

Dance Lesson In My Pocket:

Grade Three “Coming Winter” Dance Lesson

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Abstract:

This paper is my final project for EDAN 101 and is a dance lesson I have created. Writing this lesson, I have created and described an imaginary grade three class that my lesson is designed for. I describe the demographics of the class, where and when the lesson is to take place, and what my dance lesson is about and how it fits into the Saskatchewan curriculum. Then I explain the steps and the shape of my dance lesson and how it fits into a one hour dance lesson and which of Laban's concepts I focus on. I then reiterate how this lesson fits into the Saskatchewan curriculum and how I meet the grade three outcomes and indicators. I also include a description of how I would evaluate my students and whether or not they demonstrated an understanding of the focus of the lesson plan and Laban's concepts.

Who Are My Students

My dance lesson is designed for approximately 20 (give or take 5) grade three students. About half boys and half girls in this class. My class also has one student with exceptional needs. He is very shy and does not often like to participate in dance activities. Gilbert (1992) has noted that students aged 5-7 learn through imitation, observation, exploration, and creation. Gilbert also points out that they love to move; they enjoy practicing new skills for a short time; they like to have their own way; they need structure; their feelings are easily hurt; they respond well to positive reinforcement, praise and smiles; and they enjoy choreographing and performing for peers.

Where Does This Lesson Takes Place

This dance lesson takes place inside of the school I work at. The school has many rooms but sometimes they are booked by other teachers and I can never be certain which room will be available. Ideally, this lesson would take place in a large open space. If a gymnasium, lunchroom, library, multi purpose room, or an empty classroom is available that is where it would take place. In order to get the class to the space, I would wait for all of the students to arrive and then would instruct the students to line up in single file and wait for them to be quiet. I would assign a leading walker and a rear walker so that no student run ahead, or fall behind, without my knowing. Once the students are lined up and show that they are ready by being quiet we will walk down to the space.

If a one of these large open spaces are not available then the dance lesson could happen inside of a large classroom with *at least* 20 x 15 feet of floor room, with no obstacles in the way. If none of these large spaces are unavailable and I have a smaller space, I would split the

students into groups of three or five (or however many can be fit into the space and move in/have their own personal space -enough room to stretch their arms straight out and rotate in place without touching another student). If the space had a hard floor the students would wear gym shoes, but if we had a carpeted one then the students could dance in bare feet or socks. The room would have to be well lit and have a power outlet where a portable speaker/stereo system could be plugged in to play music.

When Does This Lesson Happen

This dance lesson would take place in the fall or winter months. This lesson could take place at anytime of the day, but in my head, I have planned it for the beginning of the day. The benefits of having it at the beginning of the day would be that the students could start the day off by warming up their bodies and moving around to help them wake up, get some blood flowing and get them ready to learn. Another benefit to having it at the beginning of the day would be that some students in the class who are very high energy (to the point of being disruptive throughout the day) would be able to purge some of that energy from themselves so that they could behave at a lower energy level and focus on other classes without having the need to move around. One possible risk I run by having the lesson at the beginning of the day would be if the lesson does not have adequate cool down time. If the lesson did not have enough cool down time I would run the risk of getting my students super riled up and then I could have trouble calming them down enough to focus on the other subjects that follow the dance lesson.

What My Lesson is About

The grade three curriculum's focus is environment, so this dance lesson focuses on using the environment as stimuli. Since the lesson will be taking place in between the fall and winter

months it focusses on the changing environment. These things include changing temperature, changing of plants (withering, changing colours, falling leaves), falling snow, freezing water, sledding, warm cloths, etc.

Laban's elements of dance that will be focused on are *relationships* -between the dancers with one another and themselves- and *space* -changing levels.

How I Will Teach This Lesson

I teach my lesson in seven different parts. These parts are: set, warm up, exploration, skill development, sequencing/choreography, cool down, and then closing.

For the set and warm up part of my lesson I will welcome all of the students in my classroom and then we will move to the dance space, or prepare our classroom space by moving our tables to the back/sides of the room. Then we will start by moving in curving pathways. While moving in curving pathways I will introduce the students to the concepts of relationships by explaining that relationships mean how we move with other people and around other people. I will then instructing them to move very close to their peers but to never touch them. Then I will tell them to stay far away from their peers so if they start to get too close they will have to change directions and move away.

