

FOCUS

Ages: 7 to adult

Music suggestions are from *Music for Creative Dance (MCD)* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and *BrainDance Music* by Eric Chappelle.

Length

30 to 60 minutes. You may extend this class to 75 to 90 minutes by adding sections of dance technique.

Warming Up

BrainDance: Dancers perform the first four patterns in self-space with the eyes closed. They perform the last four patterns in self-space, mirroring a partner. Dancers in pairs take turns being the leader. *Suggested music:* *BrainDance Music* #1 (5 minutes) or #3 (8 minutes).

Introducing the Concept: *Focus*—single focus, multi-focus, internal focus, external focus. Dancers read and say the words as they physically demonstrate the concept of *focus*.

Exploring the Concept

For a 30-minute lesson, choose one of these activities.

Exploring the Concept 9: Magician and Zombie

Dancers work in pairs (facing each other) with one large scarf or piece of plastic tablecloth material. Leader 1, the magician, moves the prop on different levels with changes in speed and energy. Leader 2, the zombie (or robot), responds to the prop through movement. Roles are reversed several times. You could instruct dancers to find new partners after each has had a turn being the magician. Cue magicians to move the prop in such a way as to encourage zombies to move different isolated body parts as well as the whole body. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 1, #9.

Shaping 6: Duets ("Laser Eye" Variation)

Leader 1 stares directly at a body part of leader 2. Leader 2 moves that body part into a shape. Repeat with two other body parts. Leader 1 copies the shape of leader 2. Leader 2 dances away with multi-focus looking at other shapes in the room, returns to leader 1, and stares at three body parts. The game continues until the music ends. You may also choose to do a group shape museum. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #11.

Reflection

"Discuss with your partner whether you preferred being the leader or the follower and why."

Developing Skills

For a 30-minute lesson, choose one of these activities. For a 60-minute lesson, do both these activities or choose one and replace the other with dance technique such as pliés, tendus, swings, and jumps.

Developing Skills 2: Nonlocomotor Movements

Dancers explore various effort actions (e.g., flick, float, dab, press, slash) while making the focal intent very clear and strong. They explore other movements such as melt, swing, and shake while varying the focus. Ask, "Does the action or quality of the movement change when the focus changes?"

Leaping 3: Change

Create a leaping pattern such as run, run, leap. Direct the dancers to change their focus (forward, down, up, and side) after 4 sets of leaps, 2 sets, and then after 1 set. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #11.

Creating

Choreographing 1: Flocking

For a 30-minute lesson: Divide dancers into groups of four. Each dancer chooses whether they will be first, second, third, or fourth. The first dancer moves forward with simple movements for 8 counts. The flock watches. After 8 counts the flock copies the movements. The second dancer moves, and the flock watches and then copies. The game continues until all have been leaders or the music ends.

For a 60- to 90-minute lesson: Divide the class into four groups. Each group goes to a corner of the room and numbers off. Depending on the size of the class, a flock could consist of three to eight dancers. Give each flock a number from 1 to 4. Leader 1 in flock 1 moves toward the center of the room for 8 counts. Flock 1 watches and then follows the leader. Leader 1 in flock 2 moves, and flock 2 follows. Leader 1 in flock 3 moves toward center. As flock 3 follows, flock 1 slowly moves backward into their corner. The dance continues with new leaders and the opposing flocks moving backward to prepare to enter with the next leader. *Suggested music:* MCD

(continued)

Focus: 7 to adult (continued)

Vol. 2, #5 (8-count phrases) or Vol. 1, #15 (continuous music) or silence.

Closure Circle: Dancers form a circle and review *focus* concept vocabulary verbally and physically.

Cooling Down

Evaluating Choreography: Groups discuss the challenges of following a leader. “What makes a strong leader and a strong follower?”

From Anne Green Gilbert, 2015, *Creative dance for all ages: A conceptual approach*, 2nd ed. (Human Kinetics and SHAPE America).