



ABSENT MATTER
BY KYLE ABRAHAM/ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION

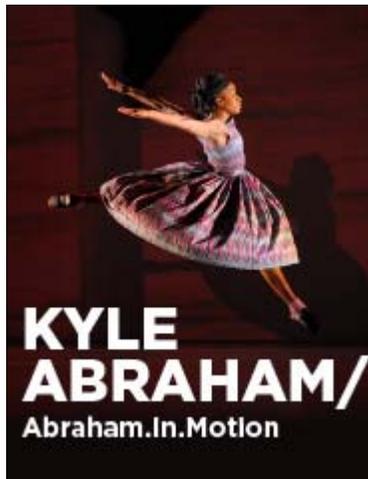
Applause Series Curriculum Guide
February 1, 2017



CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Absent Matter* by Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion. In addition to inviting your students to experience the expressiveness of dance as an art form, the three powerful dances by Kyle Abraham they will experience present a unique lens for personal reflection and conversations about the ongoing struggle for Civil Rights and equality.



We hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

As a final note about the study guide, many of the activities are movement-based; we encourage you to look to our “Introducing Movement into the Classroom” section for helpful tips to make your class’s first steps into the world of dance a successful and enjoyable experience for all.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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This study guide was compiled and written by Kathleen Hurley; edited by Karoline Myers.

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ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS



Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

Public education programs allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its **K-12 School Programs**, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 55,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts' newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:

- *Civic Center*, 2744 seats
- *Stoner Theater*, 200 seats
- *Temple Theater*, 299 seats
(located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space. Features include the Lauridsen Fountain, the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by Claes Oldenburg, and the Swirl sculpture by Jim Campbell.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 21st season of school performances!

GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Musicians and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- * What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- * What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- * What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- * Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- * Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Des Moines Civic Center:

- * Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- * Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- * Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- * Do not text during the performance.
- * Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- * When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- * **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- * Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater and causing a distraction.
- * Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- * Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



**Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts.
Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.**

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- * Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- * After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- * Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- * Des Moines Performing Arts reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- * Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- * Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- * Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- * All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted online. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- * Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
- * Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- * Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- * Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with Des Moines Performing Arts Education staff.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- * When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes.
- * Each group will be assigned a specific location in the hall, and ushers will escort groups to their seats upon arrival. Various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group's specific location in the hall.
- * We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and that other adults position themselves throughout the group.** This helps with supervision purposes and is especially important in the event a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- * Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging individuals' seat locations or taking students to the restroom. This helps ensure that everyone has a seat in your designated section, as well as allows us to more efficiently seat other arriving groups. This helps us to start the performance on time.
- * As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause Series performances.

IN THE THEATER

- * In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Civic Center performances.
- * We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- * Following the performance, please wait for your group to be dismissed prior to exiting the theater.
- * If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at
education@desmoinesperformingarts.org
or 515.246.2355.

Thank you!

VOCABULARY



As you prepare to watch the dance performance by Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion, here are some words to get you started.

abstract: not depicting something in its exact form but showing the essence of the idea or object.

choreography: the arrangement of movement in space and time. A series of pre-planned movements usually set to music but can also be set to silence, poetry or text.

collaboration: to creatively work together with others in a team to create a performance with many elements (such as combining dance with poetry or multi-media projections).

contemporary dance: a style of expressive dance that combines elements of several dance genres including but not limited to modern, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, and classical ballet.

creativity: the ability to go beyond traditional ideas, rules, and patterns in order to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, and interpretations.

duet: two dancers performing together.

ensemble: a group of dancers performing together.

energy: refers to the force applied to dance to accentuate the weight, attack, strength, and flow of a dancer's movement. Adjectives such as explosive, smooth, free, restrained, wild, etc., describe some different types of energy that dancers can exhibit.

rehearsal: practice in preparation of a public performance.

improvisation: dance movements created on the spot (not pre-planned) in relation to a particular concept or idea.

literal: showing movements or images that are as close to real life as possible.

repertory: the group of dances that are actively performed by a company.

solo: a dance performed alone (one dancer) or set apart from other dancers on stage.

space: the area in which a dancer moves, encompassing level, direction, floor pattern, shape, and design.

technique: a set of skills which dancers develop to perform a certain dance form. Sometimes, particularly in modern dance, choreographers become famous for making up their own dance technique.

tempo: the speed or pace of the music or activity.

unison: the same movement or series of movements performed at the same time by more than one dancer.

