VOYAGE Study Guide and Program Information

Using the Utah Core Standards for Dance, Social Studies and Language Arts, Repertory Dance Theatre presents to you our production of VOYAGE!

American Modern Dance is a rich tapestry which has been influenced by the music and movement of cultures world wide. Dance has been part of community life as a form of communication, empowerment, and entertainment for centuries. Rhythms and patterns gathered from Africa, Asia, Middle East, Europe, and the Americas will connect the past with the present to illustrate how dance can document history and culture and tell our collective story.

We live in a country like none other on earth.

We are a beautiful mixture of people who have come here from all parts of the world to share stories, memories and dreams.

Our culture comes from every corner of the globe.

Our song is a world song...our dance is a world dance.

We celebrate our history and our diversity in movement.
People have always danced. Something within each of us makes us want to express ourselves in movement. Dancing is a unique way for people to connect to the world and to one another. We use movement to express our heritage...who we are...and how we feel...Throughout history, dance has helped us tell our stories and communicate our dreams.

Dance has always been an important part of community life. In early tribal societies, rituals were used as a source of magic...a way to empower people. Dance gave warriors courage before the hunt...Dance provided a way for people to communicate to higher forces...a way to connect to nature and a way to gain power from the earth.

The first dances were prayers designed to send messages to the gods...they insured a bountiful harvest and celebrated the important events in the life of the community. A birth, a marriage or a coming-of-age ceremony involved dance. Dances were thought to give people magical power over the elements...Dances were performed to invite the sun to rise and to bring the rain.

**African Dance**
Every country has unique attributes. The food, customs, language, music, and dance from a particular place have special qualities that say something about the people and what we call the culture of a community. A dance that expresses the characteristic of a particular culture is called an ethnic dance. Ethnic dances help preserve the history and attributes of a country, they are handed down from one generation to the next.

Ethnic dances from Asia have inspired American choreographers. An ancient form of theater in Japan known as Kabuki, is a rich blend of music, dance and pantomime. It has spectacular staging and costuming and the movement is performed in a highly stylized manner. Kabuki has been a major theatrical form in Japan for almost four centuries and inspired a Japanese-American dancer named Michio Ito to create modern dances that blend movement from both Eastern and Western Cultures about 100 years ago.

**Warrior Dance and Pizzacati**

One of the oldest forms of Chinese dance is the sleeve or ribbon dance in which a performer uses long silk sleeves to accentuate hand and arm movements. Scarf dancing was depicted in ancient Buddhist cave art where we see performers whirling them around like banners or ribbons.

**Little Scarves Dance**

For hundreds of years, artists have used a costume, a stage set or a prop to enhance a theatrical experience. Over one hundred years ago, an American performer named Loie Fuller began experimenting with how a scarf could create illusions.

**Big Scarf Dance**
Spain is a country that is rich in cultural diversity. Just as people travel...music and dance also travel. When migrating gypsies arrived in Spain from India around the 15th Century, they brought their songs and dances from the Middle East. As bands of gypsies descended on the small Spanish villages and towns, they performed their exciting and seductive Flamenco music. At first this music was not considered worthy of attention, and flamenco was only performed by the gypsies. Their mysterious music and stimulating dances eventually became popular with the Spanish population and Gypsy singers were hired to entertain the public. Rhythm is THE most important thing in Flamenco. The rhythms are heard in the stomping of the feet, the clapping of the hands and in the playing of castanets. The Flamenco dancer must perform the steps of the patterns within an exact rhythm. The dancer is usually accompanied by a guitar. The guitarist must also follow the flamenco rhythms. The expressive gestures and exotic style of the movement has made Flamenco dancing a national and international sensation and it is popular all over the world.

Dance in India goes back thousands of years. It is one of the oldest forms in the world. Most of the classical dance in India has developed from a type of dance/drama where performers act out a story from Hindu mythology almost exclusively through gestures. The complexity of the footwork lies in elaborate stamping rhythms and many dancers wear bells around their ankles, supplying their own accompaniment. The torso, face, arms and hands are extremely active. The head movement emphasizing the dancer’s changing facial expressions, the movement of the torso is graceful and fluid. The movement of the hands and arms is subtle and elaborate, every gesture has a function and a meaning. Indian dancers have a vast number of gestures through which they express complex events, ideas and emotions. For example, there are 13 gestures of the head, 36 different glances, and 67 hand gestures, that can, in different combinations yield several thousand different meanings. East Indian Dance
Every culture has dances that bring the people together to celebrate. Folk dances and Social dances play a big part in the life of a community. People love to dance. People love to dance with one another, in groups, in couples, in lines and in circles. Dancing with someone is like having a conversation. Dancing brings people together to socialize. Peasant dances, courtship and ballroom dances are designed to be fun to perform. Two hundred years ago, line dances, square dances, contra dances became very fashionable in the United States. Choreographers working today love to explore the patterns and ideas that made early contra dancing popular. **Energizer Dance**

