

The Use of an Analytic Framework to Scaffold Student Writing in an Online Dance Course

Rhonda Cinotto, Matthew Henley, and Jennifer Salk

In this chapter, we describe three strategies we adopted to help students in an online dance appreciation course develop the ability to write about dance with specificity and clarity. The course begins by having students develop a specific lexicon to describe dance. We scaffold the use of that lexicon into increasingly complex writing tasks and provide opportunities for students to embody course concepts as a way to enrich their writing. We believe that these strategies give students the tools to support the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of complex choreography with specific, clear, and appropriate descriptions of the dance.

Dance is particularly difficult to write about, given its ephemeral form. It is challenging enough for an accomplished professional to view a fully staged dance work and speak with clarity about what dance critic Marcia Siegel describes as “the overwhelming complexity of stimuli that constitutes the experience of watching a dance” (1991). This problem is compounded in novices, who, because of their unfamiliarity with the forms and structures of dance, tend to write in generalities about what they see. Julie Malnig claims this difficulty stems from “students not trusting their ability to apprehend the work *for what it is*” (2009). When initially tasked with the development of an online, general education, dance appreciation course, we wanted to design a curriculum that provided students with dance-based content knowledge in order manage this complexity and help them develop what is referred to as dance literacy (Dils, 2007; Eisner, 1998; Giroux, 1992; McCutchen, 2006). Tina Curran et al. define dance literacy as “the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and analyze; using spoken language, written materials, and symbolic systems associated with varying [dance] contexts” (Curran, Gingrasso, Megill, & Heiland, 2011). In order to develop the students’ dance literacy, the original course design focused on the delivery of content: analytical frameworks for viewing dance, explanations of compositional devices, suggestions for writing dance criticism, tools for addressing aesthetics and bias, and other content areas important for the development of dance literacy.

As we began teaching the course, however, we found the students did not

have the skills to accomplish the writing tasks we were assigning. The course was delivering the content of an analytic framework, for instance, but the students did not know how to “convert the workaday terms [of that framework] into more subtle and expressive words” (Siegel, 1991) in order to describe the dances they were watching with specificity and clarity. A significant portion of the course-work was redesigned to focus on developing the skill of constructing specific descriptions from the continuous and ephemeral flow of dance movements in the choreography they were viewing. This chapter will outline how the curriculum in the course elicits quality writing in students new to the art form by reviewing three broad strategies. The first is to begin the course by having the students develop a specific lexicon to describe the movement they are seeing. The second is to scaffold the students’ experience of watching dance so that they can apply their lexicon to increasingly complex dance phrases. The third is to intentionally introduce creative activities throughout the course that allow students to have embodied experiences of the course content. These strategies have been successful in helping students in this online course learn how to write with maturity about dance through a variety of lenses.

Establishing a Lexicon

Lesson 1 introduces the students to a framework through which they learn a common language to write about dance. The development of a shared representational system through which the qualities of a dance are encoded and decoded allows individuals to perceive, conceive, and represent their experience of dance (Curran et al., 2011). A variety of symbolic systems exist for representing dance, but as this is an introductory course, we chose not to teach a specified notation system. Rather, we develop students’ skills in using the English language to describe dance. We find that the majority of students are not prepared to describe human movement with detail and clarity. Their writing requires the development of a unique set of vocabulary and writing skills, or lexicon. Siegel likens a lexicon to, “a list of ingredients out of which the dance is cooked” (1991), and the students need more ingredients.

At the beginning of the course, we introduce the Euro/American system of Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) as an analytic framework to structure students’ perceptions. LMA is a system that provides a comprehensive language to discuss movement from the perspective of four major components: body, shape, space, and effort (Newlove & Dalby, 2004). An online lecture with accompanying visuals delivers detailed explanations and examples of the four components. Of particular use to the students in the development of their dance lexicon is the discussion of action drives (Table 17.1), which are a list of verbs used in LMA to distinguish movement qualities.

