

Crossing Paths

This is a simple exercise involving planning and executing a movement phrase, in more than one context. Best suited for students grades 3-6.

Step one:

Have the students work independently to create a short movement phrase, (for instance, 8-16 beats long) The phrase should involve at least three parts of the body, and must travel slightly. Make sure that it can be repeated over and over. You may play music to accompany the movement phrases, or have them create their own sound effects that go with the movement.

Step two:

First, have two children perform their phrase solo for the class, travelling across the room. Secondly, have them begin on either side of the room, both moving towards, and then through the middle of the room to the other side.

(Note: They need not be travelling in a straight line, however.) Before they begin, instruct them that they will be crossing paths with another student, and they should attempt to watch the other

person as they are doing their own movement phrase, while continuing to perform their own. Encourage good concentration and focus on their own phrase.

Step three:

As they come into close proximity with each other, notice if each of them changes anything about their own movement. If they were able to keep their movement phrase the same as it was when they did it alone, was there anything about the quality of the movement that changed? How did the two dancers influence each other?

Discuss the process of performing their phrase solo, and then doing it in a situation where other factors influenced them. You may relate this to migration of peoples and the stylistic changes that occur in the larger context of cultural crossroads.

