

Specific Considerations for Teachers of Dance

About this Resource

Danielson’s 2013 *Framework for Teaching (FfT)* provides teachers and school leaders with a common language to describe and discuss effective teaching in order to achieve continuous growth in teacher practice and student learning. The *FfT* was created as an overarching framework that describes the commonalities in every classroom—those aspects of teaching that are common across grades, disciplines, and students’ backgrounds. Thus, the *FfT* is appropriate for use with and by teachers of the arts. For the 2014-15 school year, teachers are evaluated on only eight components in the Danielson 2013 *Framework for Teaching*. The remaining components (those shaded in the following pages) of the Danielson 2013 *Framework for Teaching* may be used for non-evaluative (i.e., developmental) purposes only.

Many school leaders and teachers have requested additional support in using the *FfT* in classrooms in which student characteristics, subject content, or program models may differ significantly from other courses or subjects. In response, this document offers specific considerations¹ for school leaders and dance teachers through component-aligned questions. These questions may be discussed when providing feedback, engaging in pre- and post-observations, and planning next steps; they are not to be used for evaluating teacher practice. In addition, these questions can be used by teachers voluntarily as a resource to guide their thinking as they plan and reflect on their instructional practice in how they are meeting the needs of their students. While these questions may be useful for informing teachers’ usual planning, preparation, and professional learning processes, teachers may not be required to provide written answers to these questions as an additional professional assignment.

This document is not a separate rubric for teachers of the Arts, nor is it to be used as a checklist in classroom observations. Each *FfT* component’s “Rationale,” “Performance Levels,” “Critical Attributes,” and many of the “Possible Examples” are relevant to teachers of the Arts and should be used by school leaders when considering evidence of each component. This document only seeks to present additional context to consider, keeping in mind that not every question will be applicable depending upon the students’ need and context. Those components for which it was agreed that there were no

“It is essential for administrators and all educators to have a clearer understanding of what to expect in a dance classroom. This knowledge will help them to observe the dance class and support the dance program as a whole.”

–NYC Dance Teacher

¹ New York State’s Education Law 3012-c requires that lead evaluators have appropriate guidance regarding specific considerations in evaluating teachers of English Language Learners and students with disabilities. While not required for teachers of the arts, this document was inspired by the Specific Considerations of Teachers of English Language Learners and the Specific Considerations of Students with Disabilities and follows a similar design.

significant special considerations for dance teachers (4a: Reflecting on Teaching and 4f: Showing Professionalism) are not included in this document.

Embedded in the questions are good instructional practices for students; this document is not an exhaustive guide of those good instructional practices.

The Office of Arts and Special Projects contributed significantly to the creation of this document, and these questions align to the *Benchmarks for Arts Learning* as described in *The Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts: Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts*. These specific considerations align with the work of the Office of Arts and Special Projects to support students by helping to create rigorous learning environments that focus on academic and artistic achievement.

“As an educator, I believe great instruction is great instruction, regardless of the discipline. This document provides a powerful reflective tool through which I can facilitate and augment my professional growth. The use of this common language illuminates how best practices support high-level instruction in the study of dance.”

–NYC Dance Teacher

Domain 1: Planning & Preparation

1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

- How do you align lessons with appropriate learning standards in the *NYC Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance, PreK-12*?
- What do you do to ensure that lessons reinforce important concepts about performing, creating, responding to, and connecting through dance (e.g., effective repetitive practice, being aware of criteria for excellence, a place for feedback, and student reflection)?

1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

- In what ways do you plan assessments and surveys to attain some of the following knowledge about students:
 - dance interests (e.g., hip hop and rock) and the extent to which students know about dance as an art form?
 - students' previous experience and skill level in the unit's focus s (e.g., ballet, modern dance, or African dance)?
 - dance traditions specific to the students' cultures?
 - experiences taking dance classes outside of school?
 - whether they have time or space to practice outside of school?

1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes

- Over the course of a year, how do you ensure that learning outcomes include objectives that address the Five Strands of Learning in Dance in the *Blueprint*?
- How do you ensure that planned instructional outcomes include:
 - students demonstrating new dance and performance skills?
 - students creating and developing movement, recognizing and describing choreographic structures, and applying both to original dance compositions?
 - students expressing opinions about the meanings of a dance, citing specific movement evidence from the dance, and making connections to personal experience, culture, history, and/or other arts and disciplines?

1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

- How does your planning integrate resources like professional dance performances, guest artists, professional dance reviews, dance books and magazines (e.g., *Dance Magazine*, *Dance Spirit*), and online dance sites (e.g., Jacob's Pillow, The Kennedy Center's *Free to Dance*)?

1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

- How do you ensure that your lessons incorporate major concepts ("big ideas") that are *Blueprint*-aligned and matched to the learning outcomes and learning activities?
- In what ways do your lessons include opportunities for multiple high quality movement responses to improvisation and composition tasks, and avenues for all students to improve their technical dance skills?
- How do you plan to use student groupings that are appropriate for the activity, including:
 - whole class for technique and skill building
 - small groups and partners for choreography tasks
 - solo for individual movement exploration, demonstration, and dance creation
- What are some examples of planned instructional strategies that address diverse learners (e.g., physical demonstration, verbal direction, appropriate light touch, and visual aids)?
- In what ways will the lesson design support students with special needs?
- What are some opportunities for students to move in response to themes, ideas, music, and other arts to create choreography?