Table 17.1. Action drives from Laban Movement Analysis

ACTION	WEIGHT	SPACE	TIME
Float	Light	Indirect	Sustained
Punch	Strong	Direct	Sudden/Quick
Glide	Light	Direct	Sustained
Slash	Strong	Indirect	Sudden/Quick
Wring	Strong	Indirect	Sustained
Dab	Light	Direct	Sudden/Quick
Flick	Light	Indirect	Sudden/Quick
Press	Strong	Direct	Sustained

In an activity embedded in the first lesson, students watch clips of dancers executing a single movement. Students’ attention is directed to the way the body is moving by describing where in the body a movement is happening (body part), what that body part is doing (verb from LMA framework), and the quality of that movement (adverb). They create a detailed written description of what they see by using a body part, verb, and adverb. This is what we call the “three-component description” and it is used throughout the course to encourage students to use vocabulary that creates clear images of what precisely the dancers are doing in the choreography. The use of the LMA lexicon begins to structure students’ perceptions of the movement they are watching as well as the way they describe that movement. In early iterations of the course it was not uncommon for students to submit vague descriptions of simple movements, for instance: “The dancer moved quickly,” or “Her moves were lyrical.” After introducing LMA action drives and the three-component description into the curriculum, we saw a shift in the specificity of student’s writing: “The man’s hand slashed rapidly in the air.” or “The woman’s hip pressed softly out from her body.” To further students’ development of proficiency with the vocabulary, the assignment associated with Lesson 1 asks the students to use the LMA lexicon and three-component description to write a short paragraph about the way they move their bodies during a favorite activity.

From this structured and formulaic approach to description, the course material begins to coax students away from using precise LMA terminology and challenges them to find their own rich and descriptive language, or lexicon, for each dance they view. As Siegel claims, “since all dance is different, all viewing must attempt to start with an open field. We don’t work from a checklist of effort qualities or body parts— or steps in a vocabulary of movement, or anything else. We look at what’s ‘there’—meaning, what claims our attention” (1991). Although the course begins with what Siegel refers to as a “checklist approach,” using LMA and the three-component description we quickly steer students away from the idea that there is one “right answer” when describing a dance. We first model this by having

students watch a short clip of a single movement. For example, the dancer might raise her left arm up and reaches with her fingertips, then return to neutral, arms by her side. The students would read sentences that describe that movement in three different ways:

Your sentence for a clip like this might be: The woman's arm floated softly, **or** The dancer lifted her wrist lightly. **or** The dancer's fingers extended slowly.

The students then practice this in an assignment in which they watch clips of a single movement and then describe each one in three different ways. In an assignment from lesson two, a student wrote these three sentences about a single movement. "The dancer shuffled her foot meticulously." "The woman's foot lackadaisically wiggled about the floor." "The woman casually twisted her ankle to move her foot from ball to heel."

By asking students to incorporate the shared language from the LMA framework when writing specific descriptions of actual movement, the development of a lexicon provides a foundation for further work in understanding, analyzing, interpreting, and discussing dances they view and create as part of the course. It is in the development of a lexicon that students begin to take on the perspectives of dancer, critic, ethnographer, or choreographer (See Appendix for examples).

Scaffolding

Students' tendencies at the start of our course are to make broad, finite statements interpreting or evaluating the dances they have seen. Their interpretations, though, are filled with superficial assumptions rather than deep investigations of the movement. For instance, a student might generalize about a dance, claiming it to be "sexual" or "creepy" without being explicitly aware of what movement qualities lead to those interpretations. Additionally, they are not supporting those general statements with specific evidence in the form of movement descriptions. Therefore, concurrent with the task of developing a dance lexicon, we introduce exercises to channel and focus the students' attention on the relevant features of the dances they are viewing. Course activities incrementally increase the complexity of their observations. This process of scaffolding the course materials creates opportunities for students to describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate dances with a maturity that they might not have achieved on their own (Pea, 2009).

In this scaffolding process, the first task students complete is to view and describe short clips of dancers performing single movements. They are prompted to use three component descriptions (body part, verb, and adverb) to create sentences that are specific about what is happening in the body and how it is happening.

Next, the students watch a clip of slightly longer movement phrases and write more complex descriptions of the choreography. Finally, students watch an even longer clip of choreography and write a paragraph using the three component descriptions to be as specific as possible about what they are seeing (see sample below). As a way to reinforce the idea that there are many ways to view dance, they read and comment on other students' descriptions of the same clip.



She (the woman) gracefully extends one arm to the side and flicks her wrist like a feather. She then directs her attention to her hands as she loudly claps them together and creates a wave-like motion with them. The dancer later slides her foot lightly to meet the other foot and quietly stands motionless. (This clip is available at <https://youtu.be/QxctzPcmNxU>.)

At the beginning of the second lesson, students watch longer excerpts of choreography and write paragraphs describing the dances. Because of the increased duration, the students are prompted to first write sentences that describe the dance in general terms. From there, they construct sentences that utilize the three component descriptions to support their general claims. This develops the skill of using detailed movement descriptions as evidence for more generalized observations.

