

**COIS
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DANCE**

BROADREACH



Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



CREATIVE DANCE TALES

**A DIGITAL RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS AND
DANCE ARTISTS**



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

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CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	4
THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT.....	4
DANCE AND THE CURRICULUM	4
AIMS	6
ASSESSMENT.....	6
WHAT TO ASSESS SKILLS.....	6
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES	6
HOW TO PROMPT OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION AMONG CHILDREN.....	6
THE LESSON PLANS WITH VISUAL MATERIALS	7
LESSON 1. PETER	7
LESSON 2. THE WOLF	7
LESSON 3. THE WOLF and PETER meet.....	7
LESSON 4. THE HUNTERS	7
GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY DANCE LANGUAGE.....	8
ONLINE RESOURCES	10
CREDITS	11



Photo: Ros Kavanagh, 2015

BACKGROUND

CREATIVE DANCE TALES is storytelling through dance. It began as a pilot workshop project supported by The Ireland Funds in 2015.

CREATIVE DANCE TALES ran in parallel with David Bolger's production *THE WOLF AND PETER* by CoisCéim Dance Theatre. This timeless story, re-created as seen through the eyes of the wolf, was inspired by composer Sergei Prokofiev's *PETER AND THE WOLF* - one of the most famous pieces of music ever written.

The highly successful workshop project was delivered to over 300 children in 8 primary schools at 6 locations around Ireland. It gave children an imaginative, kinaesthetic learning experience in dance and highlighted the power of storytelling through performance. Two professional development workshops for educators were also held in Dublin and Galway. In part, the **CREATIVE DANCE TALES DIGITAL RESOURCE** emerged from requests made by teachers in primary schools.

THE WOLF AND PETER marked the final production of CoisCéim's Arts Council funded residency at The School of Arts Education and Movement, Institute of Education, St Patrick's Campus, DCU. As a legacy of the three year residency, the digital resource was developed by CoisCéim and the Physical Education Unit.



Children from St. Patrick's Boys NS Drumcondra. Photo: Anthony Griffin, 2015

INTRODUCTION

This digital resource includes four lesson plans, some visual materials, a glossary of dance terminology, and website listings to access recommended music and other dance education information. Designed to stimulate creative thinking for teachers and children alike, the resource can be adapted for children from First to Sixth class. It is for use by both teachers and dance artists and assumes knowledge and experience of current pedagogical practice.

It is recommended to read the educational context note below to gain a deeper understanding of the lesson plans before teaching. We hope it will stimulate much creative activity and dancing for everyone. Enjoy!

We hope that you find this resource simple and effective to use. Feedback is welcome - please contact info@coisceim.com.

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Dance is one of the movement experiences in the PHYSICAL EDUCATION PRIMARY CURRICULUM (1999), which provides 'children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives'. To fulfil these needs, physical education is built on the principles of variety and diversity, not of specialisation. **CREATIVE DANCE TALES** is linked with the Primary School Physical Education Curriculum (Creative Dance).

'Dance in education involves the child in creating, performing and appreciating movement as a means of expression and communication' (THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM, NCCA, 1999, p.3). Dance is joyous. It is physical and expressive and contributes to children's cognitive and social development.

THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM (1999) recommends that children should experience creative and folk dance during their primary school years. Through this experience children learn about body and spatial awareness, the dynamics of movement and then learn to work individually, in pairs and in groups. It is important to note that 'the child's concept of what a dance is can be enriched by opportunities to see and appraise the more accomplished work of others' (p.3). The recent Arts Council Strategy MAKING GREAT ART WORK (2016-2025) advocates for the 'centrality of the arts in formal education at all levels' (p.26). THE ARTS IN EDUCATION CHARTER (2012) highlights the enriching role that the arts can make 'in nurturing the developing minds and imaginations' of children (p.10). It underlines the importance of presenting opportunities to children from the early years onwards to experience dance and to see dance.

DANCE AND THE CURRICULUM

CREATIVE DANCE TALES is designed to inform and encourage a **cross curricular approach to learning**, and contribute to developing varied pedagogical practices in dance, and is a tool box which can promote integrated learning.

In education there is a focus on an integrated curriculum that connects different topics and emphasises unifying concepts. This resource provides opportunities for teachers to connect **physical education** with other areas of primary education including **music, visual arts, drama, mathematics, social personal and health education** and **literacy**.



