

'Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.'

Assessment Reform Group 2002

Assessment for learning (AFL) is an ongoing process that helps pupils make good progress and achieve to the best of their capabilities. Good assessment for learning involves the continuous processes of planning, teaching, assessing and reviewing to inform teachers and pupils about their improvement, progress and achievement.

Dance lessons have always provided an environment for informal assessment for learning and can be used as a model for other subjects. Learners need to take responsibility for their own learning as far as possible, to understand what they need to do to improve and to be comfortable within a classroom climate that is supportive and allows the recognition of the achievements of all. AFL is formative in helping children identify how they can improve and summative in helping the teacher make judgements as to what level children are performing at the end of a module.

When planning for dance you need to:

- ▶ know about the pupils' prior learning, experience and achievement
- ▶ assess what they already know, understand and can do
- ▶ build upon their knowledge in order for them to improve and make progress
- ▶ provide learning activities that are at an appropriate level
- ▶ ensure that pupils know exactly what they are aiming for and how their work is going to be assessed – 'Today we are going to learn about ... and I will be looking for ...'
- ▶ know how you are going to give effective feedback.



How to incorporate assessing for learning opportunities into every lesson

- ▶ Encourage pupils to identify success criteria through questioning.
- ▶ Differentiate between performance and composition skills when observing pupils' dances.
- ▶ Use a mixture of self assessment, peer assessment and teacher assessment.
- ▶ Create a comfortable climate for peer assessment by encouraging the use of positive language.
- ▶ Ensure that children understand dance-specific language when commenting on their own and others' work.

- ▶ Think about *how* the children are learning as well as *what* they are learning.
- ▶ Be specific in giving targets for improvement and explaining what children need to do in order to improve.

Now try the following dance ideas (all with notes on assessment).

These have been supplied by:

Year 1 The Seaside by Sarah Waller, Worcestershire Arts Education

Year 6 Astronomy by Penny Perrett, Dance Adviser, Worcestershire Arts Education and Joe Lindley, Burlish Park Primary School, Stourport

Key Stage 2 Dreams adrift on the waves by Judy Evans Chair NDTA and editor Primary Subjects for dance

Developing a Dance idea

Year 1

The Seaside – Shells

Introductory activity

Bring in a selection of shells for the children to touch and feel. Talk about the shapes and textures of the shells and find words to describe them with the children – for example, bumpy, spiral, smooth, curved, holes – and make a resource bank of words (suggested music – Melt by Leftfield).

Dance ideas

Children explore how to develop movement ideas (ACTIONS) in response to words – finding ways of making three shapes that respond to 'bumpy, smooth, curved'.

They explore how they could make each shape begin to move and travel. Can they make their body move in a really bumpy way around the room? Can they make their body really curvy as they move around the space?

► **AfL teacher assessment:** Use examples and make suggestions to extend children's range of ideas and move them away from the obvious response to the task, identify children who are moving in interesting ways for the others to see.

Thinking about how the sea would make the shells move at the bottom of the sea, or when being pushed and rolled onto the beach, ask the children to think about how they might move if the sea was very stormy. Can they still be 'bumpy' and 'curvy' but move in unusual pathways, using different levels, and speeds? Can they roll and move with each wave? Can they move in and around all the other shells in the stormy sea without bumping into one another?

► **AfL peer assessment:** Can the children watch each other and identify another child in the class who has made a really unusual shape? Can they describe the shape and why they like it? Is it really a 'bumpy' shape?

The children explore how different sea creatures live inside the shells, with some children making shapes that could provide a shelter or house (a shell) for another child to hide in. The children could think about making still, clear shapes that have spaces in and under them for a partner.

► **AfL peer assessment:** Children identify success criteria for shell houses. Can you hide all of your body in the shape? Can the shape stay really still and balanced?

The teacher uses all the ideas explored to create a short sequence that the children can be guided through. Perform the sections all together, to form a class dance.



► **AfL self assessment:** Using pocket camcorders (see page 4) children video each other and immediately show on screen for self assessment based on chosen success criteria (keep very specific) which could relate to performance or composition. This could happen after pair work, work in small groups or whole class performance. Encourage classes to perform for each other at the end of the module.

