

IMPROVISORS

Notes for Teachers

Unit Standard 14879

Demonstrate dance – Improvisation
Level 2 Credits 6

Teaching, learning and assessment

This activity focuses on dance improvisation through a series of teacher facilitated workshops. For element 1, students learn and demonstrate fundamental movement vocabulary and skills in dance improvisation.

For element 2, students learn and demonstrate safe physical dance practice and this underpins the learning and teaching of the activity. For element 3.1, students present a research project on background context of dance improvisation. In this activity four perspectives have been chosen but teachers may wish to choose other perspectives from the range. For element 3.2, a New Zealand choreographer has been chosen to highlight the current relevance of dance improvisation from a New Zealand/ Aotearoa perspective. For element 4, students participate in a dance improvisation in a performance context and reflect on this experience. They may learn and perform as a part of a group, but assessment is based on their individual contribution.

Gathering the evidence

Teachers could make up their own verification grids or use video to monitor all stages of the process. It is anticipated that annotated video evidence of the presentation would be used for assessment and/or moderation purposes. The student record of ideas for the structured improvisation for element 4 is not intended to be assessed but should assist students to achieve the standard and assist teachers to verify it.

Resources

- 1 Catherine Chappell Touch Compass
<http://www.url.co.nz/arts/TouchCompass>
Chappell, Catherine and Keogh, Martin. *This Moment* Contact Improvisation Teacher Manual. USA.
Chappell, Catherine. *The Passage* Mixed Ability Teacher Manual. New Zealand.
Contact Quarterly Biannual journals of dance and improvisation.
Novack, Cynthia J. *Sharing the Dance* Contact Improvisation and American Culture.
Contact Improvisation, with an introduction to New Dance by Thomas Kaltenbrunner

- 2 Blair, LA and Chaplin, LT. *The Moment of Movement – Dance Improvisation*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988.
- 3 Spurgeon, David. *Dance Moves From Improvisation to Dance*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Group (Aust) Pty Ltd, 1991.
- 4 Schneer, G. *Movement Improvisation: In the words of a teacher and her students*. Champaign 11 Human Kinetics, 1994,
- 5 Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ) PO Box 9885 WELLINGTON
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Related Unit Standards

Level 2	Unit 11500	Explore the making of dance
	Unit 11497	Demonstrate dance
Level 4	Unit 11502	Perform dance

IMPROVISORS

This activity assesses -

Unit Standard 14879 *Demonstrate dance - Improvisation* **Level 2, Credits 6**

Elements

1. Demonstrate fundamental movement vocabulary and skills in dance Improvisation
2. Demonstrate safe physical dance practice
3. Articulate knowledge of dance Improvisation context
4. Participate in dance Improvisation in a performance context

INSTRUCTIONS

You will participate in a series of workshops to experience dance improvisation and learn the fundamental movement vocabulary and skills. You will apply the principles of safe dance practice. You will research the context of dance improvisation and you will participate in a performance context.

This activity will take 5-6 weeks.

Task 1 assesses element 2. Task 2a assesses element 1.1 and 1.2. Task 2b assesses element 1.2. Task 2c assesses element 1.3. Task 2d assesses element 1.4. Task 3 assesses element 3. Task 4 assesses element 4.

1 Demonstrate safe physical dance practice (for assessment of Element 2)

Your teacher will take you through a warm up at the beginning of each session to prepare your body for the experience of dance. Safe dance practice will be used throughout this activity and at the end you will be given the opportunity to respond to each of the following, your response being either oral or written:

- Why is warm up important for the improvisation class?
- You will lead a small group in a warm up of no less than 5 minutes. The warm up will include movements which enhance cardiovascular fitness, warms the large muscles, and develops joint mobility eg hips, shoulders, ankles, and actions which show correct body alignment.
- Discuss the main types of joint action. What are the main joints? eg.the hip and shoulder are ball and socket joints, that allow us to move in all three planes - adduction/adduction, forwards/backwards, circumduction. The knee and elbow joints

are hinge joints and allow flexion and extension and a little sideways movement. What can the spine do? e.g. actions of the spine - flexion, extension rotation, sideways bending.

- Why do dancers wear special clothing?
- What special requirements does Improvisation Dance have with regard to footwear, clothing, floor surface?
- Why is personal hygiene important in an Improvisation class?

2(a) Walking down the street (for assessment of 1.1 and 1.2)

In this exercise you will learn about locomotor and non locomotor (axial) movements and vary the use of space, time and dynamics.

You will focus on pedestrian (or everyday) movement. In groups, discuss how people move down the street or in the school ground. They walk, run, amble, risk, stop, swerve, scuff their feet, hold hands, lean against a wall, walk across the crossing. Each person writes on a separate piece of paper everyday actions you see in the street. e.g. old man shuffling along, school girl dashing late for a train. Jumble the small pieces of paper and then each person select one. This describes your intended action. Now participate in a group improvisation of a street scene, using your particular action. Repeat - shuffle the pieces of paper, choose another one, repeat the exercise. Once you have done this task several times, choose a particular action and put together a group composition based upon your improvisation.

This improvisation should clearly:

- Show at least two movements which are locomotor
- Show at least two movements which are non locomotor (axial)
- Vary the use of space ie: size, level, direction, pathway, focus
- Vary the use of time ie: speed, rhythm, accent, pulse, timing
- Vary the use of energy ie. weight, flow, sharp, smooth, sustained, sudden, percussive

2(b) Being in a moment (for assessment of 1.2)

In this exercise you will learn to respond to visual and aural images.

- Your teacher will call out all or some of the following words and you will need to respond instantly in movement:

Action words: roll, leap, pounce, float, explode, dive, slither, follow, stamp, dash, freeze

You are - sloshing through mud, rock climbing, walking through dense bush, groping your way in a dark cave, walking in a storm.

