Learning Activities

Studying Dance

# Chapter 1

1. Briefly describe your five most memorable dance experiences. Give as much detail as you can about the entire process, from early activities to the final moment. Next, identify which areas of dance this experience relates to. Use the following abbreviations to track your interests:

* P = performance
* C = choreography
* T = teaching
* A = administration
* D = design
* CD = community dance
* W = writing

Do you notice any trends?

1. Quickly identify at least 12 places where you observed people dancing or moving this week. Which places make the most sense to you, and which are the most surprising? How do these observations relate to your own dance experiences?
2. Briefly describe the person who has had the most positive influence on your dance education so far. What did he or she teach you about dance? Think of 10 ways this can be built on during your time on campus.
3. What are your current dance goals? Be honest. After writing your response, elaborate on how each of the following skills are needed for success in this field.

* Leadership
* Creative problem solving
* Self-awareness
* Relating to others and building community
* Critical thinking

1. Answer the following in as much detail as possible:

* How do you dance?
* Where do you dance?
* What do you dance about?
* Why do you dance?
* What excites you about dance?

Without sharing your responses, put your response away until the end of the book.

1. What questions do you currently have about studying dance on campus? Think of three short-term and three long-term questions you have about studying dance on campus.

# Chapter 2

1. Visit the faculty page of your department’s website. After reading about your faculty members, schedule a 15-minute meeting or arrange for a short e-mail interview with one faculty member. Ask the faculty member about what excites him or her about dance, what advice he or she has for new students, and information on any upcoming projects he or she is involved with on or off campus.
2. Identify a campus organization that you could benefit from joining. In as much detail as you can, with no limits to what is possible, brainstorm ideas for a project that combines your dance interests with the goals of this organization.
3. Interview an upper-division student about his or her experiences studying dance on campus. Summarize your findings, and share them with one other new student.
4. With the help of your instructor and fellow students, make a list of 10 important places to know on your campus. Some places might include the library, writing center, registrar’s office, student health services, various performance venues, and dance facilities. Then create a photo essay by visiting each place and taking a photograph of yourself at each location. Write a paragraph about the place and its relationship to you.
5. Revisit your questions from chapter 1 about studying dance on campus. Then, use your campus and department websites, or consult a faculty member or upper-division student to find the answers.

# Chapter 3

1. Using your campus website, find the curriculum checksheet, major map, or program of study document for your degree program. Examine the balance between general education and discipline-specific courses required. Then, outline five ways that you can connect your general education courses and discipline-specific courses to your current dance understanding and future goals.
2. Identify three ways that each of the following is already present in your academic study of dance: writing, technology, and research. Take time to consider and then list what you have learned about yourself, dance, and other disciplines through engaging with each of these. How does this information and these skills relate to your emerging dance interests and potential in dance?
3. Write a short statement that explains dance as an academic discipline. After writing the statement, consider how it reflects your values and interests as a dance student. Then, create a short movement phrase, illustration, or collage that symbolizes the value of studying dance as an academic discipline. Share your creation with at least one classmate, and discuss the similarities and differences between your statements and creative expressions.

# Chapter 4

1. Assess your consistency with each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = least consistent; 5 = most consistent): reading course syllabi, going to class, submitting assignments, checking your online learning platform, avoiding digital distractions, asking for help, and getting to know your professors. Then, outline ways to increase your consistency.
2. Briefly list some of the differences you have experienced between high school and college learning. What strategies are you using to navigate these differences? In what areas can you improve and how?
3. Using a weekly calendar, track how you use your time for one week. Indicate time spent in class, studying, visiting with friends, working, eating, rehearsing, and so on. Then, objectively assess how you are spending your time. Make a plan for next week based on your observations.
4. List three goals related to your responsibility as a student this semester. For each goal, list five small steps you can take to achieve this.

