

Online Lesson

The Martha Graham Technique

SOL Connections

English: 3.1-4, 6-8; 4.1-3, 5-7; 5.1, 3-6, 7; C/T5.2-4; 6.1-3, 5-8; 7.4, 5, 7-9; 8.2, 3, 5; C/T8.1-4; 9.2, 6; 10.1, 2, 5, 7-9; 11.5, 7; 12.5, 7
History/Social Science: 3.8; USII.1-3, 5, 7, 8; WHII.10, 15; WG.3; VUS.1, 8, 14
Science: 3.1, 2; 4.1, 2; 5.1, 7; 6.1-3; LS.1, 3; PS.1, 6, 10; ES.1-4, 8; BIO.1, 4; PH.1-6, 8
Mathematics: 3.3, 20-22, 24; 4.2, 20; 5.18, 19, 20; 6.2, 18, 19; 7.17, 18; 8.11-13.

VOCABULARY

Pedagogy
Tangible
Metaphysical
Contraction
Release
Choreography
Angular
Codified
Recoiling
Paradigm
Inextricably
Arabesque
Turmoil
Appendage

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The writer describes Graham's "new type of dance" as a series of combinations: The dance "wedded the tangible to the metaphysical" and "linked the physical with the psychological." How does her dance bring together these seemingly unrelated things?
2. What does the writer mean by "a vocabulary of movement?" What is vocabulary? What would be a vocabulary of color? A vocabulary of sounds? A vocabulary of shapes?
3. Teaching in schools is based on key paradigms. What are they?
4. Come up with examples of contractions and releases you perform. Where are examples in nature? In technology?

ARTS ACTIVITIES

1. Move Like Martha! Try your hand – or rather, your body – at some Graham movements! Read the descriptions of the movements and try to replicate them. Look at photographs of Martha Graham dancers to see examples.

2. Quote Poster Create an artistic poster of one of the quotes with this section. Be sure to create the lettering carefully according to the artistic style of the poster. Place your poster in a spot where it can inspire others!

3. Capture The Essence Create a piece of artwork which captures the essence of "contraction" and another of "release." Make the pieces work together in some way: Use the same media, or make them the same size or shape, or use the same colors. Mount them together as a set for display.

SOL EXTENSIONS

ENGLISH Write a poem about "contraction" and "release" and the emotions they inspire or inspired by them. Make a list of words which fall under each concept as a pre-writing activity, followed by activities for each concept. Choose matching pairs or conflicting pairs.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES How did Martha Graham's paradigms conflict or reflect the ideas or beliefs of her era? What ideas was she rejecting? Are they ideas or beliefs from another era or her own?

SCIENCE Look for examples of contraction and release in nature and technology. Draw a diagram of an example, creating an images for each stage of the contraction and release. Look at photos of Martha Graham dancers and identify the muscle groups needed to execute each movement.

MATH Consider the geometry Martha Graham uses on her "page" - the stage. Why does she choose symmetry for some dances and asymmetry for others? Where do we find symmetry and asymmetry in nature, in the classroom, in technology? What does it mean to an audience, and to you? Why is a soloist downstage center and not downstage right? Why does a diagonal move from upstage to downstage rather than the other way around? Map a section of "Steps in the Street" from a bird's eye view.