D-Man in the Waters alternates between seemingly chaotic

moments of scrambling with the stiff militarized posture of the dancers. This balance between catching up and maintaining order creates an unpredictable feeling in a dance that looks highly structured. At one point in the dance the dancers bend their knees quickly and hunch their backs until they get back to the front of the line.

The final activity of the second lesson is a short analytical essay that requires students to compare and contrast two of the dances (See Appendix: Lesson 2). For this assignment, they are asked for the first time to take a clear perspective about the choreography in the form of a thesis statement. The rest of the paper supports the thesis through writing paragraphs that follow the format from the previous activity: starting with general statements about the choreography then supporting those statements with specific three-component descriptions. Students are prompted to revise their writing, ensuring the thesis, general descriptions, specific descriptions as evidence, and any concluding or summary statements are supporting each other and the overall idea of the essay. By week three of the semester, students who are non-dancers are articulating mature perspectives about the dances they are viewing.

Both D-Man in the Waters (Bill T. Jones) and *Walklyndon* (Pilobolus) utilize walking and seemingly un-athletic pedestrian movements as a transition to short explosions of highly athletic, challenging dance choreography.

In both *Heaven* (Rennie Harris) and *Smoke* (Mats Ek), the choreographers used opposing augmented slow movements with disjointed fast movements to illustrate an unpredictable and unsettling theme.

In both *Time for Love* (Keone and Mariel Madrid) and *Desi-hoppers* (Shantanu Maheshwari, Macedon D'Mello and Nimit Kotian), the choreographer put very precise hits in the dance that corresponded exactly with the music even with the smallest beats making the moves stand out even more.

These examples demonstrate students' developing dance literacy in that they avoid broad evaluative or interpretive statements about the dances they are watching. Instead, the students' writing isolates and articulates specific movement qualities that support the students' perceptions of the relationship between the two dances they are analyzing. This assignment prepares students for increasingly complex and challenging assignments later in the course by providing an opportunity to discover how the development of specific movement descriptions both suggest an analytical perspective and can then be used as evidence for that analysis.

Subverting Bloom's Taxonomy

Using the dance lexicon to describe movement with specificity becomes a foundational skill from which more complex analyses, interpretations, and evaluations are built. In one sense, the course follows a traditional model of Bloom's Taxonomy, from knowledge and skill, to comprehension and application, and finally to synthesis and evaluation (Worsnop, 2003). Description of actual bodies moving becomes evidence for analysis of choreographic choices. This analysis in turn becomes the foundation for interpretation and, ultimately, evaluation. This use of the traditional model of Bloom's Taxonomy helps to decrease the occurrence of the extreme, finite evaluations we saw early on in the course.

However, we also intentionally subvert the traditional taxonomy by inserting creative experiences throughout the course as a chance for students to embody the concepts about which they are writing. The students take on varying roles during the course including ethnographer, dancer, critic, and choreographer in order to experience dance through different lenses. Instead of leaving creative experiences as the summation of earlier learning, as Bloom's Taxonomy would suggest, we believe that the opportunity to create provides a formative experience. Early in the course we require the students to take and then write about their experience in a dance class, applying their still developing lexicon. It is important, particularly in dance, that students embody course content and thereby enhance their memory, understanding, application, and other levels of the taxonomy. Here are two descriptions from Week 3 assignment that requires students to attend and write about a dance class.

I attended a Modern class. We spent the majority of the class focusing on close contact with the floor and the idea of heaviness. While lying still on the floor, there was a sense of energy flowing through my whole body as I quietly inhaled and exhaled. With every exhale, my muscles slowly melted into the wooden floor. After few moments of stillness and silence, we gently fell to our right side as our left arm swiftly swept the floor to maintain that contact. We then smoothly rolled back to the center of our backs while making sure our feet remained intact with the floor. To make things symmetrical, we did the same thing to the left side and continued to do right and left sides. I quickly gained momentum as I soothingly moved from left to right while keeping in mind that all of my movements should seem like one continuous motion with no stops in between. Next, we transitioned onto our feet and concentrated on weight distribution of our body parts. As I stood still with my arms held high right by

my ears, I imagined that there was great length coming from the top of my head. Then, I heavily dropped my arms as my head and spine followed the quick momentum. While my arms were falling, my head also had a sense of heaviness, which made the whole movement easier as I didn't assist with any resistance, instead I simply allowed my top half of the body to fall. I enjoyed this class because it reminded me of what distributing weight across the body felt like.

