



Hello everyone, my name is Manuel "Manny" Macias, and I am a doctoral student with the Department of Dance at UCR.

Today, we're going to be space explorers! No, we're not going to go on a rocket ship into the sky— we're going to explore and play with the space around us— as a dancer would.

Have you ever tried choreographing a dance and realized it's pretty hard to come up with new moves? Or have you ever seen a weird dance piece and didn't know how to describe it (kinda like Squidward's interpretive dancing from Spongebob Squarepants)? Well after we EXPLORE SPACE, both of these things might become easier!



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

1. A two sided piece of paper. One side for notes. Second side for activity.
2. Comfortable attire that you can move in.
3. A device with working audio that can access the internet for video viewing (Especially for the activity portion)
4. No experience necessary— just a willingness to move and explore space!

Photo courtesy of: Cal Poly Pomona Department of Theatre and New Dance

Before we begin, For this lesson you will need a piece of paper. It does not need to be fancy— any paper will do. The first side will be for notes, the second side will be for the activity portion at the end.

You will need comfortable attire that you can move in. Think P.E. clothes. However, we won't be moving until the activity.

You will need a device that has audio capabilities (you should be able to hear sound) and can access the internet for the video portions. Also, if you want to record yourself doing the activity, you could possibly use a camera phone.

Lastly, you do not need any experience. All you need is a willingness to explore space.

Let's Blast Off!

WHAT IS SPACE?

- ▶ *Place*: a dance studio, a stage, the room you're currently occupying
- ▶ *Shape*: the form/contour/outline the dancer/object is making (or multiple dancers/objects)
- ▶ The *proximity* of bodies and objects (shapes) in the physical area (place)
- ▶ In dance these can be *moving* or *still*

Photo Courtesy of Samantha Weisburg on Unsplash

Well... what exactly is space? It's not just that thing beyond the atmosphere... space can be thought of as PLACE, SHAPE, and PROXIMITY.

We can define place as where the dance is taking place. If we are watching dancers rehearsing in a studio, or stage— those are places. If you're dancing in your room— your room is PLACE. Or maybe you're dancing in your room but only on a rug and not the outer edges... you can consider the area of the rug PLACE.

In thinking about shape— you can't NOT have a shape. As you're sitting there right now your body is making a shape. If you were to shift and lean to the side— you're changing your shape. If you were to stand up— you just changed your shape. All of the objects around you are also shapes encompassing the space you are in. Your computer is a shape... your glass of water... your desk.. they are all making shapes.

If you've ever seen a dance with multiple people— an ensemble— how close or how far they are from each other is their proximity. The distance between you, your computer, and the door... these all have different proximities.

Lastly... Place, Shape, and Proximity.... these can be moving or still. For place: Dancers can move around the stage. This means they are moving through place. They can also be in one spot.. not moving in place. Can you change your place? Scoot to the side. You just changed your place!

For shape: When dancers *dance*, they usually moving and constantly changing their shape. Sometimes they can freeze.. and hold their position... and they can be still. Can you change your shape? Change your shape again. What's the smallest shape you can make with your body? What about the tallest?

Proximity can also be still and moving. For example: if two dancers are frozen really far from each other. Or they can randomly be running through the SPACE.. and proximity can be changing.



STAGE (THE PROSCENIUM)

How the PLACE is divided:

- A. Stage
- B. Legs and Wings
- C. Cyclorama (CYC)
- D. Hides lights and Main Curtain
- E. Audience seating
- F. Orchestra Pit

Photo courtesy of Keo Oran on Unsplash

One of the PLACES where dance happens is on a stage. Have you ever seen a stage like this? This style of stage is very common. The technical name for this is a “proscenium” stage. It’s a magical place because it has a lot of fancy equipment to make dances come to life.

