

Movement in performance

Gail Deal

BTEC – Unit 50

BTEC

Introduction

This unit is aimed at actors and dancers who would like to improve their movement skills in different performance styles. Learners will perform in two contrasting movement pieces each lasting a minimum of 3 minutes.

Learners will be filmed during discussions about stimuli, workshops, rehearsals and performances. They will evaluate the process from starting point to final performance including exercises, sequences, combinations and set studies as well as movement used in scripted work.

Learners must keep a log or vlog to evaluate their own progress and identify and set targets to help them improve their performances: peers may direct each other and give feedback.

Teachers will write observation reports on rehearsals and performances using the Learning Outcomes. They will also write an assessment record for each learner and complete a tracking sheet summarising the learners' grades on each task.

The scheme is based on two teachers sharing the delivery of the unit. Each teacher has two lessons lasting 75 minutes each. One teacher focuses more on movement for dance (MD) and the other on movement for acting (MA). The first few weeks are based on workshops led by the two teachers using a variety of stimuli to build skills.

Learning outcomes (LO)

On completion of this unit a learner should:

1. Know how to respond to different stimuli as potential performance material

Grading criteria 1 (GC1)

Visual: e.g. paintings, films, photographs, sculpture, colours, shapes, animation, digital images

Aural: music; sound effects (live/recorded)

Text-based: e.g. script, poetry, literature, news items, notation

Concepts: e.g. abstract, thematic, narrative

2. Be able to reproduce movement phrases within a performance

Grading criteria 2 (GC2)

Movement pieces: e.g. set study, section of physical theatre, piece of repertory, part of notated score, scripted piece with movement emphasis, contact improvisation, devised movement pieces

Movement memory: technical accuracy; timing; rhythmic control; spatial control; dynamics; relationships; projection; interpretation

3. Be able to apply movement skills in rehearsal

Grading criteria 3 and 4 (GC3 and GC4)

Rehearsal process: show development of movement ideas; give and take ideas; work cooperatively with others; respond to instructions; take part in warm-ups; take part in rehearsals

Improvements: identify targets; make adjustments; practice sequences; analyse; review; repeat

4. Be able to apply movement skills in performance

Grading criteria 5 and 6 (GC5 and GC6)

Performing process: reproduce ideas; respond to other performers; project and communicate ideas through movement; use of performance elements, e.g. space, properties, costumes

Evaluation: identify strengths and weaknesses; make suggestions for improvement; consideration of audience reaction; assimilate views and opinions of others

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Unit Code: D/502/4907
Credit Value: 10
GLH: 60.



Assessment and grading criteria

Learners must demonstrate evidence for each of the assessment criteria. In order to achieve a distinction, a learner must meet the pass and merit criteria as well as the distinction criteria.

Personal, learning and thinking skills

Opportunities for the learner to demonstrate effective application of some of the personal, learning and thinking skills are shown in the square brackets on the grading criteria table at the end of this scheme. For each learner a tracking sheet of the PLTS across the various units is a simple way of providing evidence of PLTS which have been demonstrated throughout the course. This can be kept in a file along with the unit front sheets, assessment record sheets, witness statements and peer and teacher observation reports for each unit for each learner. These can all be done online and printed if need be to provide hard copies. The teacher is advised to prepare the documentation before delivering the unit. Observation records provide an effective way of recording practical sessions and performances but they cannot replace assessment records.

See *grading criteria table in the Resources at the end of this scheme.*

Delivery of the scheme of work

As previously stated, this scheme is based on two teachers sharing the delivery of the unit, with each having two lessons lasting 75 minutes each. One focuses on **movement for dance (MD)**, the other on **movement for acting (MA)**. The first few weeks are based on workshops led by both teachers using a variety of stimuli to build skills.

