

Title of Lesson:	Laban Movement	Age Level:	9-12 Grade
Curriculum Area:	Physical Acting	Time Frame:	60 minutes
Developed By:	Jess Lee Harms	Lesson:	1
Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks			
1.14 Create complex and believable characters through the integration of physical, vocal, and emotional choices			
National Core Arts Standards			
TH:Pr4.1.HSIII b. Apply a variety of researched acting techniques as an approach to character choices in a drama/theatre work.			
TH:Cr3.1.HSI b. Explore physical, vocal and physiological choices to develop a performance that is believable, authentic, and relevant to a drama/theatre work.			
Enduring Understanding		Essential Questions	
The body is an actor's tool used to create and communicate character.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is movement used to develop a role? • How can movement communicate character and emotion? 	
Knowledge Students will understand that...		Skills Students will be able to...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laban Movement Analysis offers a common vocabulary to verbally communicate movement • Complete actors use their body to communicate character and emotion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a character from the outside-in • Sustain a character in an improvised setting 	
Student Objective			
Students will be able to create and express a character using Laban Movement Analysis.			

Hook/Warm-up:		Time:
<p>Machine (based on Viola Spolin's work) One volunteer begins in front of the class and begins a repetitive movement of their choice; for example, they may bend their right knee up and down repeatedly. The volunteer also makes a simple vocalization, for example a high pitched "bee bah, bee bah, bee bah," or a low pitched "ow, ow, ow." As each student is ready, they will join the machine with their own movement. Side-coaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep doing your sound and motion so others can join in! • When you see a place to add on, jump in! • Make sure to choose a sound/motion that is repeatable for an extended period of time. • Try to find a movement that engages your whole body, not just your hands and arms. • Remember that our machine does not have to be a straight line, try to use the space 3-dimensionally. <p>After every student has become a part of the machine, wait a minute to let the machine "work" and then end the exercise. As a group you have fifteen seconds to decide, what is your machine making?</p> <p>You may repeat this activity 2-3 times side-coaching students to explore and experiment with levels, cause and effect, rhythm, and pitch.</p>		5 min.
Body:		Time:
<p>Teacher In Role As the teacher, you will be in role as the factory owner. As of 09:00, we have fallen behind on our product quotas. As factory owner, I have hired this guy, Rudolf von Laban, a Hungarian dancer and choreographer, to analyze your movement to make it more efficient. He's been studying our factory and specifically your movements. Based on what he has closely observed, his analysis has determined that movement can be described in three categories. All movement can be described in space, time, and weight. Today we will use his ideas to make our factory more efficient, and</p>		15 min.

also as a way of discussing and analyzing our movement and physicality on stage.

Note: there is a fourth category for Laban movement and as this is an introduction, we will explore the fourth category later.

Spectrum of Movement

Explain that each category has a spectrum with two poles:

- *time is how fast or slow*
- *weight is light or heavy*
- *space is direct or indirect (flexible)*

Have students begin to mill and seethe around the room, side-coaching:

- Try not to walk in circles but to explore the space.
- Build awareness of yourself and your surroundings.

Laban Walks

One at a time, instruct students to experiment with the following movement modifiers. Allow students to really explore and sit in each movement modifier for at least thirty seconds.

1. Fast: walk as fast as you possibly can, without bumping into anyone.
2. Slow: walk as slow as you possibly can.
3. Come back to a normal walking speed- neutral
4. Light (connected to heavens)
5. Heavy (connected to earth)
6. Come back to a normal walking speed
7. Direct: you're on a mission, and have to get to various points in the room as directly as possible. Your focus is laser-sharp
8. Indirect: you're doing the opposite what you just did. You have no focus: you're walking aimlessly, wherever your body takes you.
9. Come back to a normal walking speed

Debrief

Bring your students back to circle to facilitate this reflection.

Observe

- What surprised you about this movement experiment?

Analyze

- Where did you notice an emotion or character emerging naturally within you?
- Why do you think Laban's theories are used by actors?
- How does this movement language help us develop strong characters?

