



## I Can Dance

### **Extension Exercises: PRIMARY**

Solely using the books and CDs 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.

#### **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.

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

#### **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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://hannahbeach.com).

## Sharing Work

Most of the exercises contain a component wherein students will share their group 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.
- 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.



## 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. Since they will not yet create a whole dance together, it is very manageable for younger students.

### Materials

- *I Can Dance* books and CDs
- Concept cards (to be prepared by teacher – examples provided below)

### Space Requirements

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside

### Exercise

1. 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.
2. Have the class sit together on the floor, either in a circle or facing you.
3. 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*



4. Place students in groups of 3 or 4.

Have each group sit in a separate space in the room. Hand each group one card which depicts a concept from the book from which you have chosen to work.

Eg.)



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. Allow 8 to 10 minutes for groups to work. **NOTE:** The only thing they practice when placed in their groups to work is the tableau. The dancing part is improvised.

5. Gather the groups to watch each group's dance and tableau. Before beginning to dance, the group tells the audience what they will be dancing.

The students always 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.

***Music Selections: You can use the music provided on the CD for each concept or select your own.***

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

- 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.



- 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.

#### 6. Peer Feedback.

- Preparing students for peer feedback: Sometimes children need a closer look at the tableau to see it from all sides or to stand up and see it if it bird's eye view. If this is the case with the tableau in front of them, encourage the children to take a trip to the pretend 'gallery'. Remind your students that, just like in a real gallery, one must not touch the art. To make it more real, have your students put on their pretend boots and coat and then gently set off to look at the tableau from all angles and then sit down to talk about the piece.

#### 7. Light stretching and cool down.



## *Exercise 2–Group Tableaux of Animals*

**Summary:** In this exercise, students will be creating a group tableau of an animal wherein each student is a different part of the animal (e.g., one person is the elephant’s trunk, another the ears etc...). They may do this standing up or bird’s eye view.

### **Materials**

- *I Can Dance the Zoo* book and CDs

### **Space Requirements**

- Gymnasium or classroom with desks pushed aside

### **Exercise**

1. 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.
2. Place students in groups of 3 or 4. Have each group sit in a separate space in the room. Go to each group and tell them the animal they will be creating with their bodies. Allow about 8 to 10 minutes for groups to work. **NOTE:** The only thing they practice when placed in their groups to work is the tableau. The dancing part is improvised.
3. Gather the groups to watch each group’s dance and tableau.
4. When the music starts they each dance on their own with their own version of the concept. When you say ‘tableau’, the group forms their tableau of the animal. They hold this tableau for 3 seconds.
5. Peer feedback. For this exercise, a ‘trip to the gallery’ as described in Ex. 1 is recommended so students can see the animal from all angles.
6. Light stretching and cool down.



### Exercise 3 – Creating a Circle Tableau

**Summary:** In this exercise students will work on creating a spontaneous group tableau.

#### 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 and tell them the concept you have chosen and explain to them how the group tableau will be created.

To create the circle tableau<sup>1</sup>, you will move around the outside of the circle gently tapping each child, randomly, not in the order in which they are sitting. As each child is tapped, they should enter the centre of the circle and add a dimension to the group tableau.(e.g., if working on the concept spaghetti for the *Dinner* book, then when you tap each person 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

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

4. After everyone is in the middle, ask them to move back 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.

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





### Exercise 4 – Mixing Colours

**Summary:** In this exercise students will explore how movement can demonstrate the process of two things blending and turning into something new. This dance experience is often fun after first exploring colour mixing with real paint.

#### Materials

- *I Can Dance* books and CDs
- 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 that have these concepts written on them. Write the words in colours as shown.

|                    |                      |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>RED – WHITE</b> | <b>BLUE – YELLOW</b> | <b>BLACK – WHITE</b> |
| <b>BLUE – RED</b>  | <b>RED – YELLOW</b>  |                      |

2. Create a space in the classroom using masking tape or the lines on the gym floor to create clear division. Show the students this space and explain that they are going to be given colours on a card and that they will be demonstrating how those colours mix to become and new colour.
  - Part of the group will stand on one side of the line being one colour; the other portion of the group on the other side being the other colour.
  - They do not need to practice dancing the colours. The only thing they should practice is how to MIX the colours
3. Place students in groups of 3 or 4 and have sit down in small clusters around the room. Give each group a card.



4. Group presentations. Students will start by standing in neutral on their own sides. They will then say aloud the colours of each group. When the music begins, each group dances their own colour.

When the teacher prompts, the groups then mix together on the line. Students can come up with any way to creatively mix their colours as one would mix paint in a pot or at a hardware store etc. After mixing for a bit, the students turn into their new colour.

5. Peer feedback. Students can talk about what colour those two colours turned into. Colours are so abstract and seen and felt so differently that there are many unique perspectives on how colours can be expressed. It is for this reason I suggest to have students state their colours before beginning to dance.

6. Light stretching and cool down.