

Dance Criticism and Questions for Written Analysis and Discussion

Criticism (writing or talking about dance) or evaluation of a dance performance is affected by past experience, sensitivity,

involvement, and personal judgment. Criticism involves three processes: description, interpretation, and judgment of a

particular piece being analyzed.

When you write or talk about a dance performance you should consider or analyze four different aspects of the dance.

The choreographic elements: the overall form, use of space, rhythmic and timing factors, use of dynamics, style, music,

and movement invention

The performance elements: the technical skill of the dancers, their projection, commitment, ability to communicate.

The production elements: the costumes, lighting, props, sets, and music

The general impact: the clarity of intent, concept, invention of the dance performance.

When answering the following questions, try to be multi-dimensional in your responses by describing visual and auditory

perceptions and feelings. Make sure you state your reasons for anything you liked or disliked.

1. What emotional reactions did you have? What moved you?

2. What was the most interesting feature of the performance?

3. What in particular do you most remember about the experience?

4. Was there an apparent motive for the dance? Was it dramatic, abstract, a mood piece, etc.?

5. Were there any social, political, or historical elements?

6. What did you notice about the form of the dance?

7. Were the performers skilled technically?

8. How well did they portray their characters or communicate with movement?

9. What kind of music was used?

10. What were your reactions to the technical or production elements, the staging, décor, props, lighting, costumes?

These questions may stimulate great discussions in the classroom, or may allow the students to delve deeper into their performance experience.

Questions for Journal:

1. Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between description, interpretation, and judgement.

2. watch one of the dance films on the class website (look under the tab "more...") write your opinion of the clip, using questions above to justify your response