# Chapter 5

1. Create a choreographed series of movements that best describes who you are as a dancer. Be sincere with your choices and try not to worry about what others might think about your movements. What dance genres did you draw from to create this phrase? Can you adapt this phrase for another dance genre? How are you fusing dance genres, if at all?
2. Think about the last dance performance or event you participated in. Quickly identify the artistic roles you had in that performance and the contributions of each role. Briefly describe how each of these artistic roles worked together to create the event.
3. Quickly imagine your future in dance. Do you see yourself working with a dance company, on a project basis, or in a commercial setting? How does your choice reflect your previous and current dance experiences?
4. Select one artist or choreographer mentioned in this chapter. Using the Internet, find additional information about this artist or choreographer. List five ways that this artist or choreographer challenged your assumptions about dance.
5. Outline four ways you can get involved in an artistic presentation or performance of dance this semester. Then, consider which of the following skills will be developed through this involvement and how that relates to your future dance goals.

* Creativity
* Leadership
* Critical thinking
* People skills
* Reflective thinking
* Networking skills
* Budgeting skills
* Marketing skills
* Time management
* Organization
* Responsibility
* Communication skills

# Chapter 6

1. Select a dance genre that you are currently studying. Research the history of this dance genre and the cultures it emerged from. What is the intent or purpose, what stories and themes are used, who participates, and where and when does the dance take place? Find three links between dance and culture in this dance genre.
2. Make a list of five traditions or cultural activities or events that you participate in. How do these reflect your cultural values? How are these values also expressed in your current dance experiences?
3. Select two dance genres outside of your culture that are unfamiliar to you. After researching the movement, history, and culture of your dance genres, create a collage of images and text that compares the dance genres.
4. Outline four ways that you can expand your awareness of dance and culture this semester. Consider what skills you will learn through broadening your cultural understanding of dance and how these skills relate to your success in studying dance on campus.

# Chapter 7

1. Consider all of the dance courses you are enrolled in this semester (technique and movement courses; creative, compositional, and performance courses; and contextual courses). Make a list of class activities, such as creative prompts, discussion questions, or movement phrases, that really engaged you as a learner. Select one, and examine how this class activity addressed multiple intelligences, embodiment, and life skills through learning dance. Also identify any elements of constructivism or embodied and somatic approaches that were present in this class activity.
2. Imagine yourself teaching a dance class 10 years from now. Then write a short descriptive paragraph that addresses the following questions:

* Where do you see yourself teaching?
* Who are your students?
* What genres are you teaching?

Using text and images, create a collage that represents your future goals and values as a dance educator.

1. Create a timeline of you dance education for the last five years that includes the sectors where you have studied dance. Along the timeline, indicate the dance educators who have made a significant impact on your dance education and the skills you learned through working with them. Underneath the timeline, provide a summary of the competencies and personal discoveries you have gained through studying dance.
2. Quickly list the non-dance courses you are currently enrolled in (such as English, math, introduction to psychology), and then select one course. Develop a dance activity that includes at least two of the 21st-century skills that could help you and your classmates better comprehend your selected course’s content. Then, try it out! What did you discover?
3. Contact two students studying the arts (visual arts, music, theater, film, digital media) and interview them about the types of learning activities they engage in during their arts coursework. Do you see any similarities with or connections to what you are learning about dance? Are there any similarities in teaching methods? What differences do you notice?
4. Reflect on your time studying dance on campus. What new teaching methods or teaching experiences have you been introduced to this semester? Make a list of seven ways you can either use or develop these methods and experiences in your current teaching or future as a dance educator.
5. List five ways that you are already participating in contemporary trends in dance education while studying dance on campus. Next, list five ways that you can develop as a dance educator while studying dance on campus. After completing both lists, identify ways that your current experiences as a student participating in contemporary trends in dance education connects to your ongoing development as a dance educator.

# Chapter 8

1. Using your campus library or the Internet, find two of the following types of works:

* Site dance
* Video dance
* Digital performance work based in dance
* Interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary work

For each, watch the entire work, and then do the following:

* List two ways that the work challenges your ideas about where dance occurs.
* List two ways that the work expands your ideas about how we view or interact with dance performance.
* List two examples of images that would not be possible in a traditional proscenium-based stage work or two examples of movement that fall outside of your personal definition of dance movement.
* List one question you have about this work, and then answer the question from the perspective of a dance performer, choreographer, or artistic collaborator who created or performed the work.