You are - depressed, maniacal, drunk, afraid, curious, fed up, agitated, amused, angry

- Your teacher will have a selection of dramatic photographs and images. In small groups bring the scene in the photograph or image alive with

movement. Use sound effects and/or words to accompany your movement.

- Your teacher will have a selection of prose and poems. You will work in a group to interpret the meaning and translate this into movement.

2(c) Dancing to the music (for assessment of 1.3)

In this exercise you will respond to rhythms in relation to dance e.g. metered, non-metered, accented, syncopated.

Your teacher will select different styles of music throughout this exercise. In small groups the students play follow the leader responding to the different rhythms in the music.

2(d) Together (for assessment of 1.4)

With a partner or in a small group you will create patterns using these words: huddle, spread out, swarm, support, weave, drag, combine, push, pull, rotate. Your improvisation may include some sound effects such as voice and body percussion.

You will need to work cooperatively with others, give and take movement ideas and relate to others in the space.

3 Articulate knowledge of dance improvisation context (for assessment of Element 3)

a You will research and then explain and identify in a presentation an aspect of the background context of dance improvisation. Your presentation can be oral (3-4 mins) or written (approx. 1500 words). Your teacher will guide you at the initial stages of this project.

b You will participate in a discussion on New Zealand choreographer Cath Chappell and her mixed ability dance group, "Touch Compass". You may have the opportunity to watch a video. After participating in this discussion and researching her work give responses to the following questions:

- What is contact improvisation?
- How is this process used by Cath Chappell and her mixed ability dance company?
- How we can use improvisation to find new movements in dance?
- How does improvisation relate to creativity?

4 In the deep end (for assessment of Element 4)

a Participate in dance improvisation in performance context. In either pairs or fours you will present a 3-5 minute dance which is based upon a structured improvisation. You will need to record your ideas for the structured improvisation. Use the movement vocabulary that you have learned.

- Brainstorm the theme, ideas, setting
- Will the dance be based on pure movement ideas such as SHAPE, or is it based on characters such as CLOWNS or a situation PEOPLE IN THE STREET?
- Decide how you are going to use pathways in space e.g. zig zag, lines, circles, a triangle, a square, a line
- Decide on the quality of your movements – will they be slow, sustained gentle dance, or will they have wild, explosive energy, or perhaps a mixture?
- Decide of the group focus during performance e.g. internal, external, audience directed.
- Decide whether music is used to accompany your dance, and how this affects the style of given movement
- Decide on how people relate to each other in the dance eg are they hostile, friendly, neutral?
- Will there be moments of spontaneity in the dance where the movements and structure have not been pre-determined?
- Will your movement patterns showing safe dance practice in both individual movements and the way you move in the space?

These recorded ideas are the basis for your structured improvisation, but you will not rehearse the dance. You will present it as a dance improvisation.

b Discuss and reflect on your performance in written or oral form by answering these questions:

- What was your contribution to the dance?
- What skills have you learned and what skills do you need to work on?
- How successful were your ideas and were they realised?
- How effective was the performance and why?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of your own performance?
- What have you learned about yourself and about others?
- What have you learned about working in a structured improvisation?

Assessment Schedule Improvisors
Unit Standard 14879 Demonstrate Dance - Improvisation Level 2

Task	Element	Evidence (The answers or performance expected from the students)	Judgement (A statement that defines the standard to be achieved)
1	2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4	<p>Individual student participation in leading a group warm up of no less than 5 minutes.</p> <p>Individual student responses to questions on safe physical dance practice in oral or written form.</p> <p>e.g. the hip and shoulder are ball and socket joints, and they have a bigger range of movement than other joints. They can move the limbs forward and backward, sideways out, and in, and up and down, and circles. The knee and elbow are called hinge joints, and their main movements are flexion (bend) and extension (stretch).</p>	<p>Student appropriately covers all the main aspects in their warm up, including major joint action, large muscle groups and correct alignment.</p> <p>Student clearly identifies the main movements of major joints.</p> <p>Student clearly identifies movement of major muscle groups e.g. hamstrings, quadriceps.</p>
2a	1.1	Individual student performance of an improvised dance.	Student clearly shows at least two movements which are locomotor and non-locomotor movements and varies the use of time, space and dynamics.
2b	1.2	Individual student participation in three visual and aural exercises.	Student clearly demonstrates improvised movement patterns in response to visual and aural stimuli.
2c	1.3	Individual student participation in dance rhythms exercise.	<p>Student clearly demonstrates knowledge of rhythms in relation to dance including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • metred • non-metred • accented • syncopated •

2d	1.4	Individual student participation in an improvisation with a partner or in a group.	Student appropriately demonstrates - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation • giving and taking movement ideas • relating to others in space
3a	3.1	Individual student presentation of background context of dance improvisation.	Student clearly explains background context from one of these perspectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural • social • historical • artistic Presented in oral, visual, written or combination.
3b	3.2	Individual student responses to the four questions on Catherine Chappell.	Student appropriately answers each of the four questions explaining current relevance of dance improvisation as a dance form. Presented in oral, visual, written or combination.
4a	4.1 4.2 4.3 4.4	Individual student participation in a structured dance improvisation of 3-5 minutes in a performance context based on individual student record of ideas.	Student performance demonstrates appropriate application of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fundamental vocabulary and movement patterns • safe dance practice • rhythm • space • energy • purpose • focus • involvement • spontaneous vocabulary making • relating to others • stylistic features of dance improvisation
4b	4.5	Individual student reflection on their participation in an improvised dance performance.	Student appropriately responds to each question. Presented in oral or written form.