Apply

- What questions would you ask Rudolf Laban?
- What other qualities of movement could Rudolf Laban have selected?

Spectrum Assessment

This reflection is a spectrum measurement. This mirrors the spectrum of each quality of movement. Imagine there is a line connecting to points of your space in a straight line, corners are often easiest. One point is one end of the spectrum, and the second point is the opposite end of the spectrum.

- ***If this corner is very easy, and this corner is very challenging, and the imaginary line connecting the two corners is the spectrum, how easy or challenging was it for you to concentrate only on yourself?*** Once all students have placed themselves on the spectrum, invite a few students to share *why* they have placed themselves at that point.
- ***If this corner is always, and this corner is never, and the imaginary line connecting the two corners***

10 min.

is the spectrum, how often did experimenting with a movement quality begin to bring up feelings or a character? Once all students have placed themselves on the spectrum, invite a few students to share *why* they have placed themselves at that point.

Laban Movement Combinations (Efforts):

Ask students to walk around the room again, and this time we are going to level-up our experiment by exploring combinations of the movement qualities. Rudolf Laban called these combinations movement efforts. Side-coaching:

- Try not to walk in circles but to explore the space.
- Build awareness of yourself and your surroundings.

One at a time, instruct students to experiment with the following movement efforts. In between each movement effort, instruct students to return to neutral. Allow students to really explore and sit in each movement modifier for at least thirty seconds.

1. Fast, Light, Direct
2. Slow, Heavy, Indirect
3. Fast, Heavy, Direct
4. Slow, Light, Indirect
5. Fast, Light, Indirect
6. Slow, Heavy, Direct
7. Fast, Heavy, Indirect
8. Slow, Light, Direct

Final Movement Exploration

Finally, invite students to explore the space with the movement combination that made you feel most strongly like a completely different person. Extend this exploration longer than you explored the other movement efforts to allow students to fully realize their character and emotional state. Side-coach:

- As you explore this movement effort, what feelings are emerging? Where do these feelings live in your body?
- As you explore this movement effort, who are you? What do you want?

Character Monologue

While students are exploring their final movement exploration, place a piece of paper and writing utensil for each participant in a circle. Invite students to come to the circle as their character, standing behind a piece of paper. Keep coaching to stay in character! Instruct students to write a 5-10 sentence monologue as the character they explored in our final movement exploration. *Give students 8-10 minutes to compose their monologues. If desired, print the instructions for this on the top of each paper. You can also coach students to include one element of a strong monologue if this is for more advanced students. Elements of a strong monologue are:*

- *Clear beginning, middle, and end*
- *Strong emotional journey (begins with one emotion and ends in another)*
- *Strong need to speak (or objective)*

Performing the Monologue

Ask students to hold on to their written monologue as they once again explore the space with their chosen movement effort. Side-coach:

- What emotions are in your movement and your monologue?
- Where is this emotion living in your body?
- What elements of your movement can you exaggerate to communicate the character you developed?

After allowing students to get back into character, ask students to freeze. Ask one student to perform their monologue in character. Repeat three-four times with different students.

Shake It Out

10 min.

15 min.

Invite students to de-role by shaking it out. This can be a full body shake as if you are a dog shaking off water, or you can chose to shake each arm and leg counting down from 4.	
Wrap-up	Time:
<p>Identifying Laban</p> <p>Once students have de-rolled, collect written monologues, and form a circle in the middle of the room. Ask students to identify what movement combination each person has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Johnny Depp as Jack Sparrow (providing a video example may be helpful) -A popular teacher at your school -Themselves -You 	5 min.

This lesson plan was created by Jessica Harms and shared on 2/4/16, maitschapter@gmail.com.

Community link: <https://www.schooltheatre.org/communities/community-home/digestviewer/viewthread?MessageKey=30cdd2d3-56d9-4e02-8e46-2565d1383288&CommunityKey=35d3756e-031c-447e-a020-14aeb57718f1&tab=digestviewer#bm30cdd2d3-56d9-4e02-8e46-2565d1383288#bm0>

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