Choreographic Devices

I. Forming
The process of developing material and giving it structure (using choreographic devices to fit the chosen choreographic forms). The smallest movement that can be manipulated is a motif: Motivic development, then phrases, then themes.

A. Development
1. Only Motifs are developed
2. Then the developed ideas can be moved into further forming

B. Repetition
1. Repeating motifs, phrases, or entire themes

C. Transposition
1. Making new ideas by putting formed movement on another body part or level, etc.

D. Reiteration
1. Emphasizing a particular part, motif or movement

E. Retrograde
1. Backwards

F. Inversion
1. Upside-down, literally

G. Augmentation (accumulation)
1. Making an idea larger or adding to it

H. Diminution
1. Making an idea smaller, or taking away from it

I. Reordering Sequence
1. Reordering an already formed theme or phrase

J. Counterpoint
1. Sections repeated between groups almost like call and response

K. Grouping
1. Where will the dancers perform this on stage? How many? Shapes?

L. Interpolation (inserting existing motifs, phrases or themes)
II. Methods of Manipulation

This is the process of changing your material in various ways and creating a mood or style in order to help to convey the main idea of the piece. Utilizing these methods is the only way to develop an series of movement ideas to change them into a work of art.

A. Space

1. Level—high, low, medium;
2. Range—large to small continuum
3. Axial vs. locomotive
4. Focus
5. Facing—in the line of direction, opposite, oblique, lateral
6. Location
7. Direction—(performance space), including turning
8. Path—curvilinear, angular
9. Shape—symmetry/asymmetry, torque, positive/negative space, light/dark, structure

B. Time

1. Fast to slow continuum (tempo/duration)
2. Acceleration
3. Deceleration
4. Fragmentation
   a) Rhythmic
   b) Arrhythmic

C. Energy

1. Strong to weak
2. Bound to free
3. Heavy to light
4. Accent
5. Movement Qualities (7)
   a) Sustained
   b) Abrupt
   c) Percussive
   d) Ballistic
III. Choreographic Forms

Knowledge of compositional forms may help you to synthesize your learnt, seen or made up movements. The movements need not—even should not mean anything alone, for meaning comes through context and construction. So the same movement may occur in quite different dances, in quite different constructional context, and mean something different in each case. Content, therefore, must have more than one or two strands. It needs several for a stirring synthesis to take place.

A. The Narrative—the unfolding of a story
B. The Situation—an interrelationship with no unfolding of a story, no solution, and different points of view
C. Dance by Chance—possibilities set, constraints laid down, items of chance decided
D. Simple Binary Form—AB, two themes, simple and short, insufficient material for long development, second them intimated in first
E. Ternary Form—ABA, two contrasting themes, motifs, or subjects, second theme contrasting from first, first repeats
F. Theme and Variation—(themes are varied), theme is danced first, any number of variations are created retaining some aspect of the original
G. Rondo—ABACADA, a development of ternary form, with BCD contrasting for A as well as each other
H. Canon—one theme, danced overlapping