



RESIDENCY DATES: _____

FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES: _____

*The Valerie Branch presents:
“Exploring, Creating and Dancing with our
Friends through the curriculum!”*



Introduction

In a residency with Valerie Branch, students will gain a sense of self-confidence through the creation and exploration of moving their bodies throughout space with respect for what or who is around them. Students will learn how to connect and apply their understanding and knowledge of curriculum content through different movement strategies.

I believe that Ms. Valerie is an important catalyst for discovery and achievement. Children need to be able to think and explore with the creative side of their brains. It gives them a better understanding of their world. The arts make children more flexible, gives them the ability to learn new skills in a new and different way, and to be creative and innovative. Ms. Valerie helps to tap, shape, and create their potential.

Cherisse Dotson, Kindergarten Teacher
Henderson Hopkins Elementary School



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***Please pass along the attached teacher residency guide to all participating classrooms**

Inside this guide:

- What will the audience What will the audience experience?
- Artist Bio
- Standards
- Sample Common Core Standards
- Maryland Fine Arts Standards
- Vocabulary
- Additional Resources
- Content Examples
- Culminating Examples
- Professional Development Strategies
- Teacher Preparation
- The Elements of Dance
- Describe, Analyze, Interpret, Evaluate

Inclement Weather

DON'T WORRY! Artists will follow school closings and delays and will work with you to reschedule the performance if necessary.

Young Audiences Contact Number: 410-837-7577

Call 410-837-7577 and follow the prompts to be connected with a staff member on call for After Hours or Emergency.

After Hours / Emergency Number: Call 410-837-7577 and follow the prompts to be connected with a staff member on call.

Valerie is the most organized and passionate artist I have had the pleasure of working with! Arts integration makes learning fun and effortless. I love incorporating art into my lessons because it engages the students and helps them to learn, not only curriculum content, but also real life skills.

Kerri Howell, Kindergarten Teacher
Seven Oaks Elementary School

Our class has really enjoyed our new learning experiences with you with the song Can You Keep A Steady Beat and playing the flute.

Mary Ann Puckett, Kindergarten Teacher
Henderson Hopkins Elementary School



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What will the audience experience?

The residency kicks off with an assembly program. This will begin with the dancers moving and dancing throughout the space as well as in and around students. Valerie will then interact with the audience as they prepare to go on a journey to meet the dancers and see their stories.



I believe that dance has the power to transform, enhance, and open the mind to new and different possibilities. Integrating dance into the traditional classroom setting helps children gain confidence, increases their memory, assists with their social developmental skills, and helps them to think more creatively, critically, and outside of the box.

For me, it is important to work in the schools because I believe that children need as many positive role models and mentors as possible to support healthy development. I also believe that using dance as a tool for learning helps children to understand different logics and also to assist with independent thinking.

Children become smarter because their brains are being targeted and challenged in a different way. As a dance teaching and performing artist, I believe in the importance of sharing the culture, knowledge and history of dance with under-served youth to enhance growth and development within their communities, while empowering them to make strong independent choices now and in their future.

- Valerie Branch



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Artist Bio

Valerie Branch graduated magna cum laude from the University of Maryland College Park with a Bachelor’s Degree in Dance. She has experience touring as a performing and teaching artist both nationally and internationally. She has taught both independently and with different organizations such as the Washington Performing Arts Society. As a teaching artist, Valerie has assisted Lesole’s Dance Project with the development and implementation of the “International Edu-dance Program” in South Africa during the summers of 2009 and 2010. In early 2011, Valerie received an invitation from the Danish Embassy to participate in a Cultural Arts Program Exchange Visit to Denmark. Following this visit, she taught a weeklong dance residency at a local school in Maryland, which focused on the classroom curriculum and the Danish culture. As Executive Director and a

founding member of Connecting Vibes USA, she has led dance workshops in St. George’s, Grenada to local dancers and throughout the primary and secondary school system. Between 2009-2014, she served on the dance faculty at New Hope Academy in Landover Hills, MD. As the Assistant Director of the Youth Company at NHA, she worked with the Director to provide youth with the opportunity to learn and grow as young dance artists through participating in community performances and taking classes from a range of different choreographers and teaching artists. . In Fall 2013, Valerie joined Young Audiences of Maryland to bring dance to schools throughout the Baltimore City area and beyond. She is also the Founder and Artistic Director of VB Dance Ensemble – a contemporary modern dance company focused on social and cultural change. As a dance teaching artist and educator, Valerie believes in the importance of sharing the culture, knowledge and history of dance while empowering youth to make strong independent choices now and in their future.



