

Exploring Body Shape While Utilizing High, Middle and Low Levels

Developed by Amanda Layton

Early Arts Learning Pilot Project 2009-2010

Objective/Goal:

This experience is an introduction to body shape and body design in space. These are fundamental dance elements, and are prerequisites to executing movement elements in performing dance.

Educational Impact:

- ✓ Comprehension
 - ✓ Body awareness
 - ✓ Learning shapes
 - ✓ Space and levels
 - ✓ Following instructions
-



Suggestions for use with the *Songs for Singing and Learning* CDs:

- ✓ "This Old Man (Hot Samba)" This is percussive music that can be used for freezes.

Procedure and Process:

Step One: Using observation to define body shape in space.

With your children, explore body shapes on a low level.

Looking around, I see that everyone is sitting a little differently. I see some dancers are sitting with their legs out straight and others are sitting with their legs crossed. When I count to three, can you find a different way to sit? What about another way? Freeze! Let me see your new body shape. You have made different shapes with your body. I see some shapes with twisted arms and some with curved backs.

Step Two: Body shapes can change level- experiment with choices.

Explore a variety of shapes on different levels with the children.

When I count to three, can you show me a body shape that is up high? That is great. Can you think of a new body shape, one you have never made before? Wow, I see curvy arms, I see straight legs. Can you make a body shape that is even taller? How high can you make your body shape? Freeze it so I can see it! These are great high shapes. Can you show me a low shape with your body again? Quick, another high shape! Freeze it so I can really see your body shape! If this shape is frozen up high, and this one is frozen down low [demonstrate for the children] then what would a shape in the middle would look like? Can you show me a middle shape?

Step Three: Define and Evaluate.

Teach the children this chant using steady beat either on their laps or marching in their feet:

*Body shape, body shape freeze for me
Body shape, body shape what's it going to be?
Freeze your body [say "high," "middle," or "low"]*

This is great as an assessment tool. You can pick a high, middle, or low level, and let the children demonstrate whether they can make a body shape on that level.

Closure:

Ask the children to create their own body shape on any level. Move through the classroom, using descriptive language, and identify what you are seeing.

I see Margo has chosen her body shape on a low level. I see her back is curved and her arms are spread long and flat on the floor. I see Michael has frozen his body shape on a high level. I see he is balancing on one foot and his arms are twisted.

Overall Assessment (How will I know the children got it?):

Do the children make choices with their bodies and maintain their shape? Can the children identify and differentiate body shape in high, middle, and low space?

Modifications:

Different age group: For much younger children, it might be necessary to work mostly on the extremities (high and low) before introducing middle. If "middle" is a new concept, be prepared to model it first.

Special needs: For special needs children with movement restrictions, consider working on the concept of shape with their arms. For example, arms create a shape up high, and arms create a shape down low.

