Chapter 21

Developmental Gymnastics

# Summary

This chapter provides progressive learning experiences for the combination- and application-level mover in developmental gymnastics. It includes the movement framework, which joins actions (balances, rolls, step-like movements, flight) and movement concepts (body, space, effort, relationship) in order to vary skills and design sequences. The chapter also includes the learning goal blueprint (table 21.2) and the summative assessment rubric (table 21.3) for developmental gymnastics; best practices for teaching gymnastics; designing instruction for developmental gymnastics; guidelines addressing each of the physical education content standards and outcomes specific to grade 3-5 learners; and combination and application task progressions.

# Key Objectives

* Describing the difference between traditional and developmental gymnastics
* Describing best practices in teaching gymnastics
* Discussing the relationship between stage of motor development, level of movement skill learning, and standards-based instruction in designing gymnastics learning experiences for children in grades 3 through 5
* Implementing combination and application task progressions for developmental gymnastics

# Big Ideas

* Developmental gymnastics combines the gymnastics actions of balance, rolling, step-like actions, and flight with the movement concepts of body, space, effort, and relationship in a progression of developmentally appropriate learning experiences in an environment that provides equipment and conditions scaled to fit the performers.
* Best practices for teaching gymnastics involve using progressions, based on student need, from the consistent (K-2), combination, and application levels of learning; maximizing participation and including all children in safe and effective practice; and promoting prosocial interactions.
* The movement framework for developmental gymnastics is used to determine how actions and concepts can be combined in order to vary skills and design sequences.
* The design of instruction for developmental gymnastics uses concepts from motor development, motor skill learning, the movement framework, and standards-based instruction.

# Part 1: Movement Framework for Developmental Gymnastics

In order to understand the relationship between gymnastics actions and movement concepts, study the information presented in table 21.1 about blending static balance with movement concepts. In addition, refer to the examples presented in chapter 21.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Static balance | | | | |
| Body | Space | Relationship with equipment | Relationship with others | Effort |
| Support parts  Nonsupport parts  Shape | Level | On  Under  Beside | Noncontact  Counterbalance  Countertension  Support (beside,  face to face,  back and front,  matching,  mirroring) | Smooth sequences that connect balances with other balances, rolls, flight, and step-like actions  Combining skills using different  speeds |

**Table 21.1** Blending Static Balance With Movement Concepts

Design charts that blend gymnastics action—rolling, flight, or both—with movement concepts.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gymnastics action: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | | | |
| Body | Space | Relationship with equipment | Relationship with others | Effort |
|  |  |  |  |  |

# Part 2: Best Practices

## Activity A

Review the criteria presented in chapter 21 about best practices for teaching gymnastics: skill development, safe and effective practice conditions, maximizing participation and inclusion, and prosocial interactions. Then read the description of continuous rolls presented here and answer the following prompts.

**Continuous rolls:** Students line up in groups of six, one behind the other, at the head of a gymnastics panel mat that is 20 feet (6 m) long. Students are instructed to perform consecutive forward rolls down the length of the mat. The next person in line begins when the preceding person is 10 feet (3 m) down the mat.

**Questions:**

* Describe how the example does not reflect best practices for teaching gymnastics.
* Design an activity and environment that do reflect best practices for the goal of combining rolls in a sequence.
* Tell how your design fulfills each of the best-practice areas.

## Activity B

Design a best-practices checklist for use in double-checking gymnastics task and learning environments that you design or observe.

# Part 3: Planning Developmental Gymnastics Experiences for Grades 3 Through 5

When planning developmental gymnastics experiences for grades 3 through 5, you must think about the prerequisite stability and locomotor skills; you must also align content and instruction and identify management strategies for including all children in a safe movement environment.

## Activity A

Use the following format to design the combination-level enrichment activity for Combining Balances from pages 497-498 using low beams, benches, and boxes.

**National physical education standards 1 and 2**

**Level: combination**

**Essential content:** combining skills and performing variations by using gymnastics actions and movement concepts

**Teaching styles:** reproduction (inclusion)

**Combining balances in relationship to equipment -** onto, on top of, beside

**Prerequisite skills:** stability chapter 16 (adding one balance to another)

**Description of task:**

**Practice:** variable when creating balance combinations, constant when practicing chosen balance combinations

**Environment**:

**Closed-skill cues (combining balances):**

* Hold balances for three seconds (keep center of balance over base of support).
* Keep core tight.
* Connect balances with shift of weight or body position that moves or keeps center of balance over new base.
* Use smooth, fluid connections with no hesitation or loss of balance.

**Feedback:**

**Assessment (standard 1):**

## Activity B

Use the following format to design a combination-level instructional task focused on combining rolls and balances in relationship with a partner.

**National physical education standards 1 and 2**

**Level:** combination

**Essential content:** combining skills and performing variations by using gymnastics actions and movement concepts

**Teaching style:** divergent

**Combining balances and rolls:**

**Prerequisite skills:**

**Task:**

* Description:
* Sample challenges:

**Practice:** variable when practicing combinations, constant when practicing chosen combinations

**Environment:**

**Closed-skill cues (combining skills):**

**Feedback:**

**Assessment (standards 1 and 2):**

# Part 4: Self-Check Questions for Planning Developmental Gymnastics Activities From Part 3

Use the following questions to determine whether you addressed each part of the plan appropriately for each activity in part 3.

**National physical education standards 1 and 2**

**Prerequisite skills:** Are foundational skills identified?

**Teaching styles:**

* Practice: Do the learning experiences include multiple repetitions of skills?
* Inclusion: Do the learning experiences include multiple repetitions of skills and provide choices at different levels of ability (e.g., three to five distances, directions, and heights)?
* Divergent: Do the learning experiences include prompts to create variety in how skills are performed or combined?

**Practice:** Does the practice use a varied format when varying skills? Does the practice use a constant format when practicing selected skills?

**Task:** Is the task developmentally appropriate. Does it come from the skill progression? Do the responsibilities reflect the teaching style and types of practice? Is the placement of students described?

**Environment:** How is the environment performer-scaled and set up for maximum participation and safety?

**Skill cues:** Do the cues represent the goal of the task? Are the cues related to the movement cues that are used to perform or combine skills?

**Feedback:** Is the feedback descriptive about the skill cues? Is the feedback prescriptive about how to change movements?

**Assessment**

**Standard 1:** Does the assessment use an observation instrument of cues for skills or skill combinations that are addressed in the plan?

**Standard 2:** Does the assessment include a way for students to describe how they varied and combined skills?

# Review Questions

1. What is the difference between traditional and developmental gymnastics?
2. What is the relationship between the gymnastics actions and movement concepts? How do teachers use this relationship to design learning experiences?
3. Describe best practices for teaching gymnastics and provide examples.
4. What are the relationships between closed skills, types of practice, and types of feedback when designing instruction for developmental gymnastics?
5. Discuss the differences between task progressions for the combination level and the application level for each of the gymnastics actions.
6. What types of assessment are used to evaluate performance for standard 1?
7. What types of assessment are used to evaluate knowledge for standard 2?
8. How might one modify and assess gymnastics tasks to address standard 3?
9. How might one modify and assess gymnastics tasks to address standard 4?