Year 6 – Astronomy – Galileo's Telescope

Introductory activity

Following discussions about the telescope develop a resource bank with the children – containing words (for example, watching, orbiting, gravity, pull/push, explosion, meteorites) pictures and music (suggested music – Space Shanty by Leftfield).

Dance ideas

Children explore travelling and turning movement ideas (ACTIONS) in response to words.

Teach a dance phrase based on gravity: travel, front 'splat', one and then another body part lifts slowly and falls back, roll sideways into the ground, get up, run fast to the side of the space. Children perform in small groups in unison.

► **AfL peer assessment:** Children identify success criteria for performance: getting in and out of the floor smoothly, timing of unison, effective contrasts of speed.

Using the words 'orbiting' and 'watching', from the original resource bank, in pairs children explore going around one another and watching stars through a telescope, thinking about interesting and unusual

ways of moving using different levels, shapes, sizes and speeds.

► **AfL teacher assessment:** Use examples and make suggestions to extend children's range of ideas and move them away from the obvious response to the task.

Using the original teacher taught gravity phrase children work in pairs to develop relationships choosing from canon, action/ reaction, mirroring, matching and facing different directions.

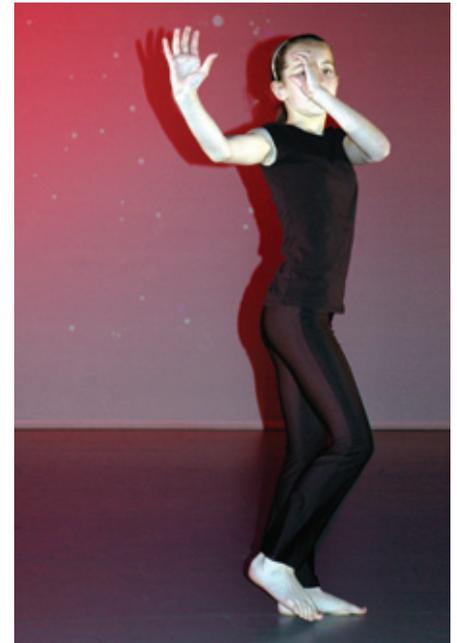
Teach safe contact through trust games. Children develop the idea of 'push and pull' in pairs. Work with a partner to combine push and pull phrase with developed gravity phrase.

► **AfL peer assessment:** Children identify success criteria for composition, for example, identification of chosen relationship, linking of ideas, complexity of relationships, expression of initial idea, development of movement material.

In fours children combine their phrases, thinking about the compositional strategies taught earlier in the module.

Individually children develop ways of travelling towards and away from an explosion after watching explosions from YouTube. Teacher pulls all the ideas together to form a whole group dance.

► **AfL self assessment:** Using pocket camcorders children video each other and immediately show on screen for self assessment based on chosen success criteria (keep very specific) which could relate to performance or composition. This could happen after pair work, work in small groups or whole class performance. Encourage classes to perform for each other at the end of the module.



Dreams Adrift on the Waves

KS2 Dance ideas based on the wonderful story of Sho and the Demons of the Deep

by Annouchka Gravel Galouchko

'It is said that in ancient Japan, people cast their nightmares into the sea. These folk were too shy to reveal their secret dreams and so they put them in bags and set them adrift on the waves.

The sea felt burdened by people's sorrows. Softened by the water, the bags would open and the nightmares would spill out like little demons. In the end there were so many that the sea became quite disturbed and monstrous waves lashed to the shores, attacking the fishermen peacefully fishing in their small boats.'

Context

The following dance ideas will focus on using words and images as a stimulus.

By the end of this unit of work pupils will be expected to:

Composing

- ▶ explore, create, select and refine dance movements
- ▶ shape a simple dance with a clear structure
- ▶ respond to words and images as a stimulus.

Performing

- ▶ link actions together
- ▶ show quality of movement with a range of dynamics
- ▶ work in small groups
- ▶ perform and repeat a dance idea.

Appreciating

- ▶ use appropriate vocabulary to describe dance
- ▶ show sensitivity when observing and viewing others dance.

Now try some of these ideas with your class.