Absent Matter, Tamisha Guy, Ellen Crane Photography.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE, pg. 1



The Quiet Dance. Ellen Crane Photography.

You will see Abraham.In.Motion, a dance company of seven dancers directed by Kyle Abraham of New York City.

The performance will feature three dances:

1. *The Quiet Dance* (16 minutes long);
2. *Absent Matter* (17 minutes long); and
3. Excerpts from *The Gettin'* (14 minutes long).

There will be a brief pause between each piece, and at the end of the performance, there will be time for a short Q&A.

Run Time: Approximately 1 hour

STYLE

You will experience a mix of dance forms including hip-hop, African forms, modern dance, ballet and jazz. Sometimes the dancers will perform with music and sometimes they will dance to silence or spoken word. Kyle Abraham collaborated with visual artists and lighting designers to also use multi-media projections to create a mood, atmosphere or cultural context for each dance.

THEMES

Abraham.In.Motion explores issues of civil rights, asking people to think about race and gender stereotypes using a range of movement qualities or textures.

As you watch for variety in the movements think about, for example, how just as it would be really boring to hear a person only talk in a monotone voice, it would be just as unpleasant to see a dancer move their body in only one way. Kyle Abraham's choreography varies the energy level, geometry and mood within each dance.

ABOVE: Abraham.In.Motion performs *The Quiet Dance*. Watch for movement that expresses the metaphor "us versus them".

THE DANCES

THE QUIET DANCE

The Quiet Dance begins with a person alone on stage dancing to silence. The choreographer purposely wanted to start the dance in a quiet and uncomfortable way to help convey ideas of sadness and hurt. A group arrives on stage separate from the first dancer which could be a metaphor for "us versus them". When the choreographer made this dance he was thinking about his own personal experiences with racism.

While you watch...

During the dance you will see characters experiencing a range of emotions. Use your imagination to create a story about one of the characters. Who is that person? Where do they come from? What are they feeling and thinking?

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE, pg. 2



The Gettin'. Ellen Crane Photography.

ABSENT MATTER

Absent Matter uses a frenzy of fast movements and multi-media projected images. The piece resonates with the “Black Lives Matter” activist movement that speaks out against the unwarranted shooting deaths of young black men like Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown and Corey Jones at the hands of police. Choreographer Kyle Abraham was also thinking about the violent deaths of hip-hop musicians Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls.

The music score sometimes includes sounds of voices yelling, calling out or screaming to create a particular mood or atmosphere.

Black and white film footage projected on the back of the stage shows rioters and police. The dancers’ movements are sometimes literal – like a dancer lying dead or motionless on the ground. But sometimes the dancers’ movements are abstract – like a person staring far away in the distance that could signify someone looking for hope in the future or grieving the far-off memories of the past.

While you watch...

Think about why Kyle Abraham chose to title this piece ‘Absent Matter’. What does it mean to be absent? Who or what is this dance suggesting is absent in our society?

ABOVE: Abraham.In.Motion performs *The Gettin’*. Watch for movement and multi-media images that express the pain of segregation under apartheid.

THE GETTIN’

A portion of *The Gettin’* will be performed at the school show. The setting is Cape Town, Africa during the time of apartheid (a system in South Africa that separated people based on their race and skin color.) In *The Gettin’*, black and white images are projected of such racially provocative things as “Whites Only” signs. Abstract ink blots are also projected over the film footage to filter, block or stain the pictures. The music by Robert Glasper re-interprets a piece of music called “We Insist” by Max Roach (from the “Freedom Now Suite”), that commemorated the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil Rights Movement. Dancers are dressed as protesters from the 1960s.

Before you watch...

Research the Emancipation Proclamation. When did it happen and why? Why is it relevant to the history of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and to the history of today?



Absent Matter.

ABOUT KYLE ABRAHAM/ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION



The Quiet Dance, Ellen Crane Photography.