Photo: Ros Kavanagh, 2015

In **Music**, elements can be explored such as tempo and rhythm, to encourage children to listen and respond to different styles of music, for example DJ Slam – PETER AND THE WOLF RE-MIX; Leopold Stokowski and Captain Kangaroo's PETER AND THE WOLF, THE HUNTERS ARRIVE.

The lessons link with work in **Visual Arts** as children begin by responding to particular images e.g. a photograph of the WOLF, or a painting they have created. This can encourage them to '*record real or imagined ideas and feelings*' through '*looking at and responding to art*' (Visual Arts Curriculum, NCCA, 1999).

In **Drama**, children can work in role to explore the different perspectives of the two main characters of the story and the tension that underlies their interaction. Through the process of physicalising this relationship, and standing in the shoes of 'other', they can explore the age old fidelities and betrayals that have underpinned the complex relationship between humans and animals.

In **Mathematics** the concept of shape is explored. Through the dance lessons symmetry and asymmetry can be examined as children create matching and mirroring movements. Children can investigate the 2-D shapes formed when their weight is supported by different parts of the body, and the changes that occur when limbs are moved. Children explore their 3-dimensional space as they travel in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions, and use different levels in creating tableaux and mirror shapes. There are numerous opportunities for children to extend, copy and describe complex repeating patterns in movement and action.

In **SPHE**, the children learn how to share ideas and feelings in relation to the characters and the environment (meadow) and develop empathy. Individual and group performances can increase children's self-confidence and self-awareness, and their communicative and cooperative skills.

Literacy is developed through the story of THE WOLF AND PETER. Reading, discussing, and describing are promoted as children are prompted to use descriptive language in response to the movement material (*lying, crouching, lunging, kneeling*). They learn to describe Peter's actions and feelings (happily dancing in the meadow), as well as talk about the wolf's response to Peter (children transform into the wolf and discuss how they might feel or act when meeting the wolf: *curious, protective, frightened, alert*).

AIMS

- **EXPRESS IDEAS** using the imagery of THE WOLF AND PETER showing awareness, understanding and sensitivity towards the movements of others
- **PRACTISE AND DEVELOP** dance movement vocabulary and fundamental movement skills showing spatial awareness and control
- **WORK TOGETHER** to enjoy dance showing an awareness of safe movement practice
- **PERFORM DANCE** with confidence and expression
- **OBSERVE AND DISCUSS** choreography created and dance performances

Building on the above aims there are *specific learning outcomes* linked to the content of each lesson.

ASSESSMENT

During each lesson the teacher can use various strategies to help assess the children's learning.

WHAT TO ASSESS | SKILLS

- **PHYSICAL** | performing and linking dance steps such as jumping, turning, galloping with control
- **COGNITIVE** | interpreting instructions, ability to remember and describe movement
- **SOCIAL** | listening in a group, making suggestions in an appropriate way, commenting sensitively
- **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT** | level of engagement with particular tasks; variety of movements to convey the characters

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Teacher observation and questioning is very important in the delivery of quality work in dance. Children can engage in self-assessment guided by the teacher's questions and can progress to peer-assessment (*can you describe Peter's body actions when he meets the wolf?*).

When watching the dance of others, children could be prompted to use a variety of techniques (e.g. two stars and a wish - identify two positive aspects of the work of a peer and then express a wish about what the peer might do next time in order to improve another aspect of the work).

HOW TO PROMPT OBSERVATION AND DISCUSSION AMONG CHILDREN

OPTION 1. Divide the class in half. One half of the class perform, the other half observe the performance. Children may be asked (depending on the lesson) to look closely at a particular aspect guided by teacher questioning embedded in each lesson e.g. *what are the travel steps the group are using?* Side step, skip, gallop. Swap over and repeat.

OPTION 2. One child looks at his/her partner guided by teacher questioning e.g. *look at the levels that your partner uses...describe what you see... is the shape high/low?*

THE LESSON PLANS

WITH VISUAL MATERIALS

LESSON 1. PETER

LESSON 2. THE WOLF

LESSON 3. THE WOLF and PETER meet

LESSON 4. THE HUNTERS



Photo: Ros Kavanagh, 2015

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY | DANCE LANGUAGE

These dance terms can be used according to the specific focus of each lesson:

