

Welcome

Welcome to Sharon Shorty's artist study, a unique storytelling and creative movement workshop created in collaboration with Trent University.

In this resource, you will begin by listening to Sharon tell a story, passed on to her by her grandfather, Jim Shorty. Then NBS Dance Educator Caitlin Marzialli will introduce you to collaborative, fun and accessible creative movement activities that allow students to engage deeply with Sharon's storytelling.

Curriculum Connections:

- Dance
- Language
- Social Studies

Primary Outcomes:

- Creating unique and expressive movements, inspired by Sharon Shorty's storytelling
- Applying different musical forms, dance formations, and movement pathways to interpret Sharon Shorty's story through dance
- Moving cooperatively and collaboratively with others

Suggested Grade Levels:

- This artist study can be enjoyed by dancers of any age!
- If you are using this resource in the classroom, it is most suitable for grades 3-6

The Story



Before beginning the dance activities, play Sharon's story for your students. Feel free to repeat the reading multiple times so students can enjoy and understand it completely.

Reflection:

You may ask your students the following questions to encourage reflection and stimulate creativity after listening to the story.

- When do you like to tell and listen to stories?
- What are some different ways you share stories in your school, home, or community?
- What parts of the story make you think of movement?
- What moment from the story is most memorable to you? How could you share that moment without using words?

Warmups



Before beginning, make sure your dancing space is clear and free of obstacles.

Warming up is an important part of every dance class, because it prepares students to move safely, confidently, and collaboratively. Lead dancers through the following warm-up activities at the beginning of each class. While these activities are not intended to be evaluated, use this portion of the class to check in on dancers, assess energy levels, and determine how your class will flow.

What to ask yourself while leading/observing warm-up:

- How much energy do dancers have at the beginning of class?
- How confident are dancers about independently contributing an idea to the group?
- How comfortable are dancers moving solo and with the group?
- How aware are dancers of other people and objects in their space?

Name Activity:

Suggested Time: 2-5 mins

Materials: none

Goals:

- Dancers will get to know everyone in the room
- Dancers will reflect on how they are feeling and begin to warm up their bodies
- Dancers will begin creating movements and respond to movements of others

Instructions:

- Begin in a circle formation
- Go around the circle and ask each dancer to say their name and describe how they're feeling, using a word that starts with the same letter as their name (e.g., I'm Caitlin and I'm feeling content)
- As dancers say their names, ask them to create an action that represents how they are feeling
- Ask everyone in the circle to repeat the action

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers are connecting their movement energy to the feeling they're expressing
- ☐ Dancers are respectfully attentive to their classmates' ideas
- ☐ Dancers echo their classmates' movements in unison at the appropriate time

Countdown Warmup:

Suggested Time: 2-5 mins

Materials: Drum or music

Goals:

- Dancers will move to a steady beat
- Dancers will begin to warm up their bodies
- Dancers will count a shrinking pattern of musical phrasing

Instructions:

- Begin in a circle formation
- Ask dancers to shrink their bodies for 8 counts, and then expand for 8 counts; repeat this pattern with 7 counts, 6 counts, descending all the way to 1 count
- Guide the dancers by playing beats on the drum, clapping your hands, or playing music with a steady beat

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers are using full body movement
- ☐ Dancers are moving continuously through each musical phrase
- ☐ Dancers are counting the beats

Journey to Earth



Activity 1:

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Material:

- Long pieces of fabric, string, or ribbon; 1 per dancer and 1 extra piece for the group

Goals:

- Dancers will use props to guide their movement
- Dancers will move cooperatively within a small group to create a movement pattern
- Dancers will move cooperatively as a large group to create a movement pattern

Instructions:

- This activity represents braiding of caribou hide
- Split dancers into groups of 3
- Place one piece of fabric in the middle of the space, tied to form a circle; this represents the boulder
- Make sure each dancer has a piece of fabric
- In groups of 3, dancers tie their pieces of fabric (caribou hide) to the middle circle (boulder)
- Dancers hold the end of their fabric crating a bit of tension
- In their groups of three, dancers braid the fabric; one outside dancer will dive under the fabric of the middle dancer, taking their place; the other outside dancer will dive under the middle dancer taking their place; repeat this pattern until everyone they have created a long braid
- Lift up the boulder one time and ask dancers if it's wet. Lift up the boulder a second time and ask if it's wet

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers take turns appropriately
- ☐ Dancers move with awareness of the people around them
- ☐ Dancers move individually and in unison



Activity 2:

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Material:

- Scarves, towels or tissue paper; 1 per dancer

Goals:

- Dancers will move through space using different pathways
- Dancers will move in connection with the group
- Dancers will lead and follow others through space

Instructions:

- Begin by exploring different ways to move with the scarves
- Give each dancer in the circle the opportunity to move with the scarf independently, and ask the rest of the group to follow
- Next, lead the dancers around the space in a line, holding onto scarves
- Pass the leader role to another dancer
- Each leader chooses the direction of movement and everyone else follows
- At any time the leader can move to the end of the line
- The next person in line becomes the leader
- Continue, until each dancer has had a turn as the leader

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers lead the group at an appropriate pace matching the music
- ☐ Dancers lead the group through space in different pathways
- ☐ Dancers follow the movements of the leader and maintain the formation as they move

Lynx and Wolverine



Suggested time: 30 mins

Material:

- Image of a lynx and a wolverine

Goals:

- Dancers will create a 16 beat movement phrase based on the characteristics of a lynx or wolverine
- In groups, dancers will collaborate to create choreography
- Dancers will perform their choreography as a group

Instructions:

- Introduce the lynx and wolverine
- Ask students to think about words that describe each animal
- Split dancers into two groups
- One group will be the lynx, and the other group will be the wolverines
- Dancers will create a 16 beat movement phrase that embodies the animal, based on the words they came up with
- Once dancers are comfortable with their 16 beat movement phrase, the wolverines will dance their choreography and remain in their ending position
- After that, the lynx group will dance their choreography and remain in their ending position
- Next, both groups will dance their choreography at the same time
- After dancing, ask the group who they think won
- In Sharon's story, the lynx wins

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers' movement dynamics, shapes, and patterns reflect the characteristics of the lynx and wolverine
- ☐ Each dancer contributes to the creative process and performance
- ☐ Dancers remain in character and position when the other group is doing something different

First Peoples' Dance



Suggested time: 5-10mins

Goals:

- Dancers will sway to waltz music dancing in $\frac{3}{4}$ time
- Dancers will move through space, mindful of the people around them
- Dancers will connect with each other through movement

Instructions:

- Using the whole space, dancers will sway side to side for 12 counts
- Dancers will face someone in the room and make a 'let's dance together' gesture for 4 counts (see video)
- Repeat this many times, until dancers have greeted many partners

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers are able to move through space, being mindful of the people and objects around them
- ☐ Dancers are swaying musically
- ☐ Dancers connect with multiple other dancers in the space

Mahsi (Thank you)

This activity will help dancers cool down their bodies and calm down.

Suggested time: 5 mins

Goals:

- Dancers will begin to calm their bodies
- Dancers will show gratitude to their classmates through movement
- Dancers will independently create a unique movement

Instructions:

- As a group, take some deep breaths together, placing your hands on your heart
- One by one, each dancer will mold a shape out of an imaginary ball and pass it to the person next to them
- Dancers should aim to accept the object as it is being passed to them
- Continue until each person has had a turn

What to look for:

- ☐ Dancers independently create a unique object using their movement
- ☐ Dancers respectfully watch their classmates when it is someone else's turn
- ☐ Dancers cooperate with others when they are passing the ball and accepting the ball