

Arts Discipline Examples

DANCE

CONTEXT

In a one-hour workshop for 1st grade teachers, the teaching artist is preparing participants for an 8-week residency. The teaching artist knows from prior experience that first graders are beginning readers, and many still depend on illustrations for reading comprehension. Illustrations are helping them become fluent readers. For this reason, the teaching artist frames the PD experience on creative dance as a way to visualize text to support comprehension. In addition, the teaching artist researched the school's demographic details by looking up its SSIR report online. She learned that about 30% of the students have limited proficiency in English. The teaching artist will focus the PD on creative dance for vocabulary and language development.

ESTABLISHING PURPOSE

In a 3-day professional development course to learn about supporting struggling readers through creative movement, the teaching artist leads participants through a variety of movement prompts connected with *Wonders*, the basal text assigned to her school district. She asks, "How does creative movement such as this support struggling learners?" Following the teachers' discussion and analysis she shares two quotes:

Research Quote

In a study that partnered elementary teachers with professional dancers to incorporate movement into their existing curricula, Gross (2011) revealed:

Allowing students time and space to express themselves, to expel energy, to explore academic concepts through movement requires a paradigm shift within the traditional education system. Participants in the project have begun learning how they, as individual educators, can contribute to changing the learning environment to include all students. In essence, they are learning how to include every student, instead of leaving the alternative learners behind (p. 152).

Teacher Quote

Movement is very helpful for ADHD and low level learners. The "Move and Freeze" or actions of the stories helped them remember more details, sequence, and recall with better comprehension.

- 1st Grade Teacher

LEARNING TARGETS

In a 3-day PD course entitled *Explaining Science Through Creative Movement*, the teaching artist publishes the following learning targets on the first page of the packet. She also shares selected objectives that pertain to the day's work verbally and on

PowerPoint at the beginning of each day of the course, along with the Enduring Understanding and Essential Question.

Enduring Understanding: Explanation is an art.

Essential Question: How can creative movement explain science?

Objectives: Teachers will:

- KNOW the B.E.S.T. elements of creative movement.
- KNOW the sequence and steps for three creative movement strategies.
- KNOW principles for the effective facilitation of creative movement.
- BE ABLE TO facilitate the creation of simple movement sequences about a topic in Science.
- BE ABLE TO use dance elements vocabulary to support their students' revisions of their dances.
- Be ABLE TO ask questions and provide prompts that support student explanations in Science.
- APPRECIATE dance as an expression of ideas.
- APPRECIATE the role of commitment and focus in creating quality artwork.

ARTS CONTENT FOCUS

During a 3-day PD course, a teaching artist introduces the vocabulary of dance by engaging the classroom teachers in B.E.S.T. movement (Body, Energy, Space, Time). The teaching artist projects this dance vocabulary on a PowerPoint slide, and also directs teachers to a poster that is within their printed packets:

Body - *What* we move. Shape, body parts, physical skills

Energy - *How* we move. Effort, feeling, quality, mood, expression

Space - *Where* we move. Direction, size, shape, level, focus, pathway

Time - *When* we move. Duration, sequence, speed, rhythm, timing

EXPERIENCE

The workshop is a one-hour PD experience devised specifically for 2nd grade teachers who will be receiving a creative movement residency. The teaching artist focuses on: a) introducing the vocabulary of dance, and b) applying the strategy Move and Freeze to help make Science content concrete. The teaching artist asks teachers to begin to move while they are still sitting. She asks them to explore movement with head, shoulders, elbows, and a variety of combinations of upper-body parts. Each time the teachers move in brief intervals of 8-second motion, the teaching artist prompts them to "freeze" before adding a variation or new prompt. The teaching artist then prompts them to move with a twist, curved shapes, and straight zig-zags. She directs them to a poster and introduces the idea of "Body." The teaching artist continues engaging the participants, while they sit in their seats, frequently using the words "Freeze," until she has introduced all of the elements. Next, she engages participants in brainstorming a word

wall based on an image of marine life. They develop verbs describing what they imagine, such as bubbling, swishing, stalking, and skittering. The teaching artist prompts the teachers to stand in personal space to interpret the words by incorporating the elements they just learned. Finally, the teaching artists prompts the teachers to move through space, moving in the manner of the word, and freezing on cue.

