

Body-Neutral Affirmations

Intro:

It seems difficult to give affirmation in dance without focusing on the body. Still, even in an embodied art form, there is more to dance than just the physical. Only using physical affirmations limits the boundaries of dance, boundaries that we all know are much more life changing than they are limiting. To dance is to experience a physical, mental, emotional, and sometimes spiritual sense of the world. Yes, one way to enjoy dance is by viewing it, but there is more to dance than just movement! Using only physical affirmations can reduce dancers' experience to just their bodies and can feel like it devalues the artistic sense related to dance.

How to:

Practice integrating qualitative assessment of your dancers and/or practice describing your experience viewing dance in this way. Focus on the qualities of their dancing, rather than merely their appearance. Emphasize strong energy rather than physical strength. Highlight attributes about your students or the performers that make them different from each other and celebrate that.

Examples:

Here are some affirmations dancers have shared that stuck with them:

"Your smile is so radiant and contagious!"

"Looking snazzy — You're always so well-dressed!"

"You look so happy! Hope you keep having days like these."

You are such an honest dancer.

I really admire your work ethic.

You have beautiful energy.

You make me laugh.

You're meant to stand out.

What is your favorite non-physical appearance compliment you have received?