Bartenieff Fundamentals Unit

Population: Advanced Middle School Dance Majors at Thomas G. Pullen

Standards: Maryland State Department of Education Standards 1.0: 2a. Demonstrate physical attributes, such as alignment, placement, flexibility, and endurance, that contribute to technical proficiency in performance. 3b. Identify dance skills and movement sequences that improve technical proficiency.

Day 1:

Level 3:

Objective: Students will learn some warm-up techniques from Ms. Ponton. These techniques come from a study of movement called the Bartenieff Fundamentals. The Bartenieff Fundamentals are somatic practices that involve rediscovering the body’s movement patterns while also finding connections through the body. Today we will focus on the Bartenieff Fundamentals principle of breath. After this, students will have technique and will continue work on their dances.

Word Wall: Bartenieff Fundamentals, Irmgard Bartenieff, somatics, breath, diaphragm, lungs

Warm-up writing reflection: Why is it important to warm-up before dance? What does it mean to warm up the body? How can using breath help you during your warm-up and throughout class? (3 sentences each).

Lesson: I will give a brief lecture about warming up. It is important to warm-up for dance because warming up prepares the body and mind for technique class. In order to warm-up, it is important for students to get their muscles ready for dance. In order for the muscles to be ready, the body needs to have enough oxygen. Oxygen helps to relax and prepare the muscles for dance.
After this, it is important to get some of the fluid in the body moving. This fluid helps to lubricate the joints and muscles. Next, it is important to get the deeper muscles within the body moving while also finding connections within the body. Once all of this has been done, then the muscles are ready to be stretched. All professional dancers do these kind of exercises before warming up. Doing these kinds of practices can help prevent injury.

After this discussion, I will have students lie on their backs so that they can breathe. While they are lying there, I will have them breathe and vocalize their exhale. As they do this, I will explain the diaphragm and the lungs and will try to get them to imagine a visual picture of both. I will have them breathe into their bellies and up in their chests, and will also try to get them to imagine breathing into one lung at a time. After this, students will do heel rocks breathing out loud as they do it, and vocalizing their breath. I will also have students stand and shake out, and then do jumping jacks, but as they do them, I will have them talk to insure that they are not holding their breath. I will also have them walk through the space breathing in and out as they walk.

Day 2:

Level 3

Objective: Students will continue to work on breath with Ms. Ponton. Students will also learn about the Bartenieff Fundamentals principles of the developmental movement patterns in order to understand the progression a warm-up should take. Students will try to apply these concepts throughout class instead of just at the beginning. Students will continue working on their dance.

Word Wall: Developmental movement patterns, core distal, upper-lower, head-tail

Warm-up Journal: Finish the journal from the other day and be prepared to discuss.
Lesson: Students will see a picture of the lungs and diaphragm (on the computer screen). We will discuss these in more depth. I will then explain what the developmental movement patterns are: breath, core distal, upper lower, body half, and contralateral. After telling students what they are, I will explain to students that these are the first movement patterns that babies learn. These ways of moving are natural to us which is why it is important for a warm-up to follow this progression. We have already started with breath. We will continue to work with breath and move into a little bit of core distal initiation, and upper lower initiation/ head-tail connection.

I will have students do the same breath work from the other day, and will also have them stretch out from the center in core distal initiation. Students will do some thigh lifts and some body half curves. I will have them walk through the space with breath and do a tendu combination using breath. They will receive reminders throughout class to continue breathing.

Day 3:

Level 3

Objective: Students will continue to work with Ms. Ponton on breath and the developmental movement patterns, especially the body half/head tail connection exercise. After this, students will do some technique and work on the dance.

Lesson: Students will change and will do some breathing on the floor, some core distal stretches, and some body rocks. Next we will break down the body half exercise more so that students better understand it. Students will do the walk about with breath and will also do jumping jacks, talking again. Afterwards, students will have the rest of class with Ms. Tester, but will have reminders about breath.

Day 4:
Level 3

**Objective:** Students will receive a handout about the Bartenieff Fundamentals principles. Students will continue to work with Ms. Ponton on breath and the developmental movement patterns, and will begin to include contralateral work. Students will do the same walk about warm-up and will work on their dances.

**Lesson:** Students will receive a handout and read it out loud. Students will change and will do some breathing on the floor, some core distal stretches, and some body rocks. Next we will break down the body half exercise again so that students better understand it, and do some contralateral exercises. Students will do the same walk about warm-up, will work on their dances, and will have reminders about breath throughout class.

