

Lesson Name: Pre-Lesson for Ballet Hispánico

Intended Audience: Gr. 5 - 12

MN ELA Anchor Standard Addressed

- ▶ **Listening, Speaking, Viewing, and Exchanging Ideas 2:** Communicate with others, applying knowledge of vocabulary, language, structure, and features of spoken language, considering audience and context.

Aligned Instructional Learning Targets: The students will recognize significant ideas and themes embedded in the five works included in the Ballet Hispánico performance.

Note for the Instructor: The instructor can choose one of two ways to proceed with this lesson:

1. Lead a presentation about each of the works included in the dance performance. Elements will include an overview of the choreography, the artistic components, and essential vocabulary for each dance.
2. Break students into five groups and assign each group to learn about one of the works included in the performance. After students have had time to review the information provided about their assigned dance, they will share what they learned with the rest of the class.

Introduction: Slides 1 - 5: The instructor begins by explaining that in the performance at Northrop on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus, students will experience five distinct works that incorporate varied elements of Hispanic culture. Those works include:

- Danse Creole
- Linea Recta
- 18+1
- Con Brazos Abiertos
- Club Havana

Body of the Lesson: Slides 6 - 13: The instructor states that in this lesson students will learn about each of the works in the dance they will see at Northrop, along with key vocabulary that accompanies what is presented in each performance. The information will help students understand and process what they experience at the dance performance.

The instructor then introduces the choreography of [Danse Creole](#):

- The choreography was inspired by the folk dances of Trinidad, a small island in the southern Caribbean, where choreographer Geoffrey Holden was born. Trinidad is the largest of the two islands that make up the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. It was originally inhabited by the Arawak (Taino) and the Carib (Kalinago) peoples. Christopher Columbus came ashore on his third voyage in 1498, leading to Trinidad's colonization by Spain in the 1500s. The island was later captured by the British in the 1700s and became independent in 1962.
- Trinidadian folklore developed from a mix of West African roots, European influences, and the religious traditions, legends, and spiritual healing practices of the indigenous Taino. Therefore, Holder's choreography showcases a unique blend of cultures that developed throughout the country's history of colonization and the intersection of Indigenous, Spanish, West African, East Indian, and French cultural influences.

- References can be seen in the way the dance is performed by couples reflecting European social dances such as the waltz and the quadrille. West African dance references are enlivened by percussive, sharply contrasting rhythms accented by shuffling steps, gestures, hip movements, and expressive articulation of the spine.

Next, the instructor shares information about the artistic components students can expect to see in Danse Creole

- The costumes dancers wear will be based on a European attire that showcases full skirts, tight corsets, and fans. These styles, however, will be fused with Caribbean accents, such as fedora hats.

Finally, the instructor teaches students key vocabulary that pertains to Danse Creole:

- **Creole:** The term used to refer to a person of mixed European and African descent who was born in North and South America or the Caribbean
- **Danse:** The French word for dance
- **Quadrille:** A European social dance performed in a square formation, which blossomed in France in the late 1800s. The dance consists of four to six consecutive contradances performed by four couples. Throughout the dances, the couples take turns dancing, creating geometric floor patterns, and exchanging partners. This concept was adapted in the French court and utilized in Louis the XIV's French Court by a two-couple dance (cotillion), which eventually expanded to four couples and received the name of the quadrille
- **Contradance:** A popular 18th century French dance developed from English country dances and popularized in Central Europe during the 1800s. Originally, the contradance was performed with men and women standing in parallel lines taking turns between dancing through the parallel formation and stepping back into the line. Eventually, these dances incorporated the geometric formations found in folk dances, such as the quadrille's square figure

Slides 14 - 21: The instructor then introduces the choreography of [Linea Recta](#):

- Colombian-Belgian choreographer Annabelle Lopez Ochoa's motivation for creating Linea Recta stemmed from the intense flamenco training in her childhood. In flamenco, she observed that dancers rarely touch one another. She became intrigued to create a physical connection between dancers and used props including a long bustle skirt and fans as a third element between the dancers, which emphasized the distance between their partners.
- Linea Recta comes from a French expression meaning "directly to the point," contradicting a key element of the flamenco dance style, which aims to have dancers circle around each other.

Next, the instructor shares information about the artistic components students can expect to see in Linea Recta:

- The music in Linea Recta will feature the flamenco guitar.
- The costumes dancers will wear were partially inspired by the typical flamenco dress, known as a sevillana dress. In the opening of the work, the lead dancer uses a red dress with a long skirt, which is meant to represent a river moving through space, creating waves.
- Fans will be used as props. Fans were introduced to Spain by the people of North Africa in the 14th century. They became very popular and characteristic of flamenco dance.