Week 1**P1 M1 D1 P2 M2 D2 P3 M3 D3****Introduction to unit, online folders and exploring stimuli.**

Introduce the learners to the unit and the working method. An online folder is set up for each learner on the course portal with permissions given to the learner and the two teachers. Learners should then write weekly logs/upload vlogs/upload audio recordings which document their lessons and evaluate their work. This is to help create evidence.

Teachers should provide learners with examples of good practice to demonstrate how to produce focused and detailed written work/video footage about progress made, targets set and evaluation of individual work. Learners need guidance on how to evaluate their work and some feedback on performance during workshops should be given as examples of how to evaluate work before the assignment is set.

The *learning outcomes table* and the *assessment and grading criteria table* should both be clearly displayed in the classroom and put online so learners have access to these two key documents. The *assignment brief* should clearly show which learning outcomes are being covered and which assessment and grading criteria are being targeted.

Each workshop will include a *warm-up* at the beginning and a *cool-down* at the end. Exercises will be used to prepare learners for movements required in different performance styles.

Workshop One (Dance)

Carry out a skills audit, which might start with a discussion or learners completing a profile. This could be a tick box sheet covering a variety of movement styles to see what experience learners have. This can be done online before the workshop. Questions might be:

- ▶ Do you have any formal dance training? If so, please tick the appropriate box/es and state the grade you are at, e.g. hip-hop, street, ballet, tap, disco, modern, jazz, physical theatre.
- ▶ Have you seen any live performances which included movement? Please tick below and give examples, e.g. classical ballet, musical theatre, opera, Greek theatre, commedia dell'arte, physical theatre.
- ▶ Can you name any physical theatre practitioners or companies?
- ▶ Can you name any choreographers?
- ▶ Do you have any injuries? Please give details.

These are just a few examples and you will be able to adapt your skills audit to suit your learners and the stage they are at in the course.

The workshop should begin with the teacher taking note of any injuries followed by a gentle warm-up and set exercises. This could follow a ballet style, a contemporary style or a street style. The learners must be given clear pointers about style and clear instructions on how to perform the exercises accurately and carefully. Sequences of movement can be demonstrated and a motif introduced and manipulated in various ways.

Vocabulary should be introduced relating to *action*, *space* and *dynamics*, in other words the components of movement. The teacher should evaluate the skills of the class and decide on what type of set study and performance pieces would work for the learners. The teacher should cover a range of *actions* in the workshop – *jumps*, *turns*, *travelling*, *falling*, *pauses* and *gestures*.

The teacher should define the word *stimulus* and distribute a range of *stimuli* to cover the visual and aural stimuli on the LO table. These could be presented in a booklet online and in hard copy for the workshop. Learners could use smart phones to access the online booklet. The teacher should spend 5 minutes introducing the stimuli and then let the learners work in trios, exploring at least one stimulus for ideas. The following questions should help the exploration:

Visual: e.g. paintings, films, photographs, sculpture, colours, shapes, animation, digital images.

1. Describe what you see (denotation) and what you associate with this (connotation).
2. What effect do the colours/shapes have?
3. Describe relationships between the people in the image; between the people and the landscape and between the people and any objects in the image.
4. Consider the composition of the image (where things are placed within the frame, i.e. the *mise-en-scene*). Discuss how this might be represented onstage in a tableau. Revise the nine areas of the stage so you can be specific. Consider the use of levels in the tableau. Explain how the three planes (vertical, horizontal and sagittal) can be used effectively to create expressive work. Show some clips from classical ballet and contemporary pieces. The Opera House website could be useful.
5. Can you detect any contrasts in the image which might lead to contrasts in movement chosen?

Aural: music; sound effects (live/recorded)

These can be played to the learners while they listen in silence. They could write down their initial reactions, then try to work out what instruments they hear and what the sound effects are. They could make note of how each one makes them feel. You could give them a list of settings, e.g. in the forest, at the seaside, by a cosy fire, etc., and ask them to match the music to the setting. Discuss how music can evoke mood and setting.

