



Artistry, Posture, and Footwork

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Learning Goals



OBSERVE

Read, Watch, and Research



THINK

Reflect, Debate, Reconcile



COLLABORATE

Connect

PURPOSE

GROWTH

Education and collaboration provides an opportunity to understand, critique, and change the canon of our sport to evaluate accurately for the benefit of the athlete. Pushing outside our intellectual comfort zone is essential for progress.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Understand our own areas for improvement, find tools and resources, and collaborate with individuals who can support us.

TEACHING TOOLS

Synthesize the technical knowledge to be able to present information to others and improve pedagogy.

NOTES on PEDAGOGY

You cannot be an expert at everything. But you CAN continually learn, grow, and engage in understanding art, music, dance, and contemporary gymnastics. It is important to push yourself **out** of your comfort zone. We cannot create positive change without looking outside ourselves. Most importantly, change does not happen fast.

Avoid **Thought Terminating Clichés**

- I just don't know that much about XYZ...
- I just don't like XYZ...
- She just doesn't have the (body/feet/artistry/etc.)...
- That judge/coach doesn't know what they're talking about...
- It's too complex/I can't teach it...

What “IS” ARTISTRY?

Artistry is NOT a superficial aesthetic judgement.

It is not simply the “look” of an athlete, or her routine. It is also not “the other stuff” or the “extra stuff” of a routine that we look at after the fact.

Artistry is an essential component to our sport and should be **actively evaluated** from “salute to salute.” It uses multiple metrics, both subjective and objective and should be used as *relative separation*.

Artistry is linked to “The Three Cs”: **Content, Concept, and Context**



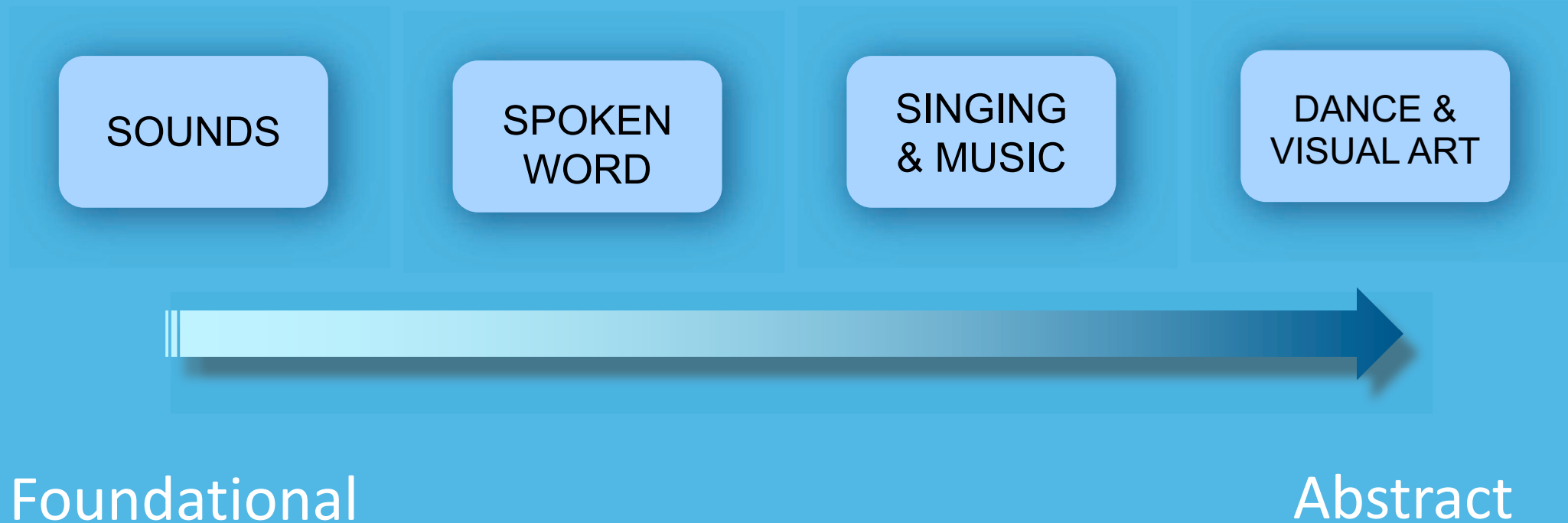
Beyond our goals, dreams, and egos is the desire for connection with another human being.

