



I Can Dance

Extension Exercises: JUNIOR

Solely using the books and CDs as is on a long-term basis is completely fine. Children will always find ways to make their dances new and exciting as they learn and grow. However, if you wish to extend the use of the books for your dance classes, these lesson plans can be used progressively to help extend the dance experience for your students.

The extension exercises are designed to be used in the sequence provided to assist students as they learn to use dance as a means through which to reflect, create, and communicate.

Before beginning with the extensions, there are a few important things to keep in mind:

NOTE

It is essential to work through the books first. This will allow the students to become comfortable with free movement prior to exploring the extension exercises.

Always select the pairs / groups for the students

Letting the students pick their own groups basically draws a map of who has friends and who doesn't. If students do not feel comfortable in their environment it is difficult for them to fully engage in the creative process. Picking groups not only eliminates the social map of the classroom, it also provides students the opportunity to collaborate creatively with others.

There is no right or wrong in creative movement

I encourage you to discuss this concept with your students often. The establishment of this ideal will make the students feel more comfortable. The purpose of these exercises is to learn to use dance as an expressive medium. If students feel that their way of sharing is not 'right' it will inhibit their ability to grow creatively.



Music Selections

For some exercises, it is suggested to use your own or ‘generic music’ rather than the tracks which accompany the books. When selecting generic music, try to avoid popular music with which the students would be familiar or music which contains lyrics. Both of these can distract newer dancers from the experience of dancing a concept; they are often inclined to dance in ways they have previously seen associated with the music or try to dance to match the words they are hearing. **NOTE:** If you are working with the CDs from the 1st Edition of the book series, you may have noticed it is not possible to advance to individual tracks. To enable you to make the most of the dance experience, individual tracks are available for download at hannahbeach.com.

Sharing Work

Most of the exercises contain a component wherein students will share their group’s work with the class. In order to maintain an environment in which students will feel comfortable sharing, it is important to discuss with them, Audience Behaviour and Peer Feedback.

Audience Behaviour

- Being laughed at inhibits us! It is important to respect each other’s work.
- Students should not discuss their own work when watching others.
- Each group should have the opportunity to share their work without audience members shouting out what they think is being communicated in the work. At the end of the dance, students can raise their hands to share their thoughts.
- If using props in a dance, they should be kept on the side while watching, not on the students’ laps.
- As previously mentioned, there is no right or wrong in creative work. This means that students are not to decide whether or not something looked like the concept.

Peer Feedback

- It is always good to remind students that there is no right or wrong in art and that each person may have a unique way to express an idea. Literal representations are not better in art as art is also about the way something *feels* not just looks. This is a wonderful opportunity to



encourage multiple perspectives and the beginnings of understanding that in art we have the power to make our own decisions rather than follow rules to create a work.

- Have students share what helped them ‘know’ what the concept was and what movements or expressions helped communicate the idea presented. This peer review can greatly increase movement vocabulary as it will make links for the students between what their bodies did and what was communicated. It also can help children see that very subtle movements may have big effects.

Facilitating Feedback

- When students are guessing a concept presented in another group’s tableau it is important to limit the guessing to two guesses. If a concept hasn’t been identified after two guesses, the group presenting often begin to feel awkward.
- As the facilitator it is important to reflect back student’s guesses with phrases such as, “I can see why you thought ...” Again, this reinforces for the student that there is no right or wrong in art and will create an open, comfortable environment for sharing.



Exercise 1 – Creating Tableaux

Summary: In this exercise students will deepen their dance experience as they begin to incorporate deliberate communicative action into their existing free movement exploration. In creating a tableau together students will explore team work and compromise. **NOTE:** By the junior grades, some students may or may not have had the opportunity to explore tableaux. Regardless of whether they have or not, it is an exercise which can be explored multiple times to enable students to enrich their own movement vocabulary.