1. Identify a community group (either on campus or in your local community) that you would like to connect with. Using your understanding of the artistic, cultural, and educational aspects of dance, brainstorm a community dance project that you could facilitate for this group.
2. List 10 ways that differently abled dance might expand your thinking about dance. Outline how each item on your list can be incorporated into your current understanding of dance.
3. Select a 30-second dance phrase or dance combination that you enjoy doing. In what ways could ideas from dance science and somatic practices enhance your performance of this phrase or combination?
4. Find an example of dance scholarship and an example of dance journalism or criticism used in one of your dance courses or on the Internet. Then, compare the following aspects:

* The purpose (e.g., event announcement, artist profile, performance review, discussion of new ideas in dance)
* Where it was published (e.g., newspaper, website, magazine, scholarly journal, book chapter)
* The intended audience (e.g., general public, dance fans, dancers, dance educators)
* The use of language (e.g., formal, informal)

Summarize the similarities and differences.

1. Create a mind map about how your awareness of dance is expanding. Place your main dance interest in the middle of a blank piece of paper, and draw a circle around it. From there, connect five related areas of interest (from inside or outside of dance) to your main interest, and circle those. Keep going, placing three to seven areas of related interests around each bubble until you have filled the page. At the bottom of your mind map, write one sentence about how your dance interests are expanding.

# Chapter 9

1. Identify and examine two ways that reflection is built into your dance coursework. Then identify and examine two ways that reflection is built into your daily life. What new knowledge have you discovered through these reflections, and how can you continue to build on that knowledge?
2. Take a moment to recall a recent challenging situation or breakthrough experience. Then reflect on the experience in the following ways:

* Describe the experience.
* Consider what worked and why it worked as well as how and where you were successful.
* Consider what did not work and why as well as any challenges or frustrations that arose.
* Consider what you learned from the experience, what you might do differently next time, and any new questions or interests that emerged.

Review your observations and thoughts, and then determine the following:

* The knowledge used in this experience
* How you applied that knowledge in this experience
* What knowledge you need to move forward in similar experiences
* New areas of investigation

1. Finally, describe how you will follow up or act on these new areas of investigation.
2. Describe and assess your current reflective practice. What changes can you make to your reflective practice so that it allows you to deepen your understanding of dance?

# Chapter 10

1. Using your campus website, make a list of the technique and movement courses required for your degree program. Then, make a list of additional technique and movement courses that pique your interests. How does your combination of required and additional or elective technique and movement courses relate to your emerging interests or professional aspirations?
2. Take a piece of paper and fold it in half. On the left side, list the approaches and types of feedback primarily used in your previous dance experiences. On the right side, list the approaches and feedback primarily used in your technique and movement courses. Highlight approaches that both sides have in common, and circle approaches that are different. Then, outline steps you can take inside and outside of class to become more comfortable with new approaches and types of feedback.
3. Research each of the following by using the Internet, talking with your faculty, or seeking recommendations from upper-division dance students.

* Technique and movement classes offered off campus or outside of your department
* A minimum of two summer intensives or festivals
* One professional certification program

Select the opportunity that is most interesting to you, and then do the following:

* Briefly discuss how this opportunity connects to your campus dance education and emerging interests.
* Outline a plan for following up on this opportunity (e.g., finding ways to get to classes off campus, finding application materials, creating a budget).

1. Reflect on your current experiences in campus technique and movement courses. Brainstorm five ways that you can be more proactive in these courses, both on and off campus. Determine which of these is most important to your dance education at this point, and outline small steps you can take to implement this.

# Chapter 11

1. Start by listing your top five dance interests or career aspirations. Then list the creative, compositional, and performance courses required for your degree program. Briefly outline how the content and skills learned in these courses relate to your emerging dance interests and career goals. Next, list any other creative, compositional, or performance courses offered on campus or in your local community and briefly discuss how they can supplement your dance education.
2. Describe the approaches used in your current creative, compositional, and performance courses. Which are you most comfortable with and why? Which are you least comfortable with and why? What are some small steps you can take to increase your proficiency with these approaches?
3. Find two dance works on the Internet. One should be a dance work that you really admire, and the second should be a dance work that is outside of your preferred tastes. Using a feedback method from one of your creative, compositional, or performance courses, pretend that you are exchanging feedback in real time with the artists. What aspects of sharing feedback are easiest for you? Which are most challenging? How do these aspects relate to how you receive feedback in your creative, compositional, and performance courses?
4. Find an upper-division student who has participated in an off-campus course, workshop, or performance related to creativity, composition, or performance. Interview him or her about this experience. Be sure to find out what was beneficial, what was challenging, and how the experience contributed to his or her dance education. Summarize your findings and share them with one classmate.

