

e-ARTinED Background Report On Using Dance To Teach Curricular Subjects

Introduction

It is believed that people have been dancing since the very beginning of time worldwide.

Although dance is so part of the human cultures it is not commonly used in schools as a learning process.

Dancing is a good way to train both body and mind. It trains the creative ability to think outside the box. It also gives body and spatial awareness.

Involving dance in a subject could give it another dimension and make it easier to understand. Students might associate it within their own experience and that will lead to memorizing the task better.

Starting point

As a teacher, you could start by looking at the goals for the class, what are the students supposed to learn today, how can we do this by dancing?

One way to do it is to look at the actions in the subject or transforming subjects into action.

You could also find key words of the subject that you work with, and then let the students dance freely only to that word.

You can transform many academic concepts into action and body shapes.

Here is a list of words that you can always use when creating a dance.

- Movement components: direction, speed, timing, size, energy, duration, rhythm, quality of the movement, shape, pathway, position, starting and stopping movement.
- Movement component position: over, under, around, behind, in front, beside and through.
- How you use the space and levels of moving: high, middle and low.
- Make space in your classroom to allow for free movements.

Creating a dance

Invite a choreographer/dance teacher. They will help you design a dance-based lessons and you can use the materials in future lessons.

Introduce a subject and let the students create their own dances. Introduce the subject and ask the students: Can we dance that word, that subject? How can we symbolize that subject with our bodies?

The subject can be danced in the normal way, in slow motion, very fast and on different levels. This could be done as individuals or in small groups.

Different art forms. To create a dance you could also use other art forms in the process. For instance: pictures, images, music, objects, photographs, lyrics or key words. Inspire children to discuss and be creative.

Theme. Children can read or paint something related to a specific theme, then ask them to dance what they have read or painted.

Composition in a space/Make a dance as a group. The students are divided into groups and every group creates different parts in the same dance.

Teacher skills

You do not have to be a dancer to use dance as an aesthetic learning process in your class.

Suggestions:

- be creative and have an open mind.
- give directions to your students and guide them with your words
- let the students be part of the creative process
- Invite dance teachers and learn from them
- use dance in a way you are comfortable with
- start with small exercises and develop them as you go on.

To dance. Sandra Minton writes that single movements or movement sequences are not dance but if you combine them together you could create a whole dance.

You can use any dance style and choose the music that is appropriate for the subject. Example: soft classical music when working with a poem, rhythmical and a lot of drums when working with a theme about volcanoes.

Why dance

Dancing usually leads to:

- better self-confidence
- body awareness and control
- learn to work together physically
- social skills
- collaboration as a team to reach a common goal.
- creative problem-solving
- understanding of own and others' body language
- communication skills

Dance is a wonderful tool to use as an aesthetic learning process!

Practical Examples are available in the longer text of the report "ARTinED Background Report On Dance To Teach Curricular Subjects"