BEAT	The <i>beat</i> is the basic unit used to measure time in both dance and music.
CHOREOGRAPHY	The compilation of a series of steps, actions, and movement to create a dance.
DANCE SKILLS	This refers to the development of physical and technical abilities to execute a particular step or action correctly e.g. landing from a jump onto one foot without wobbling!
DANCE STEPS	Dance steps form part of a dance – and are often codified or named eg. Polka Step.
GESTURE	Actions made by the body especially a hand or the head that do not involve carrying weight of the whole body through space.
LEVELS	Refers to the division of space by the body at a high, medium or low level.
MIRRORING	A physical action in which one person moves and the other is facing her/him moving, as if s/he was a mirror image.
PARTNER WORK	Choreography in pairs.
PATTERN	A repetition of lines, shapes, and/or movements that results in a spatial or movement design.
PATHWAYS	Patterns we make as we move through the air or around the floor (e.g. straight, circular, horizontal, zig-zag).
QUALITY OF MOVEMENT	Proficient execution of movement with a specific dynamic and/or expressive content.
RHYTHM	Within a dance context, <i>rhythm</i> is the way in which the temporal factor of movement is organized, including beat, tempo, measure, accents and dynamics.
SPACE	<u>According to Laban Movement Analysis</u> : <i>space</i> can be defined in 2 ways: <i>Kinesphere</i> - the axial space around the body. <i>Kinesphere</i> is directed along the Vertical, Horizontal and Sagittal axis of the body. <i>Dynamosphere</i> - the space one can reach with intent (Effort). <i>Dynamosphere</i> is composed of varied uses of Weight, Space, Time and Flow.
SPIN OR TURN ON 1 FOOT	A complete turn of the body executed on one leg; the working leg can be placed with the foot drawn up to the ankle or knee of the supporting leg. In Ballet, it is called a Pirouette.
SEQUENCE	A combination of actions linked together as one.

TABLEAU

A group of people who maintain varied poses without speaking or moving – as in a photograph.

TEMPO

In dance, *tempo* generally refers to the speed at which the beat is counted.

TRAVELLING STEPS

The means by which the body is moved using the feet e.g. skipping, changing weight from one foot to another.

UNISON

People moving in exactly the same style, at the same speed and rhythm.



Children from St. Patrick's Boys NS Drumcondra. Photos: Anthony Griffin, 2015

ONLINE RESOURCES

PETER AND THE WOLF

[ORIGINAL STORY | PETER AND THE WOLF \(for print\)](#)

[MUSICAL INSTRUMENTATION | PETER AND THE WOLF - a musical story](#)

[VIDEO | PETER AND THE WOLF - duration 27 minutes](#)

MUSIC

[General music from Apple](#) | [General music from Spotify](#) | [Music for dance by Chris Benstead](#)

DANCE IN IRELAND

[PRIMARY SCHOOLS' SPORTS INITIATIVE \(PSSI\) | Online resource for teaching Physical Education \(including Creative Dance\) in Primary Schools](#)

[COISCÉIM DANCE THEATRE | Professional contemporary dance theatre company](#)

[DANCE IRELAND | The representative body for dance in Ireland, providing training, development and practical supports for dance artists](#)

DANCE EDUCATION PUBLICATIONS

[Irish Primary Physical Education Guidelines \(1999\)](#)

[ARTSINEDUCATION.IE | National digital resource for arts in education practice](#)

DANCEBOOKS

- CREATIVE DANCE & LEARNING: MAKING THE KINESTHETIC LINK. Author: Mary Ann Brehm and Lynne McNett
- THE DANCE TEACHER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE - revised edition with cd. Author: Kathryn Sexton
- DANCING IN YOUR SCHOOL, A GUIDE FOR PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS. Author: Anne Dunkin

FURTHER LINKS TO DANCE IN EDUCATION

These may be of use for general dance education research

[COMMUNITYDANCE.ORG](#)

[ONEDANCEUK.ORG](#)

[AGA.ORG](#)



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CREATIVE DANCE TALES

THE WOLF AND PETER | A digital resource for teachers and dance artists

Credits

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CONTEXT NOTE

The CREATIVE DANCE TALES digital resource marks the legacy element of the Arts Council of Ireland funded three year residency of CoisCéim Dance Theatre at the School of Arts Education and Movement, Institute of Education, Dublin City University (formerly St Patrick's College, Drumcondra) and brought together the expertise and experience of Physical Education Lecturers, Susan Marron, Dr. Frances Murphy, Dr. Maura Coulter with that of CoisCéim BROADREACH Director, Philippa Donnellan.

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