

NATIONAL
Dance
WEEK

Fifth - Eighth Grade Modern Dance Project

Objectives

- ❖ To introduce the Modern Dance style.
- ❖ To use Modern Dance as a fun form of exercise to increase strength, flexibility, balance and coordination.
- ❖ To allow students to experience the joy of dance.
- ❖ To introduce the history of modern dance.
- ❖ To encourage students who have an interest in dance to continue to pursue opportunities which will enhance their personal development and appreciation of the art form.
- ❖ To have fun and explore creativity through movement

Dance Activity (approx activity length 45 minutes)

Equipment

Something to play music on (stereo, mp3 player and speakers, etc)

Songs that fit the descriptions provided with the individual exercises.

Movement Exercise General Information

Space the students far enough from each other that they will have room to move without being in another student's personal space.

The students will need a fair amount of room to move in safely. The gym or a large all purpose room would be the best spaces.

Suggest that the students bring a large bath or beach towel to class with them. Many of the exercises are done on the floor. If your school doesn't have a classroom dedicated to dance, having the students perform the floor work on a towel is a better option than on a floor that has a lot of shoe traffic on it.

Typically a modern class is done in bare feet. This is not a sanitary option in the average academic school. A better option would be to have the students wear socks. If using this option, remind the students that socks can be slippery. Socks with a gripper bottom would be a good choice if students have them.

Positions of the Feet

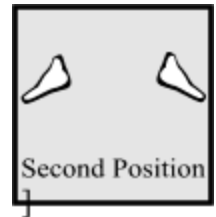
Parallel First The feet are together (with up to 1 inch distance between them), toes facing straight forward and heels straight back. Not everyone is able to achieve a pure parallel position. Allow students to slightly turnout their feet if it helps with proper body alignment and balance between the ankles, knee and hip joints.

First The legs are rotated out from the hip so that the toes are facing away from each other and the heels remain together. There can be a slight space between the two heels to allow for individual leg structures. Watch the arches of the feet for rolling in (eversion) or out (inversion). This will hold true in all turned out positions.



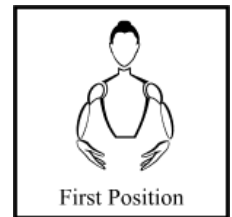
Parallel Second The feet are placed sits bones width apart. The toes are facing straight forward and the heels straight back. If there is any torque in the knees or rolling in the feet when the feet are truly in parallel position, allow the feet to slightly out toe until the alignment through the other joints in the knee is corrected.

Second A step to the side from first position opens the legs into 2nd. The heels are under the hip sockets and the rotation of the legs away from each other is maintained.

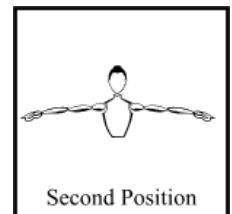


Arm Positions

First Position The arms are brought up in front of the body, in line with the bottom of the sternum, while maintaining the rounded line described above. The thumbs are folded behind the index fingers without touching. The elbows remain higher than the wrists, so there is a downward slope from the shoulder, through the elbow to the wrist.



Second Position The arms are opened out from the first position so that they are almost to the side of the body. The elbows remain slightly in front of the body, which helps prevent the back from arching. The hands remain facing each other and the downward slope described above is maintained. The arms can also be opened virtually straight to the side with the palms facing down and no curve to the arm. Even when straight the elbows should not be behind the chest.



Basic Movements Defined

- Brush or Tendu** The working foot slides along the floor until it is fully extended to a point with just the toes touching the floor. The process is then reversed to close. In any action where the foot is pointed the foot needs to be in a neutral alignment with the ankle. When the foot is turned out from the ankle it is commonly called winging. When the foot is turned in from the ankle it is commonly referred to as being sickled. The term tendu is derived from the word *etendre* meaning to stretch. In this lesson the exercise is done in a parallel alignment throughout. Watch for the height of the hips to shift. One hip lower than the other indicates a problem with alignment, weight distribution (generally there is weight on the working leg), and or sitting in the standing hip. The posture of the body remains pulled up with a neutral pelvis. If you see the pelvis tilting forward or backward remind the students that their tailbone needs to be extending to the floor.
- Flat Back** The body hinges at the hips to extend the torso in front of the lower half of the body, with the head and spine maintaining a straight line. Depending on the student's body type there will be different amounts of curvature in the lower back. As long as the abdominal muscles are engaged and the ribcage is not hyper extended forward a slight curve in the lower back is okay.
- Plié'** The knees are bend over the toes and then are straightened to return to the starting position. A demi plié' allows the knees to bend as far as possible keeping the alignment over the toes and maintaining heel contact on the floor. This is the same in both parallel and turned out positions. In 2nd position, parallel and turned out, the demi plié stops at approximately the halfway point. When bending the knees (using plié') it is important that the knees track over the middle three toes of the feet. The weight placement should remain evenly distributed. When the knees bend watch for changes in the pelvic placement. If you see students tucking their pelvis under (which will appear to flatten their back) remind them to release their tailbone to the floor. If you see students who appear to release their hips forward to gain movement (often arching their lower back) cue them to lengthen their tailbones to the floor. The feeling of a plié' should be one of resistance. As your knees and ankles flex forward the body should remain tall to avoid the appearance of getting shorter. There is a feeling of pulling up to go down. As the knees straighten there should be a feeling of lengthening through the backs of the legs into the floor.

