

## Support Materials:

# AOSA Teacher Education Curriculum Standards

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## Movement / Dance Glossary

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### Historic Terms

**Folk/Ethnic/Traditional Dance:** Dances that have evolved from cultural traditions are broadly referred to as folk or ethnic dance forms. They are learned and transferred between generations orally, and evolve and change over time.

- The term **ethnic dance** generally means dance that is inseparable from its cultural context: it is practiced as part of a combination of other related cultural features, such as ceremonies, feasts, special clothing, music, and certain physical environments. Ethnic dance may be primarily social or ritual in focus, but its movement has been derived as part of the life experience of the originating culture, including the people's work motions, terrain, animals, other physical features of their environment, or the ritual needs of their belief system. These characteristics may be evident only to members of that culture, or the origins may be lost even to them.
- **Folk dance** includes a broad spectrum of social dance styles, many of which have origins in ethnic dance forms but have been adapted over time for performance and for the social enjoyment of people outside of the original cultural context. Some folk dances have been passed down orally from a collective, ethnic source, while others have been entirely choreographed by an individual to fit a piece of music and have then become part of the international folk dance repertoire.

**Ritual Dance:** Ritual dances are ceremonial ethnic dances that are part of the religious practices of a traditional culture. Their purpose is to affect the forces of nature, insuring safety or fecundity of community members, warding off evil and illness, communicating with spirits, initiating the young, preparing for battles, or marking births and deaths, among other functions. These dances are of ancient origins and contain highly symbolic movement material. They are often

accompanied by elemental music from drums, flutes, and voices. Some ritual dances, such as those found in Bali, are accompanied by elaborate percussion orchestras (*gamelans*).

**Classical Dance:** Usually associated with aristocratic environments, classical dance forms are found in many, but not all, world cultures. They are characterized by participation of a select group of dancers who receive highly technical training from an early age. Dances are generally choreographed by an individual dance master, and performances were originally for court or other privileged audiences. Classical dance is a form of art dance, which exists for aesthetic enjoyment and stands outside of the ritual or social/folk dance realms.

**Historical Dance (or Early Dance):** This dance form is of Western European origin, generally from the Renaissance through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and performance of it exists beyond the living memory of present-day professionals: It must be reconstructed from notation or other descriptions. These social dances were learned from dance masters and performed in court functions or enjoyed socially. Historical dance forms include pre-classic dance (pre-dating ballet) court dances from the 17<sup>th</sup> century such as the gigue, gavotte, chaconne, and sarabande, as well as 19<sup>th</sup> century social dances such as the polonaise, polka, waltz, or mazurka.

**Ballet:** This is a concert dance form with origins in European court dances. First reaching professional status in the French court of Louis XIV and later flourishing in the Russian and Italian academies, ballet is based upon a specific movement vocabulary with positions artfully created to show the body at its most architecturally aesthetic. With a turned-out base, taut legs and feet, vertical torso and curved, graceful arms, the quality is ethereal and the thrust is away from the earth, defying gravity. This verticality is accentuated by the use of *pointe* shoes for women. Ballet is the classical dance of European and Euro-American cultures.

**Modern / Post-Modern / Contemporary Dance:** These art dance forms began in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with modern dance.

- **Modern dance** rejected the unnatural and decorative use of the body and the fantasy themes of ballet, and attempted to uncover what was basic and elemental in movement. As exemplified by Isadora Duncan, the new dance, in contrast to ballet, embraced gravity and rediscovered the earth. The pioneers of this new form in the United States (Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Hanya Holm) and in Germany (Mary Wigman and Rudolph Laban) experimented with movement initiated from different sources: these included contraction and release, fall and recovery, and tension and relaxation. For the first time, dance became cerebral and philosophical (e.g.: “Dance is the art of motion, not emotion”). Its themes express many aspects of 20th century life, including psychological relationships and political issues.

