Arts Assessment For Learning

DANCE — 7ᵀᴴ GRADE

ACTION PLAN: IMPROVING JAZZ TECHNIQUE

Who (the class or group I will focus on):

7th grade advanced class.

Inquiry question:

Does peer feedback improve students' execution and their performance of jazz dance technique within student choreography?

Student learning goals:

- Exhibit proper muscle use, alignment, and posture specific to jazz dance technique.
- Accurately execute jazz technique: pirouette; parallel passé; spotting; and leap.
- Apply proper jazz technique within student choreography.
- Assess peers in the execution of jazz dance technique.
- Revise performance of jazz technique by applying feedback received from peers.
- Work cooperatively with peers.

What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:

Checklist, peer feedback.

Why this strategy will help my students achieve or improve the above goals:

I noticed that my students struggle with performing dance technique. Not only do they have a hard time accurately executing technique, but they also struggle with performing technique within their own choreography. I would like my students to be able to execute basic style-specific dance technique with proper alignment, and then be able to perform the technique accurately in their choreography. The use of a checklist along with peer feedback will help students assess, apply feedback, and revise their own performance of each skill.

How I plan to implement this assessment strategy in my practice and/or lessons:

Step 1: Establishing Criteria

The students were introduced to the genre of jazz dance, and taught basic jazz technique. The first few classes were spent teaching students the criteria of how to execute

technique with proper alignment. Students learned the criteria for executing: pirouette; spotting; parallel passé; and leap.

Step 2: Modeling and Practicing Giving Feedback with Checklist and Feedback Protocol

Students learned how to give paired feedback using the technique criteria checklist and a feedback protocol. The feedback protocol required students to use only the criteria written on the technique checklist. First, students were told to begin with a positive comment, "I like how you pointed your foot at the knee when you did your pirouette." Next, students were instructed to give constructive feedback by beginning their comment with, "I wish". For example, "I wish you would land in fourth position." In each class, I introduced one skill and then students practiced giving feedback to a partner on that skill. Once students received the feedback, they were immediately given another opportunity to apply the feedback and revise their performance of the skill.

Step 3: Implementing Checklist

The class was divided into pairs. At the beginning of class, during the "warm-up" portion of the class, students would peer assess each other's performance of one of the four jazz skills. During each of these feedback sessions, one student would perform the skill while their partner would observe to see if the student met the criteria. The student observing would then note on the checklist if the performing student had met the criteria (check plus), was approaching proficiency (check), or was still working on that skill (check minus). The checklist allowed the students to track their progress on the performance of each of the four jazz skills. After selecting a focus group of novice dancers I began to film their feedback sessions on my iPad in order to collect data.

Step 4: Small Group Student Choreography

The entire class was then divided into groups of five and given the compositional task of choreographing a small jazz piece that incorporated the four jazz skills that they had learned. Once the group began choreographing, I filmed their choreographic work before they received any peer feedback on the execution of their jazz technique. My focus group was comprised of the same students whose paired feedback sessions I had begun to film.

When I plan to implement this strategy (at which point in the teaching/learning cycle or unit plan):

This project took place over a 6-week period in which I saw my students twice a week. The feedback sessions occurred at the beginning of each class, during what was typically

the time set aside for "warm-up". Other times the feedback sessions took place immediately after I taught the technique skill, or reviewed the skill with entire class. Toward the end of the unit, choreography groups took turns giving feedback on how the group members executed technique within their choreography.

Evidence of effectiveness of this assessment strategy:

I will know that my students have met the learning goals when they are able to:

- Provide peer feedback that is constructive and based on specific jazz technique criteria.
- Revise their work by applying the feedback they received from their peers.
- Execute jazz technique accurately by meeting the criteria established for each skill.
- Use proper technique when performing their original choreography.