Then I will introduce them to levels by telling them that were going to try different levels. So, while moving in curving pathways, I would tell them to, move in curving pathways, being as tall as they can up on their tiptoes (I will be moving in curving pathways with them demonstrating). After this, I will tell them to bend over and move at a medium level (I will be doing this with them and will bend my legs slightly and hunch my back over and dip my head a little). Then I will tell them to get on a low level and we will get down and crawl around the

dance space. After this we will begin our second warm up activity by finding our personal space again and then standing up. I will then move to the front of the space and instruct them to all face me at the front of the room.

To finish warming up we will do a group mirroring activity. I will instruct them to stand in a place and put their arms out to the side and do a circle and if they touch another student, they will have to spread out a little more. Then, I will tell the students that they will be mirroring me and have to do whatever movement I do. When I do a movement, I will also speak to describe what the movement is. The movements I will do will be 1) “shake like a leaf” and I will gently wiggle my arms, legs, head, and torso. Then I will say now shake a little fast and I will increase the speed of my shake. I will make sure not to shake to violently so that none of us hurt ourselves. 2) The next movement I will do will be “wither like a flower”. For this movement I will start by opening up my arms and reaching for the sky and then slowly bringing my arms down, and then to my sides, and then I will bend my head down, and then bend my torso down, and then bend my knees and finish in a by laying on the ground. 3) Then I will tell the students to stand up again and we will start to “fall like soft snow”. For this movement we will start by standing up high with our arms up and out to the sides and then we will slowly sway back and forth, softly wiggle our fingers, and slowly lower our hands and arms. Then we will bend over a little until our hands touch the floor, then we will repeat this and do it three of four times. The set and warm up portion of the lesson will take 15 minutes.

Next is the exploration portion of my lesson where we will explore the concepts of relationships and levels. Starting with this activity I will introduce music. The song I will play for this activity is called One More Time by Daft Punk. I chose this song because it is a upbeat

and happy song. The first activity we will do is called *find a friend*. I will tell the students that we will be dancing through space and then I will say “find a friend!” Then the students will find a partner or two close to them and then they will make a shape where someone is high and someone is low. So the music will be playing and then I will stop it and say “ok find a friend or two and make a high and low shape.” I will allow around ten seconds for them to do so and once they have all made a shape then I will say “now dance away” and they will dance away from each other and the music will play again. They will dance around for a while again for about 1 minute or so then I will stop the music and say “ okay now find a friend again and make a shape at a medium level.” If they seem to have trouble, I will say “like this” and bend over to a shape in a medium level. We will do this for about 7 minutes. This activity is from Gilbert’s textbook and is found on page 255.

For the next exploration part of the lesson I will split the students into two groups. The students will stand on opposite sides of the dance space. I will explain that one group will be the leading group and the other will be the following group. I will explain that this activity will be a combination between group shadowing and levels. I will say “so, the leading group is going to slowly move through the space at a high level, standing tall, on their tip toes, or with their hands in the air. And the following group is going to have to follow behind the leading group on a lower level.” After the students do this for a while, I will instruct them that the leading group is now the following group and that the following group are now the leaders. We will switch between these positions 4 times. This activity will take around 7 minutes.

After this activity we will have a short relaxation time of about five minutes. During this time we will sit down and talk about how we felt doing these activities. We will talk about how it

felt to be the leader and how it felt to be the follower. We will also talk about how we feel when we danced by ourselves and then with a friend in the *find a friend* activity. We will also briefly talk about the different levels we danced in. Then we will stand back up and move to skill development.

For the skill development portion of my lesson we will focus on developing our locomotor and nonlocomotor skills through relationships and levels. They will learn this through two activities. The first activity will be keeping a relationship of levels between partners opposite. I will explain to the students to pick a partner and then the students who has a darker shirt on will be the leader first. Then the student who leads will put out there hand and be either high, medium or a low level. If the leader puts their hand high, then the follower will put their hand low, but if the leader moves their hand to the middle then both hands will be in the middle. I will tell the students to move their hands slowly so that their partners can follow their partners easily. The students will do this for about a minute and then they switch partners.

After both partners have had a turn then I will instruct the students to join another group so they will have four or five. I will tell them that once they have their groups to make a line and face me. Then when all the groups are ready, I will randomly pick one student to be the leader first. I will move the leaders so they are standing facing their group and about two feet in front of them. Then I will explain that the students will have to practice keeping the relationship between the leaders hands and their heads the same. So the leader will move their hands back and forth at a high level, a medium level, or a low level. Then after a minute of this another student will have the opportunity to be the leader and this time they will move their hand at a different level. Then after another minute, another student will have the opportunity to be the leader.

