EDUCATORS GUIDE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020
MERRILL AUDITORIUM
SCHOOL TIME PERFORMANCE, 10:00 AM

Use this guide to help your students anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your live performance experience.

This guide is geared toward teachers of grades 2 – 5.

Supported by:
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**Activities in this study guide connect to Common Core State Standards in Dance, Science, Social Studies, Theatre, and Writing.**

**Educators**, we invite you to share with us what you did in your classroom around this guide or the production! You can email scoleman@portlandovations.org or reach us via Facebook or Twitter.

We want to hear and see what great learning is happening in your classrooms.
ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Viva MOMIX is a collection of pieces of dance and illusion pulled from the MOMIX company’s repertoire, including Botanica, Opus Cactus and Lunar Sea. Botanica is inspired by the four seasons and utilizes spectacular costumes. Opus Cactus brings the landscape of the American Southwest to life while Lunar Sea explores the unique effects of black-light. These pieces are inspired by a number of natural elements – the way animals move, how our brain works, and movement of water. They also invite laughter and wonder as they play with weight and balance, light, and unexpected costumes and props. In Viva MOMIX, as with all of MOMIX’s productions, the costumes, props, lighting and special effects are a particularly important part of the performance and storytelling.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

MOMIX is a company of about 20 dancer-illusionists that was founded by Moses Pendleton in 1980. Mr. Pendleton was born and raised on a dairy farm in Vermont. He received his BA in English Literature from Dartmouth College in 1971 and immediately began touring with Pilobolus, which had grown out of dance classes with Alison Chase at Dartmouth College. In 1980 he was invited to choreograph part of the Closing Ceremonies for the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York. Pendleton performed a solo called MOMIX, short for “Moses Mix”, and chose the same name for the company he started that year. In addition to performing world-wide, MOMIX has worked in film and television. MOMIX presents works that combine acrobatics, dance, gymnastics, mime, props, and film in a theatrical setting. The company continues to tour across the United States and internationally.

PHOTO: Max Pucciarello
Things to know before the performance

1. WHAT IS DANCE?

Dance is “the movement of the body in a rhythmic way, usually to music and within a given space, for the purpose of expressing an idea or emotion, releasing energy, or simply taking delight in the movement itself.” Dance has been a part of humanity since prehistoric times with evidence that it was first used during rituals and celebrations. Today there are many different types of dance and they are most simply divided into two categories; theatrical dance, which is performed for an audience, or participatory social dance, which is meant to be danced in social settings. Theatrical dance styles in the United States include Ballet, Jazz, Tap and Modern. Participatory social dance includes Contra Dance, Breakdancing, and Swing Dance. Archeologists can trace the presence of dance to over 9,000 years ago. Dance is an integral part of the culture of different countries and ethnicities. In Maine, the Wabanaki people utilize dance at ceremony and as a form of storytelling. The Irish, Scottish and French-Canadian immigrants brought what is now known as Contra Dance. And then there is the movement you do in your living room to that song you love. That’s dance too!

2. HOW DO CHOREOGRAPHERS CREATE DANCE?

Choreographers are the artists who create the movement and sequence of movement for a performance of dance. Like all artists, choreographers have a variety of different ways that they create dance. They might be inspired by a piece of music, an idea, an emotion, a type of movement, or a story they want to tell. Or they might begin by improvising movement to discover what they like. As they create the dance they think about how the individual movement looks on each dancer’s body and how it looks in the space all together. They might be interested in having patterns in their dance (where a type of movement returns over and over) or creating movement that makes the viewer feel happy or sad. Once the choreography is completed the choreographer often partners with a Lighting and Costume Designer to think about the total visual experience. Lights and costumes add other elements of storytelling to the choreography. MOMIX Art Director Moses Pendleton believes inspiration for his productions can come from anywhere. “When you go to make dance,” says Pendleton, “you don’t necessarily begin to make the dance in the dance studio. You might find it in the desert, or in the ball park . . . or maybe watching the sunflowers.” “You have got to use your imagination, and in our shows, we try to create what I call ‘optical confusion,’ designed to excite the brain cells and stimulate creativity.”
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

3. WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF DANCE?

Body, Action, Time, Space and Energy are the five elements, or building blocks, of dance. (National Core Arts Standards).
- **Body** is the tool or material through which the art of dance is created. It can take on different shapes and patterns. It can utilize the entire body or just a section – like one hand.
- **Action** is human movement or the how of dance – slide, hop, shake, jump, roll, crawl, walk, run.
- **Space** is where the dancer moves. Movement might be described in space by its level (high, low), direction (forward, sideways), or relationship (in front of, behind).
- **Time** is the length or pace of a movement or a series of movements. Movement might be short, long, slow, or fast.
- **Energy** is inspiration for the force utilized in movement. Energy is often describe by its quality – flowing, tight, swinging, smooth, or sharp.

