

Balls and Ramps

Nikki Sikora is a dance/educator from working in the Cleveland area. At the time of this writing she dances with The Repertory Project. As part of the Repertory Project Nikki completed a residency at Gracemount Elementary School in Cleveland Ohio. The following is a record of the First 8 weeks from September 15 - November 10, 1998. Included in her report is an Overview of the residency, assessment sheets, and tests / homework sheets.

Overview:

I spent my residency working with Mrs. McClintock's first grade class and Mrs. Kresak's second grade class. One hour was spent with each class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Both teachers were encouraged by the previous principal to use this partnership to supplement their science classes. It was believed that the students needed more help in this subject based on the proficiency test scores. With the first grade, we focused on the "Balls and Ramps" unit. In the second grade, we focused on the next level of this unit with "Simple Machines."

The partnership between the teachers and myself was a very positive and productive one. We shared the time with students and worked off of each other's ideas. The students seemed to appreciate this. They knew that it was not "play time" because the teacher was still involved. They also knew that it was a time to experiment with new ways of learning because a new teacher was in the classroom. Mrs. Kresak said that her students looked forward to my visits and they have continued to apply movement vocabulary and concepts to other areas of study. For example, when the word high was on their spelling list, the students related it to the levels that we learned about: high, middle, and low.

As teachers, we found that the class preparation needed to be very open for changes. I spent more time after class filling out the lesson plan to keep track of what we had attempted and accomplished. The first graders, especially, needed to be kept interested by changing the activities every 10 or 15 minutes. We found with both classes that there needed to be at least 10 minutes of journal writing time assigned. The students needed this transition time. This was applied to the first graders very early on, but the second graders did not always get enough time. I believe this was due to the fact that I attempted to spend more time trying new partnering and group exercises, which took up more time than I thought would be needed.

The students were aware that they would be performing on stage at the end of my residency. This was a good incentive for the children, however, it was difficult to get the support I had hoped for within the school. Much of this was due to the fact that there were simply too many assemblies and performances happening at that time of year and the teachers could not afford to give up any more of their teaching time. However, we did have a full audience of other first and second grade classes. Only a few parents who did not have to work attended. I think that this issue needs to be addressed. I hear of a

lot of community and parent involvement in many of the other arts partnerships. With dance it seems that this involvement is lacking. I think some possibilities to consider are having an evening performance to invite the parents to or taking the children to another school in the community to share what they have learned with other children their age studying the same subjects.

Overall, I think this first eight weeks was very successful. In our exit meeting, both Mrs., McClintock and Mrs., Kresak felt strongly about some changes that needed to be made if this type of project is to continue: 1) if using the science units, spend less time in the classroom everyday. 2) focus movement in the reading units - these are larger units that need more time. These are just two ideas that I feel are necessary to consider.

Assessment included pre-tests and post-tests in both classes. The second graders were given a homework sheet. I also assessed the class on a whole based on their participation and journal entries by completing an assessment chart. These charts were completed by me at the end of the first week, the fourth week, and the final week.

BALLS

1st WEEK / TUESDAY

1. Name Game in a circle while passing beach ball

- Pass the beach ball on the beat
 - They had more difficulty with change in beat
 - They did excellent with steady beat
- They described: -What they knew about balls
 - What they wanted to learn

2. Shapes

- -round, and curved vs. straight
- -circles → ends where it started
- -circles on the body
- -connect the three movements together.

3. Circle variations

- We moved our circle in 8 counts to the left.
- Then we faced inside and outside the circle.
- We put our "phrase" together: learned levels -high, middle, low
- Used one shape to show how it could be done on each level
- Touched on straight pathways
- In circle, rolled the ball across to each other
- Asked at the end of class: What did you learn with Nikki today?

1st WEEK / THURSDAY

- Warm up - circle (holding shapes for 4 counts, 2 counts, and then 1 count)
- 8 counts in the circle
- passed tennis ball around circle to the beat (They were not as attentive to the beat)

- Talked/listed similarities and differences between beach and tennis balls (used Venn diagram)
- Took 4 words from list: fuzzy, big, squishy, bounce and made a word phrase. We connected it to the previous circle phrase.
- Introduced word phrase = putting movements together
- Discussed curved vs. straight lines
- Got in groups: made a curved shape and a straight shape
- Reviewed levels
- Asked at end of class: What did you learn today?