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Sample Common Core Standards

2.K.A.1

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

2.K.D.10

Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding

RL.1.4

4. Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

CCR

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific words choices shape meaning or tone.

RL2 CCR Anchor Standard

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

RL2 With modeling and support, retell familiar stories/poems.

3.C.1.a Observe, describe and compare the life cycles of different kinds of animals and plants.

Cluster: Identify and describe shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres).

Standard: K.G.2 Correctly name shapes regardless of their orientations or overall size

Essential Skill and Knowledge: Ability to use geometric vocabulary when describing objects

SS Grade 3 Standard 2.0 Peoples of the Nation and the World

Topic: B. Cultural Diffusion

Indicator: 1. Identify and describe how individuals and groups share and borrow from other cultures

Objective: a. Use non-fiction texts to identify and discuss examples of how communities borrow and share from other cultures

Topic C: Conflict and Compromise

Indicator: 1. Analyze how groups of people interact

Objective: a. Identify and demonstrate appropriate social skills necessary for working in a cooperative group, such as using concern, compassion, and respect among group members.

Research on Dance

In the Classroom:

“Research has shown that movement is linked to specific brain functioning in children.

For example, cross lateral movement get the right and lefts sides of the brain to work together. Swirinski said, It helps to wake up different lobes in the brain”

(Humphrey – Movement education aims to increase brain function and physical fitness in students, March 15, 2010).



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Maryland Fine Arts Standards

Standard 1.0 - Perceiving, performing, and responding: Aesthetic Education

Students will demonstrate the ability to perceive, perform and respond to dance

Indicator 1: Demonstrate knowledge of how elements of dance are used to communicate meaning

Objectives:

1b. Combine selected characteristics of the elements of dance, such as body parts and positions, shapes, levels, directions, general and personal space, energy, and tempo, and use sensory stimuli to create movement sequences.

Vocabulary

Contemporary Dance: a dance form used to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings. Movements are generally derived from ballet and modern dance techniques; however, any dance techniques can be used for inspiration to create dance sequences.

Solo: a dance performed by 1 person.

Duet: a dance performed by 2 people.

Trio: a dance performance by 3 people.

Quartet: a dance performed by 4 people.

Choreography: movement that has been created, specified and practiced in sequential order.

Choreographer: the person who creates the choreography.

Artistic Director: the lead creative visionary of a production.

Movement Gesture: a simple motion that can be done with any part of the body to communicate a thought/feeling/idea.





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Additional Resources

Language Arts focus examples: Sequencing; Retelling; Key Details; Compare & Contrast.

Book ideas/suggestions to use as a resource to cycle through the residency:

Harold and The Purple Crayon - pulling out and exploring student imagination.

The 3 Little Pigs - great for sequencing.

The Empty Lot - great for learning, exploring and understanding character traits and feelings.

Town Mice and Country Mice - comparing and contrasting, sequencing, character traits, setting.

Hernando Fandango the Great Dancing Dog - this book is about a girl and her best friend having dreams of becoming a dancer, they might have the chance to live out their dreams together when there is a urgent need for dancers to step in and perform. Do they have the courage to go through with it?

You're Wearing That To School? - this book is about being yourself!

Will You Be My Friend - this book is about making new friends.

The Little Engine That Could - this book is about perseverance. However, I think that we can also push it towards how we react and engage with the people around us and how we treat our friends.

I Can Be Anything - this book is about believing in yourself.