Additional Resources on page 10.

4. WHAT IS THE PHYSICS OF DANCE?

Dance, bodies moving through space, involves physics. The concepts of velocity, momentum, gravity, energy, and force all play important parts in how dancers execute their movements. Dancers have to know how to control their weight and mass in order to move, stop, and find balance. While we might not think about how and why we move on a daily basis, force and motion are a part of our everyday – and are especially a part of dancers’ work.

Additional Resources on page 10.

5. WHAT IS NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION?

About 60 - 70% of the way we communicate with others is through non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is using eye contact, facial expression, gesture, posture, and distance between people to share information. Some of this communication is conscious, meaning it was intended, other times it is subconscious, meaning we might not be aware of it. Like verbal language, non-verbal language is different from culture to culture. For example, in many Asian countries pointing with one finger is considered rude instead they gesture toward something with their entire hand. In the United States, we clap to show appreciation while in Spain people clap to call for wait staff at a restaurant.
DANCE ACROSS CULTURES

Dance looks different throughout the world. Inspired by the geographic area, country, culture or individuals you might be learning about in Social Studies, Science or a book you are reading learn more about dance in those places. Invite students to investigate what type of dance is/was popular, how it connects to the geography or culture of a place or person.

Additional Resources on page 10

Social Studies Standards: History
Visual & Performing Arts Standards (Dance): E1: The Arts and History and World Cultures

WORKING TOGETHER

Partnering is an important part of dance, and collaboration. A simple way to begin practicing partner work is through a mirroring activity. Invite your students to stand across from each other and make eye contact. Select one person to lead first. The leader will slowly begin moving and the other student will follow, mirroring their movement. This is a silent activity. The goal of this activity is to make it so someone watching the pair cannot tell who is leading. After a few minutes have the other student lead. Challenge students to see if they can change leadership back and forth without talking or gesturing the switch. After the activity, ask your students to reflect. Which did you prefer: leading or being led, and why? What strategies did you and your partner use to work together successfully? What are some of the skills you practiced that a dancer might need to use onstage during a performance?

For more ways to use this activity in your classroom, check out:
https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/mirrors.

As a follow up activity try People to People:
https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/content/people-people

Visual & Performing Arts Standards (Dance): B3: Solving Challenges E5: Interpersonal Skills
PRE-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES
Ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes

THE PHYSICS OF DANCE
As appropriate, review vocabulary and concepts around force and motion. Challenge students to observe certain concepts in practice as they watch MOMIX: Viva MOMIX. Back in the classroom, have students share out – verbally and physically – how they saw the concepts in action.

Next Generation Science Standards: Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions (PS2-1, PS2-2)

PARTS OF A THEATER
MOMIX will perform in Merrill Auditorium, Portland’s largest performing arts theater. It was built in 1912, renovated in 1997, and can seat 1,908 people. Share the Theater Diagram (on page 17) with students so they can be familiar with the different parts of the space. Challenge students to accurately name as many parts of the theater when they arrive at Merrill Auditorium.

Additional Resources on page 17.

Social Studies Standards: Civics and Government

PHOTO: Max Pucciarello
POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES

Ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to reflect on students’ experiences attending MOMIX: Viva MOMIX. Feel free to modify the complexity of the questions for your grade level.

1. Think back to the performance. Take a moment to visualize what you watched. What did you see? What do you remember most strongly about the dance? How did it make you feel?
2. Pick one of the pieces, then turn to a classmate and describe the piece as if they had not seen it. How did the dancers move? What did their costumes look like? How did the lighting and sound create the mood of the piece? What was the emotion or story it expressed?
3. What natural elements did you see onstage? How did you see these elements shown through dance and illusion?
4. A reflection movement. All together have the students do a part of a movement they saw onstage. Give them a moment to recall one and then have everyone stand and do it in their own space.
5. Where else do you see dance in your life? How do you participate in dance? (Tip: Everyone is a dancer – from weddings to dance class.)