Alignment and Awareness

Music – instrumental, not a strong beat, relaxing and easy to speak over

Time – approximately 3 minutes

Part A – Legs

Begin with the students lying on their backs. Legs extended in a straight line from their bodies and arms long by their sides.

Have the students gently shake or move their legs for a couple of seconds and then allow their legs to just relax. Ask the students to take a mental note of where their legs want to go in a relaxed position.

Next ask the students to consciously think about creating a parallel line for their legs. Legs in line with sits bones, knees facing the ceiling, feet may or may not be facing the ceiling based on the structure of the tibia. Try to encourage the students to think about lining up the three joints in the leg – ankle, knees and hips.

Repeat the relaxation and tone the legs to a neutral position.

At the conclusion of the last repetition, tell the students to bend their knees and place their feet flat on the floor, sits bones width apart. The bent leg position often reduces pressure on the lower back for many people.

Part B – Pelvis

Instruct the students to place their hands in a triangle on their lower abdominal area. Tell them to gently rock their tailbones towards their noses and then down towards the floor.

As their tailbones rock towards their noses ask them to pay attention to what is happening in the arches of their backs. As their tailbones rock towards their noses they should feel more of their lower backs on the floor. The feeling should not be one of pressing down into the floor, but instead of lengthening through the spine.

As their tailbones rock down to the floor, ask the students to try to find the neutral position where they do not feel lengthened or overly arched. As their tailbones continue to move towards the floor, the sensation will be one of increasing the arch in the lower back.

Repeat the rocking through the pelvis another 3 times. At the conclusion ask the students to find the neutral / centered position of their pelvis. In the neutral position the students should be able to see their hands level if they glance down at their fingers.

Alignment and Awareness – continued**Part C – Ribcage**

Have the students place their hands on their lower ribcages with their fingers placed gently between each other. Ask the students to inhale and feel their ribcage expand from side to side. They will also feel their fingers slide away from each other.

Exhale and have the students feel their ribs return to the position where the ribcage is in a more closed position. Repeat this breathing exercise.

At the conclusion, have the students lift both arms up to the ceiling, palms facing each other, while keeping their shoulder blades on the floor.

Part D – Arm / Ribcage Relationship

Have the students feel the placement of their ribcages on the floor. Ask them to lower their arms to the floor behind them. Encourage the students to go as far as possible without experiencing pain in their shoulders or neck. Have the students return their arms to the starting position.

Next have the students repeat the movement, this time paying attention to the changes in their ribcage placement on the floor. As their arms go overhead towards the floor the ribs will release from the floor. As their arms return towards the starting position their ribs will return to the floor.

Now have the students repeat the movement, this time stopping their arm movement as soon as they begin to feel the change in the alignment of their ribcages on the floor. Return the arms towards the ceiling. Repeat this movement 3 more times.

Part E – Shoulder

With the students maintaining the position of their arms to the ceiling, ask them to feel their shoulder blades lying as flat as possible on the floor. Ask the students to reach their fingers towards the ceiling, have them concentrate on the feeling of their shoulder blades sliding away from their spines and possibly even losing contact with the floor. Next, have the students return their arms and shoulder blades to the starting position. Repeat this movement 3 more times.

Teaching Notes

- The focus of this exercise is to begin increasing the body awareness of the students through certain movements. As the lessons progress, more direction will be given on how to complete the movements and later on the integration of the movements into dance exercises.
- Adding additional repetitions to areas where the students need more experience to understand the connection would be very beneficial to the students.