Science focus examples:

1. Life cycles (butterfly, rocks, water, plants/flowers, etc.)
2. Energy and motion

Math focus examples:

1. Patterns
2. Numbers and counting
3. Shapes
4. Groupings (less than, more than, sizes – shorter, longer)

Social Studies focus examples:

1. Cultures
2. Geography
3. Historical and Social behaviors





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Content Examples

- **The Life Cycle of a Butterfly:** Students will be able to observe, describe, compare and dance through the life cycle of a butterfly
- **The Life Cycle of a Seed:** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the life cycle of a seed through improvised movement patterns.
- **The Life Cycle of a Leaf:** How can you use the elements of dance and the knowledge of the leaf cycle to create a leaf cycle dance?
- **Dancing Our Story:** Students will use movement and (key) adjectives to create a unique personal dance narrative.
- **Shaping Our Bodies Through Movement and Math:** Students will use their knowledge of known math shapes (square, circle, triangle, rectangle, hexagon, rhombus, trapezoid) to create body shapes individually and in groups. Students will be able to visually identify and physicalize different math shapes with their body.
- **A Day In the Life of an Eastern Woodland Indian:** Students will work cooperatively and respectfully in collaboration with one another to create a short dance sequence that portrays a “Day In the life of an Eastern Woodland Indian”. Students will draw from prior knowledge and understanding of Woodland Indian culture and way of life to create their own Woodland Indian tribe.
- **The Power of Unity:** Students will work together to build a sense of trust, respect and unity within the classroom. Students will understand and appreciate that there is power and strength in numbers and the tools needed for successful collaboration.
- **Creative Minds...Creative Bodies:** Students will use their imagination and creativity to make-up a fictitious creature – they will use their bodies to explore and embody their creature.





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Culminating Examples

In a dance residency, I like to focus more on the process of learning, understanding and demonstrating dance elements. Students will learn different strategies on choreography (movement that has been created, specified and practiced in sequential order) as well as improvisation (to compose and perform or deliver without previous preparation) in order to effectively communicate meaning to the curricular topic through body movement. Teaching Artist and Teacher often serve as directors/guides for the students; students often share the roles of choreographer/creator. Students are encouraged to take on leadership roles to explore and express their creative thinking minds.

A culminating event can be:

1. The creation of a dance / student choreographed (which reflects specific life cycles, sequence of events, tells a story, or compares and contrasts different events, books, etc.)
2. Presenting short dance strategies that students learned throughout the residency (in response to curriculum topics)
 - a. Tableau (similar to a picture in a book which tells a story or part of a story)
 - b. Presenting Name Dances (short movement sequences which describe the character traits and feelings of the individuals or that tell us something special about the individual)
 - c. Freeze dance (students may use this to demonstrate their understanding of body shapes, locomotor movements, non-locomotor movements, levels, etc.)
 - d. Movement improvisation to known topics
3. Students may also do the above in a longer duration of time.
4. Students may present for other students in the school, for other classes participating the same residency experience, and/or family and friends
 - a. A culminating event may also include other input from students such as: a Q&A with students, pictures students created to support their understanding of the residency, stories students wrote to support their understanding of the residency.

Professional Development Strategies

1. *Elements of Dance* document is below.
2. *Describe, Analyze, Interpret, Evaluate* document is below. Teachers may use this document to assist them in student discussions about dance.
3. Praise, Question, Polish: Students observe movements demonstrated or performed by other students. Observers give feedback on what they see: Praise (something you really like about the movement you saw), Question (something you wonder about what you saw), Polish (a suggestion that you think the performers can work on for the next time they present their dance/movement.)
4. Pair and Share: Students share with a partner and idea, thought or movement and receive feedback through Praise, Question, Polish