2nd WEEK / TUESDAY

Warm up

- We drew circles with different body parts (heavy and light)
- We walked like an elephant / kitten
- We looked at balls on a scale - size doesn't determine weight

Big and small

- We took circle from dance to make big/small
- We grew from the ground in 4 counts (small to big)
- Got into groups
- Assignment: make a group shape that can be big and small and move it in each level
- Each group showed what they had created
- Reviewed the dance
- Introduced "repeat"
- 1st time through with 3 heavy bounces
- 2nd time through with 3 light bounces
- At desk drew a small and big ball and chose another shape to draw small and big

2ND WEEK / THURSDAY

- Introduced pathways
- How we can make them
- Identify ones that are already made
- Carved/straight paths
- "follow the leader" to practice
- volunteers showed path ideas in a circle (ex: "snail", going in and out . . .)
- Added growing movement onto dance
- Tried to make a ball move exercise using a straw
- Drew straight and curved pathways

3rd WEEK / TUESDAY

- Brainstormed vocabulary
- -science and movement
- revisited pathways

- took rows from floor: kids walked (4 to a line) up to trash can, make an angle and walked to desk
- Straight path /heel-to-toe/ followed path/straight bodies
- Started walking to make a circle
- Curved path (made a path)

Energy -smooth and sharp

- Demonstrated by pretending to bounce a basketball
- Made smooth and sharp movements with bodies
- Discussed bouncing balls
- Compared bounciness with teacher
- Kids imitated 2 different balls (added sounds of clicking) bouncing

☆ *Discovered: From the self, with more energy, ball bounces higher and with less it slows down*

3RD WEEK / THURSDAY

- Walked into a circle
- Reviewed dance
- Added on 'smooth/sharp" movement
- What bounces besides a ball?
- Difference between bouncing and hopping

Elements: Shape and what it is made of

- Make something bouncy
- Four people in center made a square with arms (4 sides) - changed into a circle by curving arms

Played Music

- Find the beat by clapping
- Passed ball around to beat, when music stopped, person bounced ball
- Free style dance
- Danced, following my directions

☆ *Kids began "smooth/sharp" movement on their own*

Journal: Take something from dance to draw or write about

4TH WEEK / TUESDAY

- Ran dance four times
- Once with the teachers and then without
- Talked about what our bodies are made of while one group made balls with teacher, the rest worked in their journals to draw their bodies.

4TH WEEK / THURSDAY

- No Class

5TH WEEK / TUESDAY

- Experimented with rolling balls
- With much force → straight path
- With little force → curved path ending
- Log rolls across the floor
- Egg rolls on floor
- Watched balls roll down three different ramps
- Highest ramp rolls the fastest

In journals: Draw ramp with self or something going down it

5TH WEEK / THURSDAY

- Showed tape of "Thursday" - (A dance choreographed by Bethany Prater, performed by The Repertory Project).
- Talked about being an audience
- Talked about performing
- Looked for elements from class in dance: levels, pathways, shapes, fast/slow
- Practiced dance
- Used music to improvise and follow my calls

6TH WEEK / TUESDAY

- Jessica came in to videotape
- Reviewed dance
- Practiced bouncing like different balls
- Counted bounces to see which ball bounced the best
- Reviewed energy - rolling balls
- Tried adding on egg rolls to dance (unsuccessful, not enough space)
- Put music on to dance to and follow directions

In journals: looked around the room for things shaped like a circle and drew them in the journal.

6TH WEEK / THURSDAY

- Reviewed ramps
- Talked about pathways/roadways
- Split into table groups
- Each group given a different material
- Each group built a pathway for a ball to follow
- The importance of 2 lines to have for the ball to go between
- Tested each pathway

BALLS AND RAMPS PRE-TEST

Name: _____

1. Draw a picture of movement.
2. What is a phrase?
3. Which way does a ball move best, up or down?
4. How does a ball move?
5. Draw something straight.
6. Draw something curved.

POST TEST

Name: _____

1. Draw a straight line.

Draw a curved line.

2. Draw two different sized circles.

3. Draw a pathway.

4. Draw a high ramp. Then show which way a ball could roll the fastest on the ramp.