Spinal Movement and Breath

Music – instrumental, not a strong beat, relaxing and easy to speak over

Time – approximately 3 minutes

Part A – Seated

Have the students sit with their legs either tailor crossed or with their knees bent and the soles of their feet together. Ideally their backs will have the natural curve at the lower back and in the torso.

Have the students breathe normally a few times. Next, instruct them to inhale and exhale more deeply and pay attention to what happens throughout their torsos. On the inhale, the natural tendency should be of lifting and opening through the torso. As they exhale the tendency should reverse and become one of closing and rounding. As the students perform the movements, explain to them that due to these natural tendencies created by breathing we are able to add support or create more range of motion in many movements by incorporating specific breathing with the exercise.

Complete the following sequence 4 times:

Roll Down and Up

Inhale in the starting position

Exhale and roll down starting with the head and then through the spine, one piece at a time, stopping before the pelvis changes position

Inhale in the rounded position feeling the breath expand the back muscles

Exhale to return to sitting, restacking the vertebra one at a time from the bottom of the spine up to the head

Inhale and allow the spine to gently arch by lifting the collar bones towards the ceiling (maintain the alignment of the head and neck to the spine)

Exhale and return to the starting position

Part B – Standing

Have the students stand with their legs in parallel alignment and their feet sits bones width apart. The students should be standing with their pelvis and spines in neutral.

Repeat the **Roll Down and Up** sequence as described in the seated section 4 times

While the sequence of movements and breathing remains the same, it is important to note 2 changes in the execution. First, the weight should remain centered on both feet throughout the exercise. Second, the pelvis will probably change positions in the standing version.

Exercise 2 – Spinal Movement and Breath continued**Teaching Tips**

- If a student is unable to sit up comfortably in this position have them sit on a phone book or roll a piece of clothing and place it under their sits bones. Changing the angle will allow muscles in the lower back, hip and thigh areas to relax and often will allow a student to sit up properly.
- When sitting correctly the weight should be evenly divided between both sits bones and remain there throughout the exercise.
- The tendencies for the spine to arch or round with only the breath as the impetus are distinguishable but not large movements. It is important that the students begin to understand that we are using the body's natural instinct for movement and adding to it to create the movement patterns in the exercise.
- If turning the feet to a perfect parallel creates any sensation or evidence of twisting at the knee, allow the students to slightly out toe their feet until that twisting is released. It is important that the out toeing come from the foot and is not to be confused with turning out the legs from the hips (like in ballet).
- In the standing exercise, when the students round forward, the natural tendency is often to shift the pelvis backwards towards or behind the heels. This counter balance technique is often used to compensate for weaker abdominals (or lack of awareness on how to engage the abdominals). At this level, remind the students to try to maintain their weight placement, but it is not the emphasis of the exercise.
- In the standing exercise, when the students round forward many students will allow the knees to bend. The knees should remain straight, but not locked. Bending the knees is often compensation for tightness in the hamstrings or the lower back. At this level simply ask the students to not roll down quite so far.
- In the standing exercise, remind the students to control the rolling down and up by engaging their abdominal muscles. It is very easy to give into gravity and drop forward and then use momentum to return upright.

Flat Back

Music – instrumental preferred, 4/4 meter, approximately 70 beats per minute

Counts – 64 counts

Starting position – sitting with the soles of the feet together and not pulled in too tightly. If there is enough wall space for every student to sit with their back against a wall it would be beneficial for this exercise as it adds to the proprioceptive input the students receive.

Counts

Movement

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1-4 | Lift the arms as close to the ears as possible without the ribcage moving, keeping the elbows straight |
| 1-4 | Hinge the torso from the hips maintaining the flat back |
| 1-4 | Return the torso to the starting position |
| 1-4 | Lower the arms to the starting position |
| 1-4 x 12 | Repeat the above combination 3 more times |

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate the movement one time with the arms high and one time with the arms low.
- Encourage the students to reach their arms away from their bodies as they hinge forward. The reaching of their arms will encourage the students to manage their body weight away from their hips instead of down to the floor.
- Performing the exercise sitting helps the students to stabilize against the change of torso weight.
- While the shoulders will lift slightly, it is important that the students try to control the amount of lifting that the shoulders do.
- Explain to the students that their abdominal muscles must remain engaged throughout the exercise to support and control the movement.
- A good cue to help the students maintain abdominal engagement is to ask them to pull their navels towards their spines.
- The movement occurs from the pelvis hinging on the thighs. The flat back needs to be maintained when the pelvis hinges forward and returns.
- Explain to the students that they need to stop as soon as they feel their spines changing shape.
- If the wall is being used, remind the students to maintain the same feeling through their spines that they have when their backs are against the wall and when the position is hinged forward.

