

# Repertory Dance Theatre Study Guide

## Seven Intelligences

From Gardner, Howard, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983)

- **VERBAL/LINGUISTIC:** The ability to communicate effectively by listening, speaking, reading, writing and linking.
- **MUSIC/RHYTHMIC:** Sensitivity to patterns of sounds and the ability to respond emotionally to the sound patterns (language related intelligence).
- **LOGICAL/MATHEMATICAL:** Characterized by a love of working with abstraction and a desire for exploration.
- **VISUAL/SPATIAL:** The ability to comprehend the visual world accurately. A gift for bringing forth and transforming mental images.
- **BODILY/KINESTHETIC:** Gift of control of one's bodily motions and the talent to manipulate objects with deftness.
- **INTRAPERSONAL:** The ability to understand one's own feeling.
- **INTERPERSONAL:** The talent for understanding others.

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## RDT Arts in Education Residency



Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT) has been involved in serving Utah's schools with Arts-In-Education programs since 1966. RDT has created Lecture Demonstrations, Movement Classes, Teacher In-service Workshops and performances which educate, entertain, and inspire students and teachers, helping them to understand and appreciate the arts.

RDT is fortunate to have financial assistance for our AIE activities and we are grateful to the Utah State Legislature, the Utah Arts Council, Utah State Office of Education and a number of corporate sponsors.

We are looking forward to performing and teaching at your school and are providing you with a Study Guide filled with information on dance.

**Please copy, share the information with other teachers and invite them to have pre- and post-performance discussions in their classrooms.**

The Lecture Demonstration relates to the State Core Curriculum and will focus on:

- The history of dance
- The training of a dancer
- The elements of dance, SPACE, TIME, ENERGY
- The choreographic process and role of improvisation
- How to explore the creative process in the classroom

We also ask you to please fill out an evaluation sheet and mail it to RDT after the AIE residency.

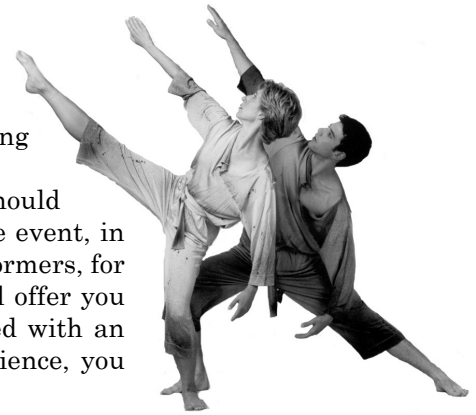
We look forward to working with you and sharing our love of dance.

Dance is surely a most extraordinary fusion of thinking, doing, feeling. If we are concerned about the health of a child's mind, body and spirit, then how can we ignore the educational force of an art form which addresses all three at once?

David Rockefeller

# The Dance Performance

Attending a performance of music, theater, or dance can be a rich and exciting experience, one full of great opportunities. Whether you are attending a performance in a theater or watching a demonstration in your school, you should realize that the audience is part of the performance, and the success of the event, in part, depends on you. You have a responsibility to show respect to the performers, for the theater, and for the other people in the audience. The performers will offer you “gifts” for your eyes, your ears, and your imagination. If you are prepared with an open mind, and if you are willing to give your full attention to the experience, you may have an unforgettable adventure . . . one that could change your life.



## Theater Etiquette

Attending a dance performance is different than going to a sporting event or a movie, and requires different behavior than what is considered normal at a football game.

An artist has spent years studying to perfect a skill. Performers want to communicate, to send the audience a message. They want to create a special atmosphere, a kind of magic. They have spent a great deal of time preparing and rehearsing. Performers must concentrate and so must the audience.

Be sure to arrive before the performance begins. If you do arrive after the performance has begun wait in the rear of the theater to be seated until there is an intermission or break in the sequence of the performance.

A dance performance is an event where mutual respect between the audience and the performers will add to the success of the experience. Leave your gum, candy, snacks, or anything else that might disturb you or other people in the audience at home.

During the performance think ahead and prepare to stay in your seat until intermission or the end of the concert. You may disturb others if you need to leave your seat during the performance.

You may be watching something totally unfamiliar to you. The movement language or other elements of the production may seem strange or unusual. The costumes are designed to add artistic dimension or reveal the lines of the human body. Leotards are often worn to accentuate movement, design, shape and form. The human body is a beautiful and expressive “instrument,” and should be appreciated in an artful way.

There are acceptable ways to show your appreciation to a performer. Applause at the end of a piece during the bow is the best way of expressing approval and thanking the performer.

