

Chapter 3

Incorporating Dance Into Your Program

This chapter provides a description of the content of dance within the physical education curriculum. In all areas of the physical education program, teaching children both to learn to move and to move to learn is the primary goal. Including dance as a significant component of the program ensures children the opportunity to learn to use their bodies as instruments of expression and communication. They learn to expand their movement abilities and use critical thinking skills to learn, create, and respond to dance.

The elements of movement—body awareness, space awareness, effort, and relationships—are the basis for the total physical education program. They are the same elements of movement that form the content of the books about gymnastics (Werner, 1994) and motor skills (Buschner, 1994) of this series of books on developmentally appropriate physical education for children. All the elements are part of every movement we perform; however, dance manipulates and emphasizes specific elements to express an idea or feeling. The learning experiences in Part II of this book focus on one or two of the elements so children may pay particular attention to how those elements affect movement.

Children participate in dance experiences as creators, performers, and observers. Creating new movements and dances is referred to as creative dance. Children love to move and instinctively create different ways to move. Children see learning through discovering new possibilities for movement

and expression as play. As performers, children perform their own movements, but they also learn new movements through participating in dances created by others. They learn to perceive and reproduce dances. They learn new ways to express ideas and communicate to others, and they learn to understand others through movement. Both types of dance, creative dance and dance created by others, should be included in the dance program to provide students with a broad range of learning experiences.

Compare the ingredients of a cake to the elements of movement. Using different ingredients in different quantities will produce many different types of cakes; using different elements of movement in different combinations will produce many different forms of dance. The specific way the elements of movement are combined depends on the meaning of the dance. For example, a dancer can illustrate the wind by running with fast, light, small steps or with fast, strong, large steps, producing a different feeling. In a creative dance reflecting the different qualities of the planets, students may choose to make their bodies into round shapes that slowly turn or form a large group circle that rotates quickly with strong energy. Many social and folk dances have very specific predetermined ways of using the elements of movement. The twist, for example, moves the upper and lower body in a strong, fast, side-to-side twisting movement in one's personal space, perhaps varying the movement by changing

levels. Everyone reproduces a similar movement when music for the twist is played. The four categories of movement—body awareness, space awareness, effort, and relationships—will be described further in this chapter (see Figure 3.1).

Body Awareness

In dance, the body is the instrument of expression and communication. Together one's body and mind create, perceive, and perform all the movements used in the dance experience. Through dance, students will explore, discover, and gain knowledge of all the infinite possibilities for movement. They will come to know more about their bodies and how to gain control over their movements. *Body awareness* refers to the ability to name the body parts, to identify where they are located, and to demonstrate the different ways they move in isolation (i.e., actions of body parts) or as the whole body at once (i.e., actions of the whole body and body shapes). Students need to participate in a variety of experiences that lead to increased understanding of how they use the body for functional purposes, as well as for the purposes of expressing one's feelings and communicating an idea to others.

Actions of the Whole Body

When the whole body is in motion all the parts are involved. Some body parts may be emphasized more than others. In skipping, the feet and legs primarily describe the movement and rhythm; however, the arms, head, and torso also contribute to the total movement. Whole-body actions occur in two ways; as traveling movements (sometimes referred to as locomotor movements) and as body gestures (also referred to as nonlocomotor movements). Traveling movements take the body to another location in space. Usually we think about traveling on the feet as in running, jumping, walking, or leaping, yet other body parts can also support the body weight for traveling (see Table 3.1).

The second category of whole-body action is body gestures (see Table 3.1). *Webster's Dictionary* defines *gesture* as "a movement usually of the body or limbs that expresses or emphasizes an idea, sentiment or attitude." This term is appropriately used here to describe a type of body movement that applies specifically to dance. Body gestures can be performed by an isolated body part or all the body parts at one time. For example, a child can shake only one hand or all of the body. The whole body is involved in rocking as the child's weight is shifted back and forth from one part to another. Two or

