

Elk Grove Unified School District
Visual and Performing Arts Resources
Dance

Grade 4: Lesson 1

Title: Creative Body Movement

Standards Addressed

Artistic Perception

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Dance

- 1.1 Demonstrate mental concentration and physical control in performing dance skills.
- 1.2 Demonstrate the ability to use smooth transitions when connecting one movement phrase to another.
- 1.3 Demonstrate increased range and use of space, time, and force/energy concepts (e.g., pulse/accents, melt/collapse, or weak/strong).

Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Dance

- 2.2 Improvise extended movement phrases.
- 2.5 Convey a range of feelings through shape/postures and movements when performing for peers.
- 2.6 Perform improvised movement and dance studies with focus and expression.
- 2.7 Demonstrate additional partner and group skills (e.g., imitating, leading/following, mirroring, calling/responding, and echoing).

Connections, Relationships, Applications

Connecting and Applying What is Learned in Dance to Learning in Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

- 5.3 Demonstrate recognition of personal space and respect for the personal space of others.

Time: 25-35 minutes

Floor Plan: A regular classroom setting, with desks cleared for plenty of general space, or outside with clearly marked boundaries.

Materials Needed:

- Relaxing, ethereal music (e.g., Enya)
- Vocabulary poster or cards (use vocabulary words listed in lesson)

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students use different postures in their dances in order to add variety to their creations. Other foci are: giving students an appreciation for their backs and how to take care of them, working as a partner and in a group to create movements using different postures, and practice controlling movement on command.

Background:

It is assumed that the students have prior knowledge regarding self and general space, levels of space (high, middle, and low), and movement transition.

Key Questions:

Can the students isolate their back area and find creative ways to move and use their backs?

Can the students use transition and balance as they move and freeze in self and general space?

Was there adequate exploration using the three back shapes, different levels, axial, and locomotor movements?

Vocabulary:

- * *Self-space*—the area used by a dancer in which he/she does not travel. The dancer moves in that space only, without touching others.
- * *Locomotor*—a dance movement that progresses across the dance area.
- * *Axial*—a dance movement that remains fixed in self-space.
- * *Tailor sit*—sitting with legs crossed (“criss-cross applesauce”).
- * *Butterfly stretch*—stretching the inner thigh muscles in the tailor sitting position, with the soles of the feet together, and bringing the knees toward the floor.
- * *Straddle position*—seated position with straight legs extended out so as to stretch the inner thighs, preferably with toes alternately pointed and flexed.
- * *Improvisation*—free form or unplanned movement, often with a given set of parameters, such as round back, beginning, freeze, steps, arched back, ending, contrast, level, straight back, posture, stretch, shape, etc.

<u>Steps of the Lesson</u>	<u>Thoughts for the Teacher</u>
<p>1 Set up purpose/goals While sitting in a circle, tell the students they will begin with warm-up movements and that they should pay careful attention to what their backs are doing during these warm-ups. Ask the student to be prepared to tell what they think the lesson will be about at the end of the warm-up.</p>	<p>How are you making your purpose clear to the students? Give them focus, asking them to predict what the lesson will be about.</p>
<p>2 Engage students After warm-ups, have the students demonstrate and discuss the shapes their backs were able to make.</p>	<p>How can I effectively get the students interested in the content of the lesson? Did the students find at least three shapes their back could make? Could they demonstrate and discuss them?</p>
<p>3 Learning Sequence a) Warm-up. b) Individual/partner exploration. c) Group creation.</p>	<p>What are the BIG idea(s) of your presentation? How will students understand/experience the material that you present? In dance, body parts can be isolated and controlled for transition and balance.</p>
<p>4 Assessment Embedded into the lesson/teacher observation and student performance. A discussion for closure will also assess the student understanding.</p>	<p>How will you allow your students to deepen their understanding of content presented? (Reflect, revise, retell, refine, practice) Reflect on the lesson through discussion and practice of necessary skills. Extend if there is time, or on another day. Can the students apply the ideas of isolation to appropriate stretching and taking care of your body?</p>