Contraction

Music – instrumental preferred, 4/4 meter, approximately 70 beats per minute

Counts – 64 counts

Starting position – sitting with the soles of the feet together and not pulled in too tightly, hands resting on the thighs

Counts

Movement

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1-4 | Tuck the pelvis under and roll the weight back off of the sits bones. Allow the lower back to round at the same time |
| 1-4 | Return to the starting position |
| 1-4 x 6 | Repeat 3 more sets and raise the arms to 1 st position |
| 1-4 x 8 | Repeat the exercise above with the arms in 1 st position |

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate the movement 1 time with the hands on the thighs and one time with the arms in first position.
- The feeling should be one of lifting, not dropping.
- Once the arms are lifted to 1st position more abdominal support will be needed than with the hands on the thighs.
- A good cue for many students is to suggest a scooping movement from the pelvis.
- The position of the legs in a diamond allows the pelvis to move more easily on the thighs.
- The back rounds only because of the movement of the pelvis.
- If the movement is initiated from the back instead of the pelvis a dropping sensation instead of a lifting sensation will occur.

Rotation

Music – instrumental preferred, 3/4 meter, approximately 70 beats per minute

Measures – 32 measures

Starting position – sitting with the soles of the feet together and not pulled in too tightly, fingertips resting on the floor on either side of the thighs, arms slightly rounded

| <u>Measures</u> | <u>Movement</u> |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Rotate the torso to the right |
| 2 | Return to the starting position |
| 3 | Rotate the torso to the left |
| 4 | Return to the starting position |
| 1-4 x 3 | Repeat the exercise above 3 more sets, as you return to center the last time, lift the arms to a slightly rounded 2 nd position |
| 1-4 x 4 | Repeat the exercise above with the arms in 2 nd position |

Teaching Tips

- It is important that the spine stay lengthened throughout the rotation.
- The fingertips should lift to just off of the floor during the rotation with the arms in the lower position.
- While the movement happens in the torso, there may be very minimal movement in the pelvis. Trying to ground the pelvis and not allow movement could create a shearing force in the spine which can lead to injury.
- The position of the legs in a diamond creates a wider base of support and provides more stability.
- Lifting the arms to 2nd position creates more resistance during the rotation due to having to support the weight of the arms against gravity.
- The movement is created by the abdominal and back muscles. If you notice a student's back arching, cue them to rotate the ribcage so that their focus is brought to the front of their body. If you notice a student's torso rounding, cue them to rotate from their back. This will bring their focus to the back of their body which will help the student to stay lengthened through the torso.
- It is very common for the range of motion to be different on the two sides of the body.

Side Bending

Music – instrumental preferred, 3/4 meter, approximately 70 beats per minute

Measures – 16 measures

Starting position – lying on your back, legs straight and sits bones width apart and arms lengthened by the sides. If there is enough room to have the students place their feet flat against the wall with at least a foot distance between each person would be beneficial to the students but is not crucial.

| <u>Measures</u> | <u>Movement</u> |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Pull the right hand down towards the right foot. Allow the head and spine to bend to the right |
| 2 | Return to the starting position |
| 3 | Repeat the movement to the left |
| 4 | Return to the starting position |
| 1 -4 x 3 | Repeat the exercise above 3 more sets |

Teaching Tips

- It is important that the spine stay lengthened throughout the side bend. There should not be a crunching feeling on either side of the body.
- From the pelvis down, the body should remain still.
- If the students are able to ground their feet against the wall it should be easier for them to maintain stability through the lower body.
- It is very common for the range of motion to be different on the two sides of the body.
- The range of motion should only be as far as the movement can remain smooth.
- The students might have more range of motion when their feet are stabilized against the wall.