The mission of Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion (AIM) is to create a thought-provoking gallery of dances that involve dance, visual art, spoken word and music. Inspired by the hip-hop culture of the 1970s and trained in classical music, dance and visual art, choreographer Kyle Abraham is interested in the diversity of personal experiences that make us who we are.

THE DANCERS

Abraham.In.Motion values diversity and individuality amongst its dancers. Unlike the New York City Rockettes, for example, who all look the same and are all required to kick the same height and dance the same way, director Kyle Abraham wants his dancers to show their individuality and celebrate who they are on stage.

Visit the [Abraham.In.Motion website](#) and look at photos of the dancers under the 'About' tab. Notice the diversity of the dancers, not just of how the performers look, but also where they come from and what kind of dance training led them to this job.

KYLE ABRAHAM

Artistic Director Kyle Abraham is a 2016 Doris Duke recipient and a 2015 NYC City Center Choreographer in Residence. Kyle is a 2013 MacArthur Fellow with numerous awards. He has been called "the best and brightest creative talent to emerge in New York City in the age of Obama" (*OUT Magazine*).



Kyle Abraham. Image courtesy of MacArthur Foundation.

Watch this [video interview](#) with Kyle Abraham in which he talks about how he makes his dances and why. He started training for dance later in life than some dance professionals and always knew he wanted to be a choreographer. He makes his dances based on what is going on in his life or in the world at the time. It can take 2-4 years for his ideas to journey from his imaginative vision to come to life on stage.

Kyle stresses that for him it is important to "be present. Be who you are, how you are and who you think you are." For him this has made his choreography feel very vulnerable and honest.

Think about...

It might have been scary for Kyle Abraham to put his feelings and dances out in the public. Have you ever written a poem, drawn a picture, or sang a song that came deep from within your heart? Was it hard for you to share it with other people? If you shared it, how did you feel afterwards?

WHAT IS DANCE?



The Getting. Ellen Crane Photography.

Dance is a fundamental part of the human experience. Read on to learn more about the many reasons why people dance and how dances are put together.

WHY WE DANCE

People have always danced.

In some societies, people dance mostly for religious reasons. They want to appease the gods, to ward off evil, to pray for rain, or to have a good harvest. In other societies, people dance mostly for their own amusement – by themselves or with others. In some places, dance is a performing art in which people dance to entertain others.

When people dance they move their bodies rhythmically to express ideas or emotions. Most of the time, dance has a structure. Sometimes it is improvised or made up on the spot. Traditional folk or tribal dances are passed down from generation to generation.

PHRASES

All dances are made up of sequences of steps and gestures called phrases. Phrases make up a dance the same way that words are put together to form a sentence.

Dance can be performed as a solo, duet, or in a group.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Dances or movement structures by a single person or made in a collaborative team is called choreography. A piece of choreography can include pre-planned steps and/or improvisation structures in which the dancers “jam” with each other on the spot.

COSTUMES

Costumes are used to help bring the choreographed dance to life and to help communicate the story or idea. In modern dance and ballet, costumes are often form-fitting and may include bare skin. This allows the audience to see the detailed shapes made by the dancer’s body.

SPOTLIGHT ON: ATHLETICISM

To dance and to play a sport requires a purpose of movement: jumping from one end of the stage to the other as a form of expression, or, stretching an arm to catch a ball. As you watch think about the following:

- ◇ What, if any, differences are there between a dancer leaping high into the air across the stage and a basketball player jumping to dunk the ball, or an outfielder leaping over the wall to make a great catch?
- ◇ What are some similarities and differences between someone participating in sports and someone dancing, in terms of movement (leap, bend, stretch, etc.)?
- ◇ As with sports, dance also requires the use of energy. What are the differences and similarities in the amount of energy used by a dancer during a full performance and a ball player playing a full game?

ELEMENTS OF DANCE — B.A.S.T.E.



The Ginn. Connie Shiao by Clark Scott.

Dance is the movement of the human body through space in time using energy. Dancers use movement to express emotions, stories, ideas, and beliefs. The five elements of dance include: body, action, space, time, and energy. It is important to understand each element as they come together to create the whole.