SHOW DON’T TELL

Invite your students to write about the dance they watched as a way to practice descriptive writing. The goal is to write the most detailed retelling of one of the pieces, or even just a moment of one piece. The description should include how the dancers moved along with descriptions of the costumes, lighting and sound. For younger students, invite them to write a few descriptive sentences and draw a picture that captures the mood of the dance piece. It is helpful for students to be excited about what they describe. You might allow students to pick their own piece but challenge them to pick a piece that is intended for performance. In Additional Resources on page 10, there is a link to the Viva MOMIX video preview to jog everyone’s memory, a list of ways to describe movement, and an example of excellent, descriptive dance writing.

Anchor Standards for Writing: 3, 4
Visual & Performing Arts Standards (Dance): DI: Aesthetics and Criticism
POST-PERFORMANCE LESSON ACTIVITIES
Ideas for lesson activities that expand on the essential questions, topics, and themes

DANCE IN THE CLASSROOM*
Create dance in your classroom. Here are three different, low-risk ways to create a movement piece with your students. These are great non-traditional assessment approaches. Use the Creating Dance in the Classroom guide on page 15 for all three approaches.

MOVE LIKE SCIENCE
Create a dance or represent the movement of a science concept you are studying. That might include the water cycle, the life cycle of a plant, states of matter, mitosis, the scientific method, currents, kinetic energy, etc. This is a challenge to invite students to non-verbally communicate their knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and concepts. After they share out, invite the class to reflect on how did each group show the vocabulary/concept? How were they different or similar to others? How does this help you understand the vocabulary/concept more deeply?

Next Generation Science Standards: Dependent on content
Visual & Performing Arts Standards (Dance): B2, B3, C1

MOVE LIKE WORDS
Create a dance that illustrates a poem, short narrative or event. Challenge students to summarize the words through movement, meaning not everything has to be concretely show. With the text in hand invite them to select 2 - 6 key words (actions or emotions) that they create movement to, then put together to create a dance. After they share out, invite the class to reflect on what was the emotion of the piece? What parts of the story or poem did you see represented through movement? How did the dance help expand on what the written text means to you?

Anchor Standards for Writing: 3, 4

CREATE AN ORIGINAL DANCE
Invite students to create a dance inspired by a selection of words that describe movement. Each student or pair/group should pick out 5-10 action verbs, 2 emotions, and at least 3 Elements of Dance as the ingredients for their dance. After they share out, invite the class to reflect on what parts of the piece were memorable, and why? What different types of movement and emotions did they see? How did they see the piece incorporate the Elements of Dance?


*Dance in the Classroom is also an in-class workshop series that Portland Ovation’s Offstage program offers. If you are interested in this opportunity please email scoleman@portlandovations.org
RESOURCES

DANCE ACROSS CULTURES
Mackrell, Judith R. “Dance.” Encyclopedia Britannica

“Dance Toolkit Collection.” KET Education
www.ket.org/education/collections/dance-toolkit/

“Dance Resources: Curriculum.” NSW Department of Education

ELEMENTS OF DANCE

KQED Arts. Elements of Dance. 2015
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGuD9Geeb2k.

SHOW DON’T TELL
Viva MOMIX trailer:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JIlbXK_5Xo

How to Describe Dance: A List of Action Verbs (page 16)
Writing about Dance: Examples (page 17)

FORCE AND MOTION
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Us0cl29aITw

“Outreach & Education: Physics & Dance.” The Charleston Ballet
www.thecharlestonballet.com/Outreach-Education/Physics-Dance/default.aspx

RESOURCES

GET DANCING! MOVE LIKE SCIENCE
The Dance of the Butterflies lesson plan, United Arts Council

The Dance of the Plant, United Arts Council

Performance example of students dancing their life cycle of a plant, Gardens for Humanity:

“Science In Motion.” Science Friday, 10 Aug. 2018
www.sciencefriday.com/segments/science-in-motion/

DANCE IN THE CLASSROOM
ArtsEdge. “Dance Resources.” The Kennedy Center
artedge.kennedy-center.org/themes/arts-resources-dance.