Or

The lyrical/modern class I attended was enlightening because I was able to connect the combination we did in class to the compositional devices and elements of dances we have been learning about. The dance that I learned combined flowing, slow, and still movements with sharp and quick movements. For example, in the beginning of the dance I glided my foot in a circle in front of me gracefully, while simultaneously flicking my arms quickly into the air above me. I also noticed that the movement in the dance was often transposed from facing the front of the room to the back of the room, showing and hiding my face. For example, I stretched my fingers up into the air slowly facing the front of the room as if I was reaching for something, and then fell to the ground forcefully. I then repeated this movement to the back of the room. The teacher talked about finding a connection when we were reaching to the ceiling as if we are so close to having something and then we drop down because we didn't get it. I liked these visuals because I felt like it helped me connect to the piece and portray emotion. I felt as though the teacher wanted to make everyone in the room feel confident in their own ability. The lights were even turned off at end of class to make us feel comfortable in taking risks with the movement we learned.

In these examples, we can see the students relying on their physical and creative experience to craft both general and specific statements about the class. These accounts suggest that the opportunity to learn by doing both deepened the student's understanding of, and provided a personal connection to, the course content. Other creative assignments in the course include the creation of a photo montage as an expression of the student's identity and a choreographic project in which students create, perform, and film a dance which is submitted online (see Appendix: Lesson 5). We find that the inclusion of creative activities throughout the course facilitates students' ability to engage in higher-order thinking with course content.

As an example, a final assignment in the course involves students attending a dance class from a culture other than their own, and writing a paper that takes an ethnographer's perspective about the experience (see Appendix: Lesson 7). These are two students' thesis statements for the assignment: "However, by participating in this Afro-Brazilian Samba class, I realized that the erratic and vigorous dance movements of Samba portrayed the rebellious nature of its people and the connections they had with their gods," and "My experience in the dance leads me to believe that the Guinean dance represents the country's agricultural background, as well as the country's history in colonial resistance and recent artistic repression." These thesis statements demonstrate the students' abilities to integrate their embodied creative experience with concepts from course content in order to articulate mature statements about the relationship between movement and culture.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have described three strategies we adopted to help students in an online dance appreciation course develop the ability to write about dance with specificity and clarity. The course begins by having the students develop a specific lexicon to describe dance, we scaffold the use of that lexicon into increasingly complex writing tasks, and we provide opportunities for students to embody course concepts as a way to enrich their writing. We believe that these strategies give students the tools to support the analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of complex sequences of dance with specific, clear, and appropriate descriptions of the dance.

Within the first few years of teaching the online course, we began to see that student writing improved dramatically, often more so than in courses we taught face-to-face. This has caused us to apply the methods implemented in the online course in a variety of other courses across the curriculum as a way to help all of our students write more articulately about what they are seeing. This focus on dance literacy has led to substantial improvement in student writing across the curriculum. By creating intentional pathways for students to develop their skills in describing dance, requiring use of the movement description as evidence for their analyses, interpretations, and evaluations, and giving them opportunities to be observers, dancers, ethnographers, and choreographers, students are able to generate deep and rich writing about the art of dance.

References

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Appendix

Lesson 2: Assignment Directions

Write an essay that utilizes the following format: Please note that there are high expectations for the Assignments in this course. Please proofread your work carefully for spelling, grammar, and clarity of ideas.

Paragraph 1

Choose two of the dances from the Lesson 02 Viewings. For this paragraph, take a perspective in the form of a thesis statement about how the two relate to each other as you practiced in Part Two of the Lesson 02 discussion forum. That should be the final sentence of the paragraph. The first part of this introductory paragraph should set up the perspective.

Here is a sample introduction: (Please note I am replacing titles with “Dance A and B” and you should use the actual titles from the Lesson 2 viewings)

Although initially I thought Dance A and Dance B were fairly similar because both dances remain relatively close to the floor most of the time, I find the differences in these two dances to be more compelling as they reveal more clearly how opposing the choreographers’ artistic intentions were. The most obvious difference is in how Dances A and B use energy and time. Dance A is incredibly smooth and consistently slow, and the dancers move as if they don’t *have* any bones in their bodies throughout the entire piece. In Dance B there is a lot more variance as the dancers continuously alternate between sudden, sharp pulses in their bodies and soft, languid ripples. After taking some time to consider the meaning of the two dances based on how the bodies were moving, I have come to the conclusion that Dance A is making a comment about the steadfastness of nature, while I

interpret Dance B to be addressing the unpredictability of life.