The final skill development exercise will focus on maintaining a relationship with the students and a leader in a single file line. I will split the students into three groups and then tell them to get into a single file line. Then I will explain that the student in front is the leader and the other students will follow behind in a line like a snake. The music I will play for this part is called “I like to Move It” the Will.I.Am version from the movie Madagascar because it is more appropriate than the original. I will tell the leader to either step, step, hop; skip; hop; walk on tip toes; or crawl and the other students will do the same. After a minute I will tell the leading student to move to the back of the line and then the next student will be the leader and will move through the space doing one of the locomotor movements. This will be repeated until every student has had an opportunity to be the leader and then I will stop the music and the three groups of students will stop where they are.

Finally comes the creating part of my lesson where the students will be able to freely improvise dance movements in their groups. I will tell all of the students to face each other in their own groups so they are in a circle. The new song for this activity is called “Winter Song” by Sara Bareilles & Ingrid Michaelson. This song has a lower energy level but I think it is appropriate for the winter dance class. I will tell them all to come up with a movement that a shriveling flower would make in the winter and would encourage them to try different levels. I would turn on the music and give them a minute to come up with dance moves. Then I would say “okay freeze, now turn around and look at the other groups.” Then I would count to three then turn the music on and let them share their dance moves for about 30 seconds. Then I would stop the music and say “okay now turn around and face your group members again. Now I want you to

make a dance move like a falling snowflake or a falling leaf.” Then I would turn on the music and give them another minute to come up with a dance move. Then I would stop the music and have them share their dances again on the count of three for 30 seconds. Finally, I would tell them to turn around and then make up a dance move where they move like the cold winter wind and I would give them another minute to create it and then 30 seconds to share it. Then I would stop the music and tell them to all freeze and get ready to do our cool down activity.

For the cool down activity I will be a series of stretches and discussion. We will twist our upper bodies back and forth, and then we bend over and try touch our toes, then sit down and stretch our arms out to the side, then in front of us, then stretch them high above our heads, then make a V with our legs and bend forward, then lay on our tummies then lift up our upper bodies with our arms and push our tummies out and then we will lay on our backs and try stretch and make ourselves as long as we can. We will do each stretch for 10 seconds. After stretching we will sit up and talk about the different relationships and levels we did today. We would talk about how it was to lead and follow, mirror and shadow. Then I will ask them to raise their hands if they can think of a time when we moved at high levels and times when moved at medium and low levels. Then I will ask the students which activities seemed hard and what ones were easy. Finally I will give them a chance to saw what their favourite dance moves were and what they liked about eachothers dance moves. Then we will stand up and get ready for the next class.

How I Will Evaluate My Students

My dance lesson focuses on Saskatchewan curriculum outcome CP3.1 which reads “generate a variety of alternatives and solutions in movement explorations (improvisation) using the environment (e.g., natural, constructed, imagined) as stimuli.” The indicators I used we these:

- a. Generate ideas for stimuli as starting points for dance compositions (e.g., plant growth in science, lines in a poem, music, personal experience, tradition, memory).
- c. Create a wide variety of movements to a given stimuli.

A large part of this assessment and evaluation would come down to the observed participation and also the discussion during the cool down. I would look to see if the students participated and tried to make movements during the creative portion of my lesson. I would look to see if they moved through different levels. I would also watch to see if they maintained the relationships throughout the dance lesson. Using the discussion at the end of the class is another way I would assess how many students are able to identify and point out the different relations we did and when we moved in different levels. I would also evaluate them on their behaviour, this being were they respectful? And were they supportive of their classmates?

Special Considerations For My Lesson

Because one of my students is shy and does not often like to participate in dance activities, I will not force them to dance if they really do not want to. I will, however, encourage them to participate. I would be kind and not give them too much attention or put them on the spot. I would invite them to come and dance with me by holding my hand or dancing beside me. If they are adamant about not participating I would allow them to sit out but I would continue to invite them to join in between activities asking if they were feeling ready yet.

Because grade three students' feelings are easily hurt by their peers and myself, behaviour rules will have to be made clear. The students will be told that absolutely no mean talk, insults or put downs will be allowed. If this happens, I will pull the rule breaker aside and

explain to them that this kind of talk is not allowed and try to get them to empathise by asking them how they would feel if those words were spoken to them. Then I would require that student to apologize. This could be difficult to do in the middle of an activity so if it did happen during an activity, I would instruct the students to start a mirroring activity while I talked to the other student. Another consideration I have is that after the students share their dances, I will allow compliments at the end of the performance where the students will take turns complementing one another.

Resources

Gilbert, A. (1992). *Creative Dance For All Ages: A Conceptual Approach*. Reston, VA.:

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

Saskatchewan Curriculum.

http://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/index.jsp?view=indicators&lang=en&subj=arts_education&level=3