Discuss each of the elements as a class and then explore each element through movement exercises. These can be as simple as the instructor asking students questions such as: “Show me low!”, “How can you make the body go high?”, “Show walking, skipping, etc.”, “Use your fingers and show fast.” “Show me stretching.” Other, more in-depth ideas for exploring the elements of dance can be found on page 14.

Adapted from “Dance Education Initiative Curriculum Guide”, Perpich Center for Arts Education.

BODY refers to the awareness of specific body parts and how they can be moved in isolation and combination.

shape: curving, angling, twisting

parts: arms, legs, head, feet, hands, torso

ACTION refers to locomotor and non-locomotor movement.

locomotor: walk, run, leap, hop, skip, gallop, slide (anything that moves from one point to another)

nonlocomotor: bend, twist (anything that does not move from one point to another)

following and leading

SPACE refers to the space the body moves through, the direction of movements, and the shapes, levels, and patterns of a group of dancers.

(SPACE, cont.)

levels: low, medium, high

direction: forward, backward, diagonal, sideways

focus: straight, curved, open, closed, peripheral

TIME is a musical and dance element. It includes beat, tempo, accent, and duration.

tempo: fast, medium, slow

with or without music

long / short

patterned / counted

ENERGY refers to the force applied to dance to accentuate the weight, attack, strength, and flow of a dancer’s movement.

quality: strong, light, sharp, smooth, soft, sudden, sustained, free, bound

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES



Absent Matter: Ellen Crane Photography.

When people see a performance, they often think only of the performers on stage; however, there are many other people who come together to make the performance happen.

WITH THE COMPANY

The following list covers many of the important roles that contribute to a professional dance performance, such as the one you will experience with Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion.

Artistic Director: the person who makes sure the dance company is meeting the artistic standards of the company. Artistic standards may include the quality of dancers, dances (choreography), sets, costumes, lights, and music.

Choreographer: the person who plans the structures of the dances, choreography and improvisation, as well as how they are sewn together to make the artistic presentation

Composer: a person who writes music.

Lighting Designer: decides what kind of light (bright / dark / colors) will illuminate each dance piece.

Costume Designer: designs all the costumes the dancers wear on stage.

Technical Director: makes sure all the technical aspects go together and work — for example the set, lights and sound.

Rehearsal Director: schedules the daily rehearsal plan, ensuring each dance piece is given enough time at rehearsal.

General Manager: oversees all the business of the company, everything from advertising to insurance to paychecks to hiring personnel to make artistic decisions. In general, making sure the company runs smoothly.

RIGHT: What do you think this dance is about based on the costumes that you see? What mood or the time period the costume designer is trying to evoke?

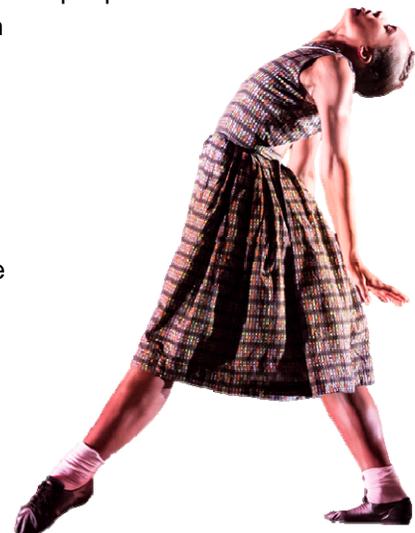
Photo credit: Tim Barden

ABOVE: In this moment from *Absent Matter*, what do you notice about the lighting? What mood or idea could the lighting designer be trying to express?

ON THE ROAD

In addition, each theater that Abraham.In.Motion travels to has many people on staff to help with the show. This includes the theater's own Technical Director and stage crew that works with the company's technical director.

As you can see, dance is a truly collaborative experience, requiring trust and teamwork among many people.



PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 1

1) WHO DANCES?

Goals: To understand that dance is a shared art form around the world

Explanation: Students will view a short video featuring people from around the world dancing, paired with guided discussion.

