoor sculptures. e.g., sculptures in Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum; Fuller Craft Museum; DeCordova Sculpture Park–all located in Massachusetts. (7-8.D.P.04) (7-8 V.P.06)   **Responding:**   * Observe, identify, and discuss the narrative of a dance and how the Relationships-dance concepts are used to express the artistic meaning and intent of the work. e.g., ***Shadowland-The Flower*** by Pilobolus Dance Theater, ***Appalachian Spring*** by Martha Graham. (7-8.D.R.08) (7.RL.3) (8.RI.3)   **Connecting:**   * Choreograph a phrase of movement with a small group of students using Relationships-dance concepts, shapes, levels in space, and force to express a narrative from your lives. e.g., “This dance phrase expresses our feelings about being athletes;” “This dance phrase expresses our feelings about being leaders in our school.” (7-8 D. Co.10) (HSS.8.T4.8) |
| **High School Foundations** | * Discern movement evoked through dancing with a selected prop. e.g.,   - How does dancing with a prop affect your movement?  - What is the impact on your use of space and time when dancing with a prop?  - What mood, qualities, or ideas are you communicating while moving with the prop? | * Discuss choreo-graphic choices and devices used in an artistic work. e.g.,   - ABA,  - Rondo,  - Theme and Variation | * Create and perform an original dance based upon movements done with a prop in inner sensing (which was videotaped) that conveys meaning, expresses emotions, and communicates an idea to the audience. e.g., Use a prop as inspiration in multiple compositional forms to create a dance to convey meaning. | **Creating:**  Create short movement phrases to communicate a theme utilizing varied props provided at “Learning Stations” in the dance space, e.g. ***Hoop Dancing*** of the Pueblo for storytelling. (F.D.Cr.03)  **Performing:**   * Discuss in an oral presentation how movement-choice decisions and choreographic devices in a personally created dance are related to the mood, qualities, or ideas the student was communicating, and provide examples from a video tape of the dance. (F.D.P.06) (9-10.SL.4)   **Responding:**   * Analyze and evaluate a dance with a rubric to identify various types of compositional forms. e.g., **Principles of Design** (McCutchen 2006); **Compositional Structures** (Blom & Chaplin 1982) e.g., use of Rondo in Donald McKayle’s ***“Rainbow Round My Shoulder”***. (F.D.R.09)   **Connecting:**   * Describe the connections between the stylistic elements used in the dance ***Sleep Study*** by choreographer David Parsons. e.g., “Why are the dancers wearing pajamas?” “How does the use of the pillow communicate the choreographer’s concept?” (F.D.Co.10) (T.T.P.04) |
| **High School Proficient** | * Recognize and identify steps in the student’s creative process of choosing a theme for a dance. e.g.,   - How do you prepare for being creative?  - How do you generate ideas for a theme?  - What is your inspiration for a dance?  - What feeling responses do you have in relation to this theme? | * Devise a movement vocabulary that will describe the dance. e.g.,   - How do you use your ideas for a theme and create a movement vocabulary that expresses the theme? | * Develop student-generated criteria to evaluate a dance that students choreographed. e.g.,   - What criteria would you use to evaluate the dance you choreographed and why? | **Creating:**   * Design a creative-process format or organizational system to support the research and development of artistic ideas for a dance (e.g., journal; mind map; scrapbook; a file box) after reading about others’ strategies. e.g., Minton’s “Linear Framework for the Creative Process” in ***Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation*** (2007); Tharp’s ***The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Lif*e** (2003). (P.D.CR.02) * Develop an evaluation instrument to assess and refine the creative-process format or organizational system in order to identify improved or new strategies. (P.D. CR.02)   **Performing:**   * View selected videos of choreographers who are explaining and demonstrating their creative processes, e.g. ***Alonzo King;*** identify and describe their creative process techniques or systems. e.g., Savion Glover: ***Tap Dance***; Bill T. Jones: ***Modern Dance***; Wayne Mc. Gregor: ***Contemporary Dance*;** Steven Butler: ***Hip Hop and African Dance,*** choreographer ***Efren Corado Garcia*** about his experience as a Guatemalan immigrant to the U.S. (P.D.P.04) * **Responding:** Apply a student-created evaluation instrument for a self-created dance. Have peers apply the same evaluation instrument while observing the dance, then discuss as a class the effectiveness of the chosen criteria for evaluating a dance work. (P.D.R.09)   **Connecting:**   * Compare and contrast individual creative processes to those of others and express the analysis through a mind map; journal entries; scrapbook, or app. e.g., Minton’s “Linear Framework for the Creative Process” in ***Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation*** (2007); Tharp’s ***The Creative Habit: Learn It and Use It for Lif*e** (2003); and “Habits of Mind” in ***Studio Thinking: The Real Benefits of Visual Arts Education*** (Hetland, Winner, et.al. 2007). (P.D.Co.10) |
| **High School Advanced** | * Expand upon one’s individual creative process for generating ideas for a theme for dance and apply a personal creative process to generate ideas for a dance based on a national or global issue, problem, or concern. e.g.,   - How do all of your senses–sound, taste, touch, and smell–respond to the images, events, and circumstances of the identified national or global issue, problem or concern? | * Apply the ideas generated through inner sensing exploration to express a specific theme. e.g.,   - What specific movements can convey meaning to tell the story or theme?  - How do movements that incorporate strength, balance, and coordination connect to a theme? | * Construct a dance based upon the movement done in inner sensing (which was videotaped) that portrays a personal opinion on a national or global issue, problem, or concern. e.g.,   - How does your aesthetic vision of the dance portray your opinion on a national or global issue, problem, or concern? | **Creating:**   * Apply consistently a selected creative process to document strategies that the student regularly uses to organize artistic ideas while creating multiple dances. (A.D.Cr.02.) (A.T.Cr.01)   **Performing:**   * Perform a dance based on a national or global issue, problem, or concern with technical accuracy, based upon current events from newspapers or reputable online videos, e.g., Jade’s Hip Hop Academy’s work on ***Changing the World through Hip Hop Dance Theatre***. (A.D.P.04) (A.D.P.06)   **Responding:**   * Analyze in an oral presentation the ways individual cultural and personal perspectives and bias impact how each student creates a dance in response to a national or global issue, problem, or concern after reading and/or observing a video from a reputable news source on the issue, problem, or concern. e.g., ***PBS High School Students News Hour*** on-line; ***New York Times Upfront*** online. (A.D.R.08) (11-12.SL.5)   **Connecting:**   * View dances by choreographers that were created in response to national or global issues. Use a Think-Pair-Share to analyze how similar and different movements used by the choreographers convey the meaning of the theme. e.g.*,* Paul Taylor’s, ***Promethean Fire***; Travis Wall’s ***Enough****;* Artichoke Dance Company’s ***Visioning Bodies****;* and Ananya Chatterja’s ***Dancing for Social Justice…An Up Take Leadership Profile: A Profile of Ananya Chatterja; Bomba*** (Bomba is Resistance: The community Batey in La Perla, Puerto Rico***)***. (A.D.Co.10) (11-12.Sl.1) |

