

# Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

## Developing Communications and Interpretations Skills With Movement Maps

### Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

Dance is a non-verbal art form and this exercise serves as an inroad to developing strategies of communication. Students are taught Laban Movement Analysis, which breaks down movement into four categories (Time, Weight, Space, and Flow); they also learn the basics of Choreutics, which maps movement into the various points and planes of a dodecahedron. This gives a common language that clarifies movement, teaching students the importance of both clarity in communication and ambiguity of the creative process. It also provides a structure for the more reserved students to begin to explore their own movement potential.

To demonstrate their understanding of these basics, each student starts with a blank piece of paper and puts an “x” randomly on the paper and then an “o,” then draws a pathway that incorporates the whole page. The “x” is the starting point and “o” is where the movement will finish. Students mark several places where they will stop and make a shape and where their locomotor patterns take them in a high-, low-, or medium-level pathway. Next, students mark locations where they will move slowly and where they will move quickly. The students walk their patterns until they memorize them. After learning their maps, students hand their maps to a partner who has to interpret the map with no help from the originator. The person who receives the map must make decisions and/or assumptions about what the originator intended and walk/dance the map to complete the movements. Once students work through their interpretations, they coach each other in pairs to clarify the intentions of each other’s map.