## How to Watch Dance: Learning to Be Perceptive

You don't have to have any special training or previous experience to be able to enjoy a dance concert. Dance is usually a silent language that everyone can understand. You will be taking in information with all your senses . . . with your eyes, your ears, and even with your muscles. You may be fascinated with the physical activity you see, or with the music, or with the produc-

tion elements: the lighting, costumes or props. Your muscles may even react to the action with a “kinetic” response as you empathize with the movement. It is very natural to want to get up and dance up the aisles after watching an inspiring dance performance.

## Questions to Ask Yourself:

1. What are the **sensory properties** in the dance?  
What do you see? What do you hear? What are the dancers actually doing?
2. What are the **technical properties** in the dance?  
What kind of space is being used? What are the shapes and designs being made? What kinds of energy, dynamics, or motion qualities are being used?
3. What are the **emotional properties** in the dance?  
How does the movement make you feel?

## How to Prepare for the Dance Performance

Clear your mind of other thoughts (general or personal). Open your mind and spirit to the moment; concentrate and raise your awareness to the immediate environment.

As the lights lower and/or the music begins, take a deep breath and relax in your seat. You are beginning to watch motion, movement, shape, line, rhythm, tempo, color, space, time, energy . . . dance.

Allow yourself to release the notion that you already know what dance means, or has to mean, or that you have to figure something out. Release the notion that you have to look at dance as if you were reading a book. Dance doesn't necessarily have a story line.

If you watch the dance with openness, you may experience an emotion, an image, or a feeling that you may not be able to describe. You may not know why or where reactions come from, but don't worry. That is part of the magic of theater.

Every piece of choreography has a reason for being. Dances may be celebrations, tell stories, define moods, interpret poems, express emotions, carve designs, or visualize music. As you watch a dance, a story may occur to you because of your past experience. However, not all dances relate stories. The sequences do not have to make literal sense. Allow images and personal feelings to come to the surface of your consciousness.

After the performance, feel free to discuss your thoughts with others, but do not be disturbed if you find that others have a different reaction than yours. Think about your own personal images and thoughts. Was it fun to watch? Did the dance remind you of experiences in your own life? Did the choreography inspire you to express yourself, write a poem, draw a picture, or make up your own dance?

**Following the performance, we suggest that the class hold a period of discussion and sharing.**

### ***WHY USE THE ARTS IN YOUR CLASSROOM?***

The arts are a tool to facilitate the expression of feelings; they offer a visual manifestation of an emotion or situation which can be explored initially without concern for technique or rules. Writing, moving, painting, sculpting, singing, making sounds and doing drama are all ways of responding to particular situations. These activities should be done for the pleasure and understanding they bring to the participants. Using feelings as a base for work in the arts allows everybody to participate as equals; the teacher does not have to be more competent than the students to encourage artistic exploration.

Also, when using the arts, common definitions of failure and success do not apply; there are many solutions to any given problem. What appears as chaos is often an ordered search for variety. Within this potentially wide scope, participants can experience their own uniqueness, seeing the best and the worst in themselves. Students and teachers will be able to establish different working relationships which could be useful in other areas.

Finally, the arts develop skills and abilities that will serve students long after schooling ends. Those who find release or stimulation from a particular art form will be able to develop and enjoy it the rest of their lives.

from King, Nancy, *Giving Form to Feeling*. (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1975).

# Dance Criticism

**Criticism** (writing or talking about dance) or evaluation of a dance performance is affected by past experience, sensitivity, involvement, and personal judgment. Try to be multi-dimensional in your responses by describing visual and auditory perceptions and feelings. When you evaluate a concert give your reasons for anything you liked or disliked.

Criticism entails three processes:

**Description, interpretation and judgment** of a particular piece being analyzed.



Description, Interpretation & Judgment are the 3 elements of criticism.

When you write or talk about a dance performance you should consider or analyze four different aspects of the dance.

1. The **choreographic elements**: the overall form, use of space, rhythmic and timing factors, use of dynamics, style, music, and movement invention.

2. The **performance elements**: the technical skill of the dancers, their projection, commitment, ability to communicate.

3. The **production elements**: the costumes, lighting, props, sets, and music.

## Questions to Ask Yourself

- 1 What emotional reactions did you have? What moved you?
- 2 What was the most interesting feature of the performance?
- 3 What in particular do you remember about the experience?
- 4 Was there an apparent motive for the dance? Was it dramatic, abstract, a comedy, a mood piece, etc.
- 5 Were there any social, political, or historical elements?
- 6 Was the choreographer skilled in trying to convey the message?
- 7 What did you notice about the form?
- 8 How did the piece begin, where did it go, and how did it end?
- 9 Was there a logical sequence, or was the form fragmented?
- 10 Was there variety, contrast, balance, unity, repetition, and/or harmony?
- 11 Were the performers skilled technically?
- 12 How well did they portray their characters or communicate with movement?
- 13 What kind of music was used?
- 14 Did the music support the ideas in the dance or conflict with them? Did the movement go with the music or against it?
- 15 What were your reactions to the technical or production elements, the staging, décor, props, lighting, costumes? What made you react this way?
- 16 Was the performance a positive experience for you? Did it stimulate questions or ideas?
- 17 What could have helped your understanding or valuing of the dance performance?