The ability to connect (emote, abstract thinking, expression, etc.) is **blocked** when our limbic system is activated – fight, flight, freeze.

Coaches: Athletes must feel safe in their environment, abilities, and identities in order to “flip their lid” and overcome the limbic system.

Judges: Reflect on when you have witnessed a routine where an athlete lacked confidence in skills/environment. Did the routine also lack polish, expression, and performance quality? Did you deduct?

Hierarchy of Communication





BIG PICTURE



TECHNIQUE – “HOW”

Measurable, Specific



CHOREOGRAPHY – “WHAT”

Genre, Construction, Vocabulary



PERFORMANCE – “WHY”

Subjective, Visceral



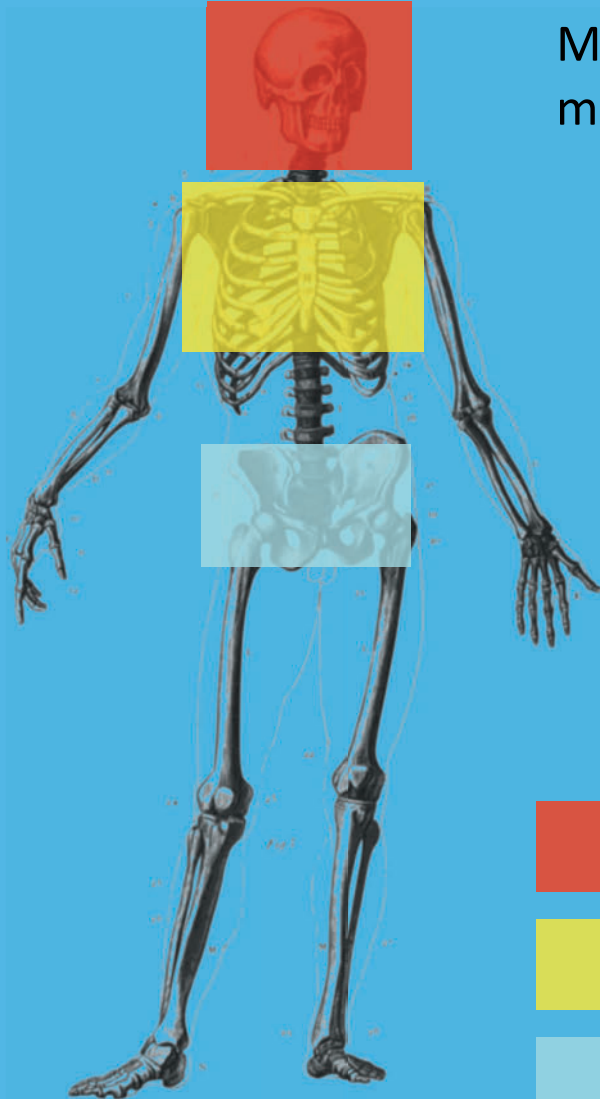
BIG PICTURE



ALL THREE CATEGORIES ARE
CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER.

Example: Poor footwork could be a result of a lack in technique OR it could be an issue with performance quality. Or **BOTH** could contribute.

ARTICULATION ZONES



Major “building blocks” for posture as well as the big picture areas for movement and choreography. Can be divided into sub-sections as needed.

CHOREO

All zones move cohesively but independently.

Articulate in X, Y, and Z space.

POSTUR

E
Goal: Alignment, structural integrity of zones.

Minimal segmentation.
Think of *Jenga*.