Materials

- *I Can Dance* books and CDs

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside

Exercise

1. Prior to class, select which book you will be working from.
2. Begin class with light stretching and some free movement. You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.
3. Have the class sit together on the floor, either in a circle or facing you.
4. Ask if students are already familiar with the term *tableau*. If some are, allow them the opportunity to share their knowledge with the group and, if comfortable doing so, demonstrate how they are done. If it is a new concept for everyone, teach the students how to create a *tableau*.

Tableaux – FROZEN; EXAGGERATED poses that communicate something. When working with the books it is suggested that the children connect themselves physically. Newer dancers tend to connect to another person with their hands. As comfort increases, and especially if it is modelled for them, they will connect in more unusual ways such as touching with their backs or knees.



A 'sad' tableau with newer dancers



A 'sad' tableau with more experienced dancers

5. Place students in groups of 3 or 4. Write all six concepts from the book on the board, or sheet of large paper to be posted on the wall if working the gym. Have each group sit in a separate space in the room and select one topic from the book to explore. Explain that they are going to communicate to their audience what is on the card through dance and tableau. In order to do this, they will need to create a tableau, using all of their bodies together, which demonstrates the concept.

The only thing they practice when placed in their groups is the tableau. The dancing part is improvised.

Make sure the students know that others will be guessing what they are so therefore they should work quietly so that others do not hear them! Allow about 8 to 10 minutes for groups to work.

Encourage the students not to vote as this will result in some people feeling disappointed and others victorious. Instead, have the students try to compromise and listen to each other's ideas. This may mean that you, as the teacher, may have to join their circle in order to facilitate some discussion around not always getting what you want and listening to the quieter members of the group. If selecting a



concept together poses too challenging of a task for the group, you may need to select the concept for them.

6. Gather the groups to watch each group's dance and tableau.

The students start in *neutral*. Neutral is standing tall with feet slightly apart and arms hung comfortably by their sides. When the music starts they each dance on their own with their own version of the concept. (e.g., if dancing WATER, one student may wish to be a gentle rain whilst another may prefer to be a splashing ocean wave.) When you say 'tableau', the group forms their tableau. They hold this tableau for 3 seconds.

NOTE: Allowing the students to each dance the concept in their own way is very important for two reasons:

- i. It allows each dancer to develop their own movement vocabulary, be creative and explore their own style while pushing their own limits as they become more and more comfortable within the medium of dance.
 - ii. It allows the audience to watch the diversity of the multiple ways a concept can be communicated and danced; reaffirming the idea that art is personal and expression is varied.
7. After each group presents, allow the chance for the other's to guess what the concept was. Remember to limit the guesses to only two as explained on page 3.
 8. Peer Feedback.
 9. Light stretching and cool down.



Exercise 2 – Creating a Circle Tableau

Summary: In this exercise students will work on creating a spontaneous group tableau. It will incorporate elements of dance to enrich the overall result of the group work.

Materials

- *I Can Dance* books and CDs

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside

Exercise

1. Prior to class, select a book and concept with which you would like to work.
2. Begin class with light stretching and some free movement. You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.
3. Have the students sit in a large circle and tell them the concept you have chosen and explain to them how the group tableau will be created.

To create the circle tableau¹, you will move around the outside of the circle gently tapping each student, randomly, not in the order in which they are sitting. As each student is tapped, they should enter the centre of the circle and give dimension to the group tableau

Tap the second person quite quickly so that no one is in the centre alone for very long.

(e.g., if working on the concept ‘spaghetti’ for the *Dinner* book, then when each person is tapped they would go into the middle and form a tableau of a noodle). As each new person goes in to the circle, they will connect in some way to another person in the tableau. Tell the students to pick tableaux that can be held for a while and do not require them to lean on anyone to sustain the pose.

¹ If you own the *I Can Dance a Better World* resource, this exercise is demonstrated in the “General Introduction” on the DVD.



