

## FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE ELEMENTS OF MOVEMENT

### **Body**

- Whole body
- Body half: upper and lower, left and right
- Cross-lateral: left upper-body and right lower-body
- Isolated body parts: head, shoulders, ribs, hips, legs

### **Shape**

- Frozen shapes the body makes (poses)
- Group shapes (tableau)
- Connected shapes: direct (connected by direct physical contact) or implied (connected by focus)
- Organic shapes (rounded or zigzag undefined shapes) or geometric shapes (circles, squares)
- Symmetrical and asymmetrical

### **Movement**

- Locomotor (movements that travel): gallop, leap, jump, run, skip, walk, hop, sneak, slither, crawl, roll
- Non-locomotor (movements that don't travel): spin, kick, gesture, twist, float, push, pull, wiggle
- Discipline/form specific moves, for example in ballet: chassé, pirouette, arabesque, tendue, chaine
- Movements that express ideas, objects, or emotions

### **Space**

- Place: self space and general space
- Direction: forward, backward, side to side, up, down
- Level changes: high, medium, low
- Pathways: straight, circular, zigzag
- Relationships: through, over, under, on, off, behind
- Focus: direct (reciprocated eye contact) and indirect (indicated with eye contact or body part)
- Spatial formations: staggered, diagonal, straight, circle, semi-circle, square
- Range of motion: big, small, and the in between

### **Force**

- Quality of dynamics: sharp, sudden, smooth, sustained, abrupt, graceful, attack, fluid, vibratory
- Flow: free flow and bond flow
- Weight: light, heavy, grounded, airy

### **Time**

- Tempo: fast, moderate, slow
- Rhythm: pulse, pattern, breath
- Music: instrumental or with lyrics
- Text: moving to the pacing of words
- Meter: triple, duple



## Take-Aways

The dance elements are the tools by which a dancer communicates and are evident in all disciplines/forms of dance (ballet, jazz, modern, tap, hip-hop, contemporary, folk, cultural dances). How is it then that dance can be categorized into different disciplines/forms? The elements are used very differently in each dance discipline/form and impact the audience in different ways. For example, the use of space by a ballerina is long, high and vertical. Ballerinas can be seen extending their legs above their head, leaping high in the air, and demonstrating exceptionally straight posture. In contrast, a break dancer will stay grounded to the floor, upside down on their head, and will twist and curve their spine.

How would you describe the use of force in ballet? What dance discipline/forms have you observed or experienced? How would you compare and contrast that dance discipline/form with ballet? How does the use of the elements communicate different expressions to an audience? Do you think ballet breaks its convention and uses the elements in a new way?

Before watching the ballet performance, make predictions about how you think the dance elements will be used. During the performance observe and make mental notes about how the dance elements were used and how this impacted you as an audience member. What was communicated? After the performance, share observations in a group. When observations contradict, make arguments of how the dance elements were used based on evidence of what you saw.