Dancing and singing games performed for play and recreation have been around for hundreds of years. Each country has developed its own variations. Originally, Folk dancing was created and enjoyed by “the common people.” Royalty and the upper classes had their own kind of social dance. Dancing in royal courts was a way to display authority, and to set standards of elegance and to teach etiquette. Today we enjoy learning folk dances brought to the United States by immigrants from all over the world. Through social dances, young people learn manners and grace. **Mazurkas Dance**

In the mid-19th Century, group dances started to decline in popularity in favor of partner or couple dances. These involve coordinating the dancing of two people. In 1912, a new kind of music was heard all over America. It was called Ragtime music. Music had a new sound that made people want to move. Young people loved the new music and began learning the new dances...the Turkey Trot, The Grizzly Bear, The Bunny Hug. Ballroom dancing was becoming more fashionable and socially acceptable. By the 1930’s dance was part of the American scene. Broadway and movie musicals gave birth to brilliant stars. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers inspired people to want to dance. Movies gave people a chance to escape their troubles in fantasy and entertainment. Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic Ocean and became a national hero. They named a dance after him, the Lindy Hop. In the 1940’s the malt shops and the ballrooms were filled with people doing the Jitterbug. **Jitterbug Dance**
In almost every society dance has been used as a means of communication. Dance is a silent language that can help us express our deepest desires and our wildest dreams. Without using speech, we use gestures and pantomime to convey emotions and actions and memories. Throughout history, people have created dances inspired by stories, legends or myths...tales filled with adventure and daring. According to legend, the Ute “Bear Dance” was created to teach wisdom and survival skills to the Native American People. The annual Bear Dances honor this powerful animal in ceremonies to mark the coming of spring when the bear awakes from hibernation. Ancient Balinese dances tell their stories in dance-drama through the intricate gestures of fingers, hands, head and eyes. Folk dances in the Philippines tell stories about historical happenings and ways of life and religious customs. Many of the dances from Thailand reenact exciting tales featuring brave hunters facing great danger. An American choreographer named Charles Weidman used a story by author James Thurber to tell a tale about a Moth and a Star...it offers good advice to people seeking adventure. Moth and Star Dance

America has absorbed information from almost every country in the world. The ethnic mix in American society has contributed to a rich and diverse heritage which influenced American music, drama and dance. The influence of African culture has been felt in all the arts...in the development of Jazz music, and in cultural and modern dance. Today, everyone loves Tap Dance, Hip-Hop and Break Dance and a creative assortment of styles with broad audience appeal. African American rhythms are part of the heartbeat of our country.

Steppin’ is an African American art form, a form of percussive dance in which the entire body is used as an instrument to produce complex rhythms and sounds through a mixture of footsteps, spoken word and hand claps. “It is jazz, funk, rhythm and blues and rap without instruments.” Steppin Dance

Jazz music and Jazz dance are American art forms filled with syncopation and inventive movement. Jazz dance developed alongside Jazz music in New Orleans in the early 1900s. The steps and essential style of this dance, however, originated from African dances brought to the Americas by slaves. Originally, the term Jazz Dance encompassed any dance done to Jazz Music, but today there are so many inventive styles that are seen on television, in the movies and on Broadway. It is part of the American culture, but it is loved all over the world. Opus Jazz Loves Bach

Hip Hop Dance is a street dance performed to hip-hop music that evolved as part of hip-hop culture that developed among African Americans and Latino Americans. It began when city teenagers were looking for new ways to express themselves. They would perform in open spaces such as streets, dance parties, parks, school yards and nightclubs. The movement was improvisational and became an outlet for
young adults and teenagers. Since first emerging in the Bronx, the lifestyle of hip-hop culture has spread around the world. **Hip Hop Dance**

Whether we assemble in theaters, around bonfires, in temples or in ballrooms, dance invites us to open our minds and hearts to one another. Dance can be a place where we can understand what we share and how we connect. We are a beautiful mixture of people who have come here from all parts of the world to share our stories, our memories and our dreams. We celebrate our past as we create our future in movement. **Karyo Dance**
All of these Dance Vocabulary words are found somewhere in this performance. Which ones can you find? Send us your findings and we’ll give a shout out to all participating schools on our Facebook Page!

**Asymmetrical** A design, space, time, or energy that is not the same on both sides.

**Balance** A state of equilibrium; an equal distribution of weight.

**Beat** A continuing and steady pulse which is heard or felt in most music, moving the music forward in time. It may be audible, visual or a mental marking or the metrical divisions of music.

**Choreographer** One who creates dance.

**Choreography** The art of making a dance, or the design of a dance.

**Coordination** The ability to move accurately and efficiently, including intricate patterns for the hands, arms and feet.