**Foundational Skills Progressions for the Arts, Pre-K—12**

## Dance Foundational Skill Progression 2: Making Meaning through Movement

Through movement, people learn, sense, respond, adapt, communicate, express, create and heal. Children and adults come ‘to know’ and ‘to know ourselves’ through moving with the earth and its inhabitants. Research in the diverse fields of dance, somatics/body-mind disciplines and embodied cognition indicates that the concepts on which the human body rely to understand its inner and outer world depend on the individual’s unique body, its interaction in the environment, critical reflection, and conscious decision-making (Bartenieff 1980). Therefore, meaning-making through bodily movement in dance is not only significant to learning dance–it is central for developing intra and interpersonal skills; social, cultural, and citizenship skills; and for taking responsible action in the world. How individuals move, make meaning through their bodies, and use intra and interpersonal skills varies greatly, depending on gravitational force; structure, form, and function of each person’s body; and personal intentions for communication. Skill elements in making meaning through movement can be used, modified, and developed based upon one’s own movement abilities, mobility differences, and preferences.

The three skill elements for this progression include: 1) ***Embodied Awareness*,** 2) ***Relate***, and 3*)* ***Communicate***. ***Embodied awareness*** is purposefully applying and transferring knowledge gained from *inner sensing* (Dance Foundational Skills Progression 1)to the broader human condition, community, society, and the environment/world. Embodied awareness assists students in making meaning of and engaging with diverse perspectives and cultures. ***Relate***is associating dance/movement with diverse perspectives, contexts, intentions, and meanings. Relating is important for developing historical, social, cultural, and political literacy. ***Communicate*** incorporates inter/intrapersonal and collaborative strategies that can contribute to meaningful, impactful, dynamic, and contextually appropriate dance making and performance. Through learning to interrelate the three skill elements of embodied awareness, relating, and communicating

students can develop an empathetic lens for understanding the needs, experiences, and feelings of others and for taking responsible action in the world.