CERVICAL: Head, Neck



THORACIC: Clavicle, Shoulders, Ribs, Upper Back



PELVIC: Lower Back, Hips

SEGMENTATION AREAS

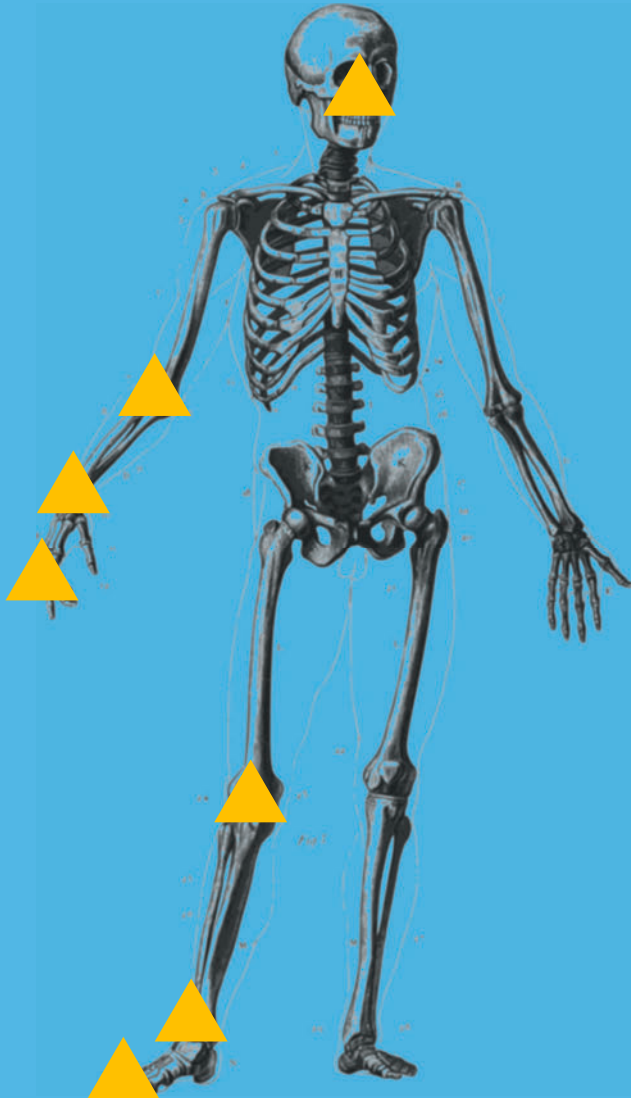
The “branches of the tree” – used to accentuate/enhance movements but can also cause structural/posture issues if left unchecked.

Posture: Often too much emphasis on main zones; these areas forgotten that end up “pulling” the main zones out of alignment or compensation for limited Range of Motion (ROM).