**Day 5:**

Level 3

**Objective:** Students will review the handout about the Bartenieff Fundamentals principles. Students will continue to work with Ms. Ponton on breath and the developmental movement patterns, and will go over the contralateral contralateral exercise. Students will do the same walk about warm-up and will work on their dances.

**Lesson:** Students will review the handout out loud. Students will change and will do some breathing on the floor, some core distal stretches, some body rocks, and the body half curves. Next, we will break down the contralateral exercises so that students better understand it. Students will do the same walk about warm-up. Afterwards, students will focus on their dances, but will have reminders about breath.

**Day 6-15**
**Objective:** Students will do the developmental movement patterns with Ms. Ponton. Students will do a warm-up and will work on their dance.

**Lesson:** Students will come to class and begin on their Bartenieff Fundamentals warm-up. For the first couple days, I will review each movement before they do it, but eventually, students will know which movements to do when I tell them.

**Day 16:**

**Quiz Review**

**Day 17:**

**Quiz:**

Name:  
Date:  
Level 3  
Ms. Tester and Ms. Ponton

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**Bartenieff Fundamentals Quiz**

*Fill in the Blank (10 pts each) Directions:* Answer each question in 3-5 FULL sentences. Spelling and grammar counts.

1. Why is it important to use breath when warming up and throughout dance class?

2. How can the Bartenieff Fundamentals help to improve your technique?

*Multiple Choice (5 pts each) Directions:* Circle your choice for each answer.
1. Ways of moving that are natural to the body because they are the first stages of movement that humans experience.
   A. Somatics
   B. Kinesiology
   C. Developmental Movement Patterns
   D. Breath

2. The third pattern of movement that humans experience. This involves finding a connection between the head and tail.
   A. Breath
   B. Core/Distal
   C. Body Half
   D. Upper/Lower

3. The process of taking in oxygen, releasing carbon dioxide, and moving the lungs and diaphragm.
   A. Core/Distal
   B. Breath
   C. Contralateral
   D. Body Half

4. Finding a connection between the right and left side of the body and discovering that they can move separately from one another
   A. Body Half
   B. Head/Tail Connection
   C. Upper/Lower
   D. Contralateral

5. The fourth type of movement that humans experience. This involves finding connections across the center line of the body.
   A. Walking
   B. Contralateral
   C. Developmental Movement Patterns
   D. Upper/Lower

6. The second movement pattern. This involves a discovery that the limbs can stretch outwards away from the core.
   A. Body Half
   B. Upper/Lower
   C. Breath
   D. Core/Distal

Extra Credit (2pts)
Directions: Draw and label a picture of the lungs and the diaphragm in your own way.

Day 18-end of second quarter

Students will do the Bartenieff Fundamentals warm-up everyday when they come into class.

Bartenieff Fundamentals Handout:

Bartenieff Fundamentals: These are movement principles developed by Irmgard Bartenieff to help dance students find connections within their body. Using the concepts of the Bartenieff Fundamentals, dancers can improve their technique by becoming more coordinated, more connected through the body, and stronger in the deeper muscles of the core. The Bartenieff Fundamentals can also help to improve the posture, technique, and phrasing. Even though the exercises for the Bartenieff Fundamentals may seem slow, they are extremely beneficial to dancers of all ages. One of the most important Bartenieff Fundamentals principles is breath.

Lungs: Two organs located within the ribcage. These organs take in oxygen and transport it into the bloodstream. Once this process is complete the oxygen is converted into carbon dioxide and release it back into the air.

Diaphragm: A dome shape muscle located under the lungs that is pulled down during an inhale and brought back to normal during the exhale. Without the diaphragm, the lungs would not be able to expand and contract.

-Developmental Movement Patterns: The first stages of movement that humans experience as infants. Because these patterns are natural to the body, it is important to follow their sequence in a warm-up.

-Breath: The first type of movement that humans experience. This movement involves the inhale and the exhale of the lungs.

-Core/Distal: The second type of movement humans experience as infants. This type of movement involves a discovery that the limbs have the ability to stretch outwards away from the core.

-Upper Lower: The third type of movement that humans experience. This movement involves discovering a connection between the upper part of the body (the head) and the lower part of the body (the tail).
**Body Half:** The fourth type of movement that humans experience. This movement involves finding a connection between the right and left side of the body and discovering that these two sides can move separately from one another.

ex: a roll

**Contralateral:** The fifth type of movement that humans experience that involves finding connections across the center line of the body. Rather than moving with only one side of the body, the right and left side of the body can move together.

ex: walking