



REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE

REPERTORY DANCE THEATRE LESSON PLAN

ABOUT HANYA HOLM

By Linda C. Smith (June 2023)

Utah Standards

RESPOND

L2.D.R.1: Analyze dance works and provide examples of recurring patterns of movement and their relationships that create structure and meaning in dance. (

PERFORM

L2.D.P.2: Perform dance studies and compositions that use time, tempo and rhythm in unpredictable ways; use internal rhythms and kinetics as phrasing tools.

L2.D.P.1: Dance alone and with others with spatial intention; expand partner and ensemble skills to greater ranges

L1.D.P.1: Sculpt the body in space and design body shapes in relation other dancers, objects and environment; use complex floor and air patterns and indirect pathways while maintaining a sense of spatial design and relationship.

CONNECT

7-8.D.CO.3: Analyze and discuss how dances from a variety of cultures, societies, historical periods or communities reveal the ideas and perspectives of the people.

German dancers who preceded the Americans into “modernism” influenced American modern dance. In Europe, Rudolf Laban developed methods of defining human movement principles in rhythm, dynamic change, and space, and he created a method of writing down movement called LABANOTATION. Laban was part of the “new arts” in Germany during a period which produced the Bauhaus, Bertolt Brecht, Oskar Schlemmer, Paul Klee and Kandinsky.

Choreographer, Mary Wigman and her pupil Hanya Holm were preoccupied with exploring ways bodies can inhabit space and create designs with individual shapes and group formations. It is through Hanya Holm that the German philosophy entered American modern dance. When she immigrated to the United States in the 1930’s she brought German theories but also found a new sense of space. In this country there was space in abundance, without restriction, and there was freedom to move in it at will. These new impressions helped her

create a broader approach to dance. Hanya Holm built upon Wigman's technique to explore curves, spirals, and a sense of carving and defining space. She developed methods of teaching and choreographing that influenced educators and artists throughout the country.

HANYA HOLM BIO

Hanya Hom was born in Germany in 1898.

She joined Mary Wigman's dance company and became co-director of Wigman's school in 1929. Holm came to New York in 1931 to introduce Wigman's methods to the U.S. During the ensuing years, Holm's teaching methods and choreography changed as she responded to the sights and sounds of the U.S.

By 1936 Holm was forced to change the name of her school to the Hanya Holm School of Dance. Anti-German sentiment caused by the activities of the Nazis compelled Holm to distance herself from Wigman and her native Germany and craft an American identity.

Although she won numerous awards for her Broadway musical choreography (including *My Fair Lady*, *Camelot* and *Kiss Me Kate*), perhaps Holm's greatest contribution was as a teacher of modern dance. Some of her well-known disciples include Alwin Nikolais, Glen Tetley, Valerie Bettis and Don Redlich.

RDT was introduced to some of the Holm technique through Elizabeth Waters, a former featured dancer with the Hanya Holm Company who founded the dance program at the University of New Mexico in 1946.

LESSON PLAN

HANYA HOLM TECHNIQUE: EXPLORING SPACE

GOAL: Help students understand their relationship to space by exploring a circle and a cylinder.

PREPARATION and VISUALIZATION

1. Imagine you are molding a lump of clay as a potter would. Imagine shaping a round smooth form into a circle. Feel the outer edges of the clay with the palms of the hands. Imagine that the volume is getting increasingly larger and larger.
2. **a.** Draw a circle around yourself with a piece of imaginary chalk. You will be standing in the center of the circle.

b. Imagine you are standing with both feet in the center of a clock that is as big as the circle you drew. Keeping the left foot in the center of the clock, place the right foot on: 12 o'clock, then on 3 o'clock, then on 6 o'clock.