Give the learners in each trio or pair 3 minutes to decide which stimulus they wish to explore. They should record their discussion on their phones, then upload it to their online folder. They should spend a further 5 minutes coming up with ideas for movements inspired by the image. Learners should consider the 6 *actions* they learned in the workshop.

Learners should then develop movement inspired by the stimulus and rehearse it in the group. This should then be performed to the rest of the class. Film the movement sequences.

Give positive feedback for each group. Do this orally, but write it on a card for each group so that they can take a photo of the card on their phone and then use the feedback in their log.

Workshop Two (Movement for Acting)

This follows a similar format to the workshop above and reinforces some of the learning. Movement can be based on physical theatre and link to mime and then dialogue. The warm-up could begin with a series of travelling steps (walk, jog, run, gallop, skip, jump, hopscotch, etc.) while exploring the nine areas of the stage at the same time. Formations can be used (circle, square, triangle, snake, line, diagonal) and facings so that learners become familiar with direction and develop spatial awareness. Simple step sequences can be taught and learned through muscle memory (LO2).

Exercises relating to **given circumstances**, **character** and **mood** should follow. Mime can be used at this stage to help learners focus more on physicality – e.g. a happy dentist in his workplace with sound effects. Each learner can be given a profession/job, a mood and a journey to work. This is mimed and then an obstacle is put in their way, e.g. a thunderstorm. Learners use physicality to show their

reactions. This exercise is developed into group work, e.g. a team of landscape gardeners producing a new garden, demonstrating all the skills needed for the job, such as digging, lifting trees and planting them, making water features and painting fences. Another example might be an angry chef in the kitchen during a busy service, trying to get the food out to impatient customers. She is aided by a useless team of cooks and waiting staff.

Text-based: e.g. script, poetry, literature, news items, notation.

Concepts: e.g. abstract, thematic, narrative.

Weeks 2, 3 and 4

P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3

A similar format is followed in Weeks 2, 3 and 4, with two workshops to cover aspects of movement and stimuli before setting the assignment. Dance workshops continue to focus on improvement of movement skills in different styles. This will necessitate the teaching of set phrases and motifs, which learners will repeat and practice using muscle memory until they know them well. Each week could focus on a different style with a different stimulus. The teacher should cover aspects of movement such as relationships, contact improvisation and trust.

The movement with acting workshops could look at scenes from a variety of plays demanding different styles, e.g.:

- ▶ *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, script by Simon Stephens, movement by Frantic Assembly, novel by Mark Haddon
- ▶ *Blood Wedding* by Federico García Lorca
- ▶ *Metamorphosis* by Steven Berkoff.

Each workshop would focus on scenes that require ensemble movement. Give a short introduction to the play and the playwright and a brief summary of the plot. Choose a scene for the learners to work on using movement. Read this through with the group and answer any questions arising from the initial read through. This might be a scene needing a lot of physical theatre style movement or a monologue or duologue where gesture, facial expression and some minimal body movement is required. This will be related to a study of character and idiosyncratic behaviour. Not all movement has to be large and busy. Over these three weeks, learners should explore monologue, duologue and ensemble work. Trust exercises and drama games should be used after a short warm-up to prepare learners for demanding pair and ensemble work. Focus on short extracts to give learners a chance to learn the text while working on movement and to perform the extract to the class. Encourage learners to annotate their scripts with movement details.

Week 5

This week focuses on the set study in Dance. Learners begin by watching extracts from different professional works, e.g.:

