

**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

**2.LESSON TITLE: Butterfly Exploration Through Movement**

**DATE: 3/13/26**

**UNIT OF STUDY: Nature & Character Exploration in Dance**

**Main Theme of Unit: Using imagery, effort qualities, and movement exploration to develop choreography inspired by nature.**

**3. MAIN THEME OF LESSON: *Using improvisation and imagery to explore butterfly movement and develop choreographic material.***

**4.ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

*How can imagery help dancers create new movement ideas?*

*How can effort qualities help us express the life and movement of a butterfly?*

**1. Learning Objectives: (Students will be able to..by/through...)**

- ***Explore movement qualities inspired by the butterfly life cycle through improvisation.***
- ***Create original movement phrases based on imagery and effort qualities.***
- ***Demonstrate understanding of levels, pathways, and tempo through butterfly-inspired movement..***

**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**

Students explore movement through imagery and improvisation, encouraging creativity and individual interpretation of movement.

### **Instructional Practice**

Students engage in creative thinking by using imagery and effort qualities to explore movement and develop phrases.

### **Assessment for Student Learning**

The teacher observes students during exploration and phrase building to assess their understanding of imagery, pathways, and movement qualities.

## **7. BluePrints for Teaching and Learning in Dance**

### **Dance Making**

Students explore movement inspired by nature and develop phrases using pathways, levels, and effort qualities.

### **Developing Dance Literacy**

Students describe how their movements represent butterfly imagery and discuss effort qualities used.

### **Making Connections**

Students connect concepts from nature and science (butterfly life cycle) to artistic movement expression.

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

### **Science Connection:**

Students explore the life cycle of a butterfly and translate these stages into movement.

## **9. DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:**

*Imagery*

*Improvisation*

*Pathway*

*Levels*

*Tempo*

*Effort quality*

*Expansion*

*Contraction*

*Gesture*

*Phrase*

## **10. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS, RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES**

(materials used in research, planning and/or instruction)

**MATERIALS:**

- **Texts, Music:** Apple Music Playlist, Whiteboard with butterfly life cycle image, Markers placed around room to represent “flowers”

**11. DEVELOPMENTAL INFORMATION:**

- *developing coordination, spatial awareness, improvisation skills, and the ability to translate imagery into movement. This lesson also encourages creativity, emotional expression, and collaboration*

**12. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS:**

The DE will scaffold by first introducing butterfly imagery and guiding students through improvisation before moving toward independent phrase creation. The DE demonstrates movement examples and writes key concepts (levels, pathways, effort qualities) on the board for visual learners. The DE will circulate throughout the room during improvisation and group work to provide feedback and support!

**LEARNING SEQUENCE**

**13. PRIOR KNOWLEDGE:**

Students have previously somewhat explored improvisation, pathways, and effort qualities in earlier dance units. They have experience working in groups and creating short movement phrases.

**14. INTRODUCTION:**

●—**Motivation:**

DE explains that the class will begin a new choreography unit inspired by butterflies and nature.

Students will explore how dancers can turn imagery and real-life movement into dance, The teacher will briefly show a diagram of the butterfly life cycle on the whiteboard.

DE asks:

“What qualities do butterflies have?”

“How do they move through space?”

Students will begin moving through the room improvising while the teacher calls out spatial prompts:

“Travel on curved pathways.”

“Try zig-zag pathways.”

“Move forward and backward.”

“Move slowly like you are floating.”

This begins warming up the body while introducing butterfly type of movement qualities

### **15. WARM-UP/INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY:**

Students explore the four stages of the butterfly life cycle through movement.

Egg

Students begin low to the floor in very small contained shapes.

Movement is small and quiet.

Caterpillar

Students travel across the floor using curved pathways, crawling, and contractions

Movement is grounded and connected to the floor.

Chrysalis

Students freeze in wrapped shapes with very little movement.

Movement is sustained and bound

Butterfly

Students slowly expand their shapes, arms begin opening like wings.

Movement is very light, floating and expansive.

Students begin traveling through space with turns, jumps, and flowing arm pathways.

### **16. EXPLORATION:**

The DE places markers around the room as “flowers.”

Students travel from flower to flower using butterfly-inspired movement.

Exploration prompts include ill say like:

Move lightly and delicately

Change pathways between flowers (zig-zag, curved, circular).

Change levels (low glide, middle float, high jump).

Change tempo (slow glide, quick flutter).

Sometimes maybe land on a flower and freeze in a butterfly shape.

! Students must be aware of others traveling through the room and avoid collisions !

The DE says to dancers to respond to each other’s movement.

### **17. DEVELOPMENT:**

Students will now create their own butterfly movement phrase!

I'll put class in small groups of 3–4 dancers

Each group must include:

- A moment showing butterfly wings opening
- A traveling butterfly pathway
- A freeze shape on a flower
- A fluttering or floating wing movement

Groups will put these ideas into a short phrase (around 6–8 movements)

The DE circulates the room giving feedback and asking questions like:

“What stage of the butterfly are you showing?”

“How can your movement become lighter or more floating?”

### **18. SHARING:**

Each group performs their butterfly phrase for the class, and students sit while watching their peers

After each group goes, the class teacher asks:

What butterfly movement qualities did you see?

What pathways or levels were used?

Groups can then explain their movement choices and what imagery inspired them.

### **19. CONCLUSION:**

DE finishes up the lesson by highlighting how the class used imagery and improvisation to create movement.

Students are made sure that they know that these butterfly movements will become the foundation for the choreography they will build throughout the unit!

DE thanks students for their creativity and exploration and tells them to keep thinking about nature inspired movements

**ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**FORMATIVE & SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:**

**20. Type of assessment:** *(This can be teacher observation and inquiry, self or peer assessment or a written assessment.)*

**Criteria 3 – Meets Expectations 2 – Developing 1 – Beginning**

Movement Exploration	Demonstrates clear butterfly inspired movement and effort qualities	Some butterfly qualities shown but inconsistent	Limited exploration of imagery
Use of Space & Pathways	Uses multiple pathways and levels clearly	Uses some pathways but limited variety	Minimal use of space
Participation & Creativity	Fully participates and contributes ideas to group phrase	Participates but contribution is limited	Limited participation

**Criteria:**

- *Did the student explore movement qualities inspired by butterfly imagery?*
- *To what degree did the student use pathways, levels, and effort qualities?*
- *Did the student demonstrate creativity when developing butterfly movement?*

**21. Teacher Skill Development:** The DE is focusing on helping students through structured improvisation using imagery prompts. The teacher is also always circulating the room to give feedback while students have the freedom to explore creatively. Another focus is helping students make imagery into movement and encouraging risk taking.

**22. Revisions for Re-implementation:** Students may need additional time to explore butterfly movement qualities before creating phrases. In future lessons, I could add visual references like videos or pictures of butterfly movement to further inspire choreography. I will also encourage students to exaggerate movement qualities to make the imagery clearer.

**23. Reminder to do:** For next class, students will begin developing choreography using the butterfly movement phrases they created today.

Alyssa Casamassa