

RHYTHM

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: Have students alternate breath, pulse, and pattern: Breath (breathe with long and short breaths), tactile (keep a pulse), core–distal (create a pattern—open slowly, close with three quick movements), head–tail (move with breath), upper–lower (keep a pulse), body–side (create a pattern), cross–lateral (move with breath), vestibular (keep a pulse), eye tracking (create a pattern). *Suggested music:* *BrainDance Music*, #7 or voice only.

Introducing the Concept: *Rhythm—pulse, pattern, grouping, breath.* Dancers read and say the words as they physically demonstrate the concept or *rhythm*.

Exploring the Concept

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

Exploring the Concept 6: Body Parts

You chant simple rhythm patterns. The dancers repeat the pattern verbally as they illustrate it physically, first with various body parts and then with the whole body through general space. For example: *ta-ta-taka-ta—ta-ta-whoa*.

Shaping 2: Echo Shapes

Dancers find partners and choose leader 1 and leader 2. Leader 1 forms two shapes during an 8-count music phrase. During the following 8 counts, leader 2 copies the two shapes (echo). Change leaders after 5 sets of echo shapes. The suggested music has an 8-count transition between sets (dancers shake out shapes, and leader 2 takes over). After each leader has had two turns, dancers move in their own ways around the room with shape flow during the last set of music. To make this easier, leaders may make one slow-moving shape or you could call out, “Leader shape and

shape. Echo shape and shape.” *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 4, #8.

Reflection

“Discuss with a fellow dancer how echoing shapes is different from mirroring shapes.”

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: Waltz Run

Dancers practice the waltz run, changing speeds and adding arm movements. This may be practiced in a scattered formation, in lines across the floor, in various pathways, and toward and away from a partner. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 3, #18.

Combining Movements 10: Words

Create an age- and skill-appropriate combination using words instead of music, and have dancers perform it. For example, *Down-up-up, down-up-up, swing down, swing up, hitch kick back, hitch kick front, balancing shape*.

Creating

Choreographing 10: Enter and Exit

For a 30-minute lesson: Dancers improvise a phrase of 8 counts of slow movement, 8 counts fast, 8 counts stillness, and 8 counts rhythmic pattern that includes vocal or body sounds. Dancers choose how to order their phrases and how to enter and exit the space within the 32 counts allotted. Dancers enter the space four at a time. *Suggested music:* No music in order to hear the rhythmic patterns.

For a 60- to 90-minute lesson: Partners or small groups choreograph a dance with 16 counts slow movement, 16 counts fast, 16 counts stillness, and 16 counts rhythmic pattern that includes vocal or body sounds. Groups choose how to order their phrases and how to enter and exit the space within the 64 counts allotted. *Suggested music:* No music in order to hear the rhythmic patterns.

(continued)

Cooling Down

Sharing and Evaluating Choreography: For a 30-minute lesson, dancers form a shape they observed or do a rhythm pattern they heard. For a 60- to 90-minute lesson, observers comment on how the performers illustrated their rhythm pat-

terns, the relationship between dancers, and the relationship of dancers to the space.

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