- A. Is the stage. It’s the PLACE where the dancing happens.
- B. Is what we call the legs and wings. If you look closely, these pieces of fabric are hanging down from the ceiling. These are the legs. They hide lights from the audience and create magical “entrances and exits” (called wings) where dancers can magically appear or disappear from the performance.
- C. Is what we call the cyclorama, or cyc for short. Back in the day, scenic artists would paint things like the sky on it, and it could move like a conveyor belt to give the illusion of flying through the sky. Today, we can make the same thing happen using colored lights or a projector. You can do other things too— maybe the dance is about a scary forrest— so you would project trees and have a really “low light” environment.
- D. This top part looks like a ceiling— but there’s curtains here that hide more lights. There is also a giant curtain, called a Main, that comes in at the beginning and end of a dance show.
- E. Is where the audience sits.
- F. This is the orchestra pit. It is an area below the audience and stage where a live orchestra plays music for the performance. It’s not as common anymore unless you see a classical ballet.

AREAS OF THE STAGE:

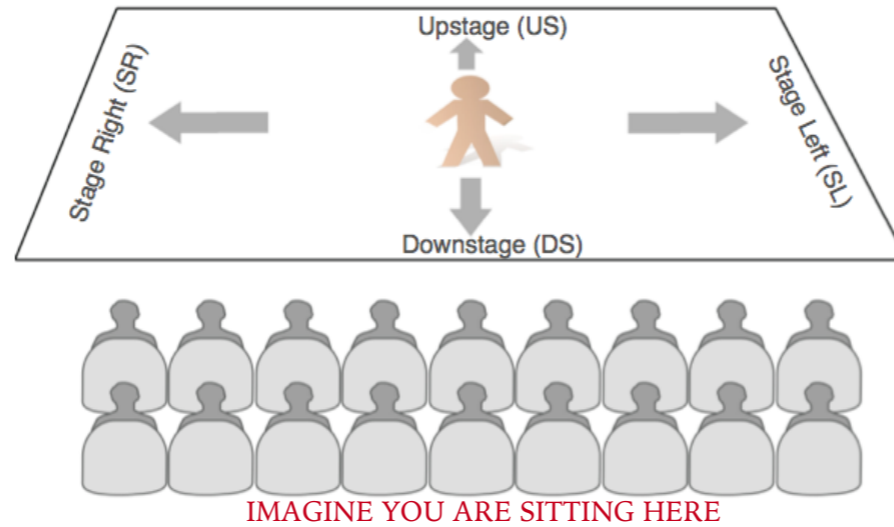
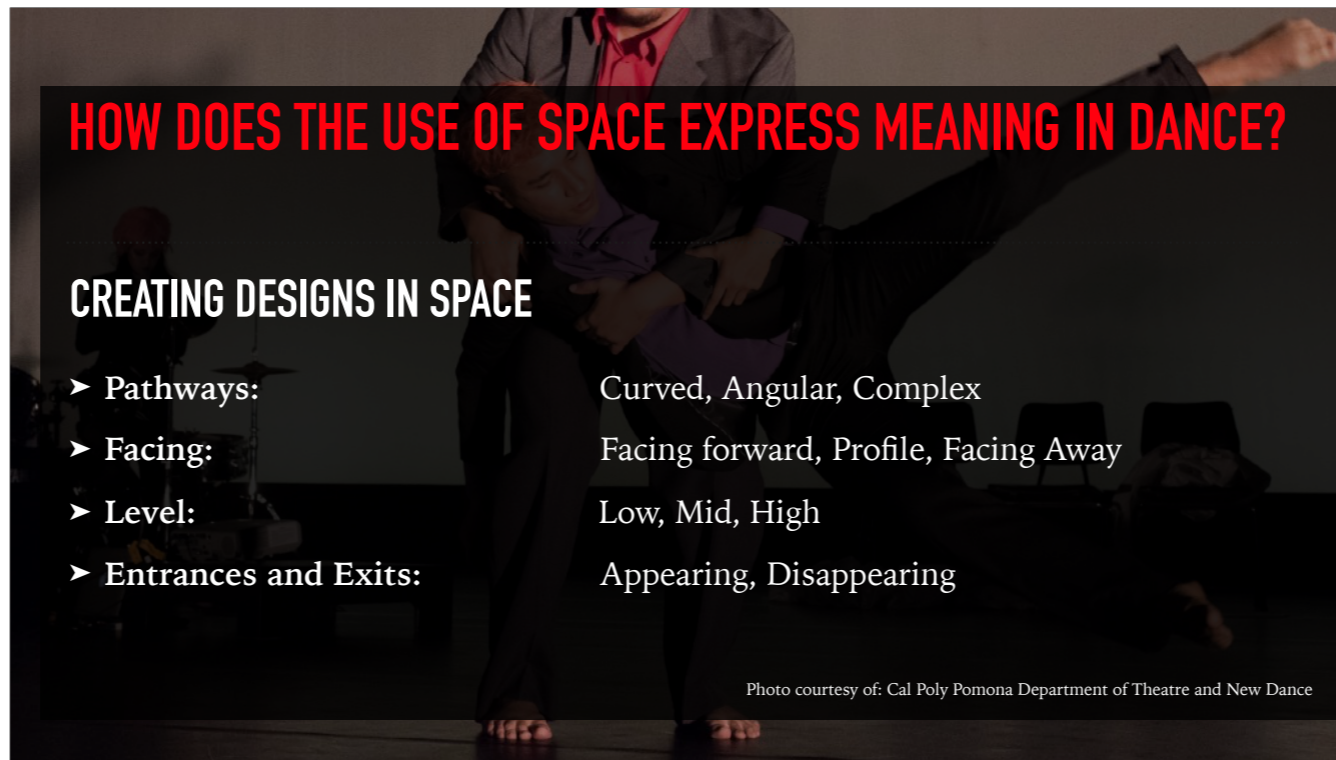