Each student should add to the tableau in a way that contributes to the multi-dimensional shape of the tableau (e.g., if many students are low or on the ground, the other students should try to add to the tableau by standing or reaching; if most are using their arms, the others would try to use a different body part to express the concept). The goal for the students is to not plan how they are going to be in the tableau, but to see what is there and instantly try to add to it in a way that varies the HEIGHT, DIRECTION, BODY PART EMPHASIS, WHAT BODY PART IS USED TO ATTACH and SHAPE.

4. After everyone is in the middle, hold the tableau for about 3 seconds and then have the students return to their original spots moving as the select concept and when they get to their spot to sit down.
5. Light stretching and cool down.



Exercise 3 –Creating a Multi-Concept Circle Tableau

Summary: This is the same exercise as Ex. 2, but with an additional step wherein students will shift from one concept to another while in the circle (e.g., if frozen as wind, switch to fire).

Materials

- *I Can Dance* books and CDs

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside

Exercise

1. Prior to class, select a book and concept with which you would like to work.
2. Begin class with light stretching and some free movement. You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.
3. Have the students sit in a large circle and tell them the two concepts you have chosen and explain how the shift between the two will take place. Students do this by changing everything but where their feet or other body part is connected to the floor. They should change their emotion, body tension, fingers, face, arms, etc... and then hold that tableau.
4. Create a circle tableau of first concept. After it has been held for a few seconds, say the name of the second concept they will be shifting into.
5. After a few more seconds, have the students return to their places moving as the second concept for which they create a tableau.
6. Light stretching and cool down.



Exercise 4 – Blending Themes

Summary: In this exercise, students will explore the beginnings of storytelling and choreography. It also provides a foundation for understanding the interdisciplinary reach of dance wherein students explore, physically, the scientific concepts of cause and reaction.

Materials

- *I Can Dance the Outdoors* book and CD
- Concept cards (to be created by teacher)
- Masking tape (if necessary)