- After WW II, **post-modern dance**, as exemplified by Merce Cunningham, worked with abstraction, chance operations, and the independence of dance from music. It was sometimes created for a “site specific” environment, not only for the stage, and often included everyday movement and stillness as part of the choreography. While the music of 20th century composers was most often used, including electronic scores, choreographers chose any or no music or sound. The sets and costumes were often spare or nonexistent. Improvisation was an essential part of the training: often the choreographic process, and sometimes the performance, incorporated improvisation.
- **Contemporary dance** includes influences from all dance forms: modern, post-modern, ballet, and dance forms from many cultures, such a Japanese *butoh*. A return to dramatic dance theater, as exemplified by the work of choreographers such as Pina Bausch, connects contemporary dance with early German and American modern dance.

**Ausdruckstanz:** Based on a German-language term meaning “dance of expression” rather than “expressionist dance,” Ausdruckstanz was a German dance movement that came into prominence after WWI, during a time when there was a constant search for new means of expression in all German art forms. Lead by Mary Wigman (who was to have a significant impact on Carl Orff) and Rudolf Laban, the Ausdruckstanz movement evolved from the pre-WW I German body-culture schools of Mensendieck, Dalcroze, Laban, and Steiner. It was a radical and deliberate departure from ballet and cabaret dance, and evolved alongside American modern dance.

**Rudolf von Laban:** Laban (1879–1958) was a dancer, philosopher, and creative genius who explored many realms of dance over a long and varied career. He became best known for his work with movement choirs (using lay dancers, often from trade unions), the creation of his movement notation system *Kinetographie* (now known as *Labanotation*), and his Space Harmony and Effort-Shape theories. Laban was primarily concerned about dance as art, to be enjoyed by everyone, not just a talented few. He left Germany in 1936, eventually landing in England, where he had a devoted following and was influential in the development of creative dance pedagogy and movement analysis.

**Gunild Keetman:** Keetman (1904–1990) was a composer, performer, and teacher who played a critical role in the development and spread of Orff Schulwerk. Carl Orff frequently said that the Schulwerk could not have come into being without Keetman’s essential contributions. In 1926, Keetman enrolled as a student at the Güntherschule and in 1928 joined the faculty as director of instrumental instruction. In 1930, she took leadership of the school’s dance orchestra. Her compositions and performances with the Güntherschule Dance Group were acclaimed in tours across Europe. She continued her work at the Güntherschule until 1944, when the German government took control of the school, which was later destroyed in wartime bombing.

After WW II, Orff and Keetman resumed the collaboration they had begun in 1932, summarizing the music work in the Güntherschule, and adapting their pioneering improvisational music education approach to the needs of children. Keetman was central to the development of the Orff Schulwerk because of her contribution as teacher in the radio and television broadcasts that popularized the Schulwerk in Germany, her role in creating many publications of elemental music including the *Musik für Kinder* volumes, her teaching at the Mozarteum and co-direction of the Orff Institut, and her instruction with Carl Orff in early international teacher-training workshops.

**Maja Lex:** Lex (1906-1986) came to the Güntherschule in 1926, one year after Keetman. Already a trained dancer, Lex was inherently musical, and found in the Güntherschule an environment in which she could develop an approach to choreography that was distinct from the dominant dance artists of the time, Mary Wigman and Rudolph Laban. Lex and Keetman collaborated to compose music and dance together, inspiring each other with improvisations and motives, and created performance pieces that blurred the line between the functions of musician and dancer. Lex directed the Güntherschule Dance Group, with Keetman as composer, until the demise of the school in 1944.

**The Güntherschule:** Founded in 1924 in Munich by Dorothee Günther and Carl Orff, with Orff as the Director of Music, the Güntherschule for Gymnastics and Dance originated after WW II. After that war, old ideas collapsed, necessitating a new orientation in all educational, psychological, and artistic fields. Orff decided to give Güntherschule dance students a well-founded but unconventional music education that laid the foundation for the later Schulwerk. It encouraged improvisation, nurturing creative ability, using ancient and simple instruments (drums, recorders, barred instruments), and emphasizing the connections between body movement and music. The Güntherschule dance group, led by Gunild Keetman as composer and Maja Lex as choreographer, was acclaimed in European modern dance community for its innovative performances. After 20 years, the Güntherschule was closed down by the German government and then destroyed by bombs in 1944. See *Gunild Keetman* and *Maja Lex*.

