

Teaching ideas for developing the skill of balancing within the Dance Strand for Third and Fourth Class
(based on the PSSI Lesson Plans)

Activity #	Activities that include balancing for Creative Dance	Teaching Points
1	<p>Movement Recipe</p> <p>Invite the pupils to move in a variety of ways: walk, run, jog, hop, skip, side-step etc. Ask them to add layers to their movements each time you blow the whistle: for example, change the level, pathway or direction of the movement. Having had a chance to explore a range of different movement ingredients with a variety of different flavours in this way, now ask the pupils to move for eight counts and then freeze and hold a shape for eight counts (balance). They are challenged to vary their actions each time they move, and to make a different shape each time they freeze. Introduce music and guide with your voice, e.g.:</p> <p>Move 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Freeze 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.</p>	<p>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>Exploring Shape</p> <p>Help the pupils to recall the concept of body shapes introduced in their Infant and First/Second Class dance programmes by asking them to make different shapes. Now introduce a count structure into the shape-making process. Ask the pupils to make a shape and hold still in this shape for eight counts, e.g. Shape 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Continue this process, changing shape after every eight counts, e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Shape 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Change shape 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Low shape 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Elbow shape 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Head shape 2,3,4,5,6,7,8. Face the back 2,3,4,5,6,7,8, etc.</p>	<p>Making Shapes</p> <p><i>Can you make a shape using your arms? Using your head and elbows? A shape that's very close to the ground? A shape that's as close as possible to the ceiling? A crooked shape? A shape that faces to the back of the hall?</i></p>

3

Partner Sequence

Arrange the pupils in pairs to create the following dance using 3 shapes:

- Each shape is performed at a different level (high, medium or low).
- Each shape is held for eight counts, i.e. a total of 24 counts, e.g.: Shape 1 (high) eight counts, shape 2 (low) eight counts, shape 3 (medium) eight counts.

Partners can perform the sequence of shapes standing side by side and/or facing each other, e.g.: Shape 1 (side by side) Shape 2 (face each other) Shape 3 (side by side). Now ask the pupils to create and practise their own shape sequences.

4

Group Dance

When the pupils have created and performed the dance in pairs, combine two pairs of dancers to join their partner shape sequences together to make up a group dance. The dance will last for last for 48 counts, e.g.: Partner sequence 1 (24 counts) + Partner sequence 2 (24 counts). Each pair demonstrates their shape sequences to the other. Now each pair teaches the other pair their three shapes, adjusting movements if necessary for the other pair to learn. The group decide the order in which they will perform the two sequences and they practise this a few times through.

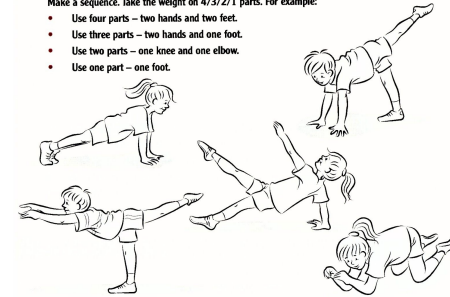
5

The name dance

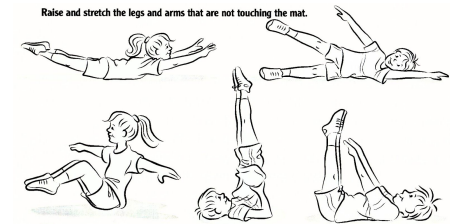
The pupils create a short dance showing the pathways created when tracing the letters of their name on the floor using the following outline: Starting shape (balance) – then trace the pathway of each letter – then freeze in a finishing shape (balance). Introduce music and ask the pupils to perform their dances to the music, holding still in the finishing position until the music fades out. Arrange the pupils in pairs. Number 1 sits down and watches while Number 2 performs his/her dance to the music. Reverse roles

Make a sequence. Take the weight on 4/3/2/1 parts. For example:

- Use four parts – two hands and two feet.
- Use three parts – two hands and one foot.
- Use two parts – one knee and one elbow.
- Use one part – one foot.



Raise and stretch the legs and arms that are not touching the mat.



Dancers can stand in two different formations: (i) a square where each dancer faces his/her partner, for example (ii) a diamond where each dancer faces into the centre, for example (iii) a combination of both.

Imagine that the body is like the pencil that writes each letter. My name has both curves and straight lines. I begin in a standing shape and move forward in a straight/diagonal/curved pathway with my arms stretched above my head to create my first letter. Now I am jump to the right in order to move into a new space and begin tracing the next letter of my name, just as a pencil would move to the next space on a page to write the next letter.

