

Dance activities – unit 3

ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children perform dances, focusing on creating, adapting and linking a range of dance actions. These are inspired by a variety of subjects, including some traditional, social and/or historical dances. They work with a partner and in small groups.

In dance as a whole, children think about how to use movement to explore and communicate ideas and issues, and their own feelings and thoughts. As they work, they develop an awareness of the historical and cultural origins of different dances.

WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit lays the foundations for 'Dance activities – unit 4', in which children will concentrate on dance inspired by characters and narrative. They will continue to work on their own, with a partner and in small groups, developing their ability to create, perform and appreciate dance.

In other physical education units in year 3, children concentrate on working with a partner and linking actions (gymnastics); working as a group to solve problems (outdoor and adventurous activities); and linking actions and relay (athletics). Other year 3 units focus on themes such as pathways, patterns and shapes.

VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use a range of words and phrases, such as:

- words to describe actions, dynamics, space and relationships
- words to describe group formations, *eg square, circle, line*
- partner, copy, follow, lead
- unison, canon, repeat
- structure
- motif
- dance phrase
- improvisation, explore

RESOURCES

- a cassette or CD player
- a tape recorder to record sounds
- percussion instruments
- a variety of stimuli, *eg words, stories, poems, pictures, objects, videos, music*

EXPECTATIONS

When carrying out the type of activities and tasks in this unit

most children will be able to:

improvise freely, translating ideas from a stimulus into movement; create dance phrases that communicate ideas; share and create dance phrases with a partner and in a small group; repeat, remember and perform these phrases in a dance; use dynamic, rhythmic and expressive qualities clearly and with control; understand the importance of warming up and cooling down; recognise and talk about the movements used and the expressive qualities of dance; suggest improvements to their own and other people's dances

some children will not have made so much progress. They will be able to:

demonstrate some basic skills; perform movements with control; try to show a sense of dynamics and expressive qualities when dancing; contribute basic ideas to the structure of a dance; come up with basic responses to a stimulus; show some understanding of why they need to warm up and cool down; use simple words to describe and interpret dance

some children will have progressed further. They will be able to:

use a wide range of movements when improvising; choose appropriate movements to express the idea, mood and feeling of a dance; take the lead when creating dances with a partner or in a group; show a greater understanding of how to compose dance phrases; show greater fluency and control in their movements; interpret rhythm well, using a range of musical accompaniments; interpret and express their thoughts clearly when talking about dance; make appropriate suggestions about how work could be improved

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

ACQUIRING AND DEVELOPING SKILLS

- to improvise freely on their own and with a partner, translating ideas from a stimulus into movement
- Ask the children to talk about a stimulus. Teach them to use language to describe it, *eg a machine might be jerky, circling, pushing, pulling, shaking*. Help them to explore these action words through different movements.
- Teach them to change the speed, strength and flow of their movements, and the way they use space, *eg cogs and pistons might move with jerky body parts; fast turning actions from high to low; slow, smooth continuous circling actions*. Encourage them to use their whole body and individual parts of the body.
- Teach them to work with a partner and in small groups to explore different relationships, *eg pushing and pulling actions going over, under and around each other; circling actions meeting and parting*.

- show an imaginative response to different stimuli through their use of language and choice of movement
- incorporate different qualities and dynamics into their movement
- explore and develop new actions while working with a partner or a small group

SELECTING AND APPLYING SKILLS, TACTICS AND COMPOSITIONAL IDEAS

- to create and link dance phrases using a simple dance structure or motif
- to perform dances with an awareness of rhythmic, dynamic and expressive qualities, on their own, with a partner and in small groups
- Ask the children to create dance phrases from exploratory tasks, *eg show a machine breaking down by exploding, turning, landing and rolling*. Help them to achieve the quality of movement needed by demonstrating with your voice, *eg BANG! S-t-r-e-t-c-h*. Help them to create longer phrases and link them together. Teach them to explore movements with a partner, working in unison and in canon. Encourage them to be aware of their partner when moving in and through space.
- Ask the children to create phrases that combine different actions and qualities, *eg slowly travelling backwards staying low; exploding into the air, collapsing, rolling, getting slower and slower then stopping*.
- Help them to remember the order of dance phrases by talking them through the sequence.
- Ask them to use clear starting and finishing positions.
- Teach them to listen to the accompaniment. Listen to them talking about their ideas for dances.