| **Dance Foundational Skills Progression Area 2: Making Meaning through Movement** | | | | |
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| **Grades** | **Embodied Awareness** | **Relate** | **Communicate** | **Potential Skill Applications Within the Clusters** |
| **Pre-K and K** | * Demonstrate awareness of different emotions through moving with music from varied dance styles   - What emotion does your body express while moving to the music? | * Embody a different interpretation of using body parts and levels in space. e.g.,   - mirror a peers’ favorite movement choices | * Describe personal responses to peers’ movement choices. e.g.,   - “I think…”  - “I see…”  - “I wonder…” | **Creating:**   * Choose favorite movement ideas practicing them with prompting and support by the teacher. e.g., “move like an animal,” “move as if you are walking without making a sound.” e.g*.,* ***Ovo*** by Brazilian choreographer Deborah Colker, Cirque du Soleil using an insect theme. Helpful exemplars include choreographer Bill T. Jones’ children’s book, ***Dance***, or Jenkins and Page’s ***Move!*** (PK-K.D.Cr.03)   **Performing:**   * Perform short dance works expressing emotions and moods. e.g., teacher reads a book or poem to which the students responsively move, such as ***Today I feel Silly and Other Moods that Make My Day***by Curtis (1998)*;* ***My Many-Colored Days***(Suess 1996). (PK-K.D.P.06)   **Responding:**   * Articulate personal responses to dances that express varied emotions. e.g., the opening of ***The Nutcracker***when Fritz breaks the nutcracker*;* ***Dog Id***by Pilobolous; ***Tsuchigumo*** in Kabuki Dance. (PK-K.D.R.0)   **Connecting:**   * Respond in movement to music cues associated with various dance styles such as tap, hip-hop, ballet, square. e.g., Eric Chappelle’s ***Music for Dance Series***; Kids-Putumayo ***World Music***; and Putumayo ***World Music Series***. (PK-K.D.Co.11) |
| **1-2** | * Create a dance phrase based upon movement sensations elicited through examining a selected composition from a different arts discipline. e.g.,   - building on Foundational Skill 1 Improvisation | * Observe and describe the movement of peers. e.g.,   - What movement dance concepts such as shape, pathways, and levels do your peers use? | * Translate a selected composition from a different arts discipline into movement. e.g.,   - Use a visual arts work to form favorite shapes and share with peers in a leader and follower, ‘round-robin’ format. | **Creating:**   * With prompting and support, choose favorite movement ideas, practicing and demonstrating them. (1-2. D.Cr.01) * Students combine shapes into a series of movements to collaboratively create a story about a visual art composition. e.g., the works of Sam Gilliam. (1-2.D.Cr.02)   **Performing:**   * Demonstrate partner skills of copying, leading, and following, e.g. ***the Shawl Dance*** of the Northern Plains. (1-2.D.P.5)   **Responding:**   * Explain how the choreographer used dance concepts to interpret the visual art composition. (1-2.D.R.07) * Demonstrate active observation as an audience member. e.g., noticing details, making connections; see dancers from the Corali Dance Company working in collaboration with the choreographer such as Tate in a piece called ***Dancing to Art***. (1-2.D.R.09) * Observe the artistic works of choreographers responding to selected visual art compositions while demonstrating active observation skills. e.g., students use a template to identify dance elements such as shape, pathways, and levels such as Leah Redd’s ***Dance Visual Art Collab*** orHeather Hanson’s ***The Value of a Line***.(1-2.D.R.07)   **Connecting:**   * Make connections between personal experience and a work of dance by describing connections in a teacher-led group discussion following agreed-upon rules. e.g., ***Moth*** by Bangarra Dance Theatre; ***Rise Up*** by Andra Day /Jay Kim Choreography. (1-2.D.Co.10) (1.SL.1.a) |
| **3-4** | * Describe how one’s body feels in a variety of self-expressive movements, e.g.,   - such as when examining a selected “selfie” picture that expresses one’s individuality. | * Explore and choose the use of levels, shapes, directions in space, pathways, and time to express your culture and share movement with a partner. e.g.,   - How can movement describe a person’s culture? | * Combine one’s movement phrase with that of a partner to create a canon with intent and focus. | **Creating:**   * Construct a repeatable dance phrase with a clear beginning, middle, and end that expresses a pivotal moment, coming of age, or a rite of passage in your life; describe this phrase verbally. (3-4.D.Cr.02)   **Performing:**   * Teach a peer a movement phrase demonstrating accurate memory and reproduction.   -Illustrate the connections between the meaning of the dance and use pathways movement, levels, shape, time, and canon. (3-4. D.P. 04)  **Responding:**   * Observe a video of a cultural dance form and explain in a discussion the relationship between cultural venues and audience behavior. e.g., ***The Butterfly Dance****,* ***Chinese Fan Dance****;* ***Mexican Hat Dance****;* ***Hula***. (3-4.D.R.08)   **Connecting:**   * Describe ways dance performance differs from other forms of movement used in sports and everyday gestures. e.g., identify the role of artistic intent.(3-4.D.Co.11) * Read a selected book on a cultural dance that celebrates a pivotal moment, coming of age, or a rite of passage and explain in writing how a lesson, central message, or moral is conveyed through dance with evidence from the book. e.g., ***The Butterfly Dance*** (Gerald 2001); ***Ho'onani: Hula Warrior*** (Gale and Song 2019). (3-4.D.Co.11) (RL.3.02.0) (W.3.2.b) |