## Choreography and Dance Terms

**Abstraction:** A design that is non-representational in purpose, resembling or giving the feeling of a particular thing without portraying it realistically

**Accent:** A stress on one element over others, by increased force/energy to make it stand out

**Accompaniment (movement accompaniment):** Sound or sounds that support movement or describe aurally what is seen or felt in a movement or sequence of movements

**Adagio:** Slow, sustained movement executed with fluidity. Same as *Time element: sustained*

**Alignment:** The concept of skeletal relationships, i.e., posture. According to Martha Graham, "posture is dynamic, not static, a self-portrait of being. It is psychological as well as physiological. I use the word 'posture' to mean that instant of seeming stillness when the body is poised for most intense, most subtle action, the body at its moment of greatest potential efficiency."

**Allegro:** A fast, lively tempo

**Anacrusis:** A single note or group of notes that occur before the first strong beat; a phrase or movement that begins on a weak beat as in a build up to the crisis

**Attack:** A manner of approaching a movement action, such as "sharp," "smooth," "sudden," or "sustained"

**Axial movement:** Any movement in one spot by a body part using only the available space in any direction without losing the initial body contact with the ground. Axial movement is organized around the axis of the body rather than designed for travel from one location to another. See *Place*.

**Beat:** A continuing and steady pulse that is heard or felt in most music, moving the music forward in time

**Body shapes:** Descriptive terms for different shapes of the body, such as "symmetrical," "asymmetrical," "rounded," "twisted," "angular," or "arabesque"

**Body systems:** Coherent elements within the body that serve a specific function, such as "muscular," "skeletal," "nervous," "respiratory," "circulatory," "digestive," etc.

**Canon:** A choreographic device which reflects the musical form of the same name, in which individuals or groups perform the same movement/phrase beginning at different times; analogous to musical canon

**Chance:** A choreographic device in which some elements of a dance phrase or use of space are defined by chance operations such as dice tossing or drawing slips of paper with directions from a bag. Also known as aleatoric dance, it is closely associated with the work of John Cage and Merce Cunningham, and is analogous with aleatoric music.

**Choreography:** Derived from the Greek words for dance and writing; originally referred to the actual writing down of the steps of a dance; since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it has meant the art of composing dance.

**Clock time:** A manner of composing, notating, and directing dance and music using seconds, minutes, and hours

**Collage:** A composition consisting of various component parts, which together comprise a whole

**Crescendo:** A gradual increase in movement dynamics; analogous to a musical crescendo

**Crusis:** A phrase that begins on a strong beat; the onset of the beat, sometimes referred to as the attack

**Duet:** Two performers dancing together or at the same time

**Dance:** Organized bodily movement created for an aesthetic, social, or spiritual purpose; dance is to movement as music is to sound

**Direction:** Descriptive terms to direct dancers, including forward/backward, upward/downward, side to side, combinations (diagonals), turning inward and outward

**Dimension:** Terms that move dancers and bodies through three-dimensional space, such as far/near, large/small, high/low, or broad/narrow

**Expression:** An act, process, or instance of representing words or some other medium; something that manifests, embodies, or symbolizes something else; a representation or symbolism; a vivid indication or depiction of mood or sentiment

**Flow:** The continuum between free and bound flow

**Force/Weight:** The continuum between strong and light force

**Free Rhythm:** Various terms to describe rhythms other than traditional musical meter, including breath, open score, sensed time, improvisation, cued, and clock time

**Guided Exploration:** Free movement prompted by verbal, aural, or visual cues

**Improvisation:** Movement created spontaneously, usually stemming from highly structured environments but always with an element of chance; instant and simultaneous choreography and performance; a response to something heard, seen, or felt

**Inner Self:** Terms to describe an individual's internal experience, including senses, perceptions, emotions, thoughts, intention, and imagination

**Initiation:** The impetus of movement from the body's core, distal, joints, single body parts, or body faces

**Kinesthetic:** The sense that detects bodily position, weight, or movement of the muscles, tendons, and joints

**Kinesphere:** The sphere of space surrounding one's central axis, defined by the furthest reach of one's limbs

**Laban Effort Action Drives:** The Effort Action Drives (flick, dab, slash, punch, float, glide, press and wring) are a subset of Laban's much larger area of movement study addressing effort. The effort elements are weight, space, time, and flow. The Action Drives are combinations of just three of the effort elements: weight, space and time. For a more detailed definition see appendix: *Laban Effort Elements*.

