



SEASON 43:
PERSPECTIVE

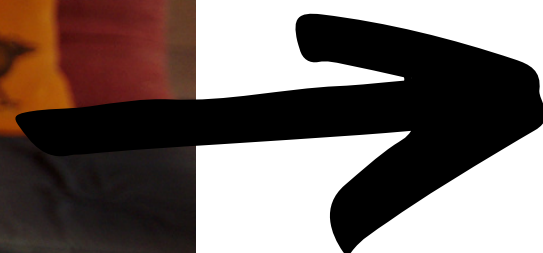
Week 2

DANCE

DISCUSSION



HUBBARD STREET
EDUCATION + COMMUNITY
PROGRAMS



As part of our virtual presentation of Season 43, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago has created a series of multi-media study guides exploring dance choreography and performance in practice. These guides are designed for middle and high school students and contain videos, discussion questions, activity prompts, and pre-recorded lessons. These Dance Discussions are designed to stand alone or accompany the dance films in our virtual season as we invite you to CONNECT, EXPLORE, CREATE, AND RESPOND.

LET'S GO!

This is



WEEK

1

CONNECT: INFERENCE

WEEK

2

EXPLORE: DANCE AS TEXT - CHARACTER TRAITS

WEEK

3

CREATE AND RESPOND: CHOREOGRAPHY & CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

PERSPECTIVE

HOW DO WE
UNDERSTAND
PERSPECTIVE AS
VIEWERS AND
CREATORS?

Perspective: A particular attitude toward or way of regarding something; a point of view.



Each of the dance films presented this season explore ideas of perspective and storytelling. Who tells our stories; who sees our stories; how we each experience events. Each Dance Discussion gives students an opportunity to change their perspective as we explore these elements in performance and choreography - let's Connect, Explore, Create, and Reflect.

A NOTE FOR OUR TEACH ERS



Essential Questions

Using dance vocabulary, how can we communicate a character trait by strategically combining movement concepts in our choreography?

Enduring Understandings

Dance has a vocabulary.

The choices we make with movement can communicate an idea (choreographer perspective)

Meaning can be interpreted and inferred from viewing movement - audience perspective.

Residency Objectives

Students will know ...

That dance can be improvisation or choreography.

That dance has sequence and transitions.

That dance communicates.

That dance has roles: choreographer, audience, and performer.

Students will be able to ...

Embody dance vocabulary.

Create a dance with a sequence and transitions.

Create a dance that demonstrates choreographic purpose.

Identify dance vocabulary.

CONNECT: HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN PERFORMANCE?

STORIES, STAGE,
AND SCREEN



Whether we're discussing Hamlet or Harry Potter, the best stories are not just about an interesting series of events: they're about characters. Great character development draws an audience by giving them strong characters with whom they can identify.

In this Dance Discussion, we will explore how we identify the elements of character, beginning with written stories and then transferring those skills and knowledge to creating an understanding character in performances, both with and without spoken text.

If this is your first Dance Discussion, you may want to review [Narrative In Dance](#) prior to diving in.

EXPLORE: VOCABULARY

* Character Traits

- Character traits are all the aspects of a person's behavior and attitudes that make up that person's personality. Character traits are often adverbs and adjectives that tell us who the character is - their actions, their feelings, their relationship to others.

* Antagonist/ Protagonist

- Antagonist and protagonist characters are common in many stories. Antagonists are the character who opposes the protagonist, often a villain; while the protagonist is the main character, often a hero.

* Character Arc

- A character arc is simply a distilled summary of the journey of a character over the course of a story.
- If a story has a character arc, the character begins as one sort of person and gradually transforms into a different sort of person in response to changing developments in the story.

EXPLORE: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN TEXT



I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter

Most of us begin our study of character development at school, with stories and sentences. Language and text are comfortable, they make up our days. As we begin to transfer that skill of understanding character to the idea of performance as text, let's review the process with this selection from Chicago author Erika L. Sánchez's *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. As you read this text, note the adjectives and adverbs that create a picture of each character. What does the text tell you and what can you infer about how they are moving, feeling, and responding in this moment?

"While I stare at my chewed-up nails and sink deeper into this floppy green couch, I hear Amá wailing. She really throws her body into it, too. "Mija, mija!" she screams as she practically climbs inside the casket. Apá doesn't even try to pull her off. I can't blame him, because when he tried to calm her down a few hours ago, Amá kicked and flailed her arms until she gave him a black eye. I guess he's going to leave her alone for now. She'll tire herself out eventually. I've seen babies do that.

Apá has been sitting in the back of the room all day, refusing to speak to anyone, staring off into nothing, like he always does. Sometimes I think I see his dark mustache quivering, but his eyes stay dry and clear as glass.

I want to hug Amá and tell her it's going to be okay, even though it's not and never will be, but I feel almost paralyzed, like I'm underwater and made of lead. When I open my mouth, nothing comes out. Besides, Amá and I haven't had that kind of relationship since I was little. We don't hug and say, "I love you," like on TV shows about boring white families who live in two-story houses and talk about their feelings. She and Olga were practically best friends, and I was the odd daughter out. We've been bickering, drifting away from each other for years. I've spent so much of my life trying to avoid Amá because we always end up arguing over stupid, petty things. We once fought about an egg yolk, for instance. True story."

WORKSHEET

UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN TEXT

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

In the space below, note the adjectives, adverbs, and other elements that help you understand the character in the passage above.

What does the character feel in this passage?

How do you know what the character is feeling?