| **5-6** | * Co-create and use appropriate assessment criteria that purposefully applies inner sensing of body organization concepts. e.g.,   - breath, core distal, head-tail, upper-lower (homologous) body-half (homolateral) cross-lateral) movement to evaluate a dance work for injury prevention | * Collaborate with one or two dancers and combine solos using compositional forms. e.g.,   - AB,  - ABA,  - canon,  - rondo,  - retrograde,  - theme and variation | * Perform a self-created solo choreographed phrase that conveys intent to an audience using body organization dance concepts. e.g.,   - breath, core distal, head-tail, upper-lower (homologous) body-half (homolateral) cross-lateral) | **Creating:**   * Organize choreographed phrases using compositional forms such as AB, ABA, canon, rondo, retrograde, theme and variation. e.g., Sandra Cerny Minton’s ***Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation***. (5-6D.Cr.01)   **Performing:**   * Present formally a short movement work that conveys a message, idea, or image to an audience. e.g., Merce Cunningham’s ***Beach Birds for Camera***, , India's ***Cosmic Dance of Shiva***; Brazil’s ***Bumba Meu Boi***. (5-6.D.P.06)   **Responding:**   * Apply a rubric to evaluate a dance work. e.g., Brenda McCutchen’s **“Assessment”** in ***Teaching Dance as Art in Education***. (5-6.D.R.09)   **Connecting:**   * Describe and demonstrate one’s personal artistic style and how to maintain a positive body image such as mindfulness or injury prevention. e.g., bone and muscle identification through coloring in Kapit & Elson’s, ***Anatomy Coloring Book;*** or explore body alignment and mindfulness in exercises in Eric Franklin’s ***Dynamic Alignment Through Imagery*.** (5-6.D.Co.10) * Compare and contrast the organization of compositional forms in dance and music. e.g., rondo, A-B-A, canon. (5-6.M.Cr.02.b) |
| **7-8** | * Observe and interpret the meaning of grade-appropriate movements while working in opposition to a dance partner. e.g.,   - What messages can movements communicate when one dancer is moving above, and one below? When one dancer is using curved shapes and another linear shapes? | * Identify and explore strategies to overcome creative blocks using movement ideas that combine multiple varied artistic elements. e.g.,   - Relationships-dance concepts under, over, around, through, above, below, near proximity, far proximity, etc. | * Analyze/ interpret peer’s artistic work.   -What criteria are needed to evaluate this dance work for its use of dance concepts?  - What dance concepts did the choreographer(s) choose to include in their dance?  - How is culture reflected in a diverse range of dance works? | **Creating:**   * Consider and explore how mirroring and opposing movements can express the meaning of the dance. (7-8.D.Cr.03)   **Performing:**   * Perform a student-created duet that uses mirroring and opposing movements while incorporating more complex weight shifts and balances and communicates a narrative. (7-8.D.P.05)   **Responding:**   * Observe a duet dance and explain your interpretation of the narrative and its relationship to culture. e.g., duet from ***West Side Story***--**“Dance at the Gym”** (***Mambo***); or the Argentine Tango: ***Dance of Carlos Gardel;*** Brazil’s ***Capoeira.*** (7-8.D.R.07) (7-8.T.R.07)   **Connecting:**   * Discuss how Relationships-dance concepts are used to illustrate the meaning of the dance narrative and explain how it is connected to a specific historical population in a specific culture. e.g., ***Revelations***by Alvin Ailey; ***Yamal- Kathak Duet*** by Shyam Dattani; and ***Ishira Shah*** by Yuva Nartan. (2017). (7-8. D. Co.11) |
| **High School Foundations** | * Distinguish physical strengths and challenges while translating the meaning of a social issue into choreographed movement. e.g.,   - physical strength,  - flexibility,  - endurance,  - balance and  - coordination | * Reflect on the factors that have influenced changes in personal preferences in dance movement and choreography. For instance:   - How have your movement preferences changed over time?  - How would you describe your artistic style? | * Choose and apply one type of dance notation system to document an original dance. e.g.,   - Labanotation  - Benesh  - The Language of Dance systems | **Creating:**   * Compose and notate in a small group, using a selected dance notation system, a 2-minute dance about a contemporary social issue after observing and analyzing historical dances that focus on social issues. e.g., Kyle Abraham’s ***Pavement****;* Renny Harris’ ***Exodus***; and/or Japan's ***Butoh Dance;*** Brazil’s ***Jongo*** (F.D.Cr.02)   **Performing:**   * Journal and self-assess personal strengths and challenges in physical strength, flexibility, endurance, balance, and coordination while performing the same dance warm-up over time. e.g., “What dance skills are challenging and what can I do to improve them?” “What are my strengths in dance skills and how can I expand upon them?” (F.D.P.05)   **Responding:**   * Analyze and describe the movement concepts used to create an emotional and social impact in two historical dances that focus on similar or the same social issues. e.g., Choreographer Travis Wall’s version of ***Strange Fruit*** and Choreographer George Faison with the Alvin Ailey Company, ***Slaves***.(F.D.R.07)   **Connecting:**   * Synthesize personal artistic style and preferences in dance movement and choreography based on one’s own journal, dance notations and choreography through the creation of a mind map. (F.D.Co.10) |