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5. Freeze Dance: Students perform freeze dance (with a focus on locomotor and non-locomotor movements, levels and body shape) with a strong understanding and demonstration of the elements of dance
6. Tableau / Human Sculpture: Students work together to use locomotor movements and body shapes to create a large human sculpture which represents an idea, theme or topic
7. Teamwork and Collaboration: Students work together in groups to create a dance sequence based on the residency topic
8. Mirror Game: Students are able to understand and demonstrate strong leadership, teamwork, partnership and focus. Students are able to improvise movements for fellow students to mirror; movement is slow and mindful of other participants and space.
9. Name Game: students create a movement or gesture that tells us something about who they are (character traits, feelings, or something they enjoy, etc.)
10. This strategy (creating movement to communicate a thought, feeling, or idea) can be used to identify and analyze other organizational patterns of texts such as sequential and/or chronological order, problem/solution, similarities/differences, main idea and supporting details. For example:
 - a) Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between two characters
 - b) Compare and contrast how a character changes from the beginning of a text to the end of a text
 - c) Elements of a story (parts of a plot) Clarify the hook, exposition, problem or conflict, the action/events, rising action, suspense, climax, falling action, resolution, and/or reflection.
 - d) Identify the changes in one/two characters during the beginning, middle, and end.
 - e) Compare and contrast two different characters in the beginning, middle, and end.
 - f) List facts about different settings or scenes in the beginning, middle, and end.
 - g) Explore how the lesson or moral is revealed during the beginning, middle, and end.
 - h) Identify cause and effect events from beginning to end.

Teacher Preparation

If applicable, list ways the teacher can prepare the class for the residency in advance.

1. Introduce the elements of dance that will be a focus for our residency (once the planning is finalized, teacher and teaching artist will agree on the elements of dance in which we will focus for the residency.)
2. Ensure that students have a general understanding of curriculum topic.
3. Show dance videos and encourage students to respond to what they see or notice about the movement and the dancers.
4. Students are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing in which they can move freely (stay away from heels, skirts, dresses, etc.)
5. Think about how we can use the space effectively in order for students to achieve our goals (should we dance in the carpet space, behind our desks, in the middle of the room, etc.)



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The Elements of Dance (B.E.S.T.)

BODY (What)

- **Locomotor**: Movement through space from one point to another (walk, run, jump, hop, leap, skip, gallop, slide)
- **Non-locomotor**: Movement around the body’s axis (bend, twist, stretch, push, pull, swing, shake, circle, sway, carve, fall, melt, turn, kick, press, rise, sink, burst, wiggle)
- **Shape**: A frozen pose (curved, straight, angular, twisted, narrow, wide, symmetrical, asymmetrical)
- **Body Part**: Parts of the body (head, eyes, torso, shoulder, arms, fingers, elbows, hands, spine, hips, legs, knees, feet)

ENERGY (How)

- **Weight**: Strong (heavy, firm, powerful), light (gentle, soft)
- **Flow**: Free (continuous, fluid movement), bound (restrained, controlled)
- **Quality**: Sharp, sudden, smooth, sustained, tight, loose, suspended, collapsed, heavy, weak, percussive

SPACE (Where)

- **Self Space**: Space immediately around the body
- **General Space**: Space throughout the room
- **Level**: High, medium, low
- **Direction**: Forward, backward, sideways, up, down
- **Pathway**: Curved, straight, zigzag, diagonal
- **Size**: Big, small, narrow, wide
- **Focus**: Direction of gaze

TIME (When)

- **Tempo**: Fast, medium, slow
- **Rhythm**: A succession of movement or sounds of varying duration.





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DESCRIBE, ANALYZE, INTERPRET, EVALUATE

Students are encouraged to observe dance while keeping the following questions and guides in mind. These tools are helpful generating discussion, but also to allow students the opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions about what they are experiencing:

1. **DESCRIBE:** simply describe what you observed without value judgments, analysis, or interpretation.
 - a. What do/did you see?
 - b. What elements of dance did you notice?

2. **ANALYZE:** determine what the dance suggests and decide why the choreographer used these specific movements/dance elements to convey this specific idea
 - a. How did the choreographer create this dance?
 - b. How are the elements of dance used within this choreography?
 - c. Determine what this dance is about

3. **EVALUATE:** can you make a personal connection to what you are witnessing in this dance?
 - a. What about the dance connects to some aspect in your life?
 - b. How does this dance make you feel?
 - c. What connections can you make between your life and the dance?

4. **INTEPRETATION:** establish the broader context for dance
 - a. Why did the choreographer create this dance and what do you think it means?
 - b. What is the overall meaning of the work
 - c. If you could title this dance what would you call it?
 - d. What evidence in the dance supports your title?