Materials:

- ◇ Internet connection with YouTube access
- ◇ Projector or other way to show the video
- ◇ Chalk board or chart paper

Activity:

1. Explain to students that they will be going to the theater to see a professional dance performance. Today, you would like to explore the question of 'Who dances?'
2. Write "Who Dances" on the board or flipchart paper. Ask for students to volunteer ideas about who dances. (Ideas may include ballerinas, cheerleaders, brides and grooms, etc.)
3. After you have gathered responses, tell students that they are going to watch a short video that may give them some additional thoughts on who dances.
4. Play the "Where...is Matt 2012" video by clicking on the image below.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Did anything surprise you about the video?
2. Are there additions we need to make to our 'Who dances' list? (Eventually, the goal is to have a student suggest that everybody dances in some form.)
3. Now that we've explored who dances, why do you think people dance? (To celebrate, to entertain, to worship, to express themselves, etc.)



Show students the video "Where the Hell is Matt? 2012" in which Matt Harding engages people from all around the world in dancing with him.

2) ABSENT MATTER AND PERSPECTIVES

Goals: To understand how dance can communicate social activism issues

Explanation: Modern dance is a symbolic communication style in which the message is bigger than just doing fancy steps or tricks. Deep and heavy issues that are hard to put into words can be explained through nonverbal body language and group formations on the stage. In this activity, students will make connections to civil rights and race issues addressed in *Absent Matter*.

Materials:

- ◇ White board and paper

Activity:

1. Explain to students that during the dance *Absent Matter*, they will see many images of people struggling with civil rights issues.
2. Invite students to write or talk about issues in their own city or school. How does racism show up in the hallways of your school?
3. Explain to students that choreographer Kyle Abraham found a way to talk about his troubles through the art form of dance.
4. Next invite students to individually write a list of words to show how they feel about how different groups of people are treated in your school or city.
5. Last, have students compare their lists.
6. Lead a discussion of how different people might have different perspectives on the same topic.

Follow-up Questions:

After the class has seen the Abraham.In.Motion performance, revisit the discussion from above.

1. How was racism portrayed in the dances?
2. Did Kyle Abraham's perception match your own? Was it different? In what way?
3. Re-look at the list of words you created before our trip to the theater. What ways can people overcome or help others overcome or help others overcome racial obstacles?
4. Think about how people in different countries have different levels of rights and opportunities (ex. economic possibilities to move up in life, access to education, equality of the sexes, etc.). Does that change the lens of discussion when we think about the discrimination people of color in the United States feel? Why or why not? If so, how?

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 2

3) THE DANCING MIRROR

Goals: To identify locomotor and non-locomotor action, to develop basic dance vocabulary, and to practice types of action.

Explanation: In this movement-based activity, students will explore ACTION (one of the basic elements of dance) through exploration of locomotor and non-locomotor movements.

Materials:

- ◇ Open area
- ◇ Chalkboard and chalk or whiteboard and markers

Activity:

1. Write 'locomotor movement' and 'non-locomotor movement' on the board and read the descriptions of each from the elements of dance ACTION section on page 11.
2. Read through the examples of each type of action as a group and ask students to generate additional examples of each that can be listed on the board underneath the title of each type of action.
3. Ask the students to stand up and form a circle with you. Explain to students that they are to be your mirror image. If your hand moves, their hand moves. If your body sways, their body sways, etc.
4. Demonstrate a number of examples of action from the board and ask students to name whether the action is locomotor or non-locomotor movement as they mirror the action.
5. Ask students to form pairs and each take turns being the leader and the follower using both locomotor and non-locomotor actions.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Describe how it felt to perform locomotor action.
2. Describe how it felt to perform non-locomotor action.
3. What was it like to lead your partner?
4. What was it like to follow your partner?
5. What did your movements remind you of, if anything?

Teacher Tip:

If you have not introduced movement activities within your classroom before, be sure to check out "Preparing for Success: Introducing Movement Into the Classroom" on page 17 for some simple exercises and pointers to get your class started.

Adapted from Diavolo's "Young Person's Concert Study Guide."

4) GROOVING TO THE BEAT

Goals: To identify and create a beat, to change tempo of beat and movement, and to move through space to beat.

Explanation: In this movement-based activity, students will explore TIME and SPACE, two of the basic elements of dance, through beat creation and movement through space.

