

Lesson 1: Dance as a second language

Sample indicators

Students might:

- perform a movement phrase created through linking shapes (P,C)
- manipulate static shapes by changing their size (C)
- describe the relationship between stimulus and movement (A)
- perform steps and patterns from dances with increasing skill (DA)
- create shapes in response to a stimulus (MO).

Learning experiences

Each student brainstorms “opposites” in the dance journal.

Whole class shares brainstorm ideas. Provide each student with a list of contrasting words (see resources) which they then paste into their dance journals for future reference.

Cardiovascular warm-up:
(see warm-ups in Section C)

Form a circle, pair students as A-B, A-B, etc. The As are given a stimulus card (see resources). They must create a body shape which represents the word on the card. The Bs must think of a contrasting word and create a body shape. The actions of each pair are repeated by all members of the class.

Students each think of a way to maximise their movement into the shape (i.e. to make it as large as possible). Whole class repeats each maximisation.

Students each think of a way to minimise their movement (i.e. to make it as small as possible). Whole class repeats each minimisation.

Students form small groups. Each group selects two pairs of contrasting movements from the circle. As a group, the students incorporate locomotor movement (e.g. a jump, a gallop, and a roll, to form a short movement sequence).

Whole class views the group dances.

- As they are viewing each dance, students use their dance journal to write words that describe the movements.
- Do the movements or shapes reflect the degree of contrast which the words indicate?
- How did the works differ?

Music

Tracks 1, 2 or 3

None

None

None

None

Teaching notes

The introduction of a dance journal is a central idea for this unit.

Can the brainstorm be categorised? Which pairs of words would be particularly useful for exploration in dance? Students could highlight these in their books.

A connection needs to be made between the brainstorm word “opposite” and the notion of contrast not necessarily being an absolute opposite.

Extension

In pairs, student A creates spontaneous monologue while student B improvises the opposite types of movements (e.g. Person A: *I'm really enjoying this bath, the bubbles are so relaxing* Person B: Sharp, fast, vigorous, angular movements.)

In pairs, students create a short, spoken text. The pair develop a movement sequence which implies the opposite to what they are saying. The movement sequence and spoken text are performed in unison.

Pairs combine to make groups of four. Pair A performs a part of its original piece (e.g. the first sentence) and then freezes. Pair B performs a part of its original piece (e.g. the first sentence) and then freezes, and so on. In effect, the audience is watching two performances at once, which are interwoven in space and time.

Elements of dance

Resources

- Word stimulus (suggestions for brainstorm, if needed):
rage–calm, ecstatic–bored, confusion–peace, nervous–confident, disgusted–pleased, joy–sorrow, frantic–organised, reject–embrace, lazy–energetic, remorse–revenge, conspicuous–inconspicuous, united–divided, powerful–weak, sneaky–obvious, brave–scared, beautiful–ugly, tired–alert, tense–relaxed, isolated–surrounded, proud–ashamed, relaxed–restless, scatter–collect, climb–drop, expand–contract, float–sink, push–pull, thrust–sustain.
- Words for stimulus cards:
lonely, angry, exhausted, guilty, brave, greedy, disgusted, hurt, outraged, calm, stunned, cheerful.
- Music: tracks 1, 2 or 3
- Dance journals

Literacy considerations

Talking and listening: During reflection, students discuss the works in terms of their observations, providing literary descriptions and their personal responses to the works.

Reading: Read through the list of opposite words provided as stimulus. Students ask questions to clarify the meaning of words they may be unsure of.

Writing: Students write lists of opposites in their journals and record their observations while viewing the dances of others. As a follow-up activity, students may write descriptions, comparing the two works.

Language

opposite
contrast
difference
static
shape
movement
represent
maximise
minimise

(plus vocabulary used as stimulus)

Curriculum links

English K-6 Syllabus, Board of Studies, 1998

- Scope and sequence of grammar; Text level: cohesion, p. 75

English K-6 Modules, Board of Studies, 1998

- Description, Stage 3 Writing, p. 363

Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus, Board of Studies, 2000

- Drama, Improvisation, p. 96.

Action

- Perform locomotor movements to link shapes.
- Create and perform non-locomotor movements based on a theme of contrast.

Space

- Manipulate the size of static shapes.

Time

Dynamics

Relationships

- Perform opposing movements.

Structure

- Link shapes and movement ideas.

Assessment

Were the students able to:

- recall and perform a sequence of movements?
- create static shapes to portray an emotion?
- maximise and minimise their movements?
- compare the way in which words have been used to make movement?