|  | * Identify differences in movement through observing bodily sensations while performing varied cultural dance forms. e.g.,   **High School Proficient**  - How do specific uses of space, timing, rhythms, gestures and postures, props and costumes/clothing affect movement expression? | * Research the historic and cultural origins of a selected global dance form.   - What is cultural dance? What are the purposes of cultural dance?  - What roles do ‘individual and community’ play in cultural dance forms?  -Analyze the meaning of gestures, posture, rhythms, timing, space, props, and clothing that are used to communicate culture in dance to an audience. | * Perform a group-created dance that utilizes features of a specific genre or culture.   - Discuss issues of potential cultural appropriation replicating cultural dances outside of your own culture   * Convey the purpose of a cultural dance by selecting specific movement, props, and costumes/clothing to express and interpret meaning. | **Creating:**   * Research a selected cultural dance form, including its origins, artistic elements (costumes, props, music etc.). Prepare a presentation to include information about the dance form as well as a short phrase of movement from the selected cultural dance. e.g., ***Salsa***, Irish ***Step,*** African ***Agbadza;*** Puerto Rican and Dominican Dance***-Merengue;*** Guatemala’s ***Danza de los Venados;*** Haiti’s ***Yanvalou.*** (P.D.Cr.03)   **Performing:**   * Assume the role of rehearsal director, costume designer, or lighting designer in the creation of a cultural dance performance. (P.D.P.05)   **Responding:**   * Compareand contrast chosen themes, space, timing, rhythms, gestures and postures, props and costumes/clothing utilized in peers’ cultural dances. (P.D.R.07)   **Connecting:**   * Construct a culture and cultural dance form in groups that could exist in the future based upon a current social or global issue or problem. e.g., climate change; technology development of artificial intelligences; global war. (P.D.Co.11) |
| **High School Advanced** | * Explore the movement challenges and advantages of dancing with selected limitations. e.g.,   - How might dancing with a selected limitation affect your movement choices?  - How can shifting a stylistic element–theme, intention, focus, dynamics–change the meaning of the movement? | * Analyze ways a contemporary dance can extend beyond the established norms or ideas about a dance genre. e.g.   - In what ways can contemporary dance forms push your preconceived ideas about what constitutes dance?  - In what ways are your ideas about who can dance challenged by contemporary dance forms?  - What might be the benefits today for pushing beyond established norms or ideas about dance and for whom?  - When might pushing beyond established norms or ideas about a dance be harmful and for whom? | * Discuss advantages and disadvantages of using props in partner choreography. e.g.,   - What are the challenges that you faced in choreographing a duet dance with one prop?  - What were the strengths and challenges of your partnership in the choreographic process?  - What skills, knowledge and behaviors did you gain or reinforce this experience?  - How and where might you use the skills, knowledge, and behaviors in the future? | **Creating:**   * Choreograph a dance by imposing a selected limitation. e.g., can only use the upper body, can only use a 3-by-4-foot space; can only dance sitting in a chair or on a bench. See Paul Taylor’s ***Seven New Dances: Duet*** segment of 4 minutes where he and his partner do not move. (A.D.Cr.01) (A.D.Cr.03) * Collaborate in pairs to choreograph a dance sharing one prop while identifying movement challenges and the advantages and disadvantages of different movement solutions such as using a hat; a chair; a bucket; a cane, etc. e.g., David Parson’s, ***The Envelope;*** Chinese ***Dragon Dance (Disneyland Lunar New Year 2020).*** A text for students to read: **“Exploring Props” in *Choreographing from Within: Developing the Habit of Inquiry as an Artist*** by Diana Green. (A.D.Cr.03)   **Performing:**   * Perform a dance choreographed by a peer integrating technical dance skills that may cause an audience to reflect upon the theme or intention of the dance in response to the movement, musicality, artistic expression, and stylistic nuance. (A.D.P.06)   **Responding:**   * Analyze and discuss ways in which selected contemporary dances push boundaries of a genre after observing two selected dance works that challenge current norms about a dance genre or who can dance. e.g., Mark Morris’ ***Swan Lake****;* orMarc Brew with Axis Dance Company’s ***Full of Words;*** Chinese ***Sword Dance.*** (A.D.R.07).   **Connecting:**   * Compare and contrast the historical and cultural context that caused the shifting of stylistic elements such as the dance genre, the intention, or theme between dance styles. e.g., Balanchine’s ***Nutcracker*** and Williams’ ***Urban Nutcracker****.* (A.D.Co.11) * Explain and defend positions about foundational ideas or values in the United States regarding dance and dancers which are in tension or in conflict in selected dances that push the boundaries of a dance genre in a short position paper. (A.D.R.09) (11-12.WCA.1.a) |