**Level:** Descriptive terms to show the relation of one thing to another on a horizontal scale, such as high, medium, and low

**Locomotor (traveling):** Body efforts that move the person through space, such as walk, run, jump, hop, gallop, slide, skip, leap, and roll

**Metacrusis:** A phrase that ends on a weak beat or the weak part of the measure with a diminishing quality of energy, but picks up again as it transitions back to the anacrusis

**Metered:** Measured time by a pattern of fixed temporal units using pulse, tempo, accent, and rhythmic pattern

**Motif:** A single movement or a short movement phrase that is developed and manipulated; see *Variation*

**Movement:** Any static or traveling body motion, whether functional or aesthetic; movement is to dance as sound is to music

**Musike:** Of Greek origin, the term means the integration of movement, logos (speech), and singing; the ancient Greek sense of pedagogy

**Non-locomotor (axial):** Body efforts that move the body without moving the entire person through space, such as stretch, bend, twist, turn, rise, fall, swing, rock, tip, shake, isolate, bounce, and vibrate

**Orientation:** Body facing; constant in direction of movement; constant in any direction other than the movement; or constantly changing orientation.

**Ostinato:** A movement motif or pattern that is persistently repeated throughout a composition or section; analogous to musical ostinato

**Parts of the body:** Descriptors of the key elements of the body involved in dance, including head and face (eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hair), shoulders, chest, back, pelvis, arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet, and toes

**Pathway:** Descriptors of paths the body may take through space, including curved, straight, and combinations such as zigzag, spiral, and random/ irregular

**Phasing:** Two or more movement phrases or a combination of movement and music phrases of differing lengths that begin together and, after however many cycles needed, come back together to a common starting point; analogous to music phasing in the work of composers such as Steve Reich

**Phrase:** A natural grouping of movements that gives a temporary feeling of completion; analogous to musical phrase

**Place:** Descriptors of how the body is placed in space, including in place (personal space/kinesphere) and through space (general space).

**Quality:** Descriptors that indicate bodily tension and relaxation; the gradations and combinations of energy levels to move as if tight, loose, sharp, smooth, sudden, sustained, strong, weak, heavy, light, suspended, collapsed, free, bound, swinging, swaying, or flowing



**Rhythm:** A pattern of time in a composition. Rhythm of movement is defined as metered and non-metered. Metered rhythm has a countable beat. Non-metered rhythms occur in nature (wind, sea, smoke, rain, bird calls), or from physical objects (popcorn, feather flight, balls, balloons), and also from individuals' breath rhythms

**Rondo:** Analogous to the musical form, in which a sequence of contrasting themes occur with a return to the first or main theme. Example: ABACADA

**Size:** Descriptors defining the relative space taken by a body, such as large/small, narrow/wide, or short/tall

**Solo:** A single performer dancing alone.

**Spatial Relationships:** Descriptors indicating the relationship between two or more bodies in space, including in front, behind, over, beside, under, near/far, alone/group, and positive/negative space

**Stage Directions:** Terms indicating to performers specific locations on the stage, including downstage (the area closest to the audience), upstage (the area furthest away from the audience), stage right and left (the areas as seen from the performers as they face the audience), and center stage (the area in the exact center of the stage)

**Syncopation:** A shift of accent in a measure or passage that occurs when a normally weak beat is stressed

**Tempo:** A rate or speed of music or movement

**Theme:** A clear movement sequence that can be used as a basic structure for variations

**Time:** An element of dance, including emotional/dramatic, free, metered, tempo, and time relationships; see *Rhythm*, *Free Rhythm*, *Clock Time*, and *Tempo*

**Timing relationships:** Descriptors that define the relationship of musical or dance events in time, such as before, after, unison, canonic, phrased, phased, faster than, and slower than

**Trio:** Three performers dancing together or at the same time

**Unison:** Two or more dancers performing the same movement at the same time

**Variation:** A formal technique where material, such as a movement motif or theme, is repeated in an altered form; ways to manipulate a motif or theme might include repetition, retrograde, or changes in space, tempo, rhythm, quality, or embellishment

**Warm-up:** Movement patterns and exercises designed to prepare the muscles, joints, and perceptions for more challenging movement activities