

Graffiti Art and Hip-hop Creative Dance Lessons

The following example is a 3 lesson arts-based instructional unit that was custom designed with embedded strategies for reflection and assessment. The teacher taught this lesson at the end of a Hip-hop dance study unit. Please see the last 2 pages for the visual images referenced in the lessons.

Grades 6-8

Guiding Question:

In what ways does this graffiti artist incorporate straight and curved lines in their art - and how can we explore these same types of lines in the creation of our own movement for a Hip-hop dance?

Objectives:

- Learn to work collaboratively to create original movement.
- Deepen skills of perception, observation, and description.
- Develop descriptive and movement vocabulary.
- Gain an understanding of how the marks of a painting can imply or inspire movement.
- Find ways to create or improvise movement within a set number of counts.
- Identify broadly the style, characteristics, qualities of the Hip-hop dance genre and set or improvise movement embodying aspects of that style.

Materials Summary:

Hip-hop Dance Folder

Unlined drawing paper

Lined paper

Pencils

Music from the Hip-hop dance learned in prior dance unit

Audio system

Graffiti art and Hip-hop dance photos (attached)

Projection screen or other digital or print quality image to display

Lesson 1

Activity 1

Look at graffiti art on screen

Individually: Silently notice all the different kinds of lines you see in the art.

Class share: Students can come up to screen and point out the lines they notice.

- Describe the different kinds of lines. Where are they?
- Where do you notice straight lines? Curved lines?
- In what ways is this curved line different from this other one?
- Looking at the whole artwork, are there any repeated straight or curved lines or shapes?

Activity 2

Individually: with pencil and paper

Silently and carefully look at different areas of the painting:

- (1/2 the class): Find 1 curvy line that you particularly like and would like to draw.
- (1/2 the class): Find 1 straight line that you particularly like and would like to draw.

In pairs made up of mixed straight and curved drawings: Share your line drawings.

- Tell your partner what you particularly liked about that line – why you chose it.
- Together, discuss what role you see each of your lines playing in support of the painting overall. – Some share back to whole group.

Activity 3

Partners:

- Using only your arms, create the straight line in the drawing in a pose that you both can do.
- Using your whole body, create the curvy line in the drawing in a pose that you both can do.
- Practice moving from one to the next repeatedly (2 counts for each pose). Rehearse, look at each other. Make sure you are doing it in the same way and that each pose is clear on your body.
- Now, with the Hip-hop music from class playing: Repeating the same movements again (2 counts each) dancing to the music and feeling the music support you.
- Look at ½ class at a time. Audience members choose one pair to focus on. Look carefully for the difference between their straight and curved lines.
 - What stood out?
 - How would you describe anything they specifically did to make it clear when they were straight and when they were curved?

Activity 4

Class seated

The photo of the Hip-hop dancer goes up on another screen next to the graffiti art:

- Partners: Do you notice either of *your pair's* line drawings in the dancer?
- Are there any similarities between this dancer and the graffiti art?
- In what ways do they differ?

Respond individually

On a piece of lined paper: Top of page. Students write the date and the title: “Things we Studied.”

- What are some of the things we have studied today?
- Think deeply and write down at least 3 different things or ideas.

Individuals share with whole group: – Teacher’s Wall Journal: “Things We Studied.”
(Captured by teacher on wall journal and re-posted in each subsequent lesson.)

- Reflecting on list: In what ways do you relate any of these things to the Hip-hop dance we learned in class?

SAVE your drawings and notes in your Hip-hop dance folder and bring to next class.

Lesson 2

Graffiti and Dancer projections up
Wall journal re-posted
Students have out their Hip-hop dance folders

Activity 1

Take out your drawing and notes from the end of Lesson 1.

Silently, review your notes, our wall journal, and projections of graffiti art and dancer.

- Reflecting on last class, think for a moment. Is there anything new you would add to the list of things we studied? As a class, let's try to think of at least 1 new thing to add that is not already on our list.

Activity 2

Partners:

- Brief review and practice your straight and curved shapes from last class. Done repeatedly with 2 counts for each pose.

Come back whole group – several students try the following:

- If you had to teach your 2 poses to someone who didn't know them, how would you verbally describe them, without physically showing them? How would you describe what you physically must do to perform your poses? Include a description of how to transition back and forth between the two poses.
- Discussion.

Partners:

- How can you do your same straight and curved positions – except now on the floor? The positions stay the same, but you decide how you want to do them on the floor. Try out a couple of ways you might be able to do that.
- Ask pairs: What are some of the options you explored, describe? Show us.
- Watching a pair: What changed with each of their choices? (Possible prompts: direction, facings, level, supporting body parts?)
- With your partner, choose the 2 floor poses you would like to stick with. Briefly practice.