Image courtesy of bbbpress

Talking about PLACE on stage is interesting. We call them “stage directions.” Have you ever heard the term “take center stage?” It means for the performer to go to the middle of the stage, as seen on this image. The orange stick figure is the performer, and the gray figures that are sitting and watching in a group is the audience. **IMAGINE YOU ARE PART OF THE AUDIENCE.** If the PERFORMER moves to the left of the screen, we call this “Stage Right” If the performer moves to the right, we call this “Stage Left.” Stage Directions are always the opposite of what the audience sees, because they are in the perspective of the performer.

If the performer moves toward the audience this is called moving Downstage. If the performer moves away from the audience, this is called moving Upstage. This is because in the old days before electricity and the stage technology of today— in order to be lit, the stage had to be on an incline.. where the back of the stage (away from the audience) was higher than the part closest to the audience. Can you imagine dancing on an incline?



HOW DOES THE USE OF SPACE EXPRESS MEANING IN DANCE?

CREATING DESIGNS IN SPACE

- ▶ Pathways: Curved, Angular, Complex
- ▶ Facing: Facing forward, Profile, Facing Away
- ▶ Level: Low, Mid, High
- ▶ Entrances and Exits: Appearing, Disappearing

Photo courtesy of: Cal Poly Pomona Department of Theatre and New Dance

Think about the little orange figure from the last slide, let's call them Orange. How might Orange move and create designs through space to create a dance that means something to the audience?

Maybe Orange dances through space using a pathway. Orange can take curved pathways that are very round, angular pathways that have sharp edges, or maybe they can be complex and random mixes of angular and round pathways.

Maybe Orange can play with the facing of the movement through space— for example they can face forward (downstage) toward the audience. Orange can face the side (wings or legs) of the stage showing their profile. Or Orange can face away from the audience (upstage). Or maybe it's a mix of the three!

Orange can be in the low LEVEL of space. Maybe the entire dance is made up of a low crawl. The dance could be mid-level, which is where Orange is not quite fully standing but not fully crouched down. Or the dance can be in the high level— Orange is standing and jumping.

If there are wings or legs then Orange could make entrances and exits, where they appear and disappear. Maybe this can be made possible with a camera— what if Orange walks off screen? It's almost like exiting the stage!

TAKING DANCE OUT OF THE THEATER:

SITE-SPECIFIC DANCE

- Dance can happen anywhere
- Generating different kinds of movement
- Audience may include passers-by
- Often filmed
- Allows for social distancing
- Safety first!



You don't need a dance studio or theatre to perform! There is a genre of dance performance where the PLACE can be just about anywhere. It's called site specific dance.

Site specific dance can happen anywhere... a park, a garden, in a forest, at the beach. Have you ever seen a performer in one of these places?