# Appendix: Dance—Selected List of Resources for Teachers

**Current and Seminal Books and Articles; Children’s Books**

**There is much overlap in the content of the articles and books.**

**Therefore, there is one bibliography for Current and Seminal books, with Children’s Books cited at the end.**

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1. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *Arts Curriculum Framework, 2019*, p. 13 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Bonis, Ferenc, ed. *The Selected Writings of Zoltán Kodály*. NY: Boosey and Hawkes, 1974, p. 122 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *Arts Curriculum Framework, 2019*, p. 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. IBID, pp. 19-20 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Hans, James (1981), *The Play of the World*, Amherst: Univ of Massachusetts [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2015), *Massachusetts Standards for Preschool and Kindergarten* [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. # Mitroff Silvers, Dana (2016), *Why play is essential to the design-thinking process.* https://designthinkingformuseums.net/2016/10/31/why-play-is-essential-to-the-design-thinking-process/amp/

   [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Shipwright (ships and boats), Wheelwright (wooden wheels), Wainwright (carts and wagons), and Arkwright (chests & boxes) are some other examples of “wright” (work) professions in addition to Playwright [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. The term “classical” here does not refer only to the Western cultural canon. Many cultures around the world have “classical” forms of art, dance, music, and theatre. It indicates a codified technical vocabulary and skill set, conforming to certain standards of form and complexity specific to that culture. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
10. As previously noted for all physical activities, many of these activities may have to be modified for students with mobility differences in accordance with their IEPs. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)