Activity 3:

Pairs rehearse:

- Do your straight and curved line phrase twice through (8 counts total).
- Now we will add a “**freestyle**” to the floor (in 8 counts). This is done individually, and can even be improvised each time – as long as it stays within its 8 counts.
- Do your phrase on the floor (as with standing, 2 counts for each position- 8 counts total).
- **Freestyle** back to standing (8 counts)

Whole Group

Teacher captures responses to 1st bullet question below on new wall journal list: “Some General Characteristics of Hip-hop Dance.”

- Based on what you have learned about Hip-hop dance from our previous Hip-hop dance lessons, how would you describe some general characteristics of the movement you have experienced: Its style, quality/dynamics, mood?
- Choose 1 thing from our list that you would like to work on. Are there any ways in which you might revise your (2) 8 count freestyles (even in small ways) to reflect these qualities? Students share responses.

- Ok – Individually briefly rehearse only your (2) freestyles with the revision you chose. Standing to floor and floor to standing.
- Pairs: Now rehearse the whole dance again with your partner.

Activity 4

Whole group

Looking again at the photo of the Hip-hop dancer.

- Standing, how can you recreate that position with your partner. Done separately or connected in some way?
- What you just came up with is now going to be the ending pose of your dance!

Pairs rehearse – with music:

- Straight and curved line phrase twice through (8 counts)
- Freestyle to the floor (8 counts).
- Floor phrase (8 counts)
- Freestyle back to standing (8 counts)
- Hold dancer's pose (8 counts)

Whole group discussion – Students propose solutions:

- What is most challenging about performing your whole dance?
- Are there particular movements or transitions that are tricky?

Activity 5:

On a new piece of drawing or lined paper (whichever the individual student thinks is best for their method:

- In your own words and/or symbols, stick figures, etc. - record your dance entire dance, including somehow indicating the counts for each part or movement.
- Share your notation with your dance partner. Each of you talk yours through.
- Put this notation in your Hip-hop folder (along with your drawing and notes on things we studied). Bring to next class.

Lesson 3

Graffiti and dancer up on screens

Activity 1

Pairs

- Review your Hip-hop dance from end of Lesson 2.

Whole group:

- Do you have any questions?

Activity 2

- Together, let's review the first 8 counts of the Hip-hop dance we learned in our previous dance classes.
- Use these first 8 counts from that dance to start your new dance – then, go right into the entire dance you created here. Ending with the 8 counts of dancers pose.
- How many counts of 8 will the total dance be?
- After some responses: Have a pair demonstrate and count the dance as a class.

Rehearse with partner:

- Begin with first (8 counts) of prior classroom dance
- Straight and curved line phrase twice through (8 counts)
- Freestyle to the floor (8 counts)
- Floor phrase (8 counts)
- Freestyle back to standing (8 counts)
- Hold dancer's pose (8 counts) – or until the applause dies down...

Activity 3

Showings: 2 pairs show at a time. Assign each ½ of audience members which pair they are to focus on.

- What stands out to you
- What did you notice about the freestyles? In what ways did they reflect Hip-hop dance?
- Were there any movements you feel you have never seen before? Describe.
- Before looking at the next pair perform, let's look back to our graffiti art:
Can you find the line you chose to draw in our first class? Focus on it.
Keep it in your mind and as you watch the next pair, see if you can't find your line somewhere in their dance. Or, at least something close to it.

Watch the next performers:

- Where did you notice your line in their dance? How did they create it?

Activity 4

Re-posting the "What We Studied" list from Lessons 1 and 2.

Whole Group:

- Take a moment to look through your Hip-hop folder. What is in there? Talk to what each paper was about.
- What were you doing/being asked to do when you created that paper?
- Looking at the "What we studied" list on wall.

Handout Sheet - Individually journaling:

- What new thing(s) did you learn over the course of these last 3 lessons?

- *Based on these last our 3 lessons only:* What is a question you would like to research and find out more about? Write the question.
- What is a question you would like to ask the dancer on the screen? Why?
- What is a question you would like to ask the graffiti artist? Why?
- What is something you will take with you to think more about as we leave our whole Hip-hop dance unit?

Group share back and discussion

Completed Handouts go in Hip-hop folders.

Teachers can collect folders for further individual student assessment and future planning and calibrations.

Please see the next 2 page for images used in the lessons.

Graffiti image used is artwork from the 5 Pointz District and *Not to be used or duplicated.*



6.11.13, Vor138, 2013-06-11, From the collection of: Street Art NYC

Vor138

Hip-hop Dancer image is from www.seekpng.com and NOT to be used or duplicated.