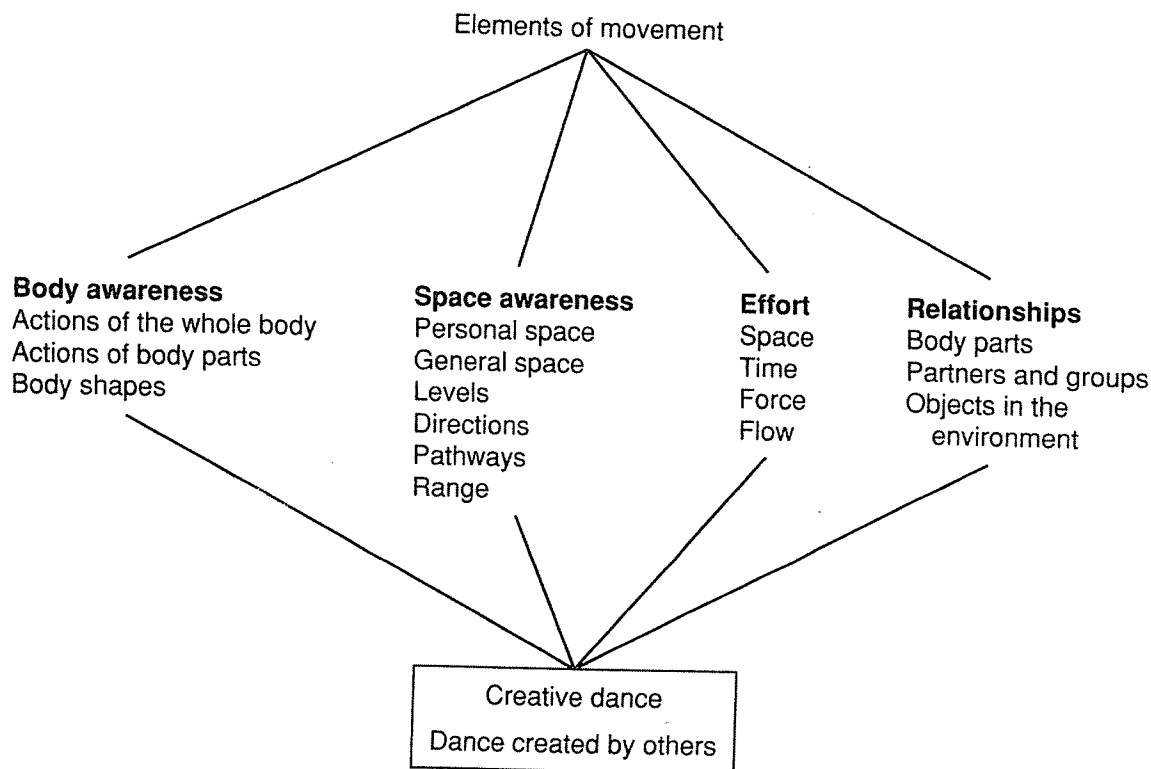


Figure 3.1 Content of the dance curriculum.

Table 3.1 Actions of the Whole Body

Traveling movements (locomotor movements)	Body gestures (nonlocomotor movements)
Using the feet for support	Shake
Walk	Turn
Run/jog	Wiggle
Jump	Swing
Hop	Twist
Skip	Stretch/bend
Leap	Rise
Slide	Fall
Gallop	Stop
Combinations of jumps and hops (i.e., up on two feet, land on one)	Sway
Using other body parts	Rock
Roll	Push
Creep	Pull
Crawl	
Slither	
Combinations of body parts	

more body gestures can be integrated to create a new movement, such as swinging the arms side to side as they are twisting. Also, traveling movements and body gestures frequently are combined to form more complex movements that allow for a greater interpretation of an idea, thought, or feeling. A student may run and leap to express the idea of a leaf being blown up in the air. When the student adds a swinging movement in the arms to the leap, she or he can further define the shape of the leaf or the path of the wind as it lifts the leaf in the air. Offering these types of movement combinations increases students' movement vocabularies beyond what they already know and at the same time challenges them to create, learn, and practice new ways to move.

Actions of Body Parts

Body parts can move in three ways to perform a traveling movement or body gesture: in isolation, leading a movement, and supporting the weight of the body. Isolated movements occur when one body part is moving and the rest of the body is still. This single movement, which appears quite simple, is actually difficult for young children. Balance, strength, and concentration are required to keep the body still and allow only one part to move. A body part leads a movement when it begins the

movement and the rest of the body follows with the same movement. Leading a movement can also occur when the whole body is moving and one body part moves in advance of the rest of the body through space, as in running with arms reaching forward. The third type of action for a body part is to support the body weight. Traditionally, in most dances the body weight is supported by the feet. Yet in some dance forms, such as break dancing, other body parts such as the hands, head, back, knees, and shoulders are used to support the body weight.

Body Shapes

The body is capable of forming an infinite variety of shapes. Our bodies always take a shape, whether we're moving or in a static position, as in sitting, standing, lying down, or kneeling. Sometimes we are aware of our body shape and may even plan to use a specific shape. Most body shapes used in everyday life are for functional purposes, such as sitting at a computer or standing in the shower. However, certain body shapes send powerful messages, such as pointing a finger at someone, standing slumped in a moment of sorrow, or hugging someone in affection.

Shapes that are created or reproduced in a dance experience are classified into three general categories: straight, curved, and twisted. Straight shapes can be formed with the whole body or its parts. By bending the elbows, knees, wrists, fingers, and spine, the body can make an angular shape composed of many smaller straight shapes. The second shape category is curved. In this shape the body is rounded through curving the spine forward, backward, or sideward. Arms and legs can also be curved to add to the whole body shape or demonstrate a curved shape without curving the spine. Other words frequently used to describe a curved shape are *rounded*, *squiggly*, *curled*, *arched*, or *spiraled*. The third category describes twisted shapes in which the body rotates in two opposing directions at the same time. Most twisted shapes begin at the waist with the legs and hips twisted in one direction and the upper body in the opposite direction. A single body part can form a twisted shape by rotating it in an opposing direction to the rest of the body, such as twisting an arm away from the torso or both legs around each other.

Two additional shape categories are symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical shapes in dance are positions in which the left and right sides of the body are in exactly the same shape; whereas

asymmetrical shapes are positions in which the two sides of the body are different.

In all the types of shapes the body can be still, like a stone sculpture, or traveling in space. For example, a straight, symmetrical shape may be combined with a jump, or a curving shape may be combined with a skip.