Finally, the instructor teaches students key vocabulary that pertains to Linea Recta:

- **Flamenco:** An art form based on the various folkloric music traditions of southern Spain and originated in the culture and traditions of the Cale Roma people, commonly known in Spanish as Gitanos, from the Andalusia region. Flamenco dance has some similarities to Kathak, a dance of Northern India which later adapted into modern flamenco

- Fusion: To merge distinct elements together. Fusion in dance refers to when dances combine different techniques or forms. In this case, Linea Recta is a fusion of ballet, flamenco, and modern dance
- Pa/mas: A hand clapping style which plays an essential role in flamenco music. It is used to help punctuate and accentuate the song and dance. There are two main ways to clap in flamenco, palmas sordas and palmas claras. Palmas claras are used during furious and loud footwork or during loud musical pieces. Palmas sorda are used during guitar intros or during the singing, so as not to drown it out
- Dance Partnering: Dancing performed by a pair of dancers, in which the pair strives to achieve a harmony of coordinated movements so that the audience remains unaware of the mechanics

Slides 22 - 25: The instructor then introduces the choreography of [18+1](#):

- The choreography was created by Ramirez Sansano and celebrates his 19 years as a choreographer, and also is a reflection of the vulnerability, care, and hope that comes with each artistic endeavor. In a display of subtle humor and electric choreography, the movement merges with the playful rhythms found in Perez Prado's mambo music.

Next, the instructor shares information about the artistic components students can expect to see in 18+1:

- The piece uses music by Damaso Perez Prado, a Cuban bandleader, organist, pianist, and composer who popularized mambo in the late 1940s receiving the international title as the "King of Mambo." Some of his most famous records include Mambo No. 5 and Mambo Que Rico Mambo.

Finally, the instructor teaches students key vocabulary that pertains to 18+1:

- **Mambo:** Mambo is a generic term for a popular dance and hybrid music style, developed in the 1940s and 50s. Mambo was popularized internationally by Cuban music artist Damaso Perez Prado, who added an up-tempo Afro-Cuban musical style and syncopation, blending mambo with influences from American jazz orchestras
- **Contemporary Dance:** A genre of dance that developed during the mid-twentieth century and has since grown to become one of the dominant genres for formally trained dancers throughout the world, with particularly strong popularity in the U.S. and Europe. Although originally informed by and borrowing from classical, modern, and jazz styles, it has come to incorporate elements from many styles of dance. Additionally, contemporary dance incorporates elements of non-western dance cultures

Slides 26 - 31: The instructor then introduces the choreography of [Con Brazos Abiertos](#):

- The inspiration for choreographer Michelle Manzanales' Con Brazos Abiertos is her inherent struggle with being a Mexican-American living in America. The performance highlights a specific moment in her childhood in Texas. She explores with humility, nostalgia, and humor the iconic Mexican symbols she was reluctant to embrace when she was younger.
- Michelle Manzanales felt constantly caught between two different cultures, and many times alienated from each of them. The piece evolves in a celebration of culture and search for identity and belonging.
- In the words of Ms. Manzanalez: "Con Brazos Abiertos is about embracing all sides and aspects of yourself, of your life. Con Brazos Abiertos is embracing who you are."

Next, the instructor shares information about the artistic components students can expect to see in Con Brazos Abiertos:

- The music used in Con Brazos Abiertos largely refers to Ms. Manzanales' life, and she uses different songs, poems, and dialogues that reflect different memories and moments in her life. One section from the movie Selena stands out: "...Being Mexican-American is tough, we gotta prove to the Mexicans how Mexican we are, and we gotta prove to the Americans how American we are. We gotta be more Mexican than the Mexicans and more American than the Americans, all at the same time! It's exhausting!"
- Props chosen by the choreographer include the traditional Mexican hat (sombrero), which is featured in two sections. In both sections, the sombrero is used as a symbol. Sometimes the prop is used as a symbol of celebration and culture, an icon of Mexican traditions. Other times, the prop is used to hide as well as, a symbol that could represent weight, perhaps a burden.

Finally, the instructor teaches students key vocabulary that pertains to Con Brazos Abiertos:

- **Symbol:** Something used for or regarded as representing something else; a material object representing something
- **Acculturation:** Assimilation to a different culture, typically the dominant one
- **Immigrant:** A person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country
- **Diaspora:** The dispersion of any people from their original homeland

Slide 36: Now that the students have learned more information about each of the works embedded in Ballet Hispánico, the instructor asks students which they are most intrigued by and why:

- Danse Creole
- Linea Recta
- 18+1
- Con Brazos Abiertos

Lesson Closure: Slide 37: The instructor concludes the lesson by stating that the University of Minnesota welcomes all students to campus and looks forward to each of them being a college student one day soon!