

Arts Assessment For Learning

DANCE — 7TH GRADE

HOW TO & TIPS: IMPROVING JAZZ TECHNIQUE

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

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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.