Actual Lesson Sequence

1. *Today we are going to have an opportunity to explore our backs and how we can use them in dance. First, we are going to warm-up, and as we do, I want you to pay careful attention to what your backs are doing during these warm-ups. Be prepared to tell me what you have noticed and how we will use it in dance. Review vocabulary.*
2. *Have the students sit in tailor sit position. O.K., we are ready to warm-up. While you are in a tailor sit, focus on keeping a straight back. Look left, right, up, now down. Good, let's repeat. Now, round your back and try to touch the floor with your nose. Keep your body in control; try not to use your hands. Now move back to a straight back position. Repeat a couple of times, praise body control and exaggerated back positions (round, straight). Now move to a straddle position. Look up and back (arch your back), sticking your tummy out, shoulders back, and chin up. Feel the stretch in your inner thighs. Lean forward with your hands on the floor, straighten your back, and reach forward. Sit back up and turn left, round your back, and try to touch your nose to your knee. Repeat to the right. Sit in a butterfly position, soles of feet together, straight back, and stretch knees to the floor. Now try to round your back. Now try to arch your back (look up and back, shoulders back, chin up).*

3. Discuss the importance of sit-ups for strong abdominal muscles to protect the back from injury. Do 10-15 bent knee sit-ups/crunches. Have the students roll onto their tummies. Have them push up slowly with their hands to try to touch their head with their toes (arched back).
4. *Great! Now let's discuss what you noticed about the shapes we made with our backs.* Listen for straight, arch, and round. *What objects in real life show these shapes with their backs as well?* Examples: round back—older person; straight back—praying mantis; arched back—sway backed horse. *Why are our backs so important?* Good posture for health, strength, and appearance. *How can we use them in dance?* Help show character, add variety to dance movements.
5. *Let's explore in self-space now. Show me a round backed shape that you can make in self-space. Good, now show me a different one.* Repeat as necessary and praise creativity. Look for variety in levels and balancing (one foot planted, shape is shown with the rest of the body), prompt as necessary. *Can you keep this shape as you move in little steps around the room?*
6. Repeat with straight and arched back shapes. *Which shape was the easiest to be in and hold? Why? Which was the most difficult? Why? Great job, now let's work with partners and explore more ways of using our backs in dance.*
7. Partner students up and briefly review expectations of working with a partner. *Partners, show me a straight backed shape. Now hold that shape and walk together. Change your back shape and now walk together. Change your back shape and now crawl together. Change your back shape and now skip together.* As the students are doing this activity, call attention to creative solutions and ensembles.
8. *Now go back to self-space with your partner. We are going to move into a shape using one of our back shapes and then freeze. The only rules are that one body part has to be planted on the floor and one body part has to be connected or touching your partner.* Guide the students through a couple of straight backed shapes, then round and arched backed shapes. Have pairs match up with another pair and repeat.
9. Creation: in groups of four, tell the student they will make a dance and perform it for the rest of the class. Write on the board and explain that each group's dance must have:
 - * a planned beginning using arched-backed shapes.
 - * axial or locomotor movement for the middle section (8 counts). This can be improvised to go with the music. It does not need to be synchronized together.
 - * a planned ending using a round-back shape.
 Clarify as needed. Give the groups 5-10 minutes to create their dances. Circulate and offer help. If possible, perform to ethereal music (e.g., Enya) and discuss each group's performance.

Closure:

Bring the class back to the listening area or classroom seats. Begin a discussion by asking questions about the dances, the shapes made, which ones were interesting. Ask questions about the parts that were planned to be done together and the parts that were improvised. Which parts were the hardest to do? Which were the easiest? Why? Link to health: back care, importance of having strong abdominal muscles.

Evaluation:

Did the dancers demonstrate body awareness, movement communication and response, and motor efficiency?

Was there adequate exploration using the three back shapes, different levels, and axial and locomotor movements?

Did the dancers demonstrate the use of the three postures correctly, safely, and creatively?

Did the students observing group dances recall interesting shapes and tell why those shapes stood out as interesting? Were observers able to point out contrasts in group work, both planned and unplanned? Was criticism constructive?

Other Considerations:

- Special Needs: Adjust the lesson according to the student's abilities.