

LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE FOR DANCE EDUCATION 2026

1. Your Name/Cooperating Teacher's Name: Alyssa Casamassa

Grade/Age/Level of Students: 6th-8th/11-14/Beginner

Lesson # 1 of 5

Student Helpers (IF APPLICABLE):

2.LESSON TITLE: Introduction to Motif Development Lesson 1 of 5 in Unit

DATE: 1/29/26

UNIT OF STUDY: Theme & variation in choreography

Main Theme of Unit: How we can vary motifs to develop choreography.

3. MAIN THEME OF LESSON: Introduction to variations on a gesture.

4.ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

How does developing a motif facilitate the develop of a theme in dance?

How do different variations on a motif reflect different emotions?

1. Learning Objectives: (Students will be able to...

Students will be able to analyze various variations by using a specific motif of movement.

Students will be able to create movement based on a particular variation through motifs.

Students will be able to differentiate between variations such as, tempo, energy, and dynamics.

Dance Standards Addressed

DA:Cr1.1 – *Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.*

DA:Cr2.1 – *Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.*

DA:Re8.1 – *Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.*

6.New York State Teaching and Learning Standards:

Knowledge of Students and Student Learning

The lesson allows students to explore emotional expression through movement variations, supporting ways of

thinking and communicating through dance.

Instructional Practice

Students engage in thinking by analyzing and creating motif variations, demonstrating design aligned with learning objectives.

Assessment for Student Learning

Ongoing observation of student’s ability to analyze, create, and differentiate motif variations provides formative assessment aligned with lesson goals.

7. BluePrints for Teaching and Learning in Dance

Dance Making

Students create and manipulate motifs through variation, using tempo, energy, and dynamics to develop movement material.

Developing Dance Literacy

Students analyze and discuss how motif variations communicate emotion and meaning, building vocabulary and understanding of choreographic structure.

Making Connections

Students connect movement choices to emotional expression, recognizing how artistic decisions influence audience interpretation.

8. COMMON CORE AND/OR CROSS-CURRICULAR STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

Common Core ELA – Speaking & Listening 9-10.1)

Cross-Curricular Connection – Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

9. DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:

motif, repeated, phrase, improve, gesture, effort qualities, movement quality, slow-fast,

10. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

MATERIALS:

- **Texts, Music:** Apple Music Playlist

11. DEVELOPMENTAL INFORMATION:

- *Layering motif unit*

12. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS:

DE is using her spanish and english speaking students to help with one child in the class who is not fluent in English. DE is using scaffolding such as helping students with making their own motifs, and later on students will make their own by themselves.

LEARNING SEQUENCE

13. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:

This is a new unit on motifs. In prior knowledge, the students just finished a lesson on effort qualities. Which is great to be used with their motif development. Students have also choreographed on their own in small groups. DE has noticed that the students progress and learn at a steady pace, allowing for this unit to have plenty of scaffolding.

14. INTRODUCTION:

●—**Motivation:**

DE will explain to students that they are learning something new called motifs.

DE: “A motif is a symbolic movement idea that can be repeated and changed.
It’s like a word or a sentence in dance. You don’t need a lot just something clear.”

DE: “*it is a theme that is symbolic to a story*”

DE stands in front of students and asks

“ Give me an example of a gesture that you do everyday. This will be our symbolic movement.”

**If students do not have ideas, give examples such as, on the phone, clap, prayer hands, etc.

Once teacher receives a specific gesture, DE will explain to students to do the gesture..

DE will then do the gesture twice exactly the same

“Can you recognize when I repeat it?”

“If we can recognize it, it is a motif!”

DE has students repeat gesture normally 2-3 times so it becomes familiar.

Then DE will teach one manipulation at a time, always returning to original motif between so students can really feel the contrast.