Sometimes, this allows you to generate different kinds of movement you wouldn't normally be able to on stage— for example. This dancer in this picture seems to be at some sort of outdoor space. What if there is a park bench near her that she could now use as a prop? What if during parts of her dance, she sits down on the bench? The possibilities are endless!

In site specific dance, this changes what it means to be an "audience." Sometimes, a passerby might become audience members.

Often, site specific dances are filmed and edited

Lastly, site specific dance performance makes it easier to socially distance because they aren't inside a theatre. Audience members could be over 6 feet apart in the open air to watch a performance.

Some of you might opt to do the activity portion of this outside in your backyard if you have access to it and the weather is nice. Just remember— safety first!



LOOKING AT SPACE IN DANCE

► Questions to Consider:

How is (shape) (place) (proximity) being used?

What did you notice about the use of space – did any of it make you feel a certain way?

Photo courtesy of Lucas Law on Unsplash

Now we're going to look at SPACE in action, using what you've just learned!

In a moment you're going to watch a video.

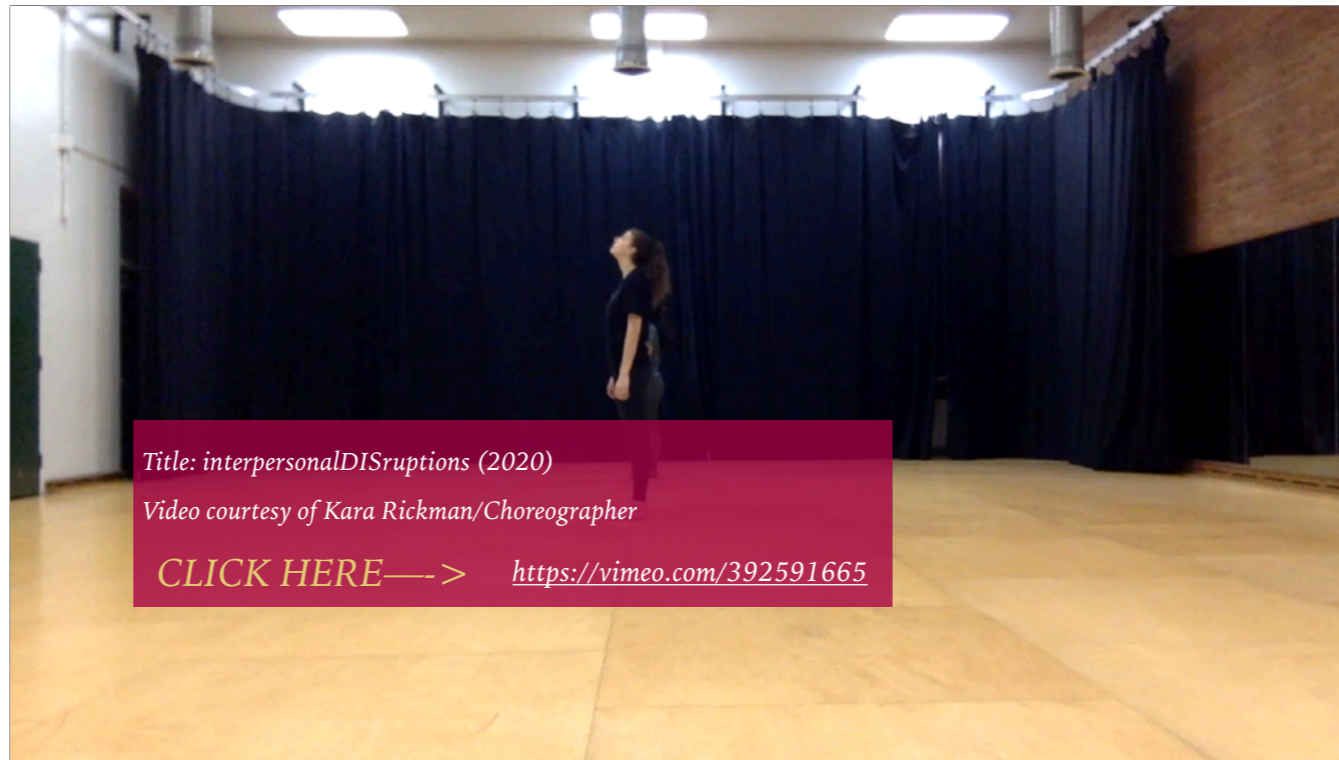
But first, you're going to write the following questions down to answer once you've finished watching the video.