1. *Swansong* by Christopher Bruce – solos, duets and trio
2. *Ghost Dances* by Christopher Bruce – duets, trio and ensemble
3. *Rooster* by Christopher Bruce – solo, ensemble
4. *Nutcracker!* by Matthew Bourne – solos, duets, ensemble
5. *Swan Lake* by Matthew Bourne – solos, duets, ensemble
6. *Car Man* by Matthew Bourne – solos, duets, trio, ensemble
7. *The Red Shoes* by Matthew Bourne – a relatively new work - solos, duets, trio, ensemble
8. *Cry* by Alvin Ailey – solo
9. *Revelations* by Alvin Ailey – ensemble
10. The 'Prologue' and 'Dance at the Gym' from *West Side Story* by Jerome Robbins – ensemble
11. *Some Like It Hip Hop* by Zoo Nation
12. Tap numbers by Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers
13. Musical numbers from more recent musicals or films, such as *La La Land*
14. Busby Berkeley films for the large ensemble numbers, e.g. *42nd Street*

I have avoided musical theatre suggestions so that learners are focusing on acting and dancing.

It is a good idea to have a professional company involved who can teach company repertoire. For numbers 1 to 3 above, contact Rambert; for 4 to 7 contact

ReBourne, part of Matthew Bourne's company. There are different versions of the solo 'Cry' and the ensemble work 'Revelations' on YouTube.

There is also a wealth of dance on the internet. Choose what is appropriate for your learners and try to make a link with a professional company so one of their teachers can come to teach repertoire to your learners. The performance must be 3 minutes long, so it could be a mixture of solo, duet, trio or one ensemble piece. Movement can be adapted to suit the learner's ability but must be recognisable as the repertoire.

For any work used, learners should be shown the work or extract and be given an overview of the work and its starting point/stimulus.

All lessons in this week should be devoted to a set study. Professional companies will run all day workshops, but check prices first (plus VAT). Some companies will also run workshops on their own premises, e.g. Rambert.

Weeks 6, 7, 8 and 9

P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5

Once the set study has been taught and filmed, learners must rehearse to improve their movement skills. Learners might be performing different numbers and so rehearsals must be timetabled carefully.

The scripted pieces have now been chosen and movement ideas worked on. The scripts need to be annotated for movement details and rehearsal should help refine skills such as projection, focus, eye focus, timing, spatial awareness, muscle memory, strength, balance, coordination and team work. Actors are speaking and moving at the same time in an ensemble so much repetition will be needed to ensure accurate timing and momentum when building a climax. Breathing and vocal delivery must be rehearsed.

Workshop on commedia dell'arte to show how movement can denote character. Look on YouTube at Didi Hopkins' National Theatre workshops on commedia characters.

Week 10

P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5

This is the week for technical and dress rehearsals, and final performances, which will need to be filmed.

Complete observation records for individual learners, using grading criteria to help you. Give detailed notes on engagement in the process, contribution, listening to instructions, receiving feedback, working with peers and making links between rehearsals and performance.

Evaluations: The teacher can give feedback on the dress rehearsal and then the learner can respond to this feedback on paper or film.

For final performances, students should present themselves to camera before the performance starts. They step forward, wait a beat then say their name and number, slowly and clearly. Ideally they will be in costume.

The teacher writes another observation sheet and comments on adjustments and refinements made between the dress rehearsal and the final performance. There might be two performances, e.g. a lunchtime one for the school and an evening one for the parents. Comments should be made on both.

Evaluation: feedback notes should be given by the teacher and again the learner responds giving detailed examples.

Learners can write peer notes and give these to the teacher.

Week 11

P6, M6, D6

There should now be a group discussion to evaluate final performances; individual vivas to discuss and evaluate the movement project from starting point to finish. Questions should be prepared by teachers in advance and sample viva questions given to learners. For example, provide 20 sample questions, but ask only 10. Vivas should be filmed as they provide evidence of evaluation of process and final performance.

Week 12

P6, M6, D6

Students now make a written evaluation of the whole project, including response to and exploration of stimuli, workshops and rehearsals through to performance. They should reflect on their learning and progress. They should be specific about the movement skills and techniques they have acquired and developed. Detailed examples from workshops, rehearsals and performances are needed. They need to explain what went well and what needs further refinement. It would be helpful for learners to sit in groups and discuss their performance work. A recording (audio or film) can be made of the discussion and learners can take notes from what was said.