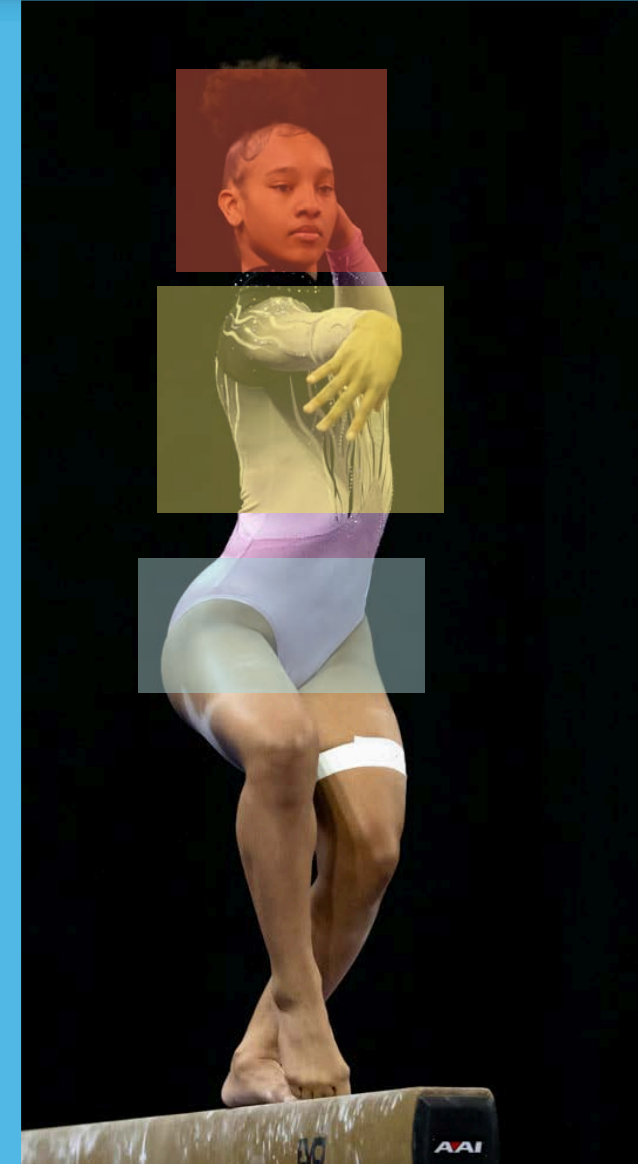
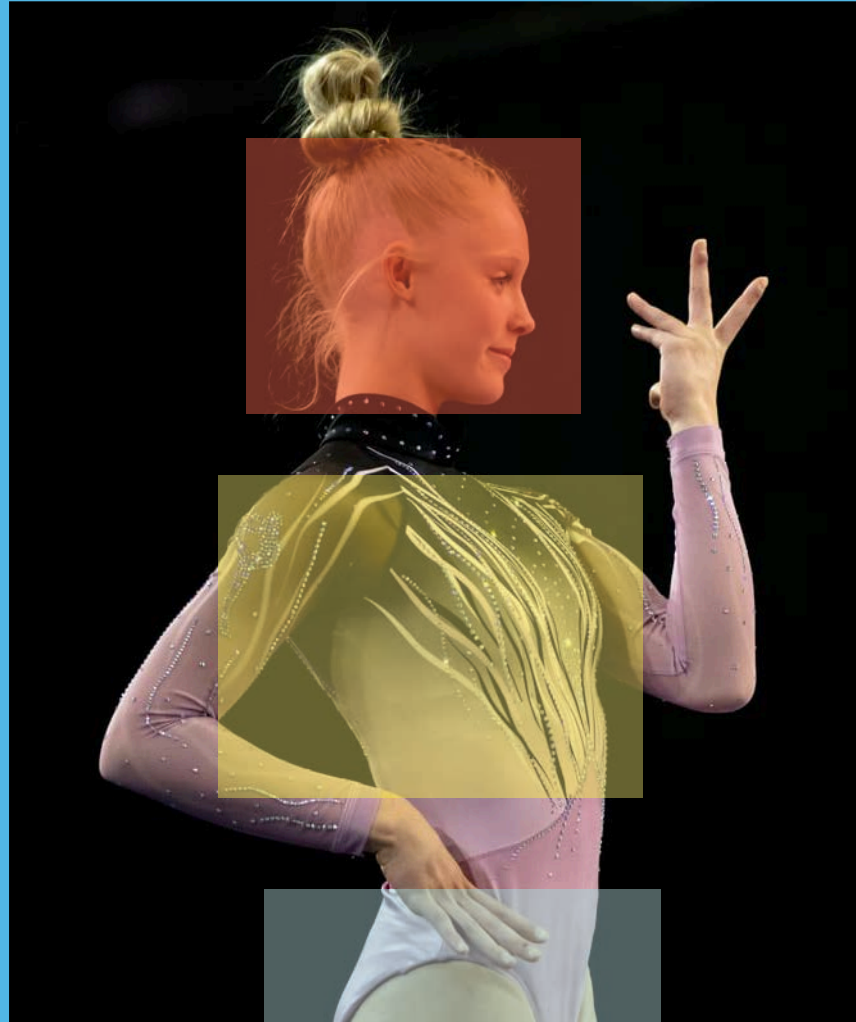
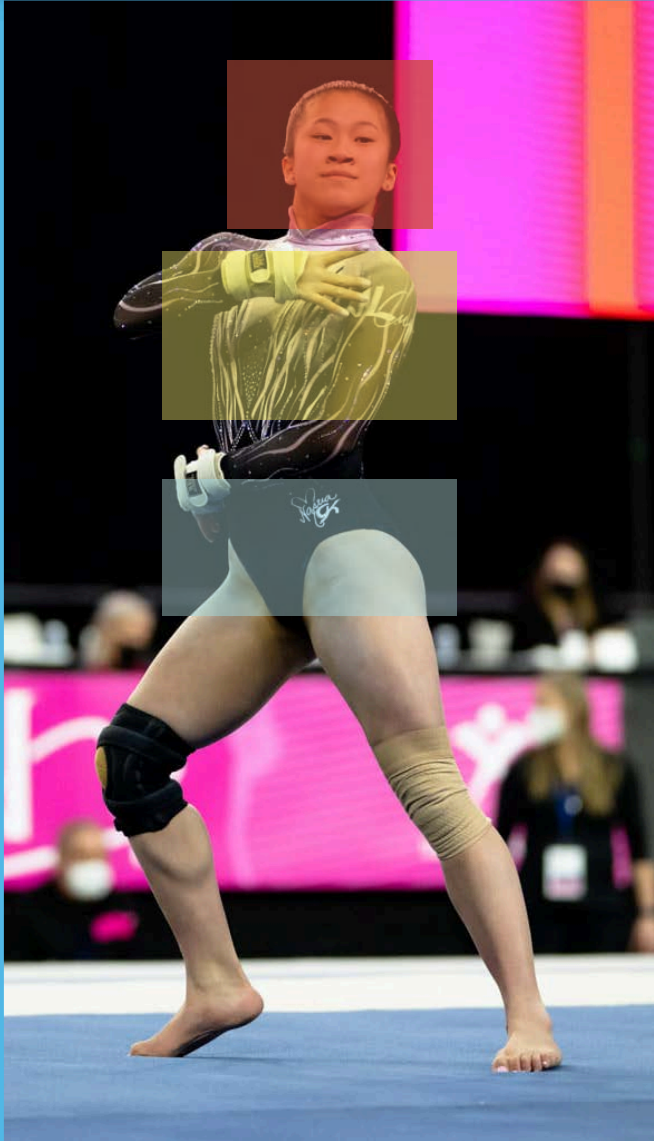
i.e., Bending Knees to compensate for limited hip ROM.

