



LIVE Arts with Ashley Johnson

Dance

Grade 6

May 15, 2013 1:30-2:15pm
Broadcast

Overview

This session will give students the opportunity to participate in a live broadcast by professional dancer Ashley Johnson.

Students will learn how Ashley uses story-telling in her own choreography.

This workshop will introduce the concept of pathways and elements of dance through demonstration and classroom activities. Students will also create their own improv piece based on the concept of a road trip.

Ask the ARTIST: You can connect with the artist during the broadcast through a virtual classroom, go to: <http://connect.edonline.sk.ca/liveartsed/>

Artist Bio

Ashley Johnson is a dancer, dance educator and Mitzvah Technique teacher working mainly as a teaching artist, collaborative performer and body-worker. In 2005 she graduated from Grant MacEwan College with a diploma in Dance. From there Ashley transferred to the Dance Program at the University of Calgary and is currently two classes short of a Bachelor of Arts in Kinesiology and Dance.

In 2007 Ashley moved to Davidson Saskatchewan to apprentice with retired professional dancer and body-worker Amelia Itcush. Since being in Saskatchewan she has travelled as an assistant teacher in Amelia's three-year teacher training program in the Mitzvah Technique and Itcush Method.

In 2009 Ashley moved to Battleford to work as an Artist in Residence at Cut Knife and since then she has taught, facilitated and performed with Living Sky School Division, BTC Indian Health, and Collective Voice Theatre. Ashley has worked in Saskatchewan Arts Board Creative Partnership Innovations and Explorations Programs, Art Smart and Treaty Smart grant programs.

Curriculum Aims & Goals

Creative/Productive:

Students will create their own short dance work based on a 'written score' and utilizing elements of dance.

Critical/Responsive:

Students will have the opportunity to ask dance artist Ashley Johnson about her life as a professional dancer.

Cultural/Historical:

Students will watch a performance by dancer Ashley Johnson.

Broadcast Program (45 min)

- Artist Bio- Video (5 min)
- Warm up- **Brain Dance** (10 min)
- Demonstration- Introduction to pathways:
 1. Straight
 2. Curvy
 3. Zig Zag.Levels & speeds. Locomotor movement (10 min)
- Performance/Demonstration- Excerpt from 'When I go' (10 min)
- Activity- Brainstorming elements (5-10 min)

Brain Dance

Brain Dance is a series of eight developmental movement patterns that warm up the brain and body. Ashley will lead the students through the Brain Dance in a lead and follow form, introducing each pattern and adding in the three pathways with the eight patterns.

- 1 – Breath
- 2 - Tactile
- 3 - Core Distal
- 4 - Head Tail
- 5 - Upper Lower
- 6 - Body Side
- 7 - Cross Lateral
- 8 - Vestibular

Creative/Productive:

Outcome: CP 6.1

Create dance compositions that express ideas about identity and how it is influenced (e.g., factors such as pop culture, cultural heritage, peer groups, personal and family interests, gender).

Use inquiry in dance to extend understanding of identity

Investigate how a single idea can be developed in many ways and directions

Reflect on how movement and dance elements can be organized to convey meaning in dance

Outcome: CP6.2

Investigate and manipulate elements of dance and principles of composition including repetition and contrast.

Investigate and demonstrate choreographic principles using the elements of actions, body, relationships, dynamics, and space.

Analyze, discuss, and explore through movement, the principles of repetition and contrast in dance.

Create with own bodies various volumes and pathways on the floor and through space using repetition and contrast.

Outcome: CR 6.2

Investigate and identify ways that the arts can express ideas about identity.

Analyze and describe how identity may be expressed through various styles and forms of art.

Teacher Guided Activity (30min-1 Hour)

1. **Lead and follow with puzzle shapes** (8 minutes): Organize the students into partners and have one student start as the leader and the other the follower. Call out one of the three pathways and have the students practice leading and following through the space using that specific pathway. When the music stops have the 'leader' make a shape using the designated pathway in their body and have the 'follower' fill in the negative space of the first shape with a shape of their own. Repeat the whole sequence with a new leader and a new pathway.

