

Dance

Body

Body includes the action of all parts of the body.

Body

Energy

Space

Time

In dance work it is important to encourage the use of many parts of the body in three main ways:

- non-locomotor movements;
- locomotor movements;
- a variety of shapes.

Non-locomotor movements are done in one place, and include such actions as stretching, bending, twisting, rising, falling, circling, swaying, swinging, turning, pushing, and pulling. Locomotor movements involve travelling in space, and include such actions as walking, running, jogging, leaping, jumping, galloping, and sliding. The shapes that a body can take on are varied, and include such shapes as curved, angular, and twisted. Dance activities, including the warm-up, should encourage a variety of head-to-toe movements. Here are some activities to get you started.

INTRODUCTION TO BODY MOVEMENT—Play music and talk students through gentle, repetitive, isolated movements that begin with the head and work down to the toes. A progression might include the head, shoulders, arms, wrists, fingers, ribcage, hips, legs, knees, ankles, and toes. Do each movement for a count of 8 beats (e.g., eight shoulder shrugs, eight arm circles, etc.). Initial warm-ups like these can be non-locomotor, and work well when a student or teacher leader is at the front, or in a circle, modelling.

EXPLORATION OF BODY PARTS—Ask the students to move to a steady percussion beat or instrumental piece of music using a particular body part. For example, you might suggest that students try every possible way to: move their shoulders; move just their arms; move only their toes, etc.

VISUALIZATION ACTIVITY—Guide students through a visualization with or without music. Tell the students to imagine that they have a paintbrush attached to various parts of their bodies, such as to

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CURRICULUM INSERT

a finger, a toe, a knee, the forehead, etc. Explain that they will be painting their name in large letters across a huge wall with the paintbrush as you suggest different body parts.

SHAPE FREEZE—Use a tambourine or drum to count students through walking in space for 8 beats and then freezing for 8 beats. Once they can do this with no talking, have them freeze in a particular shape (e.g., twisted shape) for 8 beats. Repeat the walking for 8 beats and then ask the students to freeze in a new kind of shape (e.g., angular, round, balanced, worried, scared, bold, etc.). Students can also change the way they move. For example, they could slide for 8 beats and then freeze in a wide shape for 8 beats.

BODYSTORMING—Encourage students to “bodystorm” as often as possible. This means giving them the opportunity to try out different ways to use their body to communicate something. For example:

- Invite students to communicate the idea of freedom using just their hands (or their whole body). Ask them what shape or movement would be effective.
- Challenge students to devise three interesting twisted body shapes to demonstrate different emotions (e.g., angry, puzzled, etc.).



Teaching Tips

- Consider using these tracks from the music CD enclosed in this resource: *Rain Forest*; *Deception*; *Dragon Fly*.
- Always start a dance session with a warm-up and stress the importance of warming up the body and the mind. This provides a natural opportunity to make the transition into movement and dance exploration.
- Make sure that students understand that dance is not just about foot movement. Use a variety of music from different cultures or a simple tambourine or drum beat to encourage experimentation with various body parts. A good warm-up should wake up all body parts and remind students to open up to possibilities.
- The use of instrumental music rather than music with words encourages students to focus on their body movement and personal interpretations rather than on the messages in song lyrics.

Assessment Tips

- Are students focused on body movement and not on talking? In other words, do they speak with their bodies instead of their voices?
- Do students experiment with many possible ways to move different body parts (bodystorming)?
- Are students able to follow warm-up suggestions?
- Do students show leadership ability in being able to lead a warm-up that includes a range of body parts?
- Do students move their bodies on the spot (non-locomotor) as well as in space (locomotor)?
- Can students move to a steady 8-beat count?

Dance

Space

Space refers to the area in which the body moves.

Body

Energy

Space

Time

Dance includes movement within two types of space. Personal space is your own space and general space is a group's shared space. Body levels (high, medium, low), sizes, directions, and pathways (direct or indirect) can occupy space. The following exercises will encourage experimentation with varying types of movement in a space.

PERSONAL SPACE EXPERIMENTATION—Ask students to determine their personal space (kinesphere) by standing on the spot and identifying with arms outstretched in all possible directions the invisible bubble they are in. Call out high, medium, low, thin, wide, tall, and small to encourage experimentation with levels, sizes, and variation in movement within their personal space. The use of slow-moving music helps students focus on possibilities. Encourage the students to bend body parts and reach with hips, shoulders, knees, etc. without travelling outside of their personal space.

