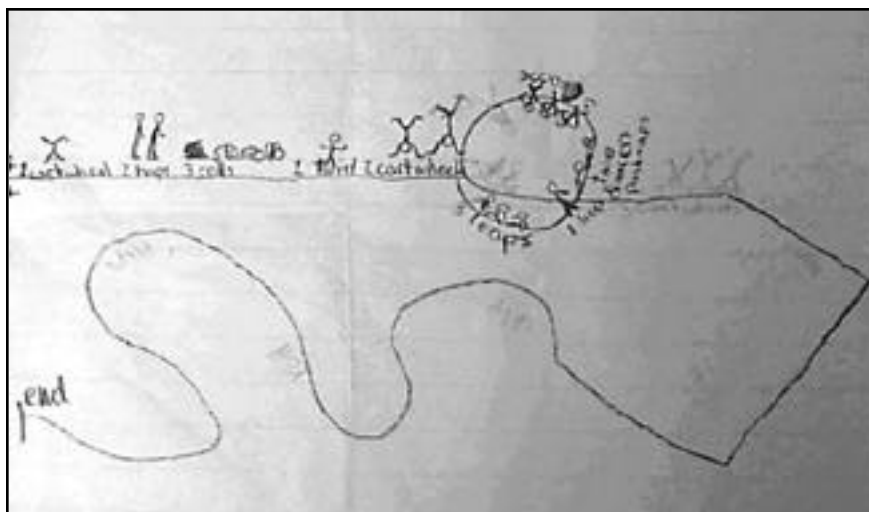


Mapping a Dance

This activity introduces the child to the concept of choreography, and the process of writing or drawing on paper a record of a dance that they create. The student will develop a drawing that resembles a roadway map, and on that map, in a logical order, record movement that fascinates them. They will then learn to perform, exchange, interpret and combine their dances using their maps to read one another's dances.



Supplies needed:

Large pieces of paper - (one per student) and large crayons or markers.

Following a teacher demonstration of the process, the students create their own choreography maps, learn and practice the movements, and combine their maps (and choreographed dances) with others.

Part One: Teacher Demonstration

Step 1. Introduce the concept of choreography, and then cartography. Fourth grade students could have choreographer and choreography as spelling words.

Step 2. Do an example on paper for them. Explain that a person moves from point A to point B. In between these two points are countless movement possibilities. Create your sample map by drawing a picture or symbol to indicate each separate movement in a sequence of movements. After creating your example, show it to the class and explain your choices.

Step 3. Demonstrate studying and learning your example map. Put your paper on the floor in your own personal space. Study your example in front of them. Explain that your goal is to memorize it.

Step 4. Try to do the choreography without looking. If you must look it is OK. They will appreciate your failure and later relate to if they fail on their first attempt. Explain that the goal is to memorize and

rehearse the choreography until it is second nature (that it can be done without having to think about it).

Part Two: Student Maps

Step 1. Working alone, each student should draw their own choreography map.

Step 2. Allow time for memorizing and practicing the choreographic arrangements. After the students have each made and learned their own map--the fun can really begin!

Step 3. Options for sharing and combining maps (and beyond):

Play music that the students can perform along with.

Have each student exchange their map with another student. Each learns and interprets this new map.

Allow 2 or more students to create junctions in their maps (a junction could be drawn in the form of an intersection, bridge or river) where they have the same or similar movements.

When one student's dance performance reaches a junction, they can tag the other (one of the other) student(s) to begin at the same junction on either (any) of the connecting maps.

Several such groups of interconnected maps may run at the same time.

This activity can be done in a variety of ways in order to create a cooperative learning atmosphere. Create your own variations for the class to follow.

Extensions:

Younger students will enjoy this activity because it is like coloring. With younger students (K-2), talk about pathways and roads.

Older students can be given more sophisticated goals related to some particular curricular task, i.e., related to anatomy, geometry (symmetrical/ asymmetrical, parallel and perpendicular lines), weights and balances, various improvisation exercises or simple choreographic commands (e.g.: over, under, level changes, falling, rising and spirals).

Assessment:

After the activity, students should talk about each others' choreography. They should be able to communicate how the works made them feel, and tell you what they saw.

Connections:

This could easily be adapted to a geography lesson. Students can discuss what dances people do in different cultures, countries or regions and create a map that reflects which dance comes from which region. (see "the Other Side of the Rainbow" for another related activity)

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