“Dance.” PBS LearningMedia
https://mainepublic.pbslearningmedia.org/subjects/the-arts/dance/


PORTLAND OVATIONS
Founded in 1931, produces dynamic performing arts events including classical music, jazz, opera, dance, theater, and Broadway. We believe that cultural enrichment should be high quality and accessible to all. Ovations collaborates with other nonprofit organizations, education systems, and the business sector to promote lifelong learning while celebrating the power and virtuosity of the performing arts. We bring the exhilaration of the performing arts into our communities with free events as part of Ovations Offstage, connecting artists and audiences. Join us at unexpected “art happenings,” classroom workshops, masterclasses, community discussions, and pre-performance lectures to explore together the relevance and connection of the performing arts to our lives.

THEATER ETIQUETTE
Audience members play a special and important role in the performance. The performers are very aware of the audience while they perform and each performance calls for different audience responses. Lively bands, musicians and dancers may desire audience members to clap and move to the beat. Other performers require silent focus on the stage and will want an audience to applaud only when they have completed a portion of their performance. As your students enjoy the show, invite them to think about being a part of the performance.

• What are the differences between attending a live performance and going to a movie or watching television?
• What are some different types of live performances? How many can you name?
• What kind of responses might an audience give to different types of performances?
• What are the different cues that a performer will give you so that you know how to respond? For example, might they bow or pause for applause?

Also, remember that a theater is designed to magnify sound and even the smallest whispers or paper rustling can be heard throughout the auditorium. Each person is a part of a community of audience members and we all work together to create your theater experience.
LOCAL CONNECTIONS

- Portland Dance Month (annually in October)
  https://www.portlanddancemonth.com/

- Bates Dance Festival
  https://www.batesdancefestival.org/

- Portland Ballet
  https://www.portlandballet.org/

- Maine State Ballet
  https://www.mainestateballet.org/

DANCE STUDIOS

- Portland Youth Dance
  http://portlandyouthdance.org/

- The Living Room (Portland)
  http://thelivingroomdance.com/

- Casco Bay Movers
  http://www.cascobaymovers.com/

- Drouin Dance
  http://drouindancecenter.com/
1. **Introduce the lesson** using language that makes dance feel accessible. That might include “we are going create a series of movements that represent different ideas.” Remind your students that dance is for everyone. While some people might pursue it as a hobby or profession, we all have bodies and bodies have been dancing for thousands of years.

2. **Set up perimeters to make the room and students safe.** Knowing your classroom and students that might range from being clear that students are to stay in their own space and not touch each other to inviting them to find a standing space in the room that they feel comfortable. You might choose to move the furniture to the side or use a different location in the school.

3. **Decide on groupings.** In advance, decide if you want students to create the movement individually, in pairs, or small groups (4 is often a good maximum group size). Students can create movement from sitting in their seats, standing next to their desks, or in their own space around the room. This will be determined based on your curriculum objects and how you know your students work well.

4. **Warm up.** Being aware of the body and how it moves is important to model. Lead your students in a quick warm up. That could include simple movements such as stretching to the sky, gently circling their heads, and shaking out their arms and legs.

5. **Music.** Pick music students likely will not be familiar with. Music without words or from different cultures is often successful. Students might want to dance to a song they know – save that for a warm up, cool down or energy release.

6. **Building movement.** Have students think about how the vocabulary, concept or idea might be translated into movement. Encourage them to try it out rather than think about it. Remind them that like anything we do physically it will not feel comfortable the first time around. Keep going!

7. **Putting it together.** If you plan for students to share a “final” version, have them put together the movements in an order. For content or narrative specific pieces, there will be a clear order for purely artistic pieces they can decide on the order themselves.

8. **Making it more interesting.** Invite students to incorporate the elements of dance to change the pace, add repetition, change the spatial relationship between dancers, add in a different type of energy, change the level, etc. It doesn’t have to be a linear narrative.

9. **Sharing it out.** Depending on your group, you might have students share out their performance “at the front of the room” with a clear stage and audience. Or, you might have students sit where they created the pieces and watch each piece in a more casual set up.

10. **Watch and reflect.** Invite the audience to look and listen. Reflect on what was seen. What types of movement did you see? What do you infer based on what you saw?