GENERAL SPACE EXPLORATION—Have students move "silently" through the general space in a room without touching anyone or anything in the room. Encourage a pathway that includes all areas of the space in the room. Ask the students to try moving slowly, quickly, directly, and indirectly in the space. Clap or drum a beat and call out to indicate a change in direction or a change of height (high, medium, low). A caution — it is wise to insist that students avoid talking so their focus remains on the movement.

SYMBOL-GENERATED MOVEMENT—Make cards like the ones shown on the opposite page. The cards should show simple symbols (e.g., \\\\\\\\\\\) that suggest pathways or qualities of movement. Hold the cards up one at a time and ask the students to travel across the general space in these ways. Have the students respond to the same symbols in their personal space. Later, groups may wish to create a group dance based on a set of symbol cards. Students can decide the order of the movements and the use of general and/or personal space.

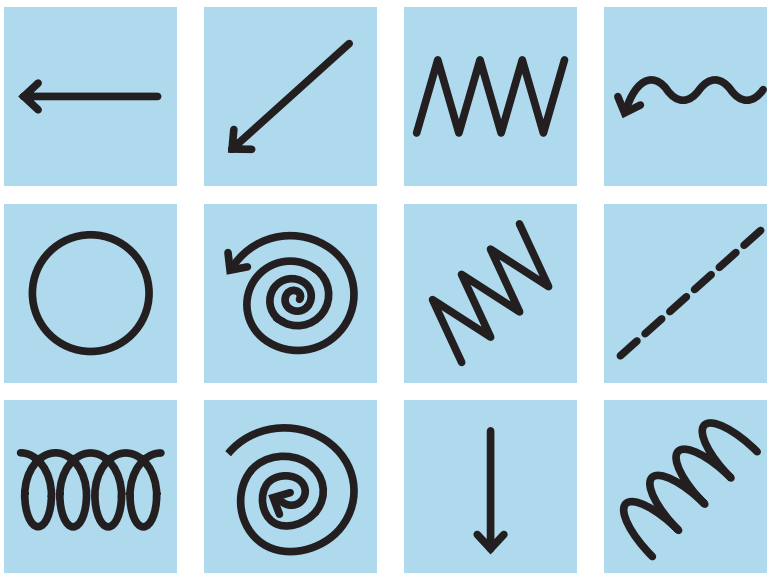


CURRICULUM INSERT

MOVEMENT WITH SHAPE VARIATIONS—Pair students, and designate one as “A” and the other as “B.” Instruct “A” to travel an interesting pathway in the room and then freeze in an interesting shape. Tell “B” to travel in a new way to the place where “A” is frozen and make a shape that somehow relates to the shape made by “A” but at a different level. Shapes can touch but it is not mandatory. Next, tell “B” to hold the shape, while “A” travels to a new space and takes a new shape. Finally, tell “B” to travel to the spot occupied by “A” and respond with another shape at a different level. Repeat this activity with the other partner going first, as well as with new movement and shape variations. For example, “A” could communicate a shape that shows fear and “B” could join this shape with a shape that communicates hope.

BODY SHAPE CHAINS—Line the students up in groups of four or five, standing one behind the other and facing the same direction. Ask the students at the back of each line to travel to the front of their line and take a shape. Instruct the next students at the back of each line to come to the front of their line and make a shape at a different level than the student behind them. Have students repeat moving in this way and taking new shapes so that each line moves across a space in a chain of varying levels of body shapes. Encourage the students to hold their shape until they are at the back of the line again waiting to move back to the front to take a new shape. Try this activity to a live or recorded percussion beat to encourage travelling in an interesting way.

Sample symbol cards



Teaching Tips

- Consider using these tracks from the music CD enclosed in this resource: *Rain Forest; Grief.*
- It is helpful to post and discuss the following vocabulary: personal space (kinesphere), general space, pathway, indirect movement, direct movement.
- Space is sometimes at a premium in schools and moving in space will be defined by the available space in rooms or hallways. Experimenting with personal space can be done even in small spaces. Sometimes pathways will be defined by the furniture and/or obstacles in a room.
- Use any of the suggested activities to generate movement that relates to a theme or concept being studied or explored. Some examples include: war and peace; earth, water, fire, and air; principles of flight.

Assessment Tips

- Can students identify and describe how space is used in their own or in others' dance work?
- Do students demonstrate the ability to sustain concentration in dance work?
- Can students work co-operatively in a group to create a dance sequence based on visual symbols?
- Are students able to use a variety of pathways and movements in both general and personal space?
- Do students apply their knowledge of space and other elements in their own creative work?