1f: Designing Student Assessments

- How do you plan clear assessment criteria that may include specific aspects of physical movement (e.g., a jeté or

leap in ballet should have stretched legs, pointed feet, and leg turnout)?

- What are examples of ways in which your lesson plans include multiple opportunities for teacher, peer, and self-assessment (e.g., students observe each other while performing choreography and use a rubric and protocol to provide peer feedback)?
- How have you provided opportunities for your students to build a portfolio of their work throughout the year?

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

- How do you ensure that students respectfully observe peer dance work?
- In what ways do you model appropriate physical proximity for dancing and ensure that students maintain their own and respect others' personal space?

2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning

- How do you support students' constructive use of protocols for giving their peers feedback on their dance work?
- How do you support students in displaying concentration, focus, and discipline when mastering new dance techniques?
- How do you ensure that students understand and use particular skills in dance expression, while demonstrating persistence?

2c: Managing Classroom Procedures

- In what ways do you set up dance class routines to maximize instructional time?
- How do you ensure that students demonstrate independence in carrying out dance class procedures (e.g., students change into dance attire, follow the warm-up, use eyes and body to learn movement, practice without prompting, and quickly form lines for traveling)?

2d: Managing Student Behavior

- What strategies do you use to support students' use of their eyes and body rather than their voice in dance technique class?
- What methods do you use to ensure that students are respectful both verbally and physically while learning, performing, creating, observing, and responding to dance?
- How do you ensure that students enter the dance studio in a respectful and quiet manner?
- What strategies do you use to make sure that, while dancing, students are aware of self, others, and the boundaries of the dancing space?

2e: Organizing Physical Space

- How do you ensure that:
 - the designated dancing space is cleared of furniture or other impediments so students can dance safely?
 - dance flooring, mirrors, *ballet barres*, and equipment (e.g., sound, video, computer, Smart board) are unobstructed?
 - dance vocabulary, dance photos, student work, and *Blueprint Standards* are posted?

Domain 3: Instruction

3a: Communicating with Students

- In what ways do you use clear, precise dance terminology, descriptive language, and accurate, expressive dance demonstration to explain the purpose of a task as it relates to the larger learning goals?
- What are some ways in which you use targeted imagery to explain the subtleties of dance movement (e.g., “Your arms should be slightly curved like the branch of a tree bending in the wind”; “Imagine your leg is rooted into the ground, like a strong, old tree trunk”)?

3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

- In what ways do you ask students to respond to artistic questions both verbally and physically (e.g., when asked what support means in dance partnering, students respond by physically exploring myriad ways to support a partner in movement, and then share out)?
- How do you give students opportunities to discuss and demonstrate the differences between two styles of dance they have learned?

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

- How do the learning activities and assignments integrate dance technique elements that build upon students’ prior dance knowledge and skills?
- How do you support students in including additional compositional elements beyond the given parameters of a choreography task?
- In what ways do you ensure that the lesson is well paced, with a mix of dance demonstration, verbal instruction, movement practice, and discussion?
- In what ways do you include writing when appropriate to the unit of study?
- How do you use groupings that are appropriate to the activity? For example:
 - whole class for technique and skill building
 - small groups and partners for choreography tasks
 - solo for individual movement exploration and creation

3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

- In what ways do you circulate and give students feedback while they perform warm-up or dance combinations, quietly correcting individual students (e.g., verbally, with light touch, or by modeling movement) and/or giving audible group corrections?
- How do you ensure that students observe each other’s rehearsals and compositions and engage in constructive peer critique, using dance terminology?
- In what ways do you support students in self-correcting their movement and line using body awareness (e.g., students make visible physical adjustments with or without prompting) and visual feedback (if there is a mirror in the dance studio)?

3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

- What are some ways in which you address student misunderstandings during a lesson (e.g., students demonstrate confusion of right and left, so the teacher makes a mid-lesson correction and presents direct instruction in recognizing right and left in movement)?
- In what ways do you invite students to share individual interpretations of a piece of choreography, modifying the task in response to students’ performances?

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

- What strategies do you use to maintain accurate records of student progress in dance skill building and performance, improvisation, and choreography through photos, videos, student papers, and/or online apps?

4c: Communicating with Families

- How do you ensure that notices and permission forms are sent home with students in a timely fashion for upcoming performances and field trips?
- What are some examples of ways in which you incorporate students' families and cultures into learning opportunities? For example:
 - A parent is invited to teach a dance from their culture to the class.
 - Students are given an assignment to interview family members about the dances they know.
 - Students learn a cultural dance from another student and share it with their own families.

4d: Participating in the Professional Community

- What are some ways in which you collaborate with other dance educators and with teachers of other content areas to enhance student success in and through dance (e.g., working with the social studies department to co-host a Harlem Renaissance event that includes period dance performances)?
- In what ways do you help plan and implement school initiatives including student performances both in-school and off-site?

4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

- What are some ways in which you participate in ongoing school-based and off-site professional development opportunities during the school day?
- What do you do to enhance your professional practice? For example:
 - attending regular dance-related professional development provided by the NYCDOE and at school
 - participating in events and training provided by professional dance companies and/or dance education organizations
 - attending professional dance concerts
 - participating as a member of a dance company