FACILITATION

On the third and final day of a PD course, teachers practice facilitating each other. After experiencing a strategy of Move and Freeze as students might, the classroom teachers describe what they notice about what the teaching artist said and did to facilitate their creative movements. Next, the teaching artist introduces a prescribed set of facilitation steps, written on a chart and posted in several locations around the room. The teaching artist prompts classroom teachers to select a word or image from the grade-level text that they will use as a movement prompt. Classroom teachers briefly plan, using a template based on the charted facilitation steps. The teachers make specific decisions about how to coach, revise, and/or question others. As partners, classroom teachers take turns facilitating each other through the strategy. Next, in groups of four, teachers practice facilitation again. Finally, one teacher facilitates the whole group. Teachers debrief what the experience was like for them as facilitators, identifying the areas that challenged them the most, and highlighting some of the strong choices their peers made.

REFLECTION

During a 3-hour PD experience, a teaching artist engages classroom teachers in an integrated creative movement strategy. Prior to the engagement, the teaching artist creates “Look For” groups. These small groups of three to five participants select one of the following topics:

- Questions & Prompts
- Assessment
- Scaffolding & Sequencing
- Behavior Management
- Activating Background Knowledge

As they engage in creative movement, the teachers “Look For” evidence of their assigned pedagogical topic. Afterward, they discuss observations, questions, and adaptation ideas regarding their topic as a small group. Finally, each group shares their big ideas and/or questions with the full group of workshop group.

ASSESSMENT

In a 3-hour PD workshop based on making dances from history, the teaching artist addresses assessment toward the end of the workshop. After creating their own Shape-Move-Shape compositions, classroom teachers watch a 1-minute video of 5th grade

students engaged in the same strategy. The teaching artist plays the video three times with the following prompts:

1. Watch the video. Look at the class as a whole, but look for one student whose performance attracts or interests you. (Discuss initial reactions with a partner.)
2. Watch again, this time with careful attention to the student you have selected. Describe this student's movement in terms of two criteria: body and space. Which body parts are they moving? What kinds of shapes are they making? How do they use levels and pathways? (Discuss with a partner.)
3. Watch the same student once more. This time, consider what additional instruction, prompting, or coaching might support this student's growth. (Discuss with a partner.)

PLANNING

During the final meeting of a 3-part workshop, teachers gather in grade-alike groups to brainstorm the use of new dance strategies within *Wonders* text, to support reading comprehension. Each teacher selects one text and plans the instructional prompts, scaffolding activities to build background knowledge and extend student learning. After 30 minutes of planning, teachers re-mix with teachers from other grade levels to engage in a tuning protocol.

4 minutes – Presenter shares context and planning ideas, without interruption

4 minutes – Participants discuss the presenter's ideas, without interruption

2 minutes – Presenter discusses what she is thinking now, with open exchange of dialogue

EVALUATION

At the end of a 3-hour PD workshop, participants walk throughout the space until the facilitator prompts them to stand “back-to-back” with a partner. Together, the pair discusses: **“What did you learn or discover during this workshop?”** They return to their back-to-back positions and develop a full-body pneumonic gesture to reflect something that arose during their talk. They practice that gesture as they walk throughout the space again.

The facilitator calls again, “back-to-back” and each participant stands with a new partner. This time the facilitator asks, **“What is something you found difficult or challenging during this workshop?”** Again the partners discuss the prompts, return to their back-to-back positions, and develop a full-body pneumonic gesture to reflect what they discussed. They practice their two gestures as they walk throughout the space again.

For a third time, the facilitator calls, “back-to-back” and each participant stands with a new partner. This time the facilitator asks, **“What do you plan to use from this workshop when you return to your classroom?”** Again the partners discuss the prompts, return to their back-to-back positions, and develop a full-body pneumonic

gesture to reflect what they discussed. They practice all three gestures as they walk throughout the space again.

The full group gathers in a large circle, with music playing. The facilitator invites participants to enter the circle at any time, dancing their sequence of three gestures, moving in and then back out to the perimeter.

Finally, on the written evaluation, the classroom teachers respond in writing to all three prompts:

1. What did you learn or discover during this workshop?
2. What is something you found difficult or challenging during this workshop?
3. What do you plan to use from this workshop when you return to your classroom?