The Ocean

The ocean bed –

'The sea was burdened by people's sorrows'

- ▶ Experience different ways of rolling, lifting and balancing, creating the ocean bed. In small groups can you create a dance phrase that you can repeat several times? You could use pieces of fabric to create the sea rising and falling with dancers moving in and out and between.

The calm sea –

'The sea was calm, the demon waves asleep'

- ▶ Let the pupils make a list of action words to describe a calm sea, for example, flowing, creeping, spreading, lapping, rippling, gliding, settling
- ▶ Individually choose three words from the list describing a calm sea and link them together to make up a dance phrase.

The rough sea –

'a howling wind and a rolling of waves'

- ▶ Make a list of action words to describe a rough sea e.g. flowing, rising, whirling, sinking, dragging, splashing, roaring, pounding, tossing, swirling, floating, foaming, ebbing, gushing, lashing, breaking, rippling, falling, turning, plunging, rushing, crashing, surging.
- ▶ Choose three words from the list describing a rough sea.
- ▶ Individually make up a dance phrase – for example, fly, swirl, swirl and crash and develop by repeating words to create a rhythm, changing level and speed.
- ▶ And then in small groups compose a dance that begins calm and gradually builds up into a rough sea showing contrast and reflecting the ocean bed and the two moods building up into monstrous demons of the deep.

Peer assessment

Film the dance for the class to observe providing opportunities to analyse, assess, evaluate and appreciate their own and others' work.

Provide adequate time for pupils to reflect and think for themselves.



Primary Conference 2010

Saturday 17 July 2010
Elmhurst School for Dance,
Birmingham

We can now confirm the date for our eagerly awaited Primary Conference, an essential event for everyone involved in delivering dance in schools. The full-day programme will have something for everyone, including practical workshops, discussion and seminars, networking and a marketplace.

Sessions will cover Early Years, KS1, KS2 and Inclusion and will be led by some of the UK's leading dance practitioners.

Keep an eye out for full details and booking information coming very soon.



Also coming soon...

Look out for NDTA's new Primary Membership Package

Primary CPD Programme

New primary CPD and resources are in development. More information on the website: www.ndta.org.uk

Dance in Education: A Guide to Resources

Comprehensive listing of essential dance resources. Buy online at www.ndta.org.uk/publications

Flip Video Camcorders

www.theflip.com

Recording, analysing and observing dance in the classroom/studio can be time consuming and challenging. Working with video cameras, wires, televisions and computers can take up valuable teaching and learning time. However, this new simple technology can really make a difference during this essential stage of the development process.

Known as the world's smallest camcorder, Flip Video launched in the UK just over 18-months ago. These devices are the size of an average mobile phone and hold up to 120 minutes of recorded film. This can be viewed on the LCD screen on the back or through a computer.

They are ideal for when students need to refine their work, whether it is a group piece or solo. The filmed data can be immediately uploaded to any computer without the use of wires, using the convenient flip-out memory stick.

Flip Video Camcorders are quickly becoming the new dance accessory and are already popular in dance classrooms throughout the UK and beyond. They are a practical, easy-to-use, and most importantly, an affordable product that allows observing and analysing dance to become simpler and quicker.

The Flip Video Ultra and Mino are available from Amazon, Play.com, Dixons, Currys Digital, PC World and other electrical retailers.

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dancematters – the magazine for teachers of dance in education

dancematters is the termly magazine of the National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA).

It is published in March, June and November each year and promotes best practice in the learning and teaching of dance in education for all ages. Its main readership is made up of those involved in the teaching of dance in schools – including teachers, dance artists and students.

Since 1991, the magazine has been posted to members. Thanks to the NDTA website www.ndta.org.uk all 56 past issues can now be downloaded by members.

Contents include: dance ideas for teachers to use with students of all ages, a fascinating historical view of how dance in education has changed in and outside the curriculum, resource reviews, contributions from numerous dance companies, information about interesting projects which have been successfully delivered in the classroom and outlines of new initiatives.

Issues in 2010 will include contributions about dance ideas to use with primary children on the subject of Recycling, Creative Hip Hop, developing Musicality with students and using Musicals as a stimulus for creating dance work.

Future *dancematters* will include contributions from a variety of regions and concentrate on cross curricular ideas for dance in the classroom with young people from pre-school to post 16 year olds.