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside

Exercise

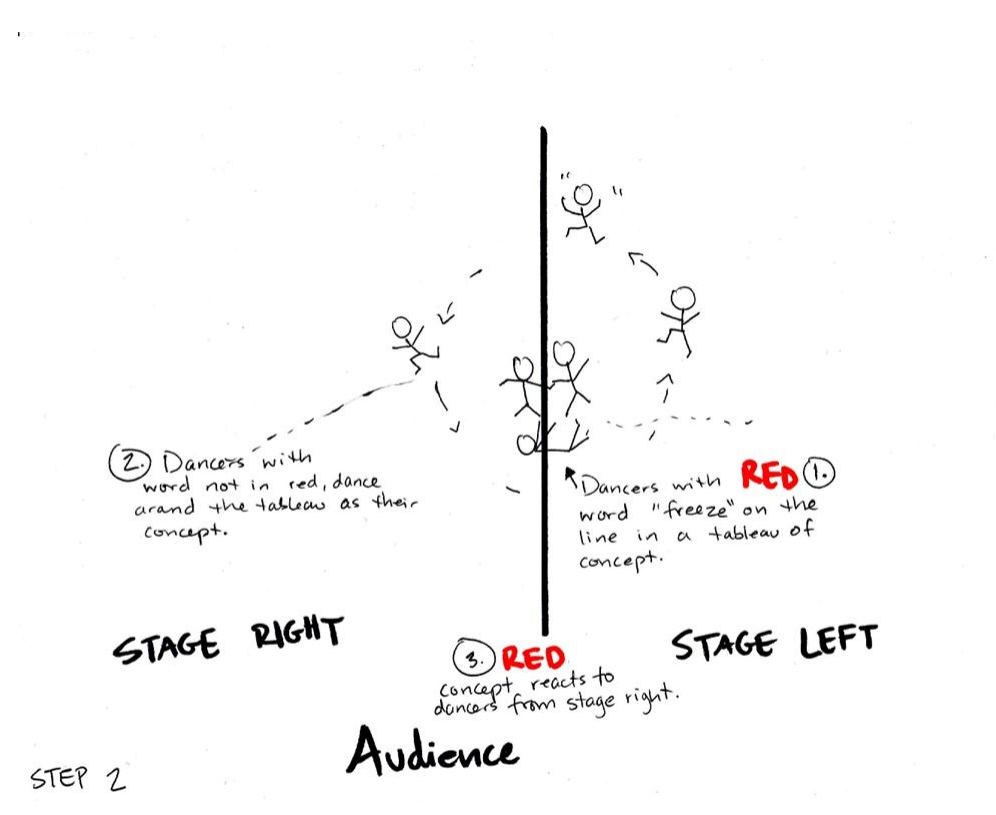
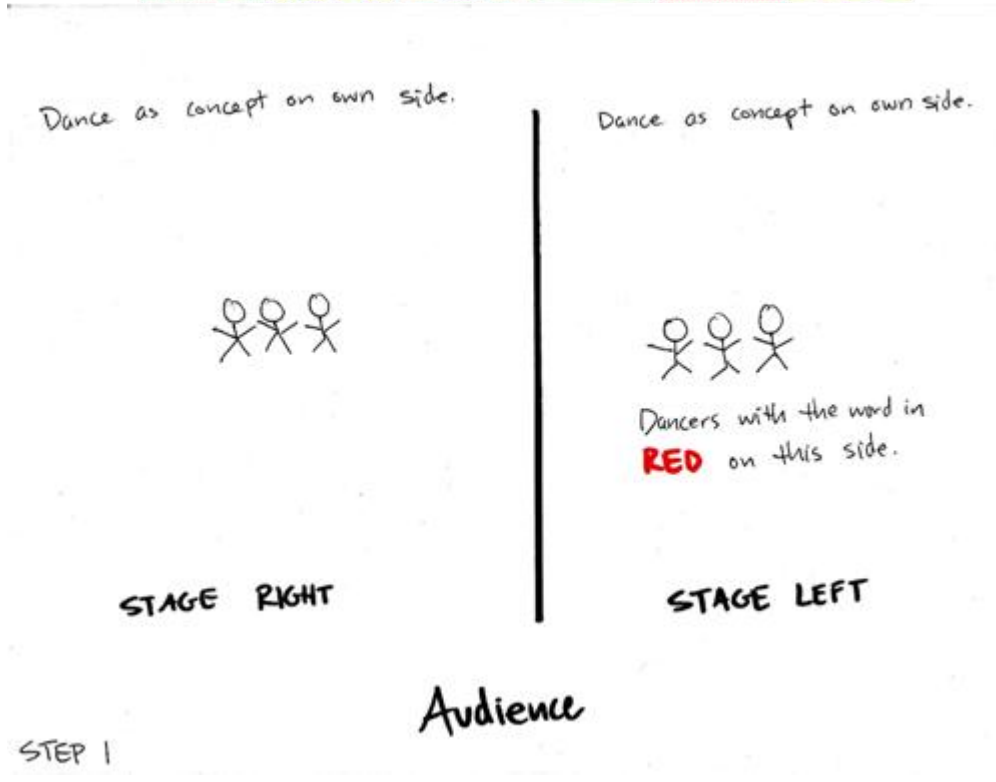
1. Create cardboard cards to hand out as shown below.

FIRE – WATER	EARTH – WATER	FIRE – EARTH	EARTH – FIRE
WATER – FIRE	FIRE – WIND	ICE – FIRE	WATER – WIND

2. Begin class with light stretching and some free movement. You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.
3. Create a space using masking tape or the lines on the gym floor to create a clear division. Show the students this space and explain that they will be given two concepts on a card and they are to demonstrate how the concepts can react to one another in a particular way.
 - Part of the group will begin on one side of the line; the other portion of the group on the other side of the line. Each side is one of the concepts on the card. Students will choose which of their group members will be which concept. The students dancing the word in **RED** start on stage left.
 - All dancers begin in neutral.