**Discipline** To train or develop by instruction and exercise, especially in self-control.

**Elevation** Refers to the body either rising onto the toes or being propelled into the air away from the floor such as in a jump, hop or leap. This requires good placement, tremendous strength and a good sense of timing.

**Endurance** The ability to continue dancing for long periods of time. Dancers must have great stamina to dance extended periods of time without tiring. Constant training and practice keeps dancers in shape.

**Energy** The amount of force or manner in which a movement is performed, or the qualities of movement: percussive, sustained, lyrical, vibratory, rebounding, exploding, collapsing.

**Flexibility** The amount of elasticity in a dancer’s body as exhibited by their range of motion.

**Freeze** A command to cease all movement at once and to remain immobile in the shape the body presented when the signal word was given.

**Gesture** A movement which is a symbol to communicate a specific idea, purpose or expression (waving, shrugging the shoulders, shaking hands, combing the hair).

**Level** The space where movement occurs in relation to elevation; this may vary from low to high within the possible range of human elevation.

**Locomotor Movement** A movement that carries the body from one place to another through space using the feet or any other part of the body as a base for moving (walking, running, hopping, jumping, leaping, skipping, galloping, sliding, rolling, and crawling).

**Rhythm** A regular occurrence of like features in a composition. Rhythm of movement is defined as metered and non-metered. Metered rhythm has a countable beat. Non-metered rhythms originate sometimes from nature (wind, sea, smoke, rain, bird calls), from things (popcorn, balloons, balls), or from our own breath rhythms (rhythms from within the body, sneeze, yawn, blink, stretching).

**Space** An element of dance, relating to the area through which one moves.

**Symmetrical** The same shape, design or form on both sides.

**Theme** A clear movement sequence that can be used as a basic structure for different variations.

**Time** An element of dance, relating to the rhythmic aspects of dance as well as the duration and tempo of a movement.

**Unison** Two or more dancers performing the same movement at the same time.
Lesson Plan Ideas for your classroom!!

Lesson Plan 1—Take an inventory in the classroom of what cultures are represented. Ask the students to write something that is special about their culture that can be shared with the class. Then ask them if they have movement from their culture that could be shared with the class.

Lesson Plan 2—Create a line dance. Try creating a dance that happens in a line. Start very simply, with hands clasped and a simple grapevine walk. Try adding a stomp and a hop. For example, 4 grapevine steps (side, cross front, side, cross back), 2 stomps and a step hop. Try this weaving around your classroom. What ideas do the students have to add? Going forward and backward, bending low and looking high? There are many ideas that could make a line dance.

Lesson Plan 3—Use the internet or YouTube to learn some of the Indian Hand Gestures or Head Gestures. Then have students create different sequences using the gestures in many combinations.

Lesson Plan 4—Create a rhythm dance. Use clapping, slapping the body in different ways, stomping and vocals to make a rhythm dance. Pair up the students and have them each create 8 counts of rhythm and put some of these together to create a sequence or pattern.

Lesson Plan 5—Create a dance based on what you have learned as a class about a culture, either from your classroom or from the performance. Use what facts you have learned about this culture and create movement from them. Use your imagination!
Why Use Dance in the Classroom?
Dance is the oldest language. Dance is a total experience involving the physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and aesthetic dimensions of an individual which helps us perceive and communicate who we are and what we aspire to become. Dance is a great resource for teaching and opening minds and imaginations. Dance is a form of non-verbal communication, a powerful language that everyone can understand. Dance allows all children to explore their own physical and creative potential in a non-competitive environment.

**Standards for Arts Education:** Utah Core Curriculum
- **Moving:** Increasing strength, flexibility and endurance
- **Investigating:** Discovering the elements of dance: time, space energy and the body
- **Creating:** Exploring the creative process
- **Connecting:** Appreciating dance, its historical, cultural and personal origins

The Elements of Dance
There are four elements of dance: time, space, energy (force and flow) and the body.

The **body** is the instrument of dance. It is the vehicle of communication, based upon the dancer’s kinesthetic sense.

Dance exists in both time and space. **Time** can be rhythmic and based upon meter, or body rhythms and breath rhythms.

**Space** is concerned with the visual design of dance. It consists of body shape, levels, floor patterns, group relationships and volume.

**Energy** relates to the force with which the movement is released. Another term for energy is dynamics and may be described by specific qualities such as: percussive, staccato, sustained, swinging, suspended, vibratory and collapse. A variety of energy levels make a dance more interesting and create texture within the movement.

How to Prepare for the Dance Performance
Turn off and put away all cell phones, mp3 players and any other device which may cause distraction, and remove any chewing gum. Clear your mind of other thoughts (general or personal). Open your mind and spirit to the moment; concentrate and raise your awareness to the immediate environment. As the lights lower and/or the music begins, take a deep breath and relax in your seat. You are beginning to watch motion, movement, shape, line, rhythm, tempo, color, space, time, energy...dance.