Ex. of ways DE will have students do gesture using different tempo, energy, dynamics such as:

- Really slow
- Then really fast
- Now make it bigger

- Now smaller

15. WARM-UP/INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:

DE will now have students walking around the room (bee hive style) in improvisation movement using this gesture that was picked from introduction

All while calling out different variations on this specific gesture:

Starting with direction/pathway;

“Backward, left, diagonal, curved, zig-zag”

And then movement:

“Slow, fast, expand, low, high”

16. EXPLORATION:

DE will have students spread out and explain to them that “This is a motif. It is a repeated movement that you can add into your own choreography or improvisation.”

DE will now split the room in half, one side is group 1, the other is group 2

DE will tell students to mix around the room

Students will begin improvising using a separate gesture based on their group

EX. group 1: prayer hands; group 2: calling on the phone

DE: “Improvisation can still be structured!”

DE will call out different effort qualities (based on student’s last unit on efforts) tying in both units together. Students will do their own group’s gesture with that specific effort

DE: “Let’s start with bound flow”

After about 30 seconds..

DE: “Now direct

.. and this goes on

Students will see how it feels to do different gestures, but same effort qualities around their peers, and how that can make choreography look and feel different.

17. DEVELOPMENT:

(If time allows)

DE will now put the class into groups of 3, and give each group their own gesture (next class students will make their own)

DE explains to students that they will choreograph a 36 count (3 counts of 8) or 30 second phrase using their gesture at least 3 times throughout.

This is furthermore explaining that this is a motif. A repeated movement/gesture throughout a phrase. DE will explain to students “This motif will allow you to tell a story throughout your phrase to the audience, think of what emotion you want to convey with this gesture”

DE will give ideas of effort qualities to make student’s gesture’s look different throughout the phrase.

DE will circulate and walk around room to help and support groups with their phrase’s

18. SHARING:

(if time allows, if not students will share the following class)

Students will share their phrases that they made in their groups to the class. The class will try to guess what the gesture (motif) was throughout the phrase of their peers

19. CONCLUSION:

DE will have students stand in a circle..

DE: “So, can everyone explain to me one thing that makes a gesture have variation”

Student’s will each go around and say their answer..

Possible answers..

“A gesture that is big”

“A gesture that is small”

A gesture that moves on a curved pathway”

Etc..

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

FORMATIVE & SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

20. Type of assessment:

● Criteria	● 3 – Meets Expectations	● 2 – Developing	● 1 – Beginning
● Motif Clarity	● Motif is clear and repeated so it can be recognized	● Motif is sometimes clear but not always repeated	● Motif is unclear or not repeated
● Use of Variations	● Shows clear changes in tempo, energy, or dynamics	● Attempts variation but changes are limited or unclear	● Little to no variation shown
● Participation and Understanding	● Participates fully and can explain one way the motif was changed	● Participates but explanation is unclear or incomplete	● Limited participation and cannot explain variation

Criteria:

- *Did the student accurately identify and repeat a clear motif so that it was recognizable throughout the movement phrase?*
- *To what degree did the student apply variations (tempo, energy, and dynamics) to the motif while maintaining its original structure?*
- *Did the student demonstrate an understanding of how changing tempo (slow vs. fast) affects the feeling or emotion of the motif?*

21. Teacher Skill Development: DE is focusing on giving clear explanations when introducing new vocabulary such as motif and variation before moving into movement. The teacher is also working on using proper counts and dance terminology when demonstrating motifs and their variations. Another skill being developed is differentiating instruction through scaffolding, beginning with a class motif and moving toward

independent student work. During exploration and improvisation, the teacher is practicing circulating the room to give feedback and support students.

22. Revisions for Re-implementation: This lesson builds off the last class on effort qualities, using what students already know to help them understand motif variation. In past lessons, students were good at exploring effort but sometimes lost the movement, so this lesson focuses more on repeating and recognizing the motif. The lesson may move a little slower so students don't rush through the variations. The teacher will also remind students that improvisation can still be structured.

23. Reminder to do: For next class, students should come with one everyday gesture they use often. They should be ready to explain one way they could change it using tempo, energy, or dynamics.

Alyssa Casamassa