Space Awareness

Obviously we are always moving in space, again mainly for a functional purpose. In dance, how one moves in space is the result of a series of choices that express or communicate an idea, thought, or feeling. Walking forward with strong energy can illustrate the need to go somewhere as fast as possible or the idea of reaching out to someone. Space for a dancer can be compared to the canvas of an artist. The dancer's movements in different directions, levels, pathways, and ranges create a spatial design. In many cultural dances the space is designed in circles or lines to represent a community of people sharing an experience together. Creative dance is a way to develop new spatial designs that represent the meaning of the movement. Skipping forward on a curved path may express the wind blowing from side to side or it can be a metaphor for expressing happiness.

Spatial awareness is defined through its six inter-related components: personal space, general space, levels, directions, pathways, and range.

Personal Space or Self-Space

These terms describe the space immediately surrounding the body, the space that is always around us everywhere we move. Although the size of one's personal space, or self-space, changes with each dance activity, it is generally thought of as an adequate amount of space around the front, sides, and back of the body so you can move without touching another person or object. You can find the limits of your personal space by reaching out with your hands and feet in the immediate space around the body and looking to see if you have enough space for your movement.

General Space

General space refers to all the space outside of personal space that is available for movement. This space is shared by everyone. In a dance learning experience where students are running and leaping, each student leaps in the shared general space.

But each individual's leap occurs within the limits of their personal space; they take their personal space with them as they move in the general space. Whether students are creating their own dances or learning a dance from another person, the general space has a defined boundary. The teacher may designate the boundary of the general space by the lines on the floor or cones marking an outside space. In a folk or social dance the general space is predetermined by the formation required by the dance such as a circle, square, or single line.

Levels

The term *levels* in dance implies three different heights—low, medium, and high—in which the body can move and make shapes. A low level is considered close to or on the ground, the space below the knees. Movements such as crawling, rolling, or stretching on the floor occur at a low level. The medium level is the space midway between high and low, or between an individual's knees and shoulders. Movements such as walking or running can occur at a medium level. The space above the shoulders is designated as a high level. Movements that require the body to be up and off the floor occur in this level, such as leaping, jumping, or hopping.

Directions

When students dance, their bodies move in six general directions in space: forward, defined as the front of the body leading the movement; backward, where the back of the body leads the movement; sideways right or left, in which the right or left side leads the movement; and up and down, defined as moving up toward the sky or down toward the ground.

The first four basic directions, forward, backward, right, and left can be combined with the up and down directions in many ways. A student can move forward and up as in a leap, or forward and down by lowering the body to the ground. Other combinations are backward and up as in a jump, backward and down as the student reaches to the floor, sideways right or left and up, sideways right or left and down. The same movement performed in each of the directions will have a different feeling and communicate a different idea. For example, in a reaching movement with the hands and arms, a forward and up direction can illustrate reaching toward the sun to express how wonderful the warm sun feels after a cold winter season, whereas the same reach in a sideward and down direction can be reaching to help a friend.

Pathways

Pathways are the places where the body travels in space. If a student stepped in a puddle of water and then ran in a circle, the result would be a pathway of footsteps that describe the shape of where the body traveled. All pathways are composed of straight, curved, or a combination of straight and curved lines. In dance the student makes a decision about the pathway for movement or learns a specific pathway that has already been designed for a dance. Two types of pathways occur in dance: floor pathways created by traveling movements (such as running in a circle or skipping on a straight line) and air pathways created by body gestures moving in the space around the body (as in drawing a zigzag line in the air with an elbow). Other examples of floor and air pathways are illustrated in Figure 3.2.

Range

This component of space defines the size of a movement. Another word used interchangeably with range is *extensions*. Questions about how large or small, long or short, and wide or narrow the movement is all relate to size. The steps to a folk dance

may require the students to take large running steps in a circle, whereas in another folk dance the students perform small turning hops.

Effort

Effort, sometimes called *dynamics*, describes how the energy of a movement is expended through space, in time, and with force and flow. All four components of effort are present in every movement. They appear in different combinations depending on the intention of the movement. A group of students expressing anger may demonstrate this feeling through stamping their feet directly down to the floor in a slow, regular rhythm using strong, controlled force. Another group of students illustrating the movement of a falling leaf may move their hands quickly in a wavy pathway that uses light, uncontrolled force.

Space

As a component of effort, space is described as either direct or indirect. A direct movement proceeds from a starting point to an ending point in a

