

LESSON 2: VERBS

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

Working with others: Solves problems and thinks critically in physical activity and/or dance settings, both as an individual and in groups. (S4.H4.L1)

Dance & rhythms: Demonstrates competency in a form of dance by choreographing a dance or by giving a performance. (S1.H2.L2)

Embedded Outcomes

Movement concepts, principles & knowledge: Applies the terminology associated with exercise and participation in selected individual-performance activities, dance, net/wall games, target games, aquatics and/or outdoor pursuits appropriately. (S2.H1.L1)

Self-expression & enjoyment: Identifies the uniqueness of creative dance as a means of self-expression. (S5.H3.L2)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- use choreographic tools to improvise movement with specific assignments given.
- think critically and problem-solve about how to move while incorporating specific directions.

Equipment and Materials

- Large open dance space
- Stereo
- 2 bowls, hats, cookie jars, or other object to pull items out of
- Small pieces of paper with verbs written on them in one bowl (e.g., wiggle, burrow, hop, writhe, skip, schlep, roll, slither, jump, slide, undulate, shuffle, gallop, crawl, scooch, convulse, zip, mope, shiver, swim, jog, swivel, and so on)
- Small pieces of paper with directions written on them in the other bowl (up, down, backward, sideways, diagonally, around, reverse, forward, between, above, below, right, left, inside, outside, and so on)
- Enough pieces of paper in each bowl to match the number of students in your class (you can repeat words)
- Background music of instructor's choice: use different songs with different moods for each exercise—it helps to switch the tempo back and forth as their dancing changes and they stretch themselves choreographically (e.g., “Broken America” by Dispatch, “Russian Roulette” by the Pop Heroes, “Let’s Get Loud” by JLo, “Jar of Hearts” by Christina Perri, “Limbo” by Daddy Yankee, “The Chain” by Ingrid Michaelson, “Hips Don’t Lie” by Shakira, “Let’s Go” by Calvin Harris)
- Video recording device

Introduction

Now that you’ve had some time to reflect, how did you feel about creating a movement map in our previous class? It was really a first step in developing your choreography tools. Today, we will continue our choreography module, using those tools to work on improvisation. Improvisation is a form of movement that is not choreographed. It is movement that you spontaneously create in the moment.

Instructional Task: Discussion of Improvisation

■ PRACTICE TASK

Discuss what improvisation is and what it means to improvise movement. Discuss the ideas of moving before thinking about it and using their entire bodies.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S2.H1.L1 Ask students to list and review choreographic tools from the previous lesson: travel through the space, level change, tempo change, touch, mirroring, opposition, stillness, fall and recovery, floor work, and so on.

After the discussion, tell students that they must use travel and interaction in each of their assignments today. Wherever they can use other tools, they should do so.

Then have students take a note from each of the two bowls, read it, return it, and spread out in the space. Tell them they may move only in the direction that they chose, using the verb that they chose. Start the music.

Refinements

- There will be many questions. Do not allow them. Tell students to solve any problems, and when the music starts, they must begin. Giggling is totally acceptable, but talking is not.
- Sometimes turning out the lights helps students drop their insecurities, even though they can see.

Extensions

- When the music stops, yell “freeze.” The students will have a laugh, and then you can have them start again with new words. Students can line up and come pick new verbs, or they can find a person next to them and exchange verbs. You can do both of these options during the course of the class.
- Change the music and watch how their movement changes. Continue repeating this exercise until 15 minutes are left in class.
- Feel free to record students’ performances toward the end of class when they have shed their insecurities and are really getting into the assignment. Show them their work and laugh together.

Student Choices/Differentiation

This improvisation exercise is completely free, and students choose what movement they will do with just a bit of direction.

What to Look For

- Students are following directions.
- If some students are feeling insecure and not really moving as they could be, stop the class and let students know that everyone is feeling silly about what they are doing. It is out of everyone’s comfort zone, but it is the assignment of the day. Embrace the silly and know that everyone in the class is feeling the same way. We are all doing it together to create something new and wonderful.
- Students grow during this task from not having any idea how to execute the verbs that they chose, then they deciding to solve that problem and do the best that they can.

Instructional Task: Discussion

■ PRACTICE TASK

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S5.H3.L2 Discuss the guiding questions as a class. Prompt students to think about dance as a means of self-expression.

Guiding questions for students:

- What did you learn today about improvisation?
- How did this exercise make you feel, and did that feeling change during the course of the class?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- What did you learn about our class?
- How could you use this activity in your own choreography?
- Can you give examples of how creative dance allows you to express yourself?

Student Choices/Differentiation

Students can write down their ideas or share with a partner.

What to Look For

- Students are responding in a thoughtful manner.
- Students are able to identify qualities that make dance unique in terms of self-expression.

Formal and Informal Assessments

Video recording of movement

Closure

- Today, we did our first improvisation exercise. It required spontaneous creative movement, and you did a great job with guided improvisation today.
- Improvisation can be performed or used as a great tool to help create choreography.
- In our next class, we will work on the choreographic tool of mirroring.
- Be sure to turn in your reflections from our previous class.

Reflection

- How did students respond to this lesson?
- Do I need to work harder to move them out of their comfort zones?
- Do students feel safe enough in my class to improvise movement?
- Is there anything I need to do to make this environment safer?
- Review the video recording of the dance to assess progress.

Homework

- View the dance performance on the school's physical education website. Analyze the movement for choreographic tools. List the tools that you see and turn in the list in our next class.
- Read the paper on dancers and nutrition posted on the school's physical education website before next class.

Resources

Gilbert, A.G. & SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators. (2015). *Creative dance for all ages*. 2nd ed. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Reeve, J. (2011). *Dance improvisations: Warm-ups, games and choreographic tasks*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

National Core Arts Standards: www.nationalartsstandards.org

National Dance Educators Organization: www.ndeo.org