PERFORMANCE AS TEXT

We are used to having words and text to tell us about characters. What can we notice when we turn the sound off? Watch section 2:30 - 3:30 of the play *Feast* first muted and then with sound, by [Albany Park Theater Project](#) and then answer the questions below.



Character Development

- What kind of gestures do you see each character make?
- What does the interaction between the characters tell you about their relationship? Did your understanding change when you watched with the sound on? Why or why not?

WORKSHEET

UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN DANCE

DANCE VOCABULARY

Chose one dancer. In the space below, note the energetic qualities of that dancer that help you understand their character in the clip above. You can review these terms at the end of this document as needed.

What character traits do you think the dancer is portraying in this clip?

What movement evidence did you find to support this?



Now let's shift our experience. In dance there often is no text, written or spoken, to guide our understanding. What other elements can help us understand character and relationship in this piece by RE Dance Group, Abbot & Viv? You may watch the entire piece or focus on section 4:40 - 5:10



Character Development

- What does the setting add to your understanding of these characters?
- What do you know about these characters? How do you know it?
- What are three adjectives that would describe these characters?

PERF
ORMA
NCE
AS
TEXT

PERFORMANCE AS TEXT



As we remove the elements of setting, we rely on gesture, staging, and choreography to provide character clues.

Character Development

- What dance elements contribute to your knowledge of character in this piece? (number of dancers, movement quality of each, contact/space between dancers, tempo, etc)
- How would you narrate this dance?



TRY AND LEARN

ACTIVITY



Your turn. Let's try creating a character through movement. If you are new to choreography or would like to review choreographic concepts for character development, check out these video lessons before beginning the assignment on the next page.

CREATE: TEXT TO MOVEMENT



→ Re-read the excerpt from *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* on page 6 and look at the three adjectives you chose to describe one of the characters. **01**

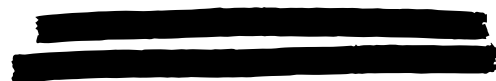
→ Create a gesture or movement for each of the three adjectives. What gestures might this character use to create an understanding of themselves or their relationship to another character? How does the transfer of language to movement create a more abstract idea of character? **02**

→ Refine your gestures and character understanding by creating a movement phrase for this character. How does your character move - Fast or Slow? Heavy or light? Sharp or smooth? Refine your gestures with this understanding and put them together into a phase with a beginning and ending shape. **03**

REFLECTION



*How do movement and gesture
affect our understanding of a
character?*



Works Cited

“Character Arc.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 15 Jan. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Character_arc.

MasterClass. “How to Write a Captivating Character Arc - 2021.” MasterClass, MasterClass, 8 Nov. 2020, www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-captivating-character-arc#quiz-0.

Sanchez, Erika L. *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. Alfred A. Knopf, an Imprint of Random House Children's Books, 2017.

Choreographic Devices

Canon
Repetition
Retrograde
Expansion/Diminution
Accumulation
Transposition

Choreographic Forms

ABA
Rondo
Theme and Variation
Narrative
Pattern
Abstract
Call and Response

BODY

Parts head, neck, shoulders, arm, wrists, elbows, hands, fingers, hips, pelvis, trunk, spine, stomach, sternum, ribs, legs, knees, feet, toes, heels, ankles, etc.

Relationships over, under, around, through, above, below, between, beside, near, far, in, out, together, apart, connected, etc.

Shapes straight, curved, angular, twisted, symmetrical, asymmetrical

Balance off balance, on balance

ENERGY

Force sharp, smooth, shaky, swingy

Weight strong, light, active, passive

Flow free, bound

SPACE

Place personal, shared

Size big, medium, small

Level high, medium, low

Direction forward, back, right, left, up, down

Pathway curved, straight, zigzag

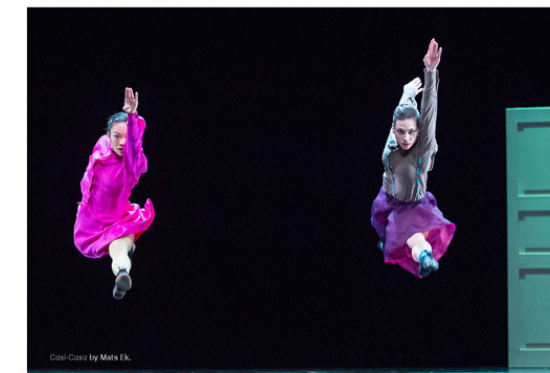
Focus single, multi

TIME

Speed fast, medium, slow

Rhythm pulse, pattern, grouping, breath

All photos by Todd Rosenberg.



Standards Addressed

National Core Arts Standards

DA:Cr2.1.3b Develop a dance phrase that expresses and communicates an idea or feeling. Discuss the effect of the movement choices.

DA:Cr2.1.4b Develop a dance study that expresses and communicates a main idea. Discuss the reasons and effectiveness of the movement choices.

DA:Cr2.1.5b Develop a dance study by selecting a specific movement vocabulary to communicate a main idea. Discuss how the dance communicates nonverbally. TH:Cr1.1.3c Collaborate to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story and given circumstances in drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.4c Imagine how a character might move to support the story and given circumstances in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr1.1.5c Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact the story and given circumstances in a drama/ theatre work.

MU:Pr4.2.3 Demonstrate understanding of the structure in music selected for performance.

MU:Pr4.2.4 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, and form) in music selected for performance.

MU:Pr4.2.5 Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance.

Common Core Standards

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events. ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.5 Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.5 Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.



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Hubbard Street Dance Chicago Education & Community Programs

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