- When the music starts students on both sides of the line start dancing as their concept.
 - Students who are dancing the concept in **RED** will freeze in a tableau of their concept on the dividing line. Students who are dancing the concept in **BLACK** will dance around the frozen **red** tableau on the line. The dancers who are frozen **REACT** to the concept that moves around them. (e.g., **FIRE** is frozen in the middle, **WATER** dances around the fire tableau. The **FIRE** tableau reacts to the **WATER** by dying out and dissolving to the ground. Alternatively, if the colours are reversed, **WATER** would react to **FIRE** by boiling.) *For clarity, please see diagram on next page.*
4. Once this is all explained to students you may begin. Place students in groups of 3 or 4 and have them sit down in small clusters around the room. Give each group a card. Students should work quietly as the class will be guessing the 2 concepts they are presenting and communicating. Allow about 8 to 10 minutes for groups to work.
 5. As students are presenting, play music that is generic so that students cannot guess the concepts by the music. If doing this for a larger presentation, such as an assembly etc... you may wish to use the track of the red concept in the second edition books.
 6. Students present followed by peer feedback
 7. Light stretching and cool down.





Exercise 6 – Transitioning in Free Movement

Summary: In this exercise students will further explore the dynamics of shifting from one concept to another as introduced in Ex. 4 and Ex. 5.

Materials

- *I Can Dance* books and CDs

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside.

Exercise

1. Select a book and concept with which you would like to work.
2. Begin class with light stretching and some free movement. You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.
3. Have the students sit in a large circle. Explain that they are going to be transitioning from one concept to another.
 - a. Pick what lines on the gym floor will be used. If the gym does not have that many, use all of them, or select one or two colours.
 - b. Students will move around the room as one of the concepts. Each time they cross over the selected lines (let's say the red line) their body should transition to the other concept selected. (e.g., 'spiky' and 'smooth' from the *Textures* book: If dancing spiky, as the student crosses over a red line, they would become smooth.)
 - c. You can suggest that students go in slow motion as they cross over so that part of their body is on one side and part on the other. This is very challenging to do! One arm and hand may be on the spiky side while the other is still in smooth...eventually their whole body transitions. They would continue to do this around the gym.
4. Light stretching and cool down.



Exercise 7 – Presenting Transitions

Summary: In this exercise students will explore the concept of communicating more than one thing at the same time. This lays the ground work for understanding the complexity of a character or concept while encouraging students to focus on communicating in subtle and very clear ways as they move in slow motion from one concept to another.

Materials

- *I Can Dance* books
- Generic music

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium
- Masking tape (if necessary)

Exercise

1. Select a book from the series with which to work. Write all six concepts from the book on the board or large sheet of paper to be posted in the gym wall. Create a space in the classroom that is divided in half. Use masking tape or the lines on the gym floor to a clear division.
2. Begin class with light stretching and some free movement. You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.
3. Have the students sit in a large circle. Explain that they are going to be transitioning from one concept to another.
4. Students are placed in groups of 3-4
5. Each group should spread out to a separate space in the room and sit down. As a group, students choose two topics to explore. Encourage the students to not vote as then some in the group may feel disappointed and others victorious which splits the collective goal. Try to have the students compromise and listen to each other's ideas. This may mean that sometimes you as a teacher may have to join their circle and facilitate some discussion around not always getting your way and listening to the quieter members of the group and learning about empathy. If selecting a concept together poses too challenging a task, then select a concept for the group. Make sure the students



know that others will be guessing what they are so therefore they should work quietly so that others do not hear them!

6. Give each student a piece of tape to put on the floor if practicing in a classroom, if in a gym they can use a gym line.
7. A portion of each group would start on either side of the divide, each as one of the concepts. Each group at their own time would transition slowly across the line making sure that at some point they are on both sides and communicating both concepts at once. Once they have switched sides and dances for a bit more, the teacher will prompt them to form their tableau. The tableau should be ON the dividing line. Those on the separate side will be the specific concept demonstrated for that side. If a student falls right in the middle of the line for the tableau, then whatever body part falls on each side, that part would match the correct concept for that side.
8. Peer feedback. Have students guess what each side was and what moments supported their thinking.
9. Light stretching and cool down.