Allow yourself to release the notion that you already know what dance means, or has to mean, or that you have to figure something out. Release the notion that you have to look at dance as if you were reading a book. Dance doesn’t necessarily have a storyline. If you watch the dance with openness, you may experience an emotion, an image, or a feeling that you may not be able to describe. You may not know why or where reactions come from, but don’t worry. That is a part of the magic of theater.

Every piece of choreography has a reason for being. Dances may be celebrations, tell stories, define moods, interpret poems, express emotions, carve designs or visualize music. As you watch a dance, a story may occur to you because of your past experience. However, not all dances tell stories. The sequences do not have to make literal sense. Allow images and personal feelings to come to the surface of your consciousness.

After the performance, feel free to discuss your thoughts with others, but do not be disturbed if you find others have a different reaction than yours. Think about your own personal images and thoughts. Was it fun to watch? Did the dance remind you of any experiences in your own life? Did the choreography inspire you to express yourself, write a poem, draw a picture, or make up your own dance?
Dance Criticism and Questions for Written Analysis and Discussion

Criticism (writing or talking about dance) or evaluation of a dance performance is affected by past experience, sensitivity, involvement, and personal judgment. Criticism involves three processes: **description**, **interpretation**, and **judgment** of a particular piece being analyzed.

When you write or talk about a dance performance you should consider or analyze four different aspects of the dance.

- **The choreographic elements**: the overall form, use of space, rhythmic and timing factors, use of dynamics, style, music, and movement invention
- **The performance elements**: the technical skill of the dancers, their projection, commitment, ability to communicate.
- **The production elements**: the costumes, lighting, props, sets, and music
- **The general impact**: the clarity of intent, concept, invention of the dance performance.

When answering the following questions, try to be multi-dimensional in your responses by describing visual and auditory perceptions and feelings. Make sure you state your reasons for anything you liked or disliked.

1. What emotional reactions did you have? What moved you?
2. What was the most interesting feature of the performance?
3. What in particular do you most remember about the experience?
4. Was there an apparent motive for the dance? Was it dramatic, abstract, a mood piece, etc.?
5. Were there any social, political, or historical elements?
6. What did you notice about the form of the dance?
7. Were the performers skilled technically?
8. How well did they portray their characters or communicate with movement?
9. What kind of music was used?
10. What were your reactions to the technical or production elements, the staging, décor, props, lighting, costumes?

These questions may stimulate great discussions in the classroom, or may allow the students to delve deeper into their performance experience.

**RDT’s Goals for Arts-in-Education**

Using dance as a way to help people become more: **Connected, Compassionate, Aware, Inspired, Original, Focused, Courageous, Passionate, Human**

- To provide alternative ways of learning in order to achieve basic educational objectives such as concentrating, creative problem solving, planning, visualizing and conceptualizing
- To develop skills and insights needed for emotional maturity and social effectiveness-sharing, cooperating, integrating, and interacting.
- To develop an individual’s physical and mental discipline at all levels of ability.
- To open participants’ minds and imaginations by developing tools of communication
- To develop feelings of self-worth, confidence, and achievement by giving students and teachers opportunities to explore movement, the art of improvisation and the creative process.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of American Modern Dance.
- To deepen the understanding of the relationship between art and life.
- To develop Life Skills by encouraging good citizenship, by helping students be responsible and understand their relationship to the other members of their group, family, class or community.
RDT and Arts Education

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE founded in 1966, is a professional modern dance company dedicated to the creation, performance, perpetuation, and appreciation of modern dance. RDT’s long standing commitment to arts in education focuses on enriching young students lives and providing on opportunity for students to experience the joy of living through dance. The company of outstanding performers, teachers, and choreographers has created new pathways for audiences to experience and value the art of dance. Residency activities that include demonstrations, movement classes, and teacher in-service workshops encourage students to integrate movement into their learning and teaching process. RDT’s residency activities are specifically designed to assist teachers and students in achieving the standards for arts education.

The following organizations and donors generously support Repertory Dance Theatre’s Arts-in-Education Activities:

- Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation
- Salt Lake City Arts Council—Arts Learning Grant
- Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts & Parks Program
- George S and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation
- Emma Eccles Jones Foundation
- Utah State Office of Education—POPS Program
- Ally Bank
- Lawrence T & Janet T Dee Foundation
- Utah Division of Arts & Museums and the National Endowment for the Arts
- HR Burton Foundation
  - BW Bastian Foundation
  - 4Life
  - Deluxe Corporation Foundation

For more information about Repertory Dance Theatre, our upcoming workshops, performances, residencies, etc. Please visit our website at www.rdtutah.org or contact us at 801-534-1000.