VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Engaging ELs in the Art of Dance

## Make learning visible

* Establish content and connected language targets to support students in comparing styles of dance, describing movement sequences, explaining their personal responses towards dance, evaluating dance performances, etc.
* Draw attention to patterns and relationships in dance performances
* Refer to student-generated word walls to support language development and understanding of dance concepts and choreography
* Complement written word walls and anchor charts with visuals and graphics, e.g., a poster that lists dance elements or forms and techniques with visual cues for memory and language connections

## Support the language of dance

All students can learn! High expectations, asset-based thinking, and growth mindsets are key to student success!

* Provide multiple opportunities for students to communicate about their and peers’ dance performances 
* Explicitly teach the language of dance arts beyond a focus on vocabulary to support conceptual understanding
* Provide [sentence starters](https://www.elementsofdance.org/body.html) to support *Dance Arts Standards of Learning* (SOL) and communication of their vision as a dancer or choreographer, e.g.,
	+ Evaluate works by self and others:
	My/Your/the performance can be improved by \_\_\_\_\_.
	When dancing, I/you/the dancer can improve technique by \_\_\_\_\_.
	+ Compare and contrast aspects of musical works:
	These two dance pieces are (similar/different) because \_\_\_\_\_.
	The element that makes this style of dance (unique/different) is \_\_\_\_.
	+ Articulate personal response to dance:
	This style of dance made me feel \_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
	I think this dance is about \_\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
	+ Understand historical and cultural influences:
	\_\_\_\_ was a popular form of dance during (time period) because \_\_\_\_.
	\_\_\_\_ dance was impacted/influenced by \_\_\_\_.
	+ Inquire about dance:
	I wonder why the choreographer chose \_\_\_\_?
	What dance techniques or movements might be help me express \_\_\_?
	+ Solve choreographic problems: In order to make the performance more \_\_\_, we can try \_\_\_. If we change \_\_\_\_, then maybe \_\_\_.

*Connect learning to ELs’ backgrounds and skills*

* Make connections between dance as a mode of expression with students’ lives
* Highlight contributions and innovations from a variety of cultures
* Facilitate opportunities for dance choices and responses to be explained in student’s home language
* Model respectful analysis of a variety of perspectives

## Use cooperative learning structures and strategies

* Structure opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate ideas when designing dance performances
* Use flexible and fluid grouping of students
* Ask students to “Notice” and “Wonder/Inquire” about dance performances and products together
* Teach “talk moves” so students can engage in academic conversations about dance, e.g., I would like to build on your idea. I have a different idea to share. Can you please clarify what you just said?

## Reduce cognitive load and allow processing time

* Break tasks and prompts into smaller sections and organize texts using bullet points versus complex paragraphs
* Read tasks and texts out loud 
* Use simple sentences and include only details needed to complete the task within reading texts
* Show and explain model and sample products that meet performance expectations
* Provide adequate thinking and processing time, and flexible time frames for completing tasks

*High expectations, asset-based thinking, and a growth mindset are key to student success!*

*Virginia Department of Education 2020*