

Teaching ideas for developing the skill of balancing within the Dance Strand for Junior and Senior Infants
(based on the PSSI Lesson Plans)

Activity #	Activities that include balancing for Creative Dance	Teaching Points
1	<p>The Space Bubble</p> <p>Pupils stand spaced apart facing you. Invite them to move the arms in the space in front of, behind and at the sides of the body. They must keep the feet still but can allow the knees to bend and the torso to twist, as necessary. Tell the pupils that all of the space directly surrounding their bodies is called their space bubble and it protects their bodies when they dance. Now the pupils begin to move around the hall, exploring all the space available. They must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep their space bubble around their bodies • move without touching another dancer's bubble. • Stop and keep still when you shout freeze. <p>Introduce some music as the pupils dance.</p>	<p>Teaching points for Balancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support leg still, with foot flat on the ground · Non - support leg bent and not touching the support leg · Trunk stable and upright · Head stable with eyes focused forward on a target · Arms as still as possible with no excessive movement either at the side or extended to aid the balance
2	<p>Body Shapes</p> <p>Introduce the concept of body shape by drawing attention to the shapes the body can now make inside it's space bubble. Introduce the concepts of levels and direction. Introduce music and use voice to help the pupils to make their shapes in time to the music, by counting to the beat: "Shape 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, change shape 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8".</p>	<p><i>Can you make a shape with your shoulder close to the floor? Can you make a shape that faces the back of the hall? Can you get your leg to face the side in this shape? How can you stay balanced in the shape? Can you make a shape by balancing on one foot/two feet/one hand and one foot etc.</i></p>

<p>3</p>	<p>Mirror Dance Arrange the pupils in pairs and number them 1 and 2. Ask the pupils to watch while you demonstrate a short mirror dance with one pupil. The pupils go into a space with their partner and begin the mirror dance. Introduce music while the pupils continue to dance.</p>	<p><i>Change movements at a steady pace so that your reflection can keep up with you, face your partner so that they can see you, your reflection can only copy your movements, not your voice, stay inside your space bubble and don't move around the room.</i></p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Interpreting music Gather the pupils in a circle and ask them to listen to two pieces of music, one that conveys very strong and powerful dynamics and the other which has very light and gentle qualities. Ask the pupils to identify the strong music and the light music. Now play the two pieces of music, alternating from one to the other and ask the pupils to dance to the music, changing from strong to light and light to strong actions as appropriate. Guide with your voice where necessary.</p>	<p><i>Let me see what way your body dances when I play the first piece of music. Can you add a strong jump? What speed are you moving at? How do your arms move? Now the music changes and look – all the bodies are getting softer.</i></p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Creating Dance – Incy Wincy Spider Sit in a circle and recite the Incy Wincy Spider rhyme with the pupils. Most of the pupils will probably move their fingers to mimic the spider's legs as they recite the rhyme. Invite them to use their body, instead of their voice and fingers, to tell the story of the rhyme. pupils find a space in the hall to begin moving.</p>	<p><i>Guide the pupils through a journey that the little spider might take: Now I'd like you to imagine that you are a tiny little spider fast asleep on your cobweb in a beautiful garden. Show me a sleeping spider shape. Now wake up and stretch your legs. Let's go for a little walk around the garden. Can you move really lightly like an incy wincy spider?</i></p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Performing to music Add music and invite the pupils to perform their Incy Wincy Spider dance to the music. Invite them to select a starting position (balance) and a finishing position (shape) and to perform their dance to the music.</p>	