

LUNA DANCE INSTITUTE

~~PERFECT~~ IMPERFECT LESSONS

Lesson #2: Directional Scales (*Context*)

This 60-minute lesson, as seen in the video, was designed for 8-11 year olds with some dance experience. It can easily be modified for different age groups, varied by length, depending on your teaching situation. See Extensions below.

Lesson Goal: Students will gain an embodied understanding of how their body can move through space.

Learning objectives: 1.) Discover new movement vocabulary using Laban's directional scales to limit spatial dimensions. 2.) Create a solo demonstrating understanding of 3 directional scales.

Elements of dance: Body Moving through Space modified with Energy and Time.

Materials: drum, music, dry erase markers and whiteboard

Limiting movement & taking a break: Laban's Directional Scales explore three axes: vertical, horizontal, and sagittal. When dancers are exploring an individual Scale, they are limiting their movement to just that Scale or axis. For example, as they rise/fall in the vertical axis, they cannot advance/retreat or spread/enclose. This can get tiring. Offer the option of "shaking it off" and walking to a new spot, or new facing, then starting again, or inserting a ten second free dance in between each Scale exploration. Dancers can explore advancing/retreating and spreading/enclosing at different levels – sitting, kneeling, standing – but they must stay at that level, and not change until they "shake it off".

Combining two Scales: Each Scale Pair offers four movement options. For example, Rise/Fall with Advance/Retreat includes rising-advancing, falling-retreating, rising-retreating, falling- advancing. Remind dancers that they can combine two Scales in many ways: dancing them simultaneously or alternating; or splitting their body so that part is dancing one Scale, another part dancing another Scale.

Visuals & images: Consider writing the Scales one at a time on a whiteboard or poster, in different colors, with arrows or other geometric forms as dancers explore them. When Scales are paired during the Improvisation, also provide a visual. For example, you could draw rectangles to illustrate the vertical plane, combining rising/falling with spreading/enclosing, but no advancing/retreating. Because we move in many directions and planes simultaneously, it can be challenging to extract just one Scale at a time. Creating an imaginary scenario, like those listed in the lesson, can help dancers limit their movement.

Setting up the performance: During Composition, clarify with your dancers where the audience will be sitting, and where the performance space is so that they can practice with appropriate facing. During Performance, remind the audience of their role as observers and to clap at the end. Remind performers to hold their final shapes until all dancers are finished.

Connections: Because classrooms have limited space, they are a great place to practice limited movement. Explore rising/falling behind desks, advancing/retreating in the aisles, or spreading/enclosing in line. Create transition dances from lines to desks that include all three Scales.

Extensions: Spatial concepts related to Directional Scales can be used as modifiers (high/low, forwards/backwards, wide/narrow) with 3-7 year olds. While not able to limit their movement to a single scale, they will enjoy exploring different ways to rise/fall, advance/retreat, widen/narrow. For 8-11 year olds still new to dance, consider breaking this lesson into three, exploring just one scale per lesson. Middle and high school students can do this lesson as is.

All these ideas can be found in *Body, Mind & Spirit in Action*, 2nd ed. ©2015 by Patricia Reedy.

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Lesson #2: Directional Scales (*Curricular Flow*)

Warm-up 5 minutes	Breathe in different directions. With hands on chest, let breath assist in moving ribcage: <i>bulging/hollowing, lengthening/shortening, widening/narrowing</i> . Exaggerate it, and see how breath can initiate movement of whole body or different body parts.
Exploration 20 minutes	Exploring the scales one at a time. <u>Rising & falling:</u> You are in your own elevator shaft and can only change level. Modify with: ENERGY (melt, crumble, drop down, be pulled up/down (and resist) burst, build, stretch up); BODY (whole body, body halves, body parts, multiple body parts simultaneously (possibly in opposite directions)); TIME (tempo, rhythmical pattern, acceleration/deceleration); SPACE: you can only rise & fall, but alter how far. <u>Advancing & retreating:</u> You are in a narrow hallway, and can only move forwards and backwards. Modify with: ENERGY: reach, spoke, poke, push & press, pull, be pushed, punch, glide, dab. Consider intention – sneak, with hesitancy, chase or be chased, attract/repel, travel through different imaginary substances, travel towards or away from something. BODY/TIME: as above in rising/falling. MOVEMENT: locomotors, axials. SPACE: distance. <u>Spreading & enclosing:</u> You are stuck between 2 slices of bread, like the filling of a sandwich. Exploring your sideways space, spread your body wide or narrow it. Modify with: ENERGY: as in advancing/retreating. BODY/TIME: as in rising/falling.
Improvisation 15 minutes	2 directional scales at once. Scale pairs: • Rise/fall AND advance/retreat • Rise/fall AND expand/contract • Advance/retreat AND expand/contract
Composition 8 minutes	Make a solo dance using all 3 scales. • Choose 1 to be your main scale, happening most of the time • Choose 1 to be your support scale, happening just a little • Choose 1 to be your accent scale, happening only once
Performance 5 minutes	Dancers perform twice , the second time grouped by what they chose for their main scale.
Response & Reflection 5 minutes	Some potential questions: • What scale was the most challenging? How did you include it in your dance? • Was there something similar in feeling about the dances with rise/fall as their main scale? What about advance/retreat or spread/enclose? • What new kinds of movements did you discover while you were dancing? Did those get included in your final piece?
Closing 2 minutes	Final group dance across the floor.