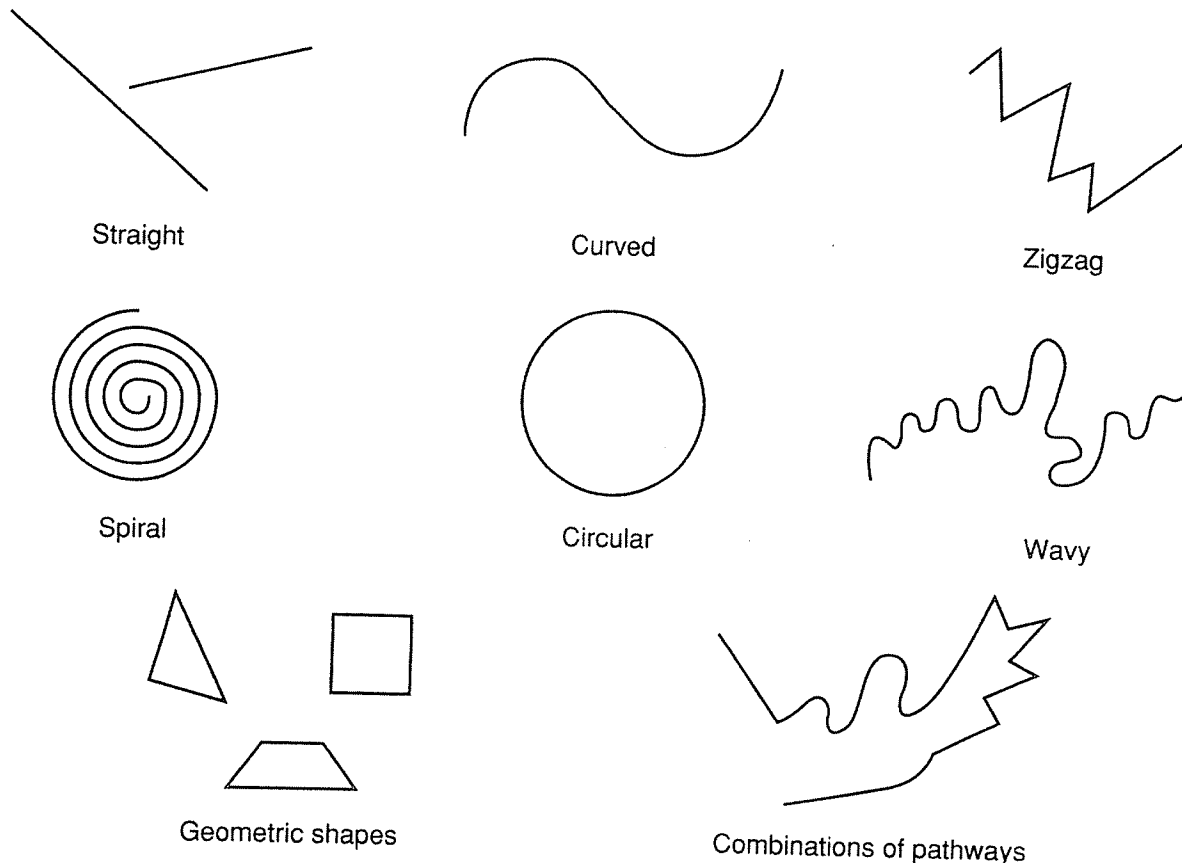


Figure 3.2 Pathways.

straightforward path without deviation or interruption, for example, a kick that moves directly from a beginning point to the ending point. The directness of the movement can be compared to the movement of an arrow as it travels from bow to target. Time and force combined with the use of direct space in different ways will vary how a movement is performed. In an indirect approach to space, a movement will travel from the beginning point to the ending point in a roundabout way, continuously deviating from a direct path. This use of space is similar to scribbling a line on paper. You begin and end at a specific place, yet in between the line moves all over the paper. Again, different combinations of time and force will affect how an indirect movement feels to the performer and reflect the intention of the movement.

Time

The time component of effort refers to the duration and speed of a movement. How long did the movement last? Was it fast or slow? Fast movement is also labeled as quick or sudden, and slow movement can be labeled as sustained, lingering, or taking a long time. Time also refers to the duration of the pauses between movements. How long did the student hold a still shape between the jumps?

The time of a movement—its duration and speed—are organized in much the same way that time in music is organized, through *rhythm*. The most basic rhythm is a pulse beat at regular intervals. In the action of clapping hands using a steady beat, the speed may be fast and the duration short or the speed can be slow with a long duration. Walking is another example of a movement that can demonstrate an even beat—it can be fast or slow and short in duration (with only a few steps) or long in duration (for example, walking for 30 seconds). Other rhythms vary duration (long and short) for each movement or the pause between movements. When performing a short dance using the rhythm long-long-short-short-short, students can move their arms up and down slowly on each of the two long beats and up and down very quickly on each of the three short beats. This same rhythm can be performed by jumping into a different shape on each beat—the first two jumps are slow, followed by three quick jumps.

Folk dances have definite rhythms inherent to the culture that created the dance. These rhythms represent different ways people move in that culture—how they work, play, worship, celebrate, and express their ideas. As students learn different folk dances they will discover that some of the rhythms

in the dance movements feel comfortable, whereas other rhythms are difficult to perform. We all grow up in a culture that has its own rhythm. Learning the rhythms of another culture can be challenging, but it can lead to understanding the similarities and differences among different cultures.

Another aspect of rhythm is *accent*. This is a strong emphasis on a beat demonstrated by a change in the movement. The accent can appear as a movement that is stronger, bigger, higher, or faster. It may move in a different direction or use another body part. For example, a folk dance may call for a strong stamp on the first beat of a pattern of steps, or a short dance composed of 12 beats may require the hands to reach into the air on the first and fourth beats. Students will notice the accented movement in a dance—it will feel different, perhaps exciting to express as well as challenging to coordinate.

Other aspects of time are *acceleration* and *deceleration*. In acceleration the speed of a movement becomes faster and faster whereas in deceleration the speed of a movement becomes slower and slower. The increase or decrease in speed can occur gradually over a long duration or very quickly in a short duration. In the familiar social dance the Alley Cat, the foot movement pattern accelerates toward the end of the dance to challenge the dancers to repeat the pattern faster and faster. Then the dance ends with a deceleration of the pattern to the original speed. In a creative dance interpreting a rain storm, the movement may begin at slow speed to demonstrate the beginning of a rainfall and then accelerate the speed of the movement to illustrate a strong rain storm and end with a deceleration of speed to represent the final raindrop at the end of the storm.

Force

When we move about our daily routine we use the right amount of force to be efficient and effective. Washing out a crystal glass will need a different force than scrubbing a burned pan. We use the appropriate amount of muscular energy to complete the job successfully. In dance, certain movements call for force to be used in a very specific manner to effectively communicate a message. This force, or energy, in dance movement is either strong or light. Using strong force, with tense, firm muscles and a considerable amount of energy, results in a powerful movement. Using light force, on the other hand, with loose, relaxed muscles results in soft, gentle, and fine movements.

The intention of the movement defines how much force is appropriate. In a folk dance where all the dancers are moving with hands touching, the force may be light, expressing pleasant contact with another in a common community. A creative dance can use strong force in the movements to illustrate the powerful sound of thunder.

Flow

Flow refers to how force is controlled in a movement. The two words commonly used to describe flow are *free* and *bound*. In free flow the mover is not completely in control of the energy of the movements and may feel out of control, unrestrained, or unable to stop. This use of force implies taking some risks with balance and some uncertainty in how space is used. A dance in which all the steps are well planned can still include some free-flow movements. Students may make a personal decision to "let the movement go," then return to the planned steps of the dance. Bound flow denotes controlling the energy of the movement. The student can stop the movement at any time. For example, in a dance using eight slides to the right and eight slides to the left, the students will need to use bound flow to change effectively from the eighth slide to the right to the first slide to the left. Many dances use bound flow when changing the direction of a movement, pausing in a shape, ending the dance, and dancing with another person.

Relationships

All dancing is composed of different types of relationships. The definition of this element of movement is broader than how well we dance with another person and relate our movement to theirs. Relationships include three parts: how body parts relate to each other, how partners and groups relate to each other in space and time (where and when), and how the body relates to the environment and the objects in the environment. Even when students dance alone, they use relationships as they move their body parts into different shapes. Individuals relate to others in a variety of ways to express the message of the dance. Popular line dances performed at many social occasions organize individuals to express the feeling of unity as they all move to the same rhythm. This type of dance fosters a feeling of acceptance and identity with a group. The relationship of an individual or group to the environment describes movements performed in approximation to an object. Students dancing with

a scarf in a creative dance experience will explore all the many spaces around the body that they can move the scarf. Another lesson may explore different ways the body can move using a chair—students may move the chair as they dance or dance around the chair.

Body Parts

Each body part is capable of an infinite number of different movements that occur in the space around the body and with the other body parts. The relationship of each body part to another is described as meeting and parting, above or below, over or under, in front or in back, along the side, and far or near. When students perform a dance in which they gallop and clap their hands, they use the relationship of hands meeting and parting in front of the body. The dance would look and feel different if they clapped their hands above their heads or in back of their bodies. In a creative dance where the students begin as small flower seeds under the earth, their body parts would be close to each other in a small round shape. As the seed begins to sprout, their hands will begin to move far away from the rest of their body parts as they reach above the body to demonstrate the plant growing toward the sun. The teacher may describe a specific position of the body using the relationship terms to help students make the correct body shapes. Many cultural dances require the hands to be held in specific ways to clearly express the intent of the dance or for the feet to move in a definite pattern that may require one foot to move over or in back of the other foot.

Partners and Groups

When students dance with another person as a partner or as a member of a group they relate to each other in three different ways. First is the relationship of where the partners or students are in space in relation to each other: facing each other, back to back, one behind the other, or side by side (see Figure 3.3). Second is the relationship of one person's movement to another's—are the movements similar or different? And third is the relationship of when the movement occurs between partners or among members of the group: at the same time, immediately after another person, or with a time delay. One of the most common relationships is an individual or group behind a lead person or group performing the same movements at the same time. Other ways that partner and groups relate to each other in using movement are the following:

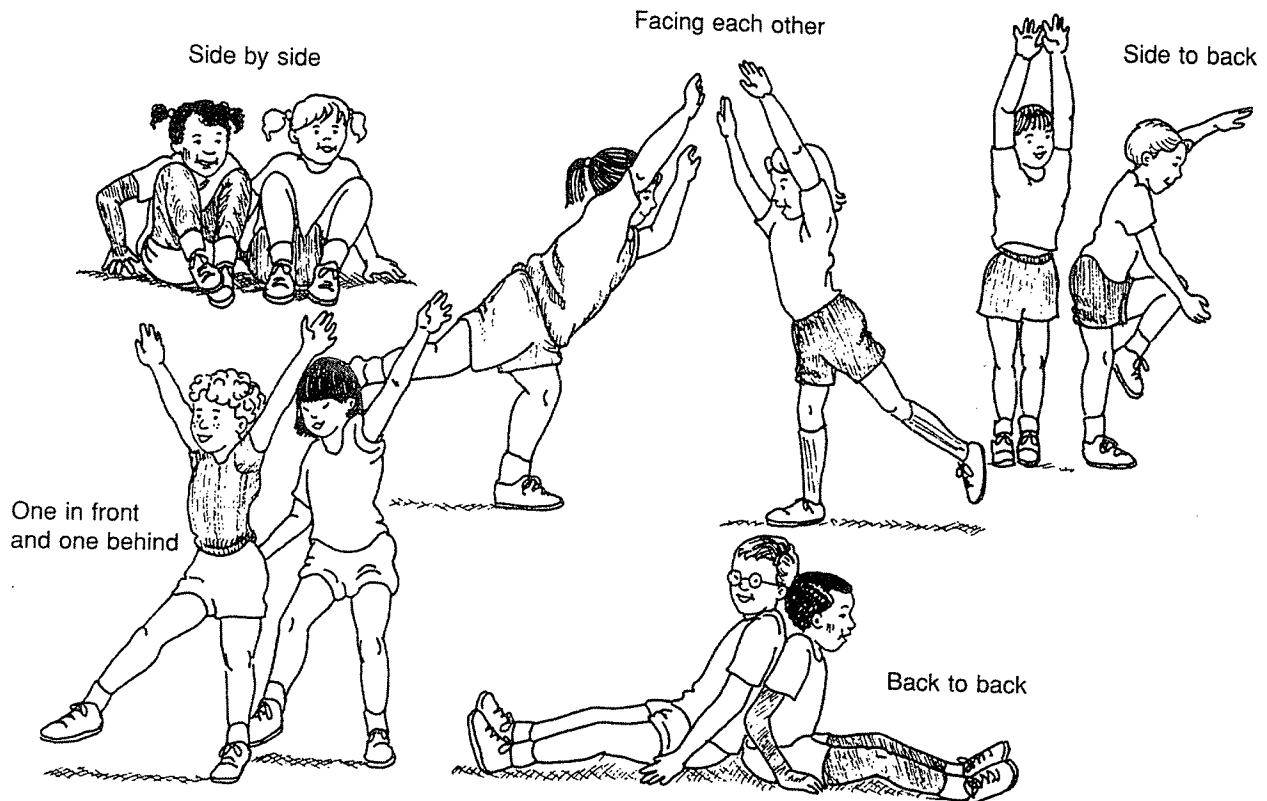


Figure 3.3 Partner relationships.

- *Copy or match.* Here students perform exactly the same movement. The right and left sides of the body move in the same way as the leader.
- *Mirror.* In this relationship students face partners and perform the same movement on opposite sides as if they are looking in a mirror. When the leader moves the left arm the follower moves the right arm using the same movement. The movements of the follower occur almost at the same time as the leader's.
- *Echo.* The leader performs a movement and the follower repeats the same movement after a brief pause. There is a delay in time between the movements.
- *Unison.* Two individuals or a group all perform the same movement at the same time.
- *Successive.* This relationship is similar to an echo movement for a small or large group. One person begins a movement during the same movement by an adjacent person or immediately after it. The effect is like falling dominoes.
- *Shadow.* One student follows in back of another student, performing the same movement at the same time.
- *Call and respond.* This relationship is like having a conversation with movement instead of words. One person or group makes the first movement, the call, and the other person or group makes the second movement, the response. The movements of the caller and responder can be exactly the same or very different.
- *Contrast.* Students perform a movement or make a still shape that is opposite to the movement of a partner or another group. A stretched-out movement can be contrasted by a closed and rounded movement, a forward movement can be contrasted with moving backward, or strong movements can be contrasted with light movements. The contrast can also appear in the use of time. The movements can be the same but at the opposite speed of other students.
- *Connected.* Two or more students move or make a still shape connected by one or more body parts.
- *Supported.* One or more students hold some or all the body weight of another student, as in leaning on another person or lifting someone in the air.
- *Meeting and parting.* This relationship describes how students move in space with each other. They move toward each other to meet

and move away as they part, or they begin the dance by parting and then meet.

The formation and movements of a dance define the spatial and temporal relationships of students to one another. In traditional folk and social dances students frequently dance in circles, squares, and single- and double-line formations. At times they form the spokes of a wheel, an X, or a cross shape. Creative dance also uses these formations in addition to a scattered formation and geometric formations. Creative dance also combines traditional formations to form a new formation (see Figure 3.4).

Objects in the Environment

This relationship describes how the student uses movement in relation to a prop or large piece of equipment. Props are small items the students usually hold in the hand while moving. These may be scarves, wands, hats, pieces of material, streamers, hoops, or balloons. Large pieces of equipment include climbing apparatus, chairs, benches, tires, mats, or cardboard boxes. The student relates to the object by moving in the space surrounding it and to the prop by moving it in the space surrounding the body. Descriptions of spatial relationships

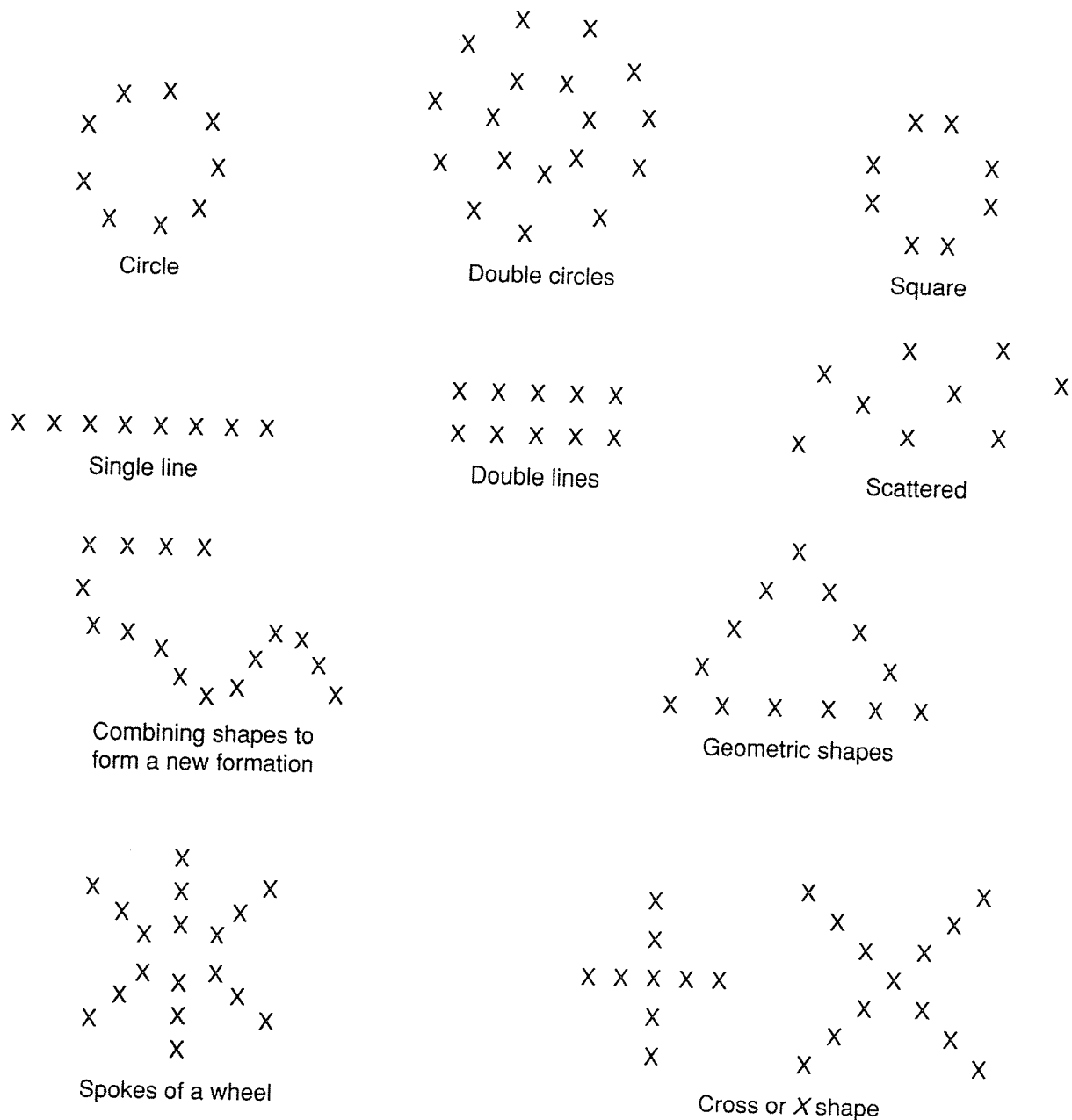


Figure 3.4 Formations for dances.

are near, close, far, away, over, under, through, in front, in back, alongside, around, between, inside, outside, above, and below. In a creative dance lesson a hoop may be used as a door to an undersea world. Students may begin far away from the hoop, slowly move closer and closer, then jump through the hoop into the sea. A folk dance may use long colorful ribbons that the dancers hold between each other in a circle while other dancers move under and over them.

Types of Dance

This section of the chapter describes the two types of dance that compose a dance curriculum: creative dance and dances created by others.

A complete and inclusive dance curriculum will provide students experiences in creating their own dances and learning dances created by others. Both types of dancing can occur individually, in partners, in small groups, or in large groups. Neither type of dance experience needs to precede the other; however, it is important for a comprehensive program to include both types of dance.

Creative Dance

In creative dance students create their own dances to reflect or interpret an idea, thought, or feeling. Creating new dance movement is often a challenge to both the student and the teacher. Students must rely on their own personal backgrounds to create something new. This is not always easy for them. Young children may not have an extensive vocabulary of ideas and movements to use for creating new movements. They look to the teacher as a model and will follow until they develop a stronger vocabulary. Some children possess a wealth of movement experiences and are always eager to offer new ideas. The teacher needs to set an atmosphere of acceptance and support to encourage children to be creative and willing to share their many ideas. Older children with a richer resource of life experiences may also experience difficulty creating new movement. They are more likely to feel self-conscious and be aware of what their peers will think. The challenge for the teacher is to design a learning experience that provides a supportive and safe structure to encourage creativity and lead students to take more risks. Students need a clear task that defines what is expected, yet is open-ended to allow for a creative response.

It is important to provide the opportunity for creating individually and with others. The term *personal dancing* can be used to refer to the experience

of students creating their own dance movements based on a task presented by the teacher. The task may be broad as in "Make up your own way of moving to the music" or more specific as in "Find a way to rise slowly from the floor using a turn." Students make personal decisions about what movements they will use and how they will perform the movement within the guidelines of the task, using their own creativity, point of view, and resources to move in new ways to express a feeling or idea (see Figure 3.5). Personal dancing is appropriate for all ages.

For students with limited experiences in dance, a specific task approach is recommended. This gives students a clear understanding of what the task requires and still leaves room for personal decision making. For example, in the task "Find a way to do three consecutive jumps, each one moving in a different direction," a student can choose the shape of the jumps, the direction of each jump, the height of the jumps, and the force of each jump. The task can be more specific if you require that all the jumps will be high and with strong energy using a designated rhythm.

Personal dances offer students the opportunity to discover what movements they like to do, what movements they may feel uncomfortable doing, how well they can do a movement, and what movements they would like to perform better. An example of personal dancing in a large-group experience is a dance my kindergarten students participated in, titled "April Showers Bring May Flowers." Its three parts were taught in three consecutive sessions. The first day we danced about the clouds that would bring the rain. We discussed the various cloud shapes and how they moved in the sky. The students described cloud shapes as long, wide, puffy, big, and round and cloud movements as slow, floating, fast, and light. Next each child created a personal dance in response to this task: "Begin your cloud shape standing very straight, then fill your

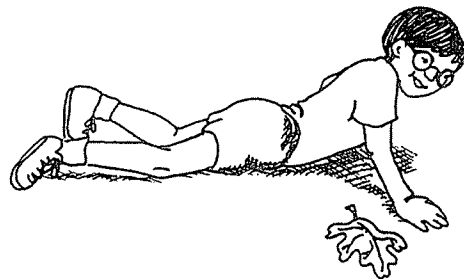


Figure 3.5 A creative dance that reflects the shape of a leaf.

arms with air, reaching them into the space around you. Then fill your legs with air, so there is a big space around each one. Show me the cloud shape you have made with your body. Now find another way to make a different cloud shape by moving your arms, legs, and back. Begin moving your body in its cloud shape around the space. Move your shape forward and backward and turn it as you travel. Keep changing your shape as you move." Each child developed a personal dance even though the whole class responded simultaneously to the same task.

Creating dances with others is another important dimension of the curriculum. Children spend most of their time in school interacting with others. They cooperate on science projects, eat lunch together, tutor each other, participate in the school band, and play partner and group games at recess. Working together with a partner or group to create a dance requires students to cooperate and to be actively involved. Not all children are ready for this type of interaction. The teacher needs to keep in mind the motor skill level of each age, the cognitive level of the students, and their ability to cooperate socially with others. Clearly defined tasks that include assigned roles will help the students to be successful. Young children need to gain some control and understanding of their own bodies before they can interact with other students of their age. They work more easily with a partner than in a group. Older children who are more coordinated and have a broad range of movement experiences are capable of creating partner and small-group dances when they are given a clearly defined task that encourages creating in a cooperative atmosphere. The motivation for partner or group interaction for all ages must be meaningful and relevant to the students.

Dances Created by Others

In this type of dance the student is the performer, not the creator. Students can learn and perform the following types of dances:

- Personal or group dances created by a student or the teacher and taught to others in the class
- Dances created by a professional choreographer
- Cultural dances such as the twist or waltz that reflect a particular time period
- Cultural dances that reflect a particular country or ethnic population (folk dance)

A description of each type of dance follows.

Dances Created by the Students or the Teacher.

These dances can be created by an individual or a

group and then taught to other individuals or groups. They are new dances created as a result of an idea presented and developed during a learning experience. The student or teacher organizes the movements into a sequence with a definite beginning, middle, and end. The dance is taught in a way that is appropriate for the developmental level of the class and that ensures a positive learning environment. The dances can be recorded in a variety of forms, including on videotape, in a written record, or in a series of pictures.

Dances Created by a Professional Choreographer. Students may have the unique opportunity to study dance in their school with a professional choreographer or dancer as a guest artist or artist in residence. Complete dances or excerpts of dances from the dancer's or choreographer's repertoire can be taught to the students and adapted to meet their developmental level.

Cultural Dances That Reflect a Particular Time Period. These dances reflect a specific time in history, past or present. They are dances that have become popular and are performed at many social occasions. Examples include the fox trot, waltz, lindy, twist, break dance, and various partner and group line dances. Students are always ready to teach the class a new dance that is popular, and they enjoy learning dances from other decades.

Cultural Dances That Reflect a Particular Country or Ethnic Population. Traditional folk dances were created to represent events, traditions, and particular characteristics of a culture. Through these dances we learn about what is important to another culture—its values, beliefs, history, and lifestyles. The dances are like stories passed down from one generation to another. Hence, folk dance cannot be taught in a cultural vacuum. Students need to learn more than the sequence of steps; they should be informed about the cultural background of the dance. It is important to teach about the environment and the people that created these dances to promote appreciation and respect for the movements and formations of the dances. I include American square dances among folk dances because they reflect culture in different geographical areas of the United States during a specific historical period. Folk dance requires dancers to use common movements, formations, and rhythms. This type of dancing is more appropriate for children who are developmentally ready to move in unison with others.

Choosing dances created by others requires thoughtful selection of dances appropriate to the

level of development of the student population. Traditional cultural dances should be taught as they are designed; changing the steps, gestures, and formations to fit a group that cannot learn the dance as originally intended loses the characteristics that make it representative of a culture. Research dances until you find one that is suitable for the physical and cognitive levels of your students. When teaching dances created by others you are relating your interpretations of the dances. Be aware of how your own culture influences your presentation of a dance from another culture.

Summary

Movement is the content for both types of dance, creative dance and dance created by others. Each

of the elements of movement—body awareness, space awareness, effort, and relationships—impacts how the movement is performed. The emphasis of each element depends on what the movement expresses. Movement in dance has meaning—it expresses an intention of the performer or creator. When children create new movements and new ways to organize movement they express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. They also learn to dance the dances of others—another student, the teacher, a professional choreographer, or traditional dances from a specific historical period or ethnic population. Both types of dance should be part of a comprehensive dance program to provide students opportunities for learning about dance and learning to dance.