# Suggested Ways to Integrate Dance into Other Arts, Sciences and Humanities

- ◆ **SOCIAL STUDIES**  
Folk dances may be incorporated into a study of cultural factors; students may learn folk dances or parents or natives of other countries may visit the classroom and perform. Chart the roots of your community, study the ethnic origins and develop a project, which incorporates their dance forms. This concept can be applied to all cultures.
- ◆ **LANGUAGE ARTS**  
Add movement to parts of speech, or capitalization and punctuation. For example, explore how movement shows the action in a verb like jump, or demonstrates the function of an exclamation mark.
- ◆ **MUSIC**  
Dance to intensify the rhythm and dynamic qualities of the music.
- ◆ **ART**  
Improvise the design, texture, rhythms or feeling of a painting, drawing, print, photograph, sculpture or weaving; develop a dance sequence based upon one element of art such as positive/negative space.
- ◆ **SCIENCE**  
Explore the various physical laws through movement; develop an awareness of the articulation of various body parts in the study of anatomy; apply physiological principles to dance movement, examine revolution and rotation by recreating the solar system in movement; study aspects in biology such as photosynthesis, or animal classification by interpreting the concepts in movement.
- ◆ **MATH**  
Explore geometric shapes through movement; relate the idea of balance in the body to balance in an algebraic equation.

## The Elements of Dance

There are four basic elements of dance: time, space, energy (force and flow) and the body.

The body is the instrument of dance. It is the vehicle of communication, based upon the dancer's kinesthetic sense.

Dance exists both in time and space. Time can be rhythmic and based upon meter. It can also be based upon body rhythms such as breath or an emotional rhythm.

Space is concerned with the visual design of dance. It consists of



body shape, levels, floor patterns, group relationships and volume.

Energy relates to the force with which the movement is released. Another term for energy is dynamics and may be described by specific qualities such as: percussive, staccato, sustained, swinging, suspended, vibratory and collapse. A variety of energy levels make a

dance more interesting and create texture within the movement.

It is important to realize these elements are also those of everyday life as we move through time and space with varying degrees of energy. Dance only becomes an abstraction or isolation of reality.

These basic elements combine in a variety of ways, each of these combinations result in a particular style.

## Repertory Dance Theatre and Arts Education

The following organizations generously support RDT Art-in-Education activities:

- Utah State Office of Education/  
Professional Outreach in the Schools  
(POPS)
- Utah Arts Council-Arts Partnership  
Program and the National Endowment  
for the Arts
- Salt Lake City Arts Council
- Wells Fargo Foundation
- L.T. & J.T. Dee Foundation
- C. Comstock Clayton Foundation
- Barbara and Joseph Andrade
- Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts & Parks  
Program

*We're on the Web!*  
[www.rdtutah.org](http://www.rdtutah.org)  
*Service Provided by Xmission*

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE, founded in 1966, is a professional modern dance company dedicated to the creation, performance, perpetuation, and appreciation of modern dance. RDT's long standing commitment to arts in education focuses on enriching young lives and providing an opportunity for students to experience the joy of living through dance. The company of outstanding performers, teachers, and choreographers has created new pathways for audiences to experience and value the art of dance. Residency activities that include demonstrations, movement classes, and teacher-in-service workshops encourage instructors and students to integrate movement into their learning and teaching process. RDT's residency activities are specifically designed to assist teachers and students in achieving the standards for arts education.

### STANDARDS FOR ARTS EDUCATION . . . DANCE

- Identify and demonstrate movement elements and skills necessary in the performance of dance.
- Understand choreographic principles and processes.
- Understand dance as a way to create and communicate.
- Apply and demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills in dance.
- Demonstrate and understand dance in various cultures and historical periods.
- Make connections between dance and healthful living.
- Make connections between dance and other disciplines

### ADDITIONAL GOALS

- To provide alternative ways of learning in order to achieve basic educational objectives such as concentrating, creative problem solving, planning, visualizing and conceptualizing.
- To develop skills and insights needed for emotional maturity and social effectiveness: sharing, cooperating, integrating and interacting.
- To develop an individual's physical and mental discipline at all levels of ability.
- To open participants' minds and imaginations by developing tools of communication.
- To develop feelings of self-worth, confidence, and achievement by giving students and teachers opportunities to explore movement, the art of improvisation, and the creative process.
- To develop an understanding and appreciation of American Modern Dance.