Artistry: These are the juicy details that either make or break a routine. They are also the areas that are neglected and can result in movement looking nonspecific.

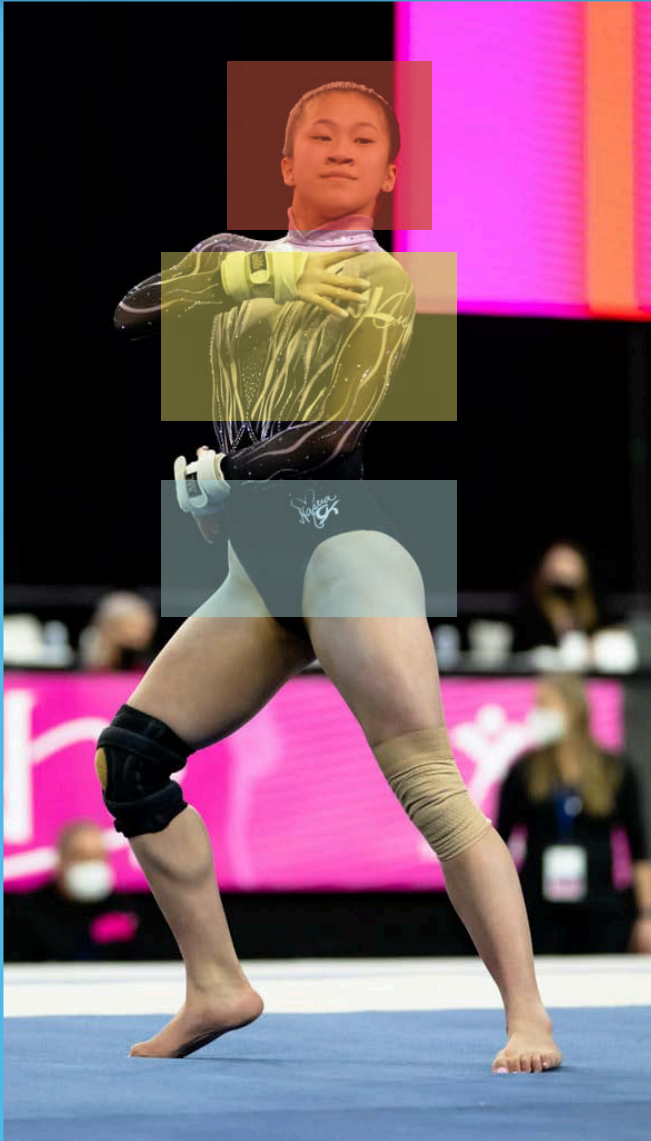
i.e., Failing to choreograph specific foot positions and movements will result in “soggy biscuits.”