Plié

Music – instrumental preferred, 4/4 meter, approximately 80 beats per minute

Counts – 98 counts

Starting position – standing in the center with the feet in parallel 1st position, arms are held long by the sides

| <u>Counts</u> | <u>Movement</u> |
|----------------------|--|
| 1-4 | Demi plié in parallel 1 st position |
| 1-4 | Stretch legs |
| 1-4 x 2 | Repeat |
| 1-4 | Turn both legs out into 1 st position |
| 1-4 | Maintain the position |
| 1-4 x 4 | Repeat the combination in 1 st position |
| 1-4 | Lift the heels and turn the legs to a parallel 2 nd position alignment. The feet will be approximately under the sits bones |
| 1-4 | Maintain the position |
| 1-4 x 4 | Repeat the combination in parallel 2 nd position |
| 1-4 | Turn both legs out into 2 nd position |
| 1-4 | Maintain the position |
| 1-4 x 4 | Repeat the combination in 2 nd position |

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate 1 plié and show the students the 4 positions of the feet and legs that are being used.
- Remind the students to keep their pelvis in a neutral position, not tilt forward or tuck under.
- The knees only bend as far as the heels remain firmly on the floor.
- It is important to remain pulled up through the torso as the knees bend.
- If the students have not had exposure to other dance training you might need to take more time to explain the plié movement.

Brush / Tendu

Music – instrumental preferred, 4/4 meter, approximately 80 beats per minute

Counts – 128 counts

Starting position – standing in the center with the feet in parallel 1st position, arms are held in 2nd position

| <u>Counts</u> | <u>Movement</u> |
|---------------|--|
| 1-4 | Tendu the right foot to the front, fully stretching the foot and ankle |
| 1-4 | Return the foot to parallel 1 st position |
| 1-4 x 2 | Repeat |
| 1-4 x 2 | Repeat the combination to the side |
| 1-4 x 2 | Repeat the combination to the back |
| 1-4 x 2 | Repeat the combination to the side |
| 1-4 x 16 | Repeat the combination on the left side |

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate 1 tendu to each direction.
- Remind the students to keep their pelvis in a neutral position, not tilt forward or tuck under.
- Remind the students that their weight needs to stay on their supporting sides, not travel with the tendu.
- It is important to remain pulled up through and the knees stay straight throughout the exercise.
- Explain to the students that they need to use their foot against the resistance of the floor. Tendus are designed to strengthen the 5 layers of intrinsic muscles in the feet.
- Encourage the students to use their arms to help them maintain balance during the exercise.

Levels

Music – instrumental, not a strong beat, relaxing and easy to speak over

Time – approximately 4 minutes

Explain to the students the three levels of space to move in.

Low – with the majority of the body on the floor through the kneeling level

Medium or Middle – with the feet on the floor

High – in the air

Have the students explore different ways to move on the low level. There are no correct or incorrect movements to include as long as they are being done with the majority of the body on the floor through the kneeling level. Allow the students to explore movement on this level for 1 minute.

Remind the students of the difference between low and middle level movement. Have the students explore different ways to move on the middle level. As with the low level, there are no correct or incorrect movements as long as they are being done at the standing / pedestrian level. Allow the students to explore movement on this level for 1 minute.

Remind the students that the high level movement needs to take place in the air. Have the students explore different ways to move on the high level. As with the previous levels there are no correct or incorrect movements as long as they are being done with some part of the movement in the high level. Allow the students to explore movement on this level for 1 minute.

Teaching Tips

- Encourage the students to try different movements on each level.
- The movements can be linear, circular or axial.
- Remind the students to maintain a safe distance between each other as they are moving.
- **Low** movement occurs on the ground level. This includes crawling, slithering, rolling, kneeling, etc.
- **Medium** movement occurs at the pedestrian or walking level. This includes, walking, running, sliding, etc.
- **High** movement occurs in the air. This includes hopping, skipping, jumping, leaping, and being a lifted body.

Walking in Rhythm

Music – instrumental with a consistent beat in the meter indicated in each section. The music should be a moderate tempo so that it is comfortable to walk to

Time – approximately 3 minutes

Part A – Walking forward in 4/4

Divide the students into small groups or pairs. Have the students walk forward in time with the music. Remind the students that the normal gait is for the heel to hit first and roll through the foot to push off of the toes.

Have the students move along the diagonal from one corner of the room to the opposite corner

Part B – Walking sideways in 3 / 4

With the students still in the groups from **Part A** change the music to the new meter.

Have the students walk sideways from right to left and from left to right

The movement of the feet should be a step together action, not crossing.

Part C – Walking backwards in 2 / 4

Maintain the same groups as the previous parts and change the music to the new meter.

Have the students move along the diagonal from one corner of the room to the opposite corner

Remind the students that the normal gait when walking backwards is to step toe first and then transfer the weight to the heel.

Teaching Tips

- The eye focus needs to be straight ahead throughout the walks in all directions.
- Encourage the students to walk as normally as possible.
- Remind the students to keep the hips, shoulders and head in the same direction.
- The length of the steps in the forward and backwards directions should be approximately the same length.
- The sideways steps should be between hip and shoulder width.