Notice how the general descriptions of each of the pieces relate to the interpretations that are included on the thesis statement.

It is not necessary to interpret the dances; the thesis can be about movement qualities that the pieces share, how the movement and music go together or don't, or any other myriad observations. The most important objective is that the **thesis statement is very specific**, and that **the rest of the paragraph is related to that perspective**.

Paragraph 2

Describe one of the two dances that you talk about in Paragraph 1. As you practiced in Part One of the Lesson 02 Discussion Forum, you should write two general sentences that describe the entire dance, and then two sentences that each describe a few seconds of choreography that stand out to you including three component descriptions, and that support your general sentences. **Your last sentence of this paragraph should relate to your thesis statement.** For example, you might say:

Dance A utilizes the concept of level well, as it contains many moments where the dancer's bodies appear suspended just above the floor. Throughout the dance, there are also multiple times when an individual dancer will make his or her way across the stage space with such smooth energy, it is as if he or she is moving through molasses. At one point at the start of the piece, a dancer delicately balances her torso on her two hands, elbows firmly bent underneath her stomach, while performing a painstakingly slow extension of her right leg parallel to the floor. Another moment in the dance that stood out to me was when one of the male dancers rotated his body, balancing precariously on one foot by executing a gradual spiral that started from his head and ended with his long leg reaching behind his body in a beautiful arc. When observing the fluidity, closeness to the earth, and consistent use of time in Dance A, one is reminded of the steady yet imperceptible growth of a tree or movement of a glacier.

Paragraph 3

Do the same as above for the second dance you have chosen.

Paragraph 4

Discuss in greater detail how you came to the conclusions that you make in your

thesis statement. You could address other movement qualities that you observed, or additional aspects of the pieces such as music, costumes, lighting, title, etc. Make sure that any observations you make about the pieces support your thesis statement. For example, you might say:

The choreographers for Dance A and Dance B made other choices that strengthen my belief about their artistic intentions. In Dance A, the music was quite calm and cyclical, and it did not have a recognizable melody. The consistency of tones without an easily discernible pattern reminded me of how there is form inside the chaos of the natural world. In Dance B, the lighting alternated haphazardly between being bright while directly on a few dancers, and being more subdued and casting a soft glow on the entire stage. These sudden changes in the look of the stage support my hypothesis that the choreographer was intending to comment on the ways that a person's life can change in an instance. . . .

Paragraph 5

In the final paragraph, discuss the necessary tools for and the benefits of being an active audience member, and how you used those tools to create your thesis statement. Include in your discussion ideas and concepts from Lesson 01 Readings, "The Audience Checklist." Make sure that you refer to the readings directly. For example, you might say:

After carefully examining Dance A and Dance B, I have come to the conclusion that to be an active audience member while watching dance, a person needs to consider the various ways the dancers interact with each other and the stage space. I think that how and where the dancers are placed on the stage gives an audience member a context for understanding the world created by the choreographer. Similarly, the specific qualities present in the interactions between the dancers offers some evidence about what is being communicated. In "The Audience Checklist," Marcia Siegel describes choreography as being a "game" and that an engaged audience member must uncover what he or she thinks the "rules" of that game are. I resonate with this idea as I very much enjoy looking for and discovering patterns, and I plan to continue with that level of engagement whenever I watch dance.

Lesson 5: Assignment Directions

Use the collage that you created in Lesson 05 Discussion Forum to create a short movement study. You will go through several steps to create your study.

Follow these steps:

Part One: Generating movement material

- Using your collage as your source, create a movement inspired by 10 individual images. (You should have at least 10 distinct movements after this step in the process.) Think abstractly and creatively with this step in the process.
- String your image-based movements together, which will require you to memorize the sequence of movements. A viewer should see at least 10 different actions with your body. It should not look like you are making it up as you go along.
- Film yourself doing the 10 movements, include in your film a shot of your collage, and upload your video to YouTube. Follow the directions in Posting Videos to YouTube.

Part Two: Manipulating the movement material

- Once you have the 10 movements memorized, make changes by using at least **four** of the Compositional Devices. For example, if you do a swing of the arm, try transposing that so your study also includes a swing of the leg. Another example would be if you quickly and lightly toss your arms in the air, you could contrast that with a slow press of the air above you. This would demonstrate a change in speed and weight. Note: when you layer in the devices, it will increase the length of your movement material. Consider the ways the compositional tools enhanced your collage. This should be a similar experience.
- Film yourself demonstrating your now **noticeably changed** sequence of movements, and upload the video to YouTube. Follow the directions in Posting Videos to YouTube.