STILL IMAGES: NEUTRAL POSTURE



EVALUATION: NEUTRAL POSTURE



1. Structural integrity?
Are the blocks stacked?
2. Is each zone engaged?
engaged = intentional & specific
3. Is posture *aiding* performance?

EVALUATION: NEUTRAL POSTURE



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STILL IMAGES: DYNAMIC POSTURE



Flat



Contracted



Extended

STILL IMAGES: DYNAMIC POSTURE



1. Quality of **articulation**?

articulation = range of motion, spectrum of movement, “using” the space or apparatus.

2. Specific, purposeful, intentional? Variety?

Related to Quality, Choreography, Dynamics, Music, etc. – everything is connected

A female gymnast with dark skin, wearing a bright pink leotard with black sleeves and a pink hair bow, is captured in a handstand position on a blue mat. Her arms are extended upwards, and her legs are split in the air. The background shows a blurred blue stadium seating area.

Footwork

FOOTWORK ≠ AESTHETICS ONLY

Judging and/or coaching footwork to a white, Eurocentric, ballet standard is inequitable and racially biased. It is an **active evaluation**, not a superficial aesthetic judgement.

Footwork embodies:

- Technique (Alignment, Stability, Safety)
- Articulation with apparatus (Engagement)
- Articulation with choreography (Style)
- Relative Biomechanics (Anatomy)

RELEVÉ



French translation: *Lifted, raised up*

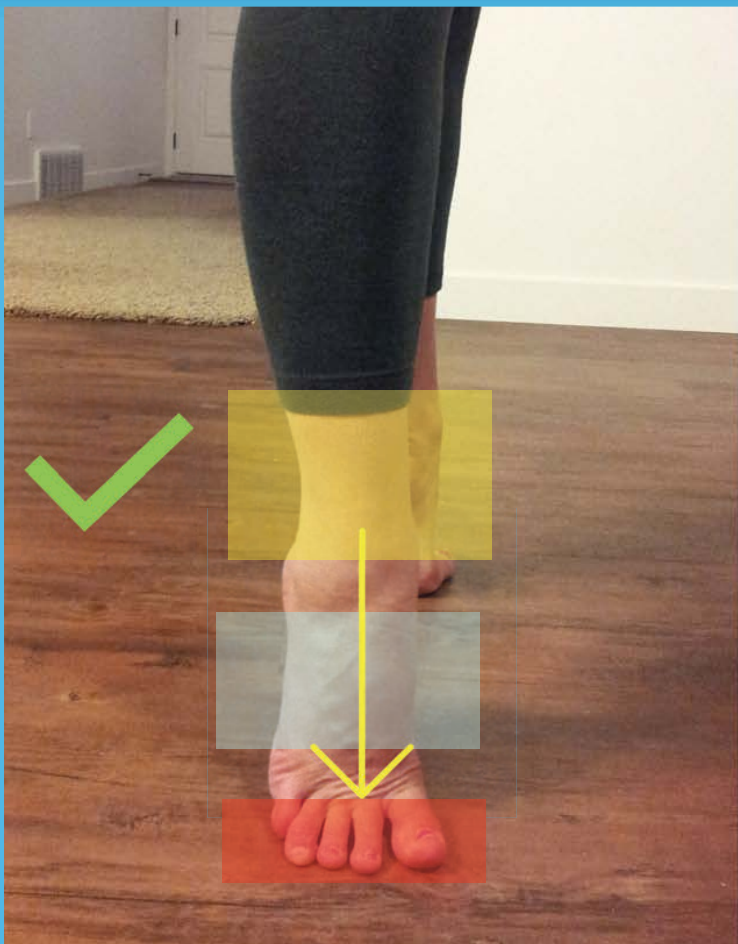
Incorporates one or both feet with full or partial weight on the feet.