- link actions to make dance phrases, working with a partner and in a small group
- perform short dances with expression, showing an awareness of others when moving
- describe what makes a good dance phrase

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF FITNESS AND HEALTH

- to keep up activity over a period of time and know they need to warm up and cool down for dance
- Teach the children some dance activities that make them feel warmer, mobilise the joints and stretch the body, *eg skipping and swing actions; lifting, lowering, circling and shaking joints; holding stretches*.
- Teach the children some stretches they can use to warm up and cool down. Ask them why it is important to warm up and cool down.

- in simple language, explain why they need to warm up and cool down
- sustain their effort in their dances

EVALUATING AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

- to describe and evaluate some of the compositional features of dances performed with a partner and in a group
- to talk about how they might improve their dances
- Ask the children to practise and refine dance phrases. Encourage them to suggest how dances with a partner could be improved.
- Help the children to use a range of descriptive language to describe dance, *eg for a fast-rising action – exploding, leaping, shooting, soaring, bursting; for a slow-rising action – climbing, growing, expanding, spreading, floating*. Teach them how to recognise and describe canon and unison.

- use a range of expressive language to describe dance
- recognise unison and canon and suggest improvements

- In every lesson, most of the children's learning should take place through physical activity relating to the core tasks.**
- Most lessons should start with short warm-up activities that help the children remember what they did in the last lesson and prepare them for what they will learn next. Most lessons should end with cool-down activities.
- Give the children different stimuli, including some from different times and places, as a starting point for structuring simple dances that include partner and group work.
- Give the children enough time to practise and develop their movements and ideas. They should also have opportunities to talk about, explore and play with dance and movement ideas.
- Make sure the children have an opportunity to watch and talk about examples of professional dance, *eg 'Wild Child' (Ludus Dance Company), 'Seven Brides for Seven Brothers' (the Hollywood musical)*.
- Give the children specific guidance on what to do and how to do it, as well as general feedback and praise. Make sure you give them information that they can use to improve the quality of their performance.
- The children could put together a database of visual images, sounds and actions that they could link to the music. They could also use a tape recorder to record different sounds, then store, repeat and reorganise these to accompany their dance phrases.

Health and safety

- Are the children wearing footwear and clothing that are safe and help their learning?
- Is the space safe and clear enough to work in?
- Are the children aware of others in the class when they are moving around?
- Have all the children warmed up and cooled down properly?

PRIOR LEARNING

It is helpful if children have:

- used a range of stimuli, including world music
- structured short dance phrases and dances on their own and with a partner
- used a range of descriptive language for dance
- explored moods, ideas and feelings through body actions
- talked to each other about dance and listened to each other describing dance

CORE TASK

Following are core tasks the children could be asked to carry out.

Task 1

Create and perform a dance, either on your own, with a partner or in a small group, on the idea of ‘machines’. Make sure you use changes in speed, strength, level, direction and space in your dance. Include the following three sections in your dance:

- section 1 – cogs and pistons. Circling, jerky, pulling, pushing, shaking, large, small, whole body actions, individual body parts, quick and sudden, slow and controlled, speeding up, slowing down, on the spot, travelling, on your own, with a partner
- section 2 – working together. Copying and following each other, moving in opposite directions, side by side, facing each other, moving in unison, in canon, meeting and parting, going over, under and round a partner
- section 3 – breakdown. Out of control, spinning, jumping, racing, slowing and stopping

Adaptations and variations on the task

To make the task easier:

- use ideas the children are familiar with
- make the dance phrases shorter and keep actions simple
- use simple accompaniment
- ask the children to work on their own
- use small spaces and similar heights and directions

To make the task harder:

- use more abstract stimuli
- make the dance phrases longer and actions more complicated
- use more complex rhythms, including changes of speed
- work in small groups
- use larger spaces and different heights and directions

Other stimuli or dance ideas could include Pat-a-cake Polka; meeting and greeting; Creation stories, *eg Pan Gu, Hope on a Rope*; volcanoes; and folk dances using partner and group formations.

Make sure the children have experience of working on their own, with a partner and in a small group.

EXTENSION AND ENRICHMENT

Out of lessons, at home and in the community, children could be encouraged to:

- take part in dance and drama in after-school clubs and youth dance groups. This will give them an opportunity to practise, develop and perform the skills they learn in school
- create dances in their own social groups, to perform at home or in their community
- take part in exercise groups with their parents or guardians
- take part in, and watch, ice-dancing, gymnastic floor sequences, local dance clubs and theatre groups in their own community

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

This unit could be linked to:

- art and design – considering spatial perspective
- mathematics – exploring number, shape and space
- language – discussing stimuli and performances
- science – developing awareness of human body parts
- PSHE – developing interpersonal relationships