Materials:

- ◇ Open area

Activity:

1. Ask the students to create a circle and clap 8 count beats while counting out loud: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
2. Explore variations in tempo by asking students to insert a word after each number such as 'Mississippi' for a slow tempo, 'art' for a fast tempo, or 'dancer' for a medium tempo. i.e. "one, Mississippi, two," etc.
3. Ask students to divide into two groups: A and B.
4. Ask group "A" to clap a beat using one of the tempo prompts from the previous step, while group "B" moves through the space by stepping on each beat. To give the walking purpose and character, you may want to ask students to move like a certain kind of animal as they walk, or as if walking on the moon, through water, etc.
5. Students in group "A" can experiment with different tempos, prompted by you, as students in group "B" change their movement to the beat.
6. Ask the two groups to switch roles.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Describe the difference between moving to the beat and creating the beat by clapping. Was one more challenging for you? Why?
2. How did changing the tempo of the beat affect your group's movement?
3. Describe some of the ways that everyone moved through the space (stepping, high or low levels, etc.). What are some other ways that you might move through space to a beat?

Teacher Tip:

If you have not introduced movement activities within your classroom before, be sure to check out "Preparing for Success: Introducing Movement Into the Classroom" on page 17 for some simple exercises and pointers to get your class started.

Adapted from Diavolo's "Young Person's Concert Study Guide."

POST-SHOW ASSESSMENT AND DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Art Form

1. Who dances?
2. Why do we dance?

Elements of Dance

1. Which parts of the body were the dancers using?
2. Were all the body parts moving together or separate from one another?
3. Were all the performers moving at the same speed? How would you describe their movement?
4. Did they all move to the same beat?
5. What kind of spatial shapes did the dancers form?
6. What adjectives would you use to describe the energy of the dancers?

Performance Components

1. How did the lighting add to the show?
2. How did the costumes help to express the ideas, moods or time periods of the dance?
3. How did the music add to the show?

Prior Knowledge and Connections

1. What was your favorite dance? Why was it your favorite?
2. If you could ask Kyle Abraham, the creator of the dances you saw, a question, what would you ask him?
3. What themes or ideas did you see in the performance? What did you see specifically that led you to that conclusion? Did any of those themes repeat in different ways throughout the show?
4. Did any of the movement or music remind you of anything you've experienced before? If so, what did they remind you of?

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

1) WRITE A REVIEW

Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of the performance to inform others about what they experienced. They should describe with detail: what they saw; what they heard; how the performance made them feel; what the performance reminded them of; and what their favorite part was and why. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

2) COLLABORATIVE IMPRESSIONS

When Kyle Abraham made *The Gettin'* he said he collaborated with his dancers – meaning not all the ideas came from him. The group would improvise movement ideas and work as a team to come up with imaginative ways to communicate using the body instead of words. With a group of 3-4 students, make a collage of images or words that you remember from the dance. You can also add your own images or ideas. Tissue paper can be used to layer different ideas over top of others or to add to or block out those beneath.

3) EXPLORE EMOTION

Have students pick an emotion they felt while watching the performance. Allow students to draw or write about the emotion using the following questions to guide their exploration:

- What does _____ look like?
- What does _____ sound like?
- What does _____ feel like?
- What does _____ smell like?
- What does _____ taste like?

4) WRITE TO THE DANCERS

Once you have seen the performance and you and your students have had a chance to discuss what you saw and read, write to the Abraham.In.Motion dancers. Artists love to read about what teachers and students thought of the performance.

Letters may be sent to:

Education Department
Des Moines Performing Arts
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS...

INTRODUCING MOVEMENT INTO THE CLASSROOM

Introducing movement into the classroom can be a richly rewarding experience, tapping into both visual and kinesthetic learning modalities. For the non-dance educator, however, the prospect can be intimidating.

Like any new concept and experience in the classroom, introducing dance is best done when scaffolded. The following are some helpful exercises to aid you in laying a foundation for integrating movement activities, such as the ones on page 14, into your classroom with success.

STEP 1: TALK ABOUT DANCE

Goal: To encourage students to realize that dance is for everyone and to lay the foundation to create a nonthreatening environment for movement exploration.

Explanation: In this activity, students will discuss their concepts of dance and will progressively explore how the body can convey emotion.