Demi-pointe or En Pointe

Demi-pointe: Forced arch, full turns, pivots, choreography

En pointe: Toes curled under, exclusively choreography (no VP done en pointe)

TECHNIQUE & SAFETY



Alignment over middle toe
“Stacked” articulation zones
Healthy for ankles, knees, toes



Excessive weight on MTP joint,
compromised medial ligaments and
tendons that connect to knee



Weight on some of the smallest bones
in the body, compromised lateral side –
anatomically weaker

ARTICULATION



Engagement with the apparatus.



Look for articulation with flat and relevé. BOTH are equally important.

Looking for active engagement with the apparatus (floor, beam)

How is the athlete “working” the apparatus.

Should look and feel “grounded” and stable regardless of movement, relevé, etc.

CHOREOGRAPHY

NON-VP MOVEMENT

Historical canon: Eurocentric, ballet foundation (specifically Cecchetti)

- Exclusive, inequitable. Does not align with contemporary gymnastics or dance.
 - Biomechanics & progressions are different
 - Harmful to cut corners to achieve aesthetic
- Does not negate its value or merit – it is simply not the ONLY metric to base evaluation.



DIFFERENTIATION

GENRE

Ballet (Traditional)	Haka
Ballet (Contemporary)	Bolojo
Jazz (Theatrical)	Sanghyang
Jazz (Lyrical)	Sufi whirling
Graham	Kagura
Horton	Disco
Cunningham	Bolero
Tap	Rumba
West African	Jive
Break	Dougie
Popping	Uprock
Vogue	Krumping
Irish Step	Majorette
Scottish	West Coast Swing
Waltz	Flamenco
Lindy Hop	...and MORE .



1

CONTENT

- Identify
- Inform

2

CONCEPT

- Narrative

3

CONTEXT

- Culture*
- Race
- History

Be cautious about specific styles – incorrectly performing them could be culturally disrespectful (e.g., Bollywood mudras)

GOAL OF CHOREOGRAPHY

Fill Space

X, Y, Z axes (3D Space) and Time (4D Space)

Value Parts are used to *enhance* the choreography, not vice versa.

- Substituting VP in a poorly choreographed routine will still result in a poor routine.

Connect to all 3 viewing zones

- Zone 1: Judges
- Zone 2: Field of Play
- Zone 3: Spectators

ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL

- 1 IDENTIFY “THE THREE Cs”
- 2 APPLY KNOWLEDGE
- 3 EVALUATE

Reflect on where gaps might exist in the ability to move between 1 – 3. Those gaps are opportunities for professional development or expansion.

LANGUAGE MATTERS

Having the proper language to describe the various qualities of movement will help to categorize and differentiate between styles, techniques, and rhythms and ultimately provide more specific and intentional separation when applying deductions.

