

LUNA DANCE INSTITUTE

~~PERFECT~~ IMPERFECT LESSONS

Lesson #4: High and Low (*Context*)

This 30-minute lesson, as seen in the video, was designed for 3-5 year olds in an early education inclusion classroom, with children in special education and general education learning together. In this class, all children were supported by the participation of their classroom teacher and aide. This lesson can easily be modified for different ages, varied by length, depending on your teaching situation. See Extensions below.

Lesson goal: Students will expand their range of locomotors and axial movements when creating and performing dance

Learning objectives: Discover new movement possibilities when exploring locomotors and level.

Elements of dance: Space and locomotors modified by Energy.

Materials: drum, music

Using the Brain Dance in multiple ways: You can use the Brain Dance patterns to warm-up axially or in locomotion, or in transition moments to calm building energy. The core/distal, tactile, and breath patterns work well in supporting children in recalibrating.

Integrating performance and response throughout: Young children love to be seen and to share their ideas. Instead of always considering them to be interruptions, how can you incorporate their exclamations of “Look at me!” and “I have an idea!” into your lesson as ongoing and emergent performance and response opportunities? Their sharing indicates their excitement, and you can extend on their ideas through new movement prompts for everyone to try.

Composition with young children: Very young children are exploring, improvising, composing, performing and responding all at the same time. Because they live in the “now”, a separate composition section in which they’re asked to remember movements and sequences is not appropriate for them. Instead, their class more authentically flows in an explore-show-explore-show pattern.

Across the floor set-up: All new structures take time to introduce and organize. In early childhood, across the floor dancing can be supported with concrete, physical markers so that children can dance from chairs to tables, for example, or from one teacher to another. They can practice self-regulation by stopping their bodies before they crash into these markers. You can make it a game, and illustrate the challenge by demonstrating your expectations.

Connections: Dancing high and low connects to early math concepts of length (long and short), and young children can play dancing high like a long-legged flamingo. What has longer legs? A giraffe! Can you dance even higher like a giraffe? They can explore gradation in relation to animals or objects familiar to them.

Extensions: Exploring level, and transitioning from one level to the next, is fun for all ages. This age particularly loves the challenge of dancing high, higher, even higher, highest! Children aged 5 and up enjoy exploring slow melts and stretches, along with fast drops and bursts, and 8-9 year olds can play with more nuanced level changes like crumble and build. This age can also begin to explore middle level, and dancing with some body parts higher or lower than others. Tweens and teens can create dances that play with the full range of level and level changes, creating dynamic accents that communicate meaning.

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

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Lesson #4: High and Low (*Curricular Flow*)

Opening ritual 3 minutes	Hello song & name game with drum
Warm-up 5 minutes	Brain Dance with nursery rhymes: breath, tactile, core/distal, head/tail, upper/lower, body sides, cross-lateral, vestibular.
Exploration 7 minutes	Freeze Dance: high and low axial and locomotor movements. Low spinning, rolling, jumping. High jumping, tiptoes, runs. Bursting from low to high. Running and sliding from high to low. Running and jumping even higher. Modify with some direction and with student ideas. Other possibilities: low crawling, slithering, scooting. High spinning, hopping. Freeze in a low shape, with one high foot. Freeze in a low shape with one high elbow. Freeze in a low shape with your belly up high. Freeze in a high shape with one finger down low. Observe what a child and call out what you see. Choose one verb and modify it lots of different ways, for example: slide big, slide small, slide and fall, slide and turn as you fall, slide and fall in slow motion, slide and roll.
Improvisation into Performance 5 minutes	Surprise dances in general space. Running then ____ (Dancer's choice! Surprise me!).
Exploration 2 5 minutes	Across the floor • Running and stopping • Running and melting from high to low • Running and sliding low • Running and exploding/jumping high • Running and incorporating student ideas
Performance 2 3 minutes	Across the floor dances, any way they want many times
Closing ritual 2 minutes	Final responses and goodbye song