Exercise 8 – Creating Dance Stories

Books that work best for this form of storytelling are *I Can Dance the Outdoors* and *I Can Dance My Feelings*. Although it is possible to create stories with all of the other books, the concepts found in these two books lend themselves very well to dynamic dance stories, particularly for those newer to the dance experience.

Summary: This will be the beginnings of students choreographing and linking the idea that dance can communicate complex ideas, thoughts and reflections through the ways we move, express and interact with one another in this context.

The objective is to further their last exploration that simply communicated a *concept* through movement to creating and communicating an actual ‘story’ through movement. The story can be very simple, but students need to know that something has to HAPPEN in their story...just like in all stories. The occurrence need not be complex at this stage of choreography at all. The focus should be on a simple occurrence that can be well communicated and expressed. (e.g. Instead of just dancing FIRE from the *Outdoors* book, students would create a dance story that involves FIRE. This could be very simple such as:

- The fire starts as a spark, grows bigger and bigger, then dies down.
- The fire starts in one area. A wind comes in and the fire is blown all over the space being used. As the wind goes away ... the fire dies down.
- The fire is raging. Water comes in and splashes over it. The fire dies.

The point is to no longer have the students only communicating the concept being explored but to integrate that concept into an event.

Materials

- *I Can Dance* books
- Generic music

Space Requirements

- Gymnasium



Exercise

1. Select a book from the series with which to work. Write all six concepts from the book on the board or large sheet of paper on the gym wall.

It is always best if students select their own concepts as their enthusiasm for the work tends to rise when they have ownership over its creation as well.

2. Begin class with light stretching and free movement.

You may wish to use the music from one of the books or your own. Free movement should last for approximately one minute.

3. Explain the objective to the students and place in groups of 3 or 4. Have the students discuss as a group what concepts they wish to use and what their story will be.

Just as in Ex. 1, encourage the students not to vote as this will result in some people feeling disappointed and others victorious.

Instead, have the students try to compromise and listen to each other's ideas. This may mean that you as the teacher may have to join their circle in order to facilitate some discussion around not always getting what you want and listening to the quieter members of the group. If selecting a concept together poses too challenging of a task for the group, you may need to give them a short story to create.

4. Students practice their movement story. This should not be memorized or timed to the music. The story should be clear in all their minds so that they follow the correct order of events, but should not have memorized steps. This will allow students to express themselves in many ways whilst moving rather than counting or focusing on steps. They are focusing on communicating to their audience.

Groups should practice their tableau that they will end in.

5. Share their stories with class.
6. Peer feedback.
7. Light stretching and cool down.



Exercise 9 - Creating Dance Stories with Props

Summary: This is the same as Ex. 8, however, in this exercise each group selects 1 prop that they will incorporate into their dance to help communicate the idea. Props can be *anything* used to help the audience better feel and understand the message. Props are not used to REPLACE the movement. (e.g., If a student is dancing WIND and using a scarf, the student should not walk around having the scarf blowing and dancing as wind.) The student should be moving as wind alongside the scarf. The scarf *enhances* the communication, not replaces the work of the dancer.

Either: (i) present this idea ahead of time to give each group time to select and bring in their props, OR (ii) provide many props for the students to use on the day of the class

Ideas for Props:

Scarves, blankets, stretchy fabric (or nylons cut-up), sheets, paper bags, socks painted colours

The above are all props I have seen used by students of this age to further their stories that also tend not to cost much and can often be purchased second hand, made themselves, or simply brought in from home and returned.

Gym Mats:

If the teacher can allow the students creative freedom in a gym and there are gym mats available, these mats are often used very creatively to create barriers and spaces that allow the dimension of the piece to deepen, houses to be ‘blown’ down, as a soft ground for students to explore more floor work and so much more. You may wish to open this idea to students before they discuss their concept and choreography.