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTORS

Grounded
Elastic
Angular
Heavy
Staccato
Fragmented

Soft
Dynamic
Curved
Contracted
Stealthy
Powerful

Gooey
Mechanical
Mirrored
Disconnected
Opposed
Isolated

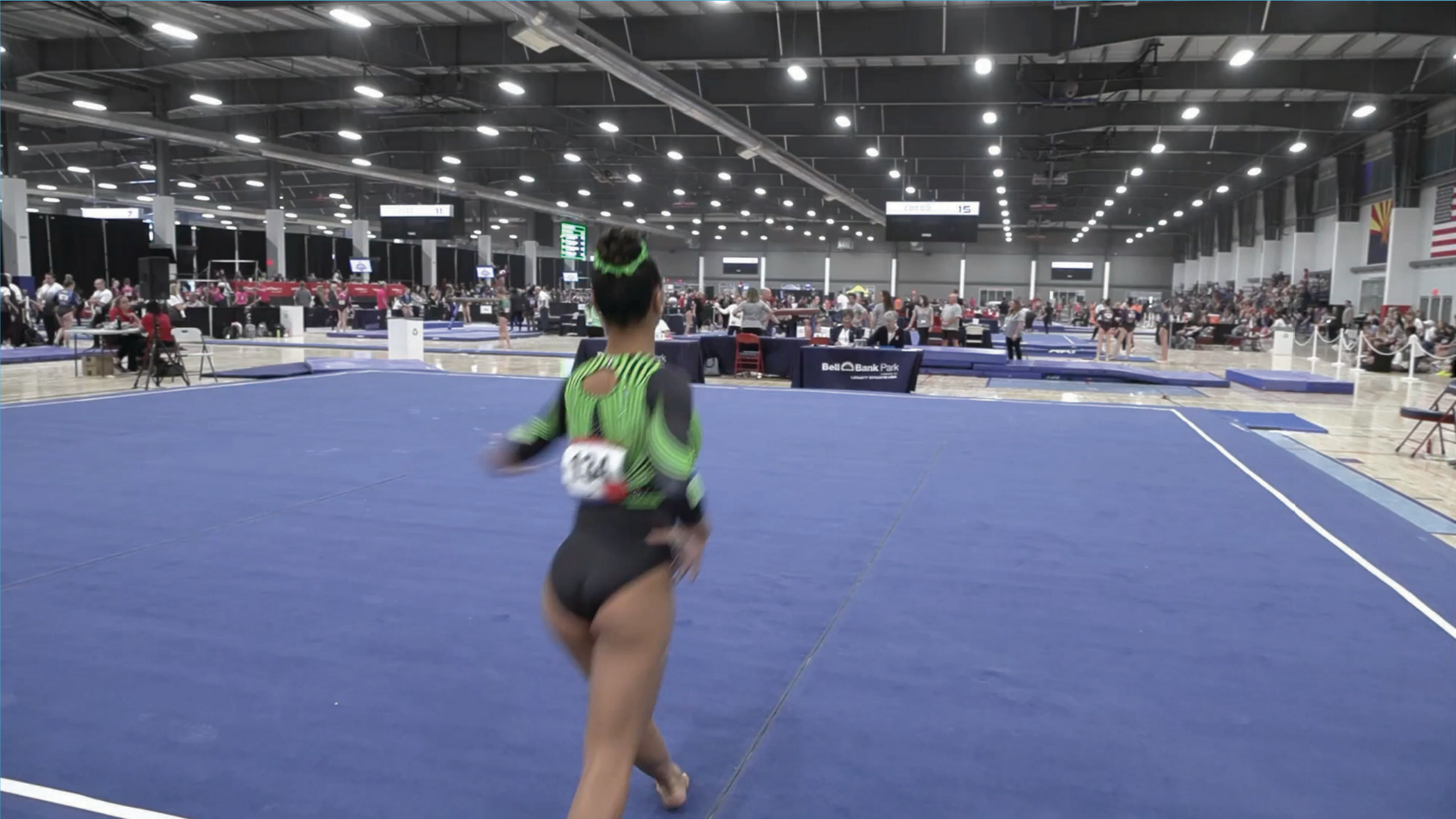


Evaluation

- 1 EXCELLENT [No Ded.]
- 2 GOOD ENOUGH [No Ded.]
- 3 NEEDS WORK [Small → Med.]
- 4 VERY POOR [Med. → Lg.]

FX VIDEO #1

CHOREOGRAPHY	Very Good (empty steps)	0.0 – 0.5
QUALITY OF MOVEMENT	Excellent	0.0
EXPRESSION	Minor Improvements (as a result of dynamics)	0.0 – 0.05
MUSICALITY	Excellent	0.0
VARIETY IN RHYTHM	Excellent	0.0
BODY POSTURE	Minor Improvements (as a result of dynamics)	0.0 – 0.05
FOOTWORK	Very Good	0.0



BB VIDEO

CHOREOGRAPHY	Very Good	0.0
QUALITY OF MOVEMENT	Excellent	0.0
EXPRESSION	Excellent	0.0
VARIETY IN RHYTHM	Excellent	0.0
BODY POSTURE	Good	0.05
FOOTWORK	Excellent	0.0
SURENESS	Excellent	0.0