Repeat the idea on the other side and put the left foot on 12 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 6 o'clock.

c. Put both feet on 12 o'clock and **face front. Begin on right foot and remain facing front.**

- Walk around the circle clockwise use as many steps as you like.
- Repeat walking in counter-clockwise direction starting with the left foot.
- Now only take 8 steps to walk the circle.

d. Put both feet on 12 o'clock and begin to walk clockwise around the edge of the clock and face the direction you are walking. **Point to the center of the circle on the floor with their right hand.** Increase the tempo of the walk getting faster and faster. Observe that you will lean toward the center of the circle to compensate for the centrifugal force.

Repeat going the other direction.

e. Now, imagine you are on the OUTSIDE of a clay cylinder. Try and embrace the cylinder with your arms. Without moving your feet try and reach around the cylinder with one arm then rock back in the opposite direction and reach around to the other side as far as you can.

f. Try walking clockwise around the outer edge of the clay cylinder and feel the outer edge of the cylinder with the back of the hand closest to the cylinder. Repeat going in the other direction.

LOCOMOTOR PATTERNS

Walking on the beat. Travel across the space smoothly **in plie**. Feel the whole foot on the floor.

SERPENTINES SIX COUNTS

Walk in a path resembling half circles...like the letter "S"

Bend the knees and lean into the curves. Feel the smooth flow of the action and the weight of the body. Visualize the space and the volume. Perform the patterns with a sense of ritual. Use the feet to feel the floor and be sensitive to the earth. Use a drum to establish the pulse.

1. Traveling **forward** across the floor with a **6 count serpentine** pattern:

Begin on stage right. Imagine you are feeling the outer edge of a cylinder that is cut in half, a "C" shape. With knees slightly bent, walk forward counter-

clockwise. Imagine you are feeling the outer wall of the cylinder with the back of the left hand.

Begin with the foot nearest the cylinder, the “inside” foot, the left foot and feel the surface with the back of the same hand. Take 5 steps then on count 6 draw the feet together, straighten the knees, come to half toe and prepare the other hand and foot (the right hand and foot) to repeat the action on the other side.

Repeat:

NOTICE: You have just walked in a path resembling the letter “S”

If you repeat this process, you will travel in a serpentine path.

REMEMBER: Lean into the center of the circle slightly. Walk with knees slightly bend. Walk smoothly. On count 6 come to half toe, straighten the knees and lift the torso.

2 .FORWARD FIVE COUNT SERPENTINE: Travel with a **5 count serpentine** pattern. Use the concepts described above, but eliminate count 6 and change the direction of the curve on one count...count 1. Stay in plie, low and gliding.

3 .BACKWARD FIVE COUNT SERPENTINE: Using the same idea but travel backward feeling the OUTSIDE wall of the cylinder with the back of the hand. Remember that you are feeling the outside surface of a cylinder. Begin with the foot and hand that is near the surface you are feeling. Travel **backward** across the floor with a **5 count serpentine** pattern.

SCALLOPS 6, 5, 6, 5

Travel across the floor using the concepts learned in the above exercises.

FORWARD WALKING (counterclockwise) Six counts: Leaning to the left, walk forward in a half circle for 5 counts and feel the outer wall of the cylinder with the back of the left hand. On count 6 bring both feet together and bring the body to an upright position.

BACKWARD WALKING (counterclockwise) Five counts: Now lean to your right and step backward on the right foot and travel BACKWARD with a 5 count pattern feeling the outer wall with the back of your right hand.

Repeat the 6 count pattern, repeat the 5 pattern and it will make a SCALLOP.

REPEAT ON THE OTHER SIDE

9 COUNT TRAVELING WALKING PATTERN PUSHING THE SPACE

Elbows are bent with finger-tips almost touching. Palms are forward

Step right, left, hold with leg in low attitude

1 2 3

Step right, left, hold with leg in low attitude

4 5 6

Step Step Step

7 8 9

REPEAT (the pattern will start on the other side.)

COMPOSITION PROBLEM:

CREATE: Ask students to create their own pattern using the concepts explored above. Students could make a drawing of circles, scallops, serpentine, and direction of travel using the 9 count pattern and then perform the sequence.

PERFORM: Combine some of the new patterns and perform them together.