# Chapter 12

1. Quickly list your top three emerging dance interests or career aspirations. For each, identify five ways that your contextual knowledge of dance can increase your proficiency and understanding in each area.
2. Identify seven additional opportunities in your degree program, department, campus, or local community that can deepen your contextual understanding of a specific area. Outline a plan to follow through on one opportunity, and discuss how this can contribute to your overall dance education.
3. How are the approaches and feedback used in your contextual courses similar to and different from those used in your other coursework? Outline five ways you can use the strengths developed in other types of courses to succeed in contextual courses and five ways you can use the strengths developed in contextual courses to succeed in other types of courses.
4. Using the Internet, find more information about one of the professional organizations mentioned in this chapter. What is the mission of this organization, and how does it align with your emerging dance interests? Also find information about student membership, upcoming conferences, and other resources the organization offers, and then exchange this information with a classmate.

# Chapter 13

1. Make a list of your top three dance interests. For each, brainstorm a way that you could learn more about this area through an independent study, internship or apprenticeship, and scholarly or creative research opportunity. After devising your ideal scenarios, research what is possible through your degree program and make a plan to follow through on one of these opportunities.
2. Recall a previous dance experience where you collaborated with your peers outside of a class setting. How did this experience challenge your understanding of dance, and what skills did you call on to help you succeed? Outline four ways you could collaborate with your peers while studying dance on campus to advance these skills and your understanding of dance.
3. Using the Internet, find a dance opportunity that excites you. This could be a dance company or summer program audition, an interview for a teaching or dance administration position, an internship or apprenticeship, or anything else that relates to your current dance interests. Prepare a resume and cover letter for this opportunity, and outline how you will prepare for the interview or audition.

# Chapter 14

1. Thoughtfully describe the attributes (e.g., artistic, physical, intellectual, emotional, social) needed for success in your primary postgraduation dance goal. Then, identify resources on campus and in your community that can help you prepare for this goal while on campus.
2. Using the steps outlined in this chapter, create a monthly budget for yourself. What did you discover through assessing your current financial situation and creating your budget?
3. Visit your campus wellness center and participate in a class, workshop, or activity focused on wellness, stress management, nutrition, or cross-training. Then, share with a classmate what you learned through this experience.
4. List three locations where you might consider living after graduation. For each, research possible dance opportunities as well as non-dance aspects that appeal to your well-being. Then, create a draft of a monthly budget for your top location. Share this information with a classmate.
5. List 10 small steps you can take this month to gain skills you need in order to implement and continue developing your understanding of dance after college. Prioritize your list, and explain how each step contributes to success in studying dance on campus and engaging in dance after graduation.

# Chapter 15

1. Briefly describe your five most memorable experiences while studying dance on campus. These can be in-class or out-of-class experiences and can relate to class projects, things you learned in class, or out-of-class events. Give as much detail as you can about the entire process, from early activities to the final moment. Next, identify which area of dance each experience relates to. Use the following abbreviations to track your interests.

* P = performance
* C = choreography
* T = teaching
* A = administration
* D = design
* CD = community dance
* W = writing
* DW = dance wellness
* CC = cultural contexts
* HT = history and theory

Do you notice any trends? Outline how you can develop these interests in your remaining time on campus.

1. What is the most valuable thing you have learned about dance and yourself while studying dance on campus? How does this relate to your previous experiences in dance? How does this relate to your future aspirations in dance?
2. Answer the following in as much detail as possible:

* How do you dance?
* Where do you dance?
* What do you dance about?
* Why do you dance?
* What is dance?

Then, compare these responses to your responses from chapter 1. How do your current responses relate to your responses from chapter 1?

1. Using the methods described in this chapter, outline a one-year and a five-year plan. How do your plans relate to what you are learning about dance and yourself through studying dance on campus?