11. **Final Reflection.** Have a discussion or invite students to respond in writing to the experience. What was your experience using movement? What did you enjoy? What did you find challenging?
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Below are examples of how dance writer Deborah Jowitt describes dance to readers. Notice the different ways that she describes what she sees and how the bodies move.

“Catherine Hurlin and Aran Bell, leading the rest of the cast in the first movement, gesture longingly toward each other. He shows off for her.”

“Three of the women shake their shoulders to suit the staccato arpeggios of the music. All five of them scamper away.”

“They hold hands and strut on pointe, quite flirty, but also jump several times in a row.”

“Often the others pose as a group, wait, and stare into the distance.”


“You may imagine a sail when hidden dancers hold up a piece of fabric just so, or think of a playground when two guys swing Christina Sahaida high.”

“...three men, supine with their legs together and their arms plastered to their sides, scootch along on their backs.”

“Nine dancers dressed alike in strappy black leotards stand in a line set on a slight diagonal on one side of the stage. They all (Karlie Budge, Estrada, Jr., Garrison, Grant, Loux, Laurel Lynch, McMurray, Minga Prather, and Sabella) hold fans—blue on one side and silver on the other. Almost immediately, Loux breaks away—rolls away— from the others and begins a solo.”


Jowitt also uses a lot of simile and metaphor in her writing to help make connections to the stories and themes of a dance. These are about pieces choreographed by Merce Cunningham.

“...they clear the stage for his solos like chickadees fluttering off when a blue jay arrives.”

“You imagine him twiddling the dials of a fantastic machine. Or, wait, perhaps he’s conducting an orchestra.”
We want to know what you thought about the performance you watched! You may write and/or draw pictures.

**PERFORMANCE:** MOMIX: *Viva MOMIX* – February 7, 2020

**SCHOOL NAME:** ____________________________ **TEACHER NAME:** ____________________________

**YOUR NAME:** ______________________________________________ **GRADE:** ____________________________

What did you really like about the performance? Why did you like that part? (If you want to draw a picture, do so on the back of this piece of paper.)

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What was something that you learned, discovered or felt during the performance?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What would you like to tell other students about the performance?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Please print your name below to give Portland Ovations permission to use your comments in future promotions. Thank you!

Print Your Name Here
TEACHER RESPONSE FORM

Please take a few moments to fill out and return this form after the performance. Your response to our School-Time Performance Series helps us plan for the future. Feel free to include any comments from class discussion or activities related to the performance as well!

PERFORMANCE: MOMIX: Viva MOMIX - February 7, 2020

TEACHER NAME: ___________________________ GRADE(S) OF STUDENTS: ___________________________

SCHOOL NAME: ___________________________ CITY/TOWN: ___________________________

EMAIL ADDRESS: ___________________________

1. From your perspective as a teacher, how would you rate the performance? Please select one.
   □ Excellent  □ Very Good  □ Good  □ Fair  □ Poor

2. What made this a valuable experience for your students? (If it wasn’t, what can we do better?)

3. What was your primary reason for choosing to bring your student to MOMIX: Viva MOMIX?
   Please select one.
   □ I wanted my students to experience a live performance
   □ The performance fits with my curriculum goals.
   □ The date and time of the performance fit our schedule.
   □ The ticket price is affordable.
   □ Other (please specify):

4. How did this live performance connect to or enhance your curriculum?

5. Did you use the Educator Guide before or after attending the performance?
   □ Yes  □ No

6. Why or why not?

7. What improvements could we make to the Educators Guide to serve you and your classroom better?

MAIL RESPONSES TO: Ovations Offstage 50 Monument Sq, 2nd Fl. Portland, ME 04101
EMAIL SCANNED RESPONSES TO: offstage@portlandovations.org
8. How would you rate the following components of attending the School-Time Performance?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reserving &amp; paying for tickets</td>
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<td>Communication about the day of the performance</td>
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<td>Arrival at the venue</td>
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<td>Departure from the venue</td>
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</table>

9. What types of performances would you like to bring your students to in the future? (Feel free to share art forms, topics/themes, specific artists, etc.)?

10. A number of generous individuals and organizations make it possible for Portland Ovations to offer these School-Time Performance tickets at extremely discounted rates. Is there anything you’d like them to know in terms of your experiences or its impact on your students?