**Arts Assessment For Learning**

## ACTION PLAN: IMPROVING MODERN DANCE TECHNIQUE

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

6th grade class

**Inquiry question:**

Does peer feedback based on specific criteria improve student execution of modern dance technique?

**Student learning goals:**

- Exhibit proper muscle use, alignment and posture specific to modern dance technique.
- Accurately execute the modern technique: triplet; prance; contraction; battement, and arabesque.
- Apply proper modern dance technique within student choreography.
- Evaluate peers in the execution of modern dance technique.
- Revise performance of modern technique by applying feedback received from their peers.
- Work cooperatively with peers.

**Identify indicators from the *Blueprint* aligned with the student learning goals:**

- Develop skills and techniques: Exhibit proper muscle use, alignment and posture appropriate to a style.
- Perform: Improve performance independently in response to feedback.
- Respond, Reflect, Revise: Clarify and improve dancing by analyzing the way the body works, and the characteristics and demands of various genres, styles and techniques.

**What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:**

Students will aim to improve their modern dance technique through peer feedback. Students will learn a feedback protocol that will enable them to give and receive peer feedback. Feedback will be based on clear modern technique criteria. The student giving the feedback will observe their peer execute modern technique and then state a criterion in which they observed their peer do well, and then follow up with specific criteria that their peer must improve. The student receiving the feedback will then immediately have an opportunity to implement the feedback they received from their partner.

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

My students are beginner level dancers who struggle with executing proper dance technique. They also have a difficult time performing technique accurately within their own choreography. I see my students twice a week and I would like them to be able to execute basic style specific dance technique with proper alignment.

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

The students were introduced to the genre of modern dance and the modern dance technique used in Cunningham (prance, battement, contraction, triplet, and arabesque). The first few classes were spent teaching students the criteria on how to execute each movement with proper alignment. For example when executing a triplet they learned the following criteria:

- Head and spine upright and make a 180 ° line with their back.
- Perform the triplet with the correct footwork – plié, releve´, releve´
- Straight legs in releve´
- Foot flat in plié

Students were then taught how to conduct paired feedback using a specific feedback protocol.

Feedback protocol:

- Use the technique criteria checklist to give specific feedback.
- Begin stating a positive comment about the performance of the skill your partner performed. Use the criteria feedback form.
- Follow up with specific feedback that your partner needs to work on.
- Do not give opinions or feedback that is not based on the specified criteria.
- Apply the feedback immediately.

Feedback Process:

Students were taught how to conduct paired feedback sessions to improve their dance technique. Students were given a technique criteria checklist to record their feedback and track their progress over time. Students were paired, switched forms and took turns giving specific feedback on a modern technique skill on the form. One person performed the skill and their partner watched to assess if the person was meeting the criteria listed on the technique criteria form. The person giving the feedback would put the following checkmark next to each criterion.

√**+ for mastered criteria/got it**

√ **for approaching proficiency / almost got it**

√**- for still working on it**

After hearing the feedback, the student was given another opportunity to perform the technique skill and apply the feedback immediately. Students would then switch roles. The teacher selected one focus student to video throughout the entire unit in order to document growth.  The teacher recorded the feedback sessions of the focus student and her partner on an ipad in order to provide visual feedback and teacher feedback.

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

Lessons were held twice a week for a total of seven weeks.

1) The peer feedback sessions began during lesson three.

2) Students retrieved their forms from a container in the classroom and were given six to ten minutes to give each other feedback on one or more of the skills.

3) In each class the teacher introduced one new skill on the technique criteria form and then the students were paired, switched forms and then took turns giving specific feedback on that skill.  Students recorded their feedback on their partner's form in order to track progress.

4) The teacher recorded the feedback sessions of the focus student once every other week and assisted other students in the class when she was not recording the focus student.

5) Once all of the skills had been taught the teacher would sometimes pick the skill the students would work on, or allow the students to pick the skill they wanted to receive feedback on.

6) Also, around lesson six the feedback sessions began to take place at the beginning of each class before the warm-up.  Students knew that when they entered the classroom they were expected to retrieve their peer feedback criteria form, and begin working with a partner on improving their technique.  The feedback sessions lasted 6-10 minutes.

**Evidence of effectiveness of this assessment strategy:**

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

1) Provide peer feedback that is valuable and based on specific modern dance technique criteria.

2) Apply the feedback that their peers give them.

3) Execute modern dance technique accurately by meeting the criteria established for each skill.

4) Students use proper technique while performing their choreography.

**How I Can Capture The Evidence:**

Record the feedback process of my focus student once every other week on my Ipad.

Use the modern technique criteria checklist to document the progress my focus student has made over a six week period.