In my analysis course this semester (AU17) I discovered a whole new aspect to the dance world that I was unaware of before coming to OSU. I learned of Laban Movement Analysis, Motif Scores, and much more about the analyzing and notating of movement and its purpose. For our final writing assignment, we were to describe where a practical application of our course concepts may find a place in our futures. Below is my response to the assignment, focusing on how the covered concepts of Body, Space, and Effort analysis of LMA could be used in my teaching.

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Practical Application Assignment

 Laban Movement Analysis, Motif scores, and the associated concepts and symbols that have been covered this semester have given me a new lens to view and learn dance through that I never knew existed. My academic learning of dance outside of movement practices before attending college is more than limited, and I did not know that this aspect of the dance world was even available. I can see where the lessons that I have learned on how to notate movement, learn movement through read notations, and various theories on how to analyze movement have come into play in my current dance training. I can see myself using the theories from this course in my future experiences as a teacher.

 While I am home over the summer and other breaks, I often am asked to teach classes at the studios I used to attend. Typically, I am given freedom to teach any style class I would like, and I love to tie together all of the things that I have picked up in that semester. The students I teach often are from the ages of 9 to 18 and have danced since they were little. Since I do not choreograph on them, I get to teach a “technique” class of a combination of all of my experiences and influences. In teaching these classes, I can see where I can use the Body, Space, and Effort theories as a way of giving the students another way to think about their movement. This could be used in learning class choreography, and better communicating what I want to see, or in giving directions and tasks for improvisation exercises.

 The concepts I feel would be best applied are the theories on Body, Space, and Effort Qualities in Laban Movement Analysis. For Body, it would be useful for me as a teacher to make corrections on students using the concepts of Body Attitude, Initiation, Body Flow, and Body Participation. I can better describe the intentions of my choreography and movement now with a vocabulary to say that the torso is stable as one unit versus moving as multiple parts. I can better express to a student to isolate their right arm, for instance, if I say that it is a sequence of individual movements. For Space, the shapes that I may choreograph and want to get through to the students will be much easier to describe with a vocabulary to use, instead of saying “watch me do it and try to pick up what I’m doing.” I can say that the shape my arm is creating is a one-dimensional line as it spokes across my body, or that my whole body is more three-dimensional in the movement as I twist around. Using the ideas of Extension Degrees would allow me to say not just a “small arm” and have everyone’s look different, but to communicate a reach near the body that students can embody more and internalize. Space Design concepts would allow me to portray to students more exact movements, shapes, and spatial/relational orientations that I would like to work on in class. For Effort, the factors of Space, Weight, Time, and Flow provide me with distinct binaries to describe movement to the class. What I have learned about teaching is that sometimes saying what a movement “is” is not enough, but providing also what it “is not” is very helpful. To say not only that a set of movements are free, but to demonstrate the difference of bound versus free effort would further sink in the idea of what free is. Although the vocabulary of all Body, Space, and Effort ideas would not be in the knowledge of my students, the new level of communication it could provide between my students and I would help class run more efficiently and productively.

 For my class I would create combinations that move across the floor with varying focuses on Effort Qualities. Something I have done in the past in my classes have been teaching movement, and giving tasks to perform it two opposite ways. This could be one way to bring out the difference in qualities in students, by teaching movement and giving the task of doing it once with a bound effort and once with a free effort, or light and strong, or sustained and sudden. I would also give time for improvisation with tasks like specific body initiations and body participation, asking the students to feel that movement can be more or less than their typical level of moving. Many of the ways I would use the concepts of BES theories in my teaching would not be directly planned into the class, but implemented through the corrections I give to the students as I see how they are processing and experiencing my class.

 My teaching and communicating to my students will be greatly improved when I get the chance to apply the Body, Space and Effort theories of Laban Movement Analysis in my classes. Although I may not teach the students the exact vocabulary and explain the theories I have learned, I feel that I have picked up a new understanding to teach from. I hope that this new lens to teach through will provide at least some students with new information and new ways to process their movement that they can take with them in their dance training.