Points to remember:

- Encourage the students to move clearly and not too quickly so that their partner can copy their movements.
 - Have them experiment with shapes and movement that move through the levels.
 - When one student is filling the shape of the second student have them first find the areas of restricted or 'negative' space. Then have them use their own shape to fit into the areas of negative space, like one puzzle piece fitting into another.
2. **Sculpture** (8 minutes): Organize the students into groups of four or five and put them in different areas of the space. Demonstrating first with one group, have the students stand in a circle and number them from one to five. Have the first student come into the center and make a shape, student two fills the shape of student one with a shape on a different level. Student three adds to the sculpture with a shape and student four and five do the same. Once the sculpture is complete student one begins to dance back to the circle, this dissolves the sculpture and all students dance back to their places. Repeat until each student has been each number.
 3. **Fences** (15 minutes): In this activity students create a "fence" with their bodies connected, to form a pathway.

Building a fence requires team work and problem solving skills. It is helpful to draw the pathway of the fence before dancing it.

Points to remember:

- A fence covers a space from point A to point B.
- Fences do not have any holes in them and they are connected one post to the next. The students are the posts and they connect to one another with their limbs (for example, body parts touching: hand to arm, foot to knee, etc.)
- Remind students that they remain frozen as a fence post until there is no one behind them.
- If the pathway of the fence is straight, the student makes a straight shape, etc.
- Remind the students to use their levels and make shapes, low, medium and high.

Materials/Resources

Please have your students follow along in the Brain Dance warm up during the broadcast. It is important to get them up and moving so that they are more warmed up for the next exercises. Most of the activities can be done in a conventional classroom space. Use the desks and space restrictions to help your students find interesting pathways around the room. The Brain Dance can be done sitting, standing or moving through space. Refer to the attached BD handout for more information on the patterns.

Teacher Guided Activity:

You will need to supply each 'small group' of students with a large sheet of paper to create a score during the teacher led activity (roll paper works well approximately 6-8' in length. Students will be working in small groups or as a whole class to create the dance.

Instructions for Fences:

a) "Drawing the Score"

With a big piece of paper, decide if the class would like to make a straight, zig zag or curvy fence. Have someone draw the line on the paper to illustrate the chosen pathway of the fence. Is it a diagonal, horizontal, vertical line? Are the curves wide or narrow? Are the zig zags with long or short lines? This drawing is a 'score' of your fence dance.

b) "Starting Point"

Choose a place to start building your fence. Have students line up single file and have one student start the fence.

c) "Building the Fence"

The student who is the first fence post makes a still shape with single focus to where the fence will end. The next student adds on a still shape connected to the first person with a single focus to where the fence will end. The third person adds a post onto the fence, etc. etc. Once the last person is in position, the first dancer moves along the fence to create a new shape at the end of the fence. Second dancer follows and the pattern continues to repeat.

d) "Check In"

Students refer to the drawing to make sure that their fence is creating the same pathway as the one drawn on the 'score.'

e) "Ending Point"

The fence is complete when it has reached the pre-determined end - usually the other side of the room.

Reflection:

Did the fence you danced match your drawn score?

How could you change your score to add interest in your dance? Example: Obstacles in the fence pathway.

4. Building a Dance (15 minutes):

a) Have the class brainstorm places you could go on a road trip.

Example: The farm, the mountains, the ocean (maybe you are on a boat instead of a car).

Discuss how driving through different landscapes would create different pathways and levels.

Create a list of different obstacles you may encounter along your road trip.

Example: A cattle drive, a rock slide, a tidal wave. How would these obstacles change the quality in your movement (slow to fast, high to low, unison to chaos)?

b) Give students the format for their dance ABC (beginning, middle, end)

Beginning - Start of the road trip determine the pathway in general space depicting the landscape.

Middle - Encounter the obstacle. Show contrast from their initial movement pathway.

End - A pathway moving through space to finish at the destination.

c) Break students up into groups of 4 - 6 (this could also be done as a whole class). Give them each markers and a piece of paper. Have them decide on their destination and obstacle. Draw a score of their dance showing the beginning, middle and end.

d) Practice the dance in groups.