

Dance BFA

Dance Choreography Proficiency

Goal Description:

BFA candidates will become proficient in the craft and art of choreography.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Students Will Demonstrate Proficiency In The Tools Of Choreography

Learning Objective Description:

Each student will demonstrate their ability to use tools of choreography to develop and perform an original, well developed solo that emerges clearly from a proposed concept.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Sophomore Gate Presentation

Indicator Description:

The Sophomore Gate process assesses whether students are progressing satisfactorily towards the BFA.

Each student is paired with a faculty mentor at the beginning of the fourth semester of study, generally in conjunction with enrollment in Choreography 2, DANC 2376. The faculty mentor meets with the student a minimum of three times within the semester as the student proposes and develops a 3-5 minute solo to be performed for the dance faculty at the end of the semester.

A two-part rubric, file attached, is used to assess each student. One part, completed by the student's mentor addresses the process, while the second part is scored by the other faculty and addresses the performance and choreographic elements. Students whose work is assessed as unsatisfactory, less than 80% composite score, will have one opportunity to repeat the Gate; if they do not perform at 80% or higher in the second presentation, they will be advised out of the BFA program.

Attached Files

 [sophomore gate rubric](#)

Criterion Description:

The department goal is that students will receive composite scores of 80% or better.

Findings Description:

Of the 22 sophomores doing the Sophomore Gate, all but two received composite scores from the adjudicators above 80%. The two who did not were notified that they may repeat the process in the fall; if they neither repeat the process, not make improvements, they will be advised out of the BFA program.

Across the board, students excelled in taking risks in their choreography. They were inventive, original, and committed to their solo performances. They were less successful in realizing their concepts sufficiently. Developing expressive personal movement vocabulary that is interesting to the viewer is a weak area for the majority of the students.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Connect development of movement vocabulary with expression of concepts

Action Description:

In DANC 2376 Choreography I, increase the focus on creating original movements within studies that explore elements of time, space, and energy. In DANC 3376 Choreography II, provide more extensive practice in the development of a unique movement vocabulary that will communicate a specific concept for a specific study. Faculty will also review the curriculum for choreography II to determine whether students have sufficient opportunities to show their work and receive feedback within the semester; we may need to limit class size in order to accomplish this goal.

Dance Performance Proficiency

Goal Description:

Dance BFA candidates will demonstrate proficiency in dance technique.

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS-----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Proficiency In Dance Technique

Learning Objective Description:

Dance BFA students will demonstrate proficiency in the development of technique appropriate to their classifications in both modern and ballet techniques through juried presentations each semester.

Attached Files

 [sample rubrics for modern and ballet technique juries](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Ballet And Modern Technique Juries

Indicator Description:

A panel of jurists composed of dance faculty and guest professionals assesses students in designated technique classes at the end of each semester. A variety of rubrics have been used in recent semesters; one example is attached. Students are evaluated on specific technical elements as well as on performance qualities. Jurists are also encouraged to include comments for each student.

Criterion Description:

The department goal is that at least 90% of students receive composite assessment of at least 80% in the jury.

Findings Description:

Only one professor conducted a formal jury in the fall and spring semesters. It has become difficult to schedule juries given the demands on time for faculty, and our budget no longer supports bringing guest adjudicators from Houston. Since our jury structure has been full class periods for each of 4 levels of ballet and modern, plus jazz, and aerial, the time requirements for meaningful adjudication are too cumbersome.

We tried something different this year. In both the fall and spring semester, the department adjusted one of our traditional end of semester workshop events. For years, this workshop has been an evening presentation focused on opportunities for those in lower level technique courses (who generally are not cast in major productions) to have a performance opportunity. This year, we shifted the event to an afternoon and included all majors, in all technique classes. Each class presented material from their ballet, modern, aerial, and jazz courses. Although no formal evaluation of individual students was done, the presentations were recorded and can be reviewed. The full dance faculty attended. This process can be further tweaked into a manageable and valid jury to replace the process that has ceased to work for us.

