

# CHOREOGRAPHY NOTES

Tips for Creating a Movement Piece with Large Groups and Varied Experience Levels

Presented by Lisa O'Brien – January 2017

---

## Song Choice

- Choose a song that speaks to you and movement comes easily
- Know your students strengths and capabilities
- Pay attention to the lyrics and time limit
- Map out your song:  
(i.e., Verse 1 = 8 c 8, Chorus = 4 c 8, Verse 2 = 8 c 8)  
  
\*Take note of any musical accents in the song and use words to describe specific sections such as swirly, clump or battle.

## Blocking

- Imperative for successful choreography!!
- Plan ahead and make visual diagrams
- Blocking allows for use of choreographic tools
- Know your performance space such as size, entrances, exits, stairs, etc.
- Blocking establishes a focus for the audience
- Varies the dance
- Possible formations: line x 3, clump, circle, semi-circle, concentric circles, triangle, diamond, pyramid, X, V, scattered
- Transitions between formations are important

## Choreographic Tools

- Peel/Wave
- Add-on
- Take-away
- Cannon
- Mirroring
- Repetition
- Facing Different Directions
- Levels
- Shapes: Symmetrical vs Asymmetrical, Dynamic vs Static
- Changing Rhythm – stillness is good!
- Clear beginning and end
- Allow for moments of student creation/expression

## How to Come Up with Movement Phrases

- Teach what you know, don't reinvent the wheel!
- Use lyrics of the song or musical elements for inspiration
- Improvise first! Take note of what works for you
- Refer to your song mapping for ways certain sections should look/feel
- Change it up: rhythm, levels, direction
- Don't feel you have to start at the beginning of the song

## Tips for Rehearsal

- Establish a timeline and include at least 4 cleaning rehearsals where no new material is presented
- Set up rehearsal times and clear expectations/consequences for student attendance
- Make sure blocking is clear and choreography is clear for students
- Choose dance captains who can work specific sections
- Discuss facial expressions