

Dance Students' Performance Technique and Skills

Dance BA - College of the Arts

Step 1: Student Learning Outcome

Students adequately demonstrate the technique, performance skills and movement vocabulary required of performing artists.

Step 2: Methods and Measures

Data collection took place in spring 2016 during Dance Major Assessments. The freshman, sophomore and junior dance majors were assessed in their Modern and Ballet Technique and Performance skills. Students were assessed for progress in application of previously learned skills and concepts to new challenges and problems in studio study. All full-time dance faculty members were present during this performance evaluation. The Senior Dance Majors who were enrolled in the highest level of Ballet and Modern Technique were assessed separately.

The Ballet and Modern Assessment Rubrics used in the previous cycle, 2014-15 Dance Assessments, were utilized this year as well. Students were rated as, Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, and Needs Improvement on the following criteria;

Application of Technique

- Technical accuracy
- Centering, balance, and alignment
- Stamina, strength, and flexibility
- Spatial awareness and precision of movement

Application of Performance Skills

- Timing and musicality
- Quality and dynamics
- Self-expression, sense of performance, and use of focus

Step 3: Criteria for Success

Seventy percent (70%) of students will receive an “exceeds” or “meets” expectations based on the demonstration of technical skills, application of performance concepts and understanding of movement vocabulary.

Step 4: Results

The BA in Dance program averages from all four levels of Ballet and Modern Technique were over 70% at the “meets expectations” or higher criteria of success.

Moreover, 90% of current Ballet IV Dance Major Seniors “exceeded” or “met” expectations, while 96% of current Modern IV Dance Major Seniors “met expectations” or “exceeded expectations” was 96%. These results indicate that the training given in the program is highly effective in the successful development of our dance majors.

An area for improvement was identified within the freshman class. The two areas of *Alignment/Posture* and *Turn-out Control* scores averaged in the 50%. The same class when assessed in the Modern II materials also scored a low 38% average in the area of *Alignment/Posture*. This can be contributed to a number of factors including the entrance level of some of the incoming freshman. Also contributing to this is the new challenges freshman dance majors face when first learning new Modern Dance languages as part of the curriculum within the major. Often they come into the program with very little exposure to these artistic forms. In reviewing the numbers throughout the four years of training within the program, these areas markedly improve in both the Ballet and Modern Dance Assessments. The Senior Dance Majors Assessed in their Dance 422 and 412 classes scored well over 70% in all these same areas.

Step 5: Improvement Actions

Assessment results encourage faculty members to continue their dedication to classical characteristics in dance training content and a “hands-on” approach to mentoring student development. One of the challenges identified is that transfer students typically do not possess the skills comparable to CSUF juniors, and require considerable retraining. It is this retraining of the habits of skeletal misalignment and inefficiency in movement that is necessary to address in order to meet the 70% goal in the areas of centering, balance, alignment and posture and technical accuracy and use of turn-out/parallel. The 2015-16 Dance Major Assessments demonstrate some improvement in this area. There has been a remarkable improvement in this area over the four years that students study in the program. Helpful approaches implemented this past year will be continued and include;

- Continue to provide ‘retraining’ for transfer students.
- Continue to conduct a session on dancer efficiency of movement and finding muscular balance with the Physical Therapy unit of the Health Center for incoming students.
- Schedule a Ballet open studio time to address individual student needs.