It is apparent that real time evaluations are not the only practical solution. Using video has advantages including providing a permanent record that can be compared across semesters. Such video can be stored, and comparisons of students' achievement level as they progress from freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors can be seen by faculty and by the students.

Since the juries were not conducted, there is no data to report, except in the two ballet classes, in which 100% of students received composite scores above 85%.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

Revise structure of juries

Action Description:

Review the workshop process launched this year, to determine whether it can be an effective and practical assessment vehicle.

Direct our attention to defining more clearly what we are assessing in technique. The ballet faculty has begun outlining skills that should be introduced/practiced/mastered at each of the four levels of ballet. A draft is attached. Better definition of what is being assessed, and agreeing within the faculty what expectations are appropriate to each level, will guide improvements in assessing technique, regardless of the format in which it occurs.

Attached Files

 [Ballet I through IV benchmarks](#)

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

The faculty will formalize the objectives for each level of modern and ballet techniques. These will be documented, and may be shared with the students in the syllabi as appropriate. We will determine whether we can return to the model of juries or find another model for assessing dancers' technique. The sophomore gate process has received the most focus in becoming a more structured process, with satisfactory outcome for the students and faculty. Our challenge as faculty is to agree on the objectives for the course sequences, to document those objectives, and then to apply them to our students.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

Faculty began defining objectives for ballet technique by specifying skills for levels 1-4 in the categories of jumps and turns. Although there are many more elements of the technique to be mastered at each level, starting with two significant areas within the technique is a manageable first step. These can form the basis for assessment of student progress. Instead of having juries at the end of each semester, we will use technique placement classes, which are already conducted at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, to assess students' accomplishment in these skills areas. A rubric will be designed before the start of fall semester and make its debut in August.

A different model has emerged for defining students' progress in modern technique. Much discussion over several meetings confirmed the difficulty of defining a progression in as linear a fashion as ballet since there are multiple approaches for modern technique, all of which contribute to students' facility. Students will experience at least four approaches in modern technique within the minimum of six semesters of modern technique studied. Faculty can define a singular continuum for some skills, movement qualities, and concepts that are deepened across the curriculum, but it is also useful to assess the range of technique students master. Adaptability in learning different techniques, and quickly learning and reproducing choreography are primary skills students need for success in performing careers. A useful mechanism for assessing/adjudicating students could be within guest teachers' classes, since the department usually has at least 8 master classes in the fall semester.

As we devise and revise measures of assessment for technical and creative achievements, we are conscious of efficient means of implementation. Existing events such as auditions, placement classes, and master classes serve this need well, as faculty already attend and observe. Formalizing an assessment instrument will be the next step.

Plans for AY17

Closing Summary:

1. Improve Assessment Process in Dance Technique

A. Define what we are assessing as students progress through four levels in ballet and modern dance techniques.

*For ballet, a relatively linear progression of skills can be defined. Progressive standards in two areas, jumps and turns, has been drafted and will be used in technique level placements at the beginning of the fall semester. More areas can be defined and potentially implemented.

*For modern technique, the linear progression of skills is perhaps not as useful a model. Instead, assess students' adaptability to new movement styles, their ability to quickly learn and accurately replicate choreography. This skill can be assessed within master classes taught by guests, and/or in auditions for repertory. Faculty need to discuss and determine means to formalize this kind of assessment.

* Review the workshop process launched this year to determine whether it can be an effective and practical assessment vehicle that would replace former juries. Faculty may conclude that we prefer this event to be an informal event that functions primarily as a "sharing" and affirming experience. If so, we will explore other ideas.

2. Increase Proficiency in Choreography

*In DANC 2376 Choreography I, increase the focus on generating original movements within studies that explore elements of time, space, and energy.

* In DANC 3376 Choreography II, provide more extensive practice in the development

of a unique movement vocabulary that will communicate a specific concept for a specific study.

*Review number of assignment showings in choreography II to determine whether students have sufficient opportunities to show their work and receive feedback within the semester. If time constrains against sufficient development in this course, consider limiting enrollment in each section, and adding additional sections.

As we devise and revise measures of assessment for technical and creative achievements, we are conscious of efficient means of implementation.