The first question is: How is shape, place, and proximity, being used?

The second question is: What did you notice about the use of Space and how it made you feel?

For example— in this picture of the left, the dancers in the high space with their hands in the air seem hopeful and united.. while the dancers in the mid space standing on one leg seem like they are in conflict with the other group of dancers. Their proximity suggests, to me, that they are part of two different groups of people.

Are you ready?



The following is a short dance performance titled “interpersonalDISruptions” by my collaborator and mentee, artist Kara Rickman. Remember, as you watch, think about SPACE— place, shape, and proximity.



WHAT DID YOU THINK

- **Jot down some notes (30 seconds for each question)**

How is (shape) (place) (proximity) being used?

What did you notice about the use of space – did any of it make you feel a certain way?

- **Read your notes and take a minute to think about how Kara's use of space made you feel certain ways. Discuss with a classmate and compare/contrast. Isn't that amazing?!**

Jot down some notes for each question, 30 seconds each.

Now take a minute to reflect— Thinking about how the use of SPACE (place, shape, and proximity) made you feel certain ways. If you did this activity with a friend or classmates— discuss what you came up with! Compare and contrast your findings. Isn't it amazing that movement can make you feel certain ways?

THE 4 WINDS ACTIVITY VIDEO:

- Draw the diagram (right) on a piece of paper and download the instruction sheet.
- This activity will ask you to move in space. Prepare the space with safety in mind.
- Warm up before you begin.
- Listen to your body!

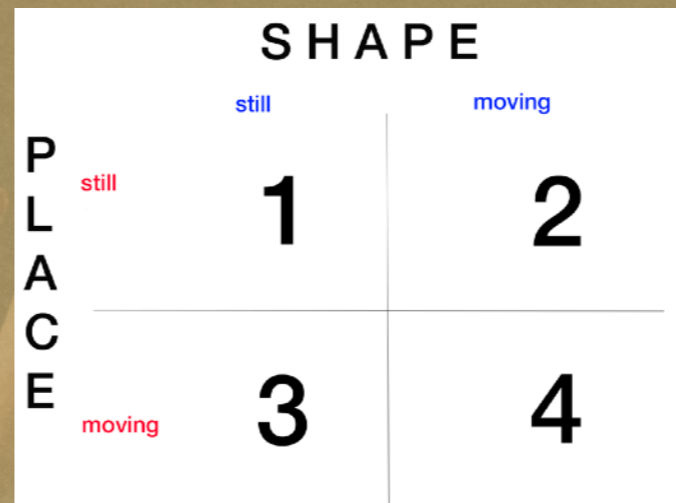


Photo courtesy of: Cal Poly Pomona Department of Theatre and New Dance

Now you are ready to proceed to the 4 Winds Activity Video. Before you begin, there are some things you need to prepare.

The copy the diagram on the right for yourself. You can also download the instruction sheet and follow along if needed.

The following activity will ask that you move. Because of social distancing and remote learning, you might be dancing in a small space. Look around. Is there anything that can fall over? Is there anything you could potentially crash into and hurt yourself. If you can move it somewhere safe to create more space— please do so. Also— if you're dancing outside— please consider your environment and ask the same questions. If there are things you can't change about your environment and you cannot move somewhere more spacious— please proceed with the activity safely. Feel free to adjust as need.

Please warm up before you begin. Do about 30 seconds of running in place or jumping jacks. Do some lunges. It is possible to use this activity as a warm up. For the best experience, warm up before you begin.

Lastly, please listen to your body. This activity should not completely push you to your limit. Nothing should ever hurt. Again, feel free to adjust as needed!



PLAYING WITH SPACE
Make Dances for the Solo or Ensemble

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Photo courtesy of: Cal Poly Pomona Department of Theatre and New Dance

Thank you for learning about space! Please proceed to the related activity video!