Part Three: Creating the dance and incorporating the concept of collage

- Look back at your collage and think about what it says about you. From the movement material that you have created, pick out what best express-

es the ideas present in your collage. Edit it, make a final version of your movement study, and memorize it.

- When you are confident that you have your movement study memorized, add yet one more layer to demonstrate the concept of collage. Anything that adds another dimension to your study. This could be several clips of music, speaking, costumes, a prop, or another element of your choosing. Consider filming your study in a unique space. Note: filming in a dorm room or living room is not really a unique space, instead try a hallway, a stairwell, or in the woods, etc.

Film your study. Your video study should be **at least** one minute and no longer than three minutes in length. You can also have fun with editing your study on iMovie (<http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/>) or another editing program to experiment with the idea of montage in film; however, this is not required. Then, go to the Post Lesson 05 Assignment YouTube Video Link and **embed all three videos there**. Follow the directions in Posting Videos to YouTube.

Part Four: The written description

- Lastly, you will submit a **detailed** written description of your process **below** that describes how the images of your collage were translated into choreography, the decisions that you made about which compositional devices to use, and how to make one movement transition into the next. Make sure that your description includes vocabulary and concepts from the course, specific descriptions about what your body was doing and three component descriptions. (200 -300 words)

Lesson 7: Assignment

Now you are ready to take a dance class in a cultural dance form that is unfamiliar to you. You will approach this class both as an ethnographer and as a movement artist, an observer and a participant.

- Enroll in a class of your choice. (See below for further guidelines on choosing a class.)
- Once you choose what type of class you are going to take, do some research to learn more about both the dance form and the culture from which it comes. Try a UW Library or Google search for articles or websites. Before you go to the class, you should have some idea of the history and current practice of this dance form and what it means to the cultures that created/dance it.
- After taking the class, answer the following question:

What specifically did participating in a dance form from another culture teach you about that culture?

Think thoughtfully about the above question, and develop a strong and specific perspective or thesis based on a synthesis of your movement experience in the class and your research about the culture of the people who created/dance it.

Here are examples of thesis statements that are specific and would work for this assignment:

“After participating in the East-Indian dance class, I have a deeper understanding of dance as a spiritual practice, and how creating specific gestures with the body enables one to feel a connection with the divine.” Or “The culture of hip-hop dance values individuality, and I was able to have a physical experience of that by all of the moments in the class that required students to make energetic and dynamic choices in their bodies.”

As opposed to thesis statements that are vague:

“After participating in the East-Indian dance class, I have a deeper understanding of how dance is important in that culture.”
Or “The culture of hip-hop dance was revealed to me by taking the class.”

Qualities of evidence: The thesis should be based on and supported by TWO sources of evidence: extrinsic research and intrinsic research.

Extrinsic: This is not a research paper, so we do not expect extensive outside research for this assignment. However, the expectation is that students locate and incorporate respectable sources of information, and offer the reader a thoughtful consideration of culture. (note: the research should NOT be on the history of the dance form, but rather on its cultural significance)

Intrinsic: Consider carefully what evidence from movement is most effective in explaining your thesis. For instance, many social dance forms have fairly basic movements, but complex uses of interpersonal space. If your thesis addresses a connection to community or to a partner, your description should focus more on how you shared space than on recounting the steps you learned. Review the Elements of Dance and Compositional Devices in order to decide and clearly articulate what course concept best illustrates the point you are making. **Remember to always include three component descriptions to add to the specificity about the body.**

Structuring the paper

- Begin your paper by creating an introductory paragraph that names the class you took (style and studio), your general impressions of the class, and then outlines your thesis. See sample thesis statements above.

- The second paragraph should discuss the research you gathered before attending the class and should support your thesis. Remember that this information should address how the dance form reflects the CULTURE of the people who created it, rather than just the history of the dance form. (This is the extrinsic information.)
- The third paragraph should support your thesis and consequently the info you provided in the second paragraph by using three component descriptions of the dance moves you learned in the class and relating them to your research. (By doing this you are combining extrinsic and intrinsic research.) There should be aspects of your research integrated with specific three component descriptions throughout this paragraph.
- Lastly, the concluding paragraph should be a summation of these arguments that specifically points to how the dance class helped better your understanding of the culture.
- Make sure that you cite your sources!
- Finally, please review your work. Are you effectively making the point you were hoping to make?