Teacher check list

- ▶ Work assessed by both teachers as a joint panel and graded.
- ▶ Assessment records completed by teachers.
- ▶ File all documentation and learner work ready for *internal verification*.
- ▶ Make sure there is a *signed front sheet* for each learner's assignment brief.
- ▶ *Peer and teacher observation records* and *witness statements* should be signed, dated and filed.
- ▶ Complete a *tracking sheet* displaying all learners' individual grades and PLTS.
- ▶ Feedback to learners with any necessary resubmission dates set. Check that all documentation is signed and dated in appropriate boxes (*Assessment records*)
- ▶ Check that all filmed/recorded work is on a *labelled memory stick* ready to be sent for sampling if required: Centre name and number/course and unit number and title/class code/date.
- ▶ There should be a *theatre style programme* for the final performance, which includes a running order and a photo of each learner in costume, accompanied by a short biography. The running order should name each performance item and state which learners are performing it. If recorded tracks are used, the title of the track should be given with details about the composer, lyricist, etc. For extracts from scripts, details of the playwright, first performance date and venue and the name of the theatre company who performed the premiere should be given. Check copyright before the delivery of the unit starts.

RESOURCES

Useful books and websites

Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Nationals specification in Performing Arts – Issue 1 – January 2010 © Edexcel Limited 20094

www.rambert.org.uk and www.rambertschool.org.uk

www.matthewbourne.com

www.akramkhancompany.net

<https://ZooNation.co.uk>: The Kate Prince Company

www.motionhouse.co.uk

www.ockhamsrazor.co.uk

www.roh.org.uk

<http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk/>

www.franticassembly.com

www.sleepingtreestheatre.co.uk

www.complicite.org

www.samuelfrench.com (for play scripts)

www.westsidestory.com

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/movement-techniques-actors-study-8763/>

www.londoncalling.com/features/did-hopkins-commedia-dellarte-specialist

Assessment and grading criteria

The following grading criteria are taken from the Pearson BTEC Unit 50 specification.

To achieve a pass grade, the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade, in addition to the pass criteria, the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the evidence must show that the learner is able to
P1 respond to a stimulus and explore possibilities as performance material [CT – creative thinker]	M1 show a considered response to a stimulus and demonstrate exploration of this as performance material	D1 show a detailed response to a stimulus and demonstrate thorough and perceptive exploration of this as performance material
P2 reproduce movement phrases showing evidence of movement memory [EP – effective participator]	M2 reproduce movement phrases accurately, showing competent use of movement memory	D2 reproduce movement phrases with attention to detail, accuracy and assured confidence
P3 attend workshops and rehearsals with evidence of responding to instruction and contributing ideas [SM – self-managers, TW – team worker]	M3 attend workshops and rehearsals regularly with evidence of effective response to instruction and appropriate contribution of ideas	D3 fully engage in the rehearsal process, responding consistently well to instruction and providing a valuable contribution of ideas
P4 make links between rehearsal process and performance by suitably adjusting and correcting the work [SM – self-manager]	M4 make thoughtful links between rehearsal process and performance by successfully refining and adjusting work	D4 make significant links between rehearsal process and performance by refining and adjusting the work with skill and expertise
P5 perform a role, showing control of appropriate physical qualities with competence in communicating a character, mood or intention to an audience [EP – effective participator]	M5 perform a role, showing a command of movement skills that accurately conveys the character, mood or intention of the material	D5 perform a role showing a confident command of movement skills with a real sense of style; the character, mood and/or intention is communicated with ease
P6 provide an evaluation of the performance in which obvious judgements are made and commented on regarding strengths and weaknesses. [RL – reflective learner]	M6 provide a considered evaluation of the performance in which clear judgements are made regarding strengths and weaknesses.	D6 provide a detailed evaluation of the performance in which judgements are fully justified and there is evidence of analysis regarding strengths and weaknesses.