

ATM 3M: Physically Integrated Dance - Unit Planning Notes

Unit description

This unit allows students to collaborate with students who have a disability (students in wheelchairs, students who are blind, deaf, or who have any other disability) to create a final dance composition.

In preparation, if you do not have wheelchair students in your school, contact a school where students use wheelchairs and arrange several days during which the students from both classes work together to develop a dance. This dance may be presented in Unit 4, The Finale, for public viewing.

A) Sensitivity and Awareness (Continued from Lesson 1) (1 hour)

The purpose of this lesson is to allow students to physically explore various assistive devices; however, no amount of 'exploration' can take the place of the experience that a person who uses these devices truly lives.

Sensitivity Exercises

Set up an obstacle course with tunnels and benches. With one partner blindfolded, each pair must make it through the course without talking.

•How did it feel not to be able to communicate through words or to see?

Divide the class in half with one half blindfolded and lying on the floor close enough to touch each other. The other half of the class will be 'spotters' to help protect the blindfolded dancers. When they are ready students can begin to move around the space in their own time. This is completely improvised, and students can dance, speak, interact with each other, whatever they like except hurt each other. Students must be responsible for each other's safety at all times. Switch roles.

•How did it feel to move and not able to see?

Explore other assistive devices (crutch, wheelchair, earplugs, etc.) to be used by various students. Play different kinds of music influencing what is happening in the space. Continue to explore movement with these devices focusing on the elements of dance (body, space, time, energy, relationships)

B) Preparation of a Dance Lesson (2 hours)

Determine with each student, in a wheelchair and on their feet, their physical and emotional boundaries so that safety is ensured.

Discuss with the class how dancers in wheelchairs may move. *What is their range of movement? What interesting actions can they do that "on the feet"*

*dancers don't? How can dancers in chairs create shapes using their chairs?
What kinds of balances can be accomplished?*

Allow students time to plan a workshop where they will lead students who use wheelchairs in a basic dance class including warm-up, centre, and travelling exercises. Access print material on the topic from the library.

In preparation for the outreach activity, assign students or groups of students to be experts for teaching and modelling different components of the lesson.

C) Outreach (10 hours)

Day 1

Grade 11 Dance students implement their technique class that explores the basics including warm-up, centre, and travelling exercises. Students lead different sections of the lesson, while others model the movements within the group.

2. Arrange (before the day) for the teacher of the students with wheelchairs to have some of their students share with the class how they use and manipulate the chairs in various creative ways.
3. As a whole group, watch some of the physically integrated dance videos for inspiration.
4. Lead a whole group in a discussion on what they saw in the videos.

Day 2

1. Repeat the warm-up (perhaps different students)
2. Lead the whole group through a lesson in contact dance. In integrated pairs or small groups, students can explore partnering work, allowing the students who use wheelchairs to share how they use their chairs.

Together explore (all options) and experiment (focus on one and develop it) with:

- shapes (symmetrical, asymmetrical, round, twisted, angular)
- levels
- size
- use of weight-bearing and balance
- relationships (between dancers, between chair, floor, etc)
- other explorations using the elements of dance as a guide

Choreography (6 hours)

Day 3

1. Warm-up
2. Incorporate a lesson in choreographic variations on a movement phrase.
 - a) The students create dance phrase of 16 counts that has changes in levels, shapes, locomotor and non-locomotor movement.
 - b) Allow students time to memorize the phrase and be able to repeat it over and over.
 - c) Create variations on the phrase by changing some of the following:
 - i) the travelling
 - ii) jumping or hopping
 - iii) sharp, angular
 - iv) off centre
 - v) focus on isolation of body parts
 - vi) turning
 - vii) robotic
 - viii) slow and sustained
 - ix) very fast
 - x) change in rhythm (4/4 to 3/4)
3. Introduce unison, canon, and retrograde concepts by trying them out on the original dance phrase.
4. Students create a small study that includes:
 - a) original phrase in unison (2 x 8 cts)
 - b) 2 variations in unison (4 x 8 cts)
 - c) original phrase in unison (2 x 8 cts)
 - d) 1 variation in canon (2 x 8 cts)
 - e) 1 variation in retrograde (2 x 8 cts)
 - f) 1 variation in unison (2 x 8 cts)
 - g) original phrase in unison (2 x 8 cts)

Days 4-6

1. Warm-up
2. In small groups, create a choreographic work that is physically integrated, incorporating concepts developed in previous classes. Assign each group music, or allow them to choose. The dance should be 2-3 minutes in length.

Day 7

1. Allow sufficient time for students to warm-up and rehearse before beginning the sharing time.
2. Present the dances to the rest of the class. Perhaps consider inviting another class in the school to attend an informal sharing of the work.