Name of Student Choreographer: Mariah Eastman

Number of Dancers: 6

Semester of Presentation: Fall

Title Ideas: (Really?) Becoming Orientated, Working Through Absurdity

I. The Seed: Project Inspiration/Intention (No more than 100 words)
Describe your project idea, or choreographic intention considering your inspirations and sources. What is the SEED of your idea?

The inspiration for my piece is the depiction of the absurdity of team building activities which are experiences almost everyone can relate to. The uncomfortable work or school team building activity is almost always a memory that crawls with conflicting feelings of awkwardness yet gratefulness for the break from the everyday schedule of daily life. I want to create movement inspired by the body language of individuals doing a range of team building exercises. From there, I will create characters within the piece from watching the dancers participate in the activities. Overall the piece would hopefully develop into a satire on team building activities.
II.
The Root

Annotated Bibliography


What I found particularly interesting about this article was the noted differences between casual, academic, industrial and conservative work settings in body language. I also thought that the differences between the body language of each role in a workplace environment would be something I could explore.


While these activities were mostly geared towards students, I thought they could provide information on developing movement based in the team building aesthetic.


I thought this blog post was interesting and relevant because it also had some great activities that I could use for movement development. For example, the zombie escape would be great to transform into a movement section in the piece.


This article was of interest to me because I never knew how far these team building activities could go. The fact that employers and companies go to extremes to bring their employees together is almost absurd. It gave me an idea to create an extreme situation within the piece and develop different people’s reactions to it.


This book is very entertaining because of how it talks about interacting with coworkers and bosses. It has an emphasis on eye contact and how relevant it is within a business context. It talks about the different signals your eye contact can give other people.

I thought this was an interesting source because he describes parts of his choreographic process. I like his ideas about not revealing everything to the dancers (or actors in his case) because I think that would make sure that my piece isn’t too literal.


I thought this could be relevant because the movement training systems could help educate me how to create movement that could communicate a dancer’s character within the piece to the audience.


This article was another that talked about the importance of body language in a workplace context but also on a personal level. I think it would be helpful to develop different people’s attitudes within the context of the piece and use it as a resource for the creation of movement.


I thought this would be a valuable resource in order to see the necessity or reasoning behind team building activities from a management point of view.


This was another resource that I think could give me ideas for different team building activities to develop movement from. It also talks about different situations where team building is necessary.

1. In what style or type of aesthetic are you working with? For example, are you working in a post modern fashion? Are you interested in release technique? Are you investigating the physicality and technique of a more classically oriented modern form?

   I would like to work in an aesthetic that is task orientated - leaning a bit towards post modern. For example, I would like to take different people’s physical responses to team building situations and exaggerate them to the extreme. By taking everyday movement and responses, I’m hoping to develop a movement vocabulary that everyone can relate to in some way or another.

2. Are there any particular artists or movements that you are modeling your movement style and/or choreographic process on? For example, are you following William Forsythe and his improvisational concepts?
Through my choreographic process, I believe the style of the piece will develop. I am leaning towards a more task orientated style that will become exaggerated to the point of absolute absurdity. David Gordon’s take on choreographic development has helped me think about how to work with dancers on creating realistic absurdity.

3. Are there other visual, musical or theatrical artists that you’re thinking of modeling your work on?

Some of the infographics in my Pinterest board will help inspire movements as well as costuming ideas. For costumes, I think I’ll be leaning towards everyday wear to give the piece a more casual feel. Since most people do team building activities in their everyday wear, I would want to emulate that in my costuming.
III. Flowering

A. [https://www.pinterest.com/randomness454/senior-project/](https://www.pinterest.com/randomness454/senior-project/)

B. i. What types of music/sound are you working with as you develop your idea?

For this project, I want to work with sounds of workplace to create a background for the piece. I also think an element of elevator music would work really well in order to bring out the weird discomfort of the situation. Another idea for music would be using cartoon sounds used to increase the ridiculousness of the piece.

ii. What choreographic processes, or working style(s) do you feel are suitable for this project? For instance, how will you approach your first day in the studio with your dancers?

In order to develop my dancer’s characters within the piece, I think I would actually do some of the team building activities with them in order to watch their reactions. I would also videotape them to watch after rehearsals for a better observation. These reactions could help me figure out what their character is within the entirety of the piece. I also would create phrase material to teach them and transform depending on their character within the piece.

Reflection Questions:

1. How has this piece changed your ideas on team building?
2. What was your biggest challenge with developing each dancer’s character?
3. How could you approach this piece with a larger cast?

PROPOSAL: PERFORMANCE
WHO: Samantha Nelson
WHEN: Fall 2016