When: Prior to introducing movement to the classroom for the first time.

1. Explore what dance means. Ask questions like, "What is dance?", "What does dance mean to you?", "How do you dance?", "Who dances?"
2. Explain that dancing is for everyone and that it is a powerful means of human communication.
3. Now suggest several emotions for the students to show you without words or sounds. Call out happy, sad, love, fear, anger, etc., one at a time. Have the class show those emotions.
4. Repeat the exercise, this time without the use of any facial expression, and then without the use of different body parts, to encourage many different ways to express emotion.

STEP 2: SET EXPECTATIONS

Goal: To set expectations for class behavior during movement activities.

Explanation: To best ensure success, set collective rules of what is and is not appropriate during each movement activity. For example, keeping hands and feet to oneself, areas of the room that are off limits, when it is and is not okay to use our voices.

STEP 3: WARM-UP

Goal: To get students ready for movement activities.

Explanation: Warm-ups are important to warm up the muscles and prepare for physical activity; this helps prevent injury. Warm-ups also get us ready to focus and concentrate.

When: You should consider doing some sort of warm-up prior to each time you do a classroom movement activity. The following are two examples of warm-up activities that aid clarity and focus.

Name Game:

1. In a circle, have each student stand shoulder to shoulder, with a straight posture and hands out of their pockets.
2. Students one by one, will turn to their right, look that person in the eye and state their name with purpose and clarity.
3. When everyone in the circle has gone, evolve the activity by adding tempo (ex. Say your name but let's move through the circle faster, like the wind, or slow like molasses) or add a quality (ex. Say your name like a lion).
4. When ready to move on to another step, add the element of switching directions and saying names across the circle, using eye contact and a clear voice.
5. Make sure the students keep going, even with laughter, until a complete round is made with each variation.

Game of Ten:

1. Begin by having students walk around the space at varying tempos per the instructor's call.
2. Circle up.
3. Next, give different sets of movements to be done to a count of ten. You may choose to use some of the following examples.
 - ◇ Shake out hands, legs, arms, and whole body.
 - ◇ Stretch for 10 in various directions
 - ◇ Roll down through the spine to the floor for a count of 10
 - ◇ Push-ups, 10 times.
 - ◇ Roll over, sit ups, 10 times.
 - ◇ Stand up slowly for a count of 10, shake out the body again.
 - ◇ Repeat

Adapted from Diavolo's "Young Person's Concert Study Guide."

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



CLASSROOM RESOURCES

ArtsEdge from the Kennedy Center Web Site. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org>

Contains resources on national grade-level dance standards, lesson plans for integrating dance into core curriculum areas, and multimedia resources for students to explore various dance styles.

Au, Susan. Ballet And Modern Dance. 2nd ed. 2003.

Dance Education Curriculum Guide. Perpich Center for Arts Education.

Frames dance as an integral part of learning for all students. For more information and to order, visit http://www.mcae.k12.mn.us/index.php?section=outreach_publications

Humphrey, Doris. The Art of Making Dances. Princeton Book Company Publishers. 1991.

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

Abraham.In.Motion. <http://www.abrahaminmotion.org>

Callon, Cheryl. "The Getting's Good."

<http://www.theaterjones.com/ntx/reviews/20151104133501/2015-11-04/TITAS/Kyle-Abraham>

Diavolo "Young Person's Concert Study Guide." Chisa Yamaguchi, Education Director.

Hy, Michelle. "Ready, A.I.M., Don't Shoot." <http://www.thru.media/kyle-abraham-abraham-in-motion-review/>

Jowitt, Deborah. "Dancing to Beat the Reaper." DanceBeat.

<http://www.artsjournal.com/dancebeat/2015/11/dancing-to-beat-the-reaper/>

Ordway Center for the Performing Arts: Dance Study Guide Materials <http://www.ordway.org/>

Munice, Amy. "MCA Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion Review—Largo Hip-Hop Grace." Splash Magazines.

http://www.lasplash.com/publish/Entertainment/cat_index_chicago_entertainment/mca-kyle-abraham-abraham.in.motion-review.php

"Talking Dance: Kyle Abraham." Scholars and Publics. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdDlnztlvhY>