

Creative Dance in the First Three Grades

Chapter 1-Joyce Boorman

“Here, the emphasis on movement being the foundation of all imaginative work is contradictory to much of the material that is used in many contemporary methods of teaching dance”

Reference

Boorman, J. (1969). Creative Dance in the First Three Grades. Don Mills, Ontario: Longman Canada LTd.

Issue/ Focus

The focus of this chapter is on providing a very practical guide to new teachers outlining not only what to teach but also how to teach creative dance to the first three grades. There is a lesson plan provided for each grade 1-3.

Reasoning

The content of the book is based on the writings of Rudolf Laban. His work has been simplified here to be appropriate for teachers just begging to teach creative dance.

Significant Information

The chapter begins by introducing a teaching progression providing a starting place and a sequence of movement concepts appropriate for young children.

Begin with familiar whole body movement

Ex. run, walk, jump

Explore new movement vocabulary

Ex. leaping, hopping rising twirling

Explore action and Stillness words

Ex. Shake-Grip, Gallop- Freeze

Increase complexity of movement sentences

Ex. Leap-Twirl- Run

There are four ways of extending the movement experience from this point

- 1) Increase and decrease speed
- 2) Change of Order in a Sentence of Action
- 3) Increase and Decrease of the size of the Action
- 4) Explore different ways of Achieving Stillness

Conclusion

The focus of a creative dance unit should be on experiencing movement, extending movement vocabulary and allowing for the creation of movement sequences not just pretending to be a volcano or a flower.

Personal Comments

As a new teacher, I can see this being a very helpful text. It provides the right balance of structure (model lessons and sequences) but also provides the theory to create unit plans in many directions. I like that the lessons are written in “teacher action language” and point out how to get the most from the students along the way. My only wish is to have a bit more information on how to assess these movement sequences.