Triplets

Music – instrumental with a consistent beat in a 3/4 meter, approximately 75 beats per minute

Time – approximately 4 minutes

Starting position – standing in corner #6, legs are in parallel 1st position and the arms are relaxed by the sides

Counts

Movement

| | |
|-----|--|
| 1 | Step forward on the right foot, through the toe, ball, heel and into a bent knee |
| 2 | Step forward on the left foot, onto the ball of the foot (relevé position), on a straight leg |
| 3 | Step forward on the right foot, onto the ball of the foot (relevé position), on a straight leg |
| 1-3 | Repeat the same combination with the left leg starting the movement |

Continue alternating between starting the pattern on the right and left sides until the whole diagonal is completed.

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate 1 triplet with the right foot starting and 1 with the left foot starting.
- The pattern can be called out as down, up, up.
- At this level, the concentration is on learning the movement pattern of the feet and legs.
- As the students execute the pattern there should be no holds in the timing between each set.
- Remind the students to keep the hips, shoulders and head facing in the direction of travel.
- The length of both the down and up steps should be approximately the same.
- The weight should transfer completely onto each step.

Footwork

Music – instrumental preferred, 2/4 or 4/4 meter, approximately 80 beats per minute

Counts – 128 counts

Starting position – standing in the center with the feet in parallel 1st position, hands on the hips

Counts

Movement

| | |
|----------|--|
| 1-2 | Bend the right knee and lift the heel of the right foot off of the floor, keep the ball of the foot on the floor |
| 3-4 | Stretch the foot fully, until just the tips of the toes are on the floor |
| 1-2 | Return the foot to the relevé position |
| 3-4 | Place the heel back on the floor |
| 1-4 x 14 | Repeat 7 more repetitions |
| 1-4 x 16 | Repeat the combination on the left side |

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate 1 set of the movement.
- Remind the students to keep their pelvis in a neutral position, not tilted forward or tucked under.
- The movement is created from the foot up, not the knee down.
- It is important that there is no weight put on the gesture foot when the toes are fully stretched.
- Watch the alignment of the leg between the ankle, knee and hip, all three joints should face in the same direction.
- The rest of the body should remain still throughout the movement.

Release and Recover

Music – instrumental preferred with a definite 4/4 meter, approximately 80 beats per minute

Counts – 64 counts

Starting position – standing with the feet sits bones width apart in parallel 2nd position, the arms are reaching up towards the ceiling

Counts

1-4

Movement

Swing the arms down, drop the head and roll down through the body and allow the knees to soften

1-4

Return the body to the starting position

1-4 x 14

Repeat the exercise 7 more times

Teaching Tips

- Demonstrate 1 release and recover.
- The release is a controlled drop.
- The recovery is the return to the starting position.
- When demonstrating the exercise it is important that the students understand that there is control in the movement.
- While there is momentum to the movement, it is important that the students remember the sequence taught in the roll down so that the release is safe for the body.
- The abdominal muscles control the movement of the release.
- During the return to the starting position it is important that the pelvis and spine are returned to their neutral positions.

Choreography Project (approximate length can vary from a few minutes to a full class)

Have the students think about the movements that were done in the class and incorporate those movements with travelling steps. Encourage the students to try turning and jumping in a side bend or contraction. Suggest linking the stationary movements together to create a movement phrase or perform a travelling step and use a stationary movement as an accent.

If the activity is designed to take a full class, encourage the students to work with specific phrases in music and write down the combinations that work well. Assigning a theme to the phrase can help students find direction the creation of their combination.

Once the choreography portion is done, have the students perform, either alone or in small groups and then switch roles with the observers. Another option is to have a student teach another student or a small group of students and then reverse roles.

Research Project (approximate length can vary from a few minutes to a full class)

Have the students research a famous figure in modern dance and present their findings to the class. Encourage the students to show pictures, demonstrate movements based on the pictures or present a brief oral report. The following is a starting list of modern dancers:

- Isadora Duncan
- Mary Wigam
- Lester Horton
- Martha Graham
- Loie Fuller
- Rudolph Von laban
- Ruth St. Denis
- Ted Shawn
- Doris Humphrey
- Charles Weidman
- Katherine Dunham
- José Limon
- Hanya Holm
- Donald McKayle
- Erik Hawkins
- Merce Cunningham
- Alvin Ailey
- Judith Jamison
- Trisha Brown
- Paul Taylor
- Twyla Tharp
- Alwin Nikolais
- Sean Curran
- Mark Morris