

'Help! I Can't Teach Dance'

Evaluation

Shakespeare Primary School Year 3

September 2014 to January 2015

**Compiled and written by Jules Laville,
2nd March 2015**

Shakespeare Primary School:

Year 3 teachers:

Jo Spring jspring@shakespeare.plymouth.sch.uk

Teresa Skingle tskingle@shakespeare.plymouth.sch.uk

Shakespeare Teacher Training coordinator: Ben Norris bnorris@shakespeare.plymouth.sch.uk

Plymouth Dance:

Artistic Dance coordinator: Jules Laville jules@barbicantheatre.co.uk

Led Dance Practitioner: Jane Castree jane@jcdc.org.uk

Assistant Dance Practitioners: Becky Miles Rebecca_miles20@hotmail.co.uk

HICTD Training Aims:

- To expand teacher's physical and verbal vocabulary within dance.
- Through practice and observation enabling them to teach dance using a balance of physical and verbal communication skills.
- To expand teachers knowledge of using appropriate dance terminology/language within lessons.
- Through observation and practice to develop the skills for teaching dance lessons linked to curriculum themes/subjects.
Skills include: Research/stimulus, structuring/planning and practical delivery.
- To learn new creative tasks and make your own creative tasks to enable and inspire pupils to make/devise quality dance material (choreographic sequences, phrases, routines etc.)
- Learn how to structure basic dance material made by the pupils in creative tasks into simple affective choreographic sequences.

Training and Delivery between September 2014 and January 2015:

- 20 x Dance workshops sessions delivered to the Year 3 Pupils over a 10 weeks period
- 20 x Preparation, planning and feedback sessions between dance practitioners and teachers
- 4 x Development & Evaluation meetings between the Artistic HICTD Coordinator, Dance Practitioners and teachers

Summary Evaluation Structure:

Part 1: Teachers

Part 2: Pupils

Part 3: Dance Practitioners and Summary

Part 1: Teachers

7 weeks in:

Development & Evaluation Meeting 14th November 2014 -3pm

Present: Jules, Teresa and Jo

Jo talked of the benefits that both her pupils and she have experienced from the sessions so far:

"The pupils have learnt a great deal about balance, coordination, spatial awareness, pair and group interactions; all beneficial to their individual social development."

Both teachers felt that they have noticed positive changes with their pupil's ability and behavior as a result of the dance sessions. These changes have been noted not only within their individual approach to the dance sessions but also within the classroom.

Both Jo & Teresa talked about how both of their classes contain varying percentages of challenging behavior and that their pupils are so very different in terms of their ability.

Jo felt that her that class was generally easy to engage and to keep focused, whereas Teresa talked about the ability in her class as varied and that they can be very challenging when trying to maintain focus. Teresa has several pupils with Asperger's; in relation to this she feels that sometimes the sessions need to be slightly more upbeat and at a pace where they are challenging and engaging.

Jo also spoke about how she has had to ban a few pupils from the session and has said this was nothing to do the sessions but just bad behavior.

Both teachers said they have learnt a great deal from the 7 sessions so far in terms of how to plan a dance workshop/structure and more importantly both feel that they now have a basic understanding of how to use dance to enable and inspire their classes with curriculum subjects and topics.

We discussed the full staff training and that how despite the many emails sent and phone messages left for Ben Norris re. scheduling a staff training session a date has still not been provided.

Teresa did say that Ben had mentioned it to them and that there was a long list of staff training sessions needed so it would depend on how the Head Teacher priorities the training. I did re-email Ben in regards to the possibility of the staff training session in January and explained that this would have to take place by the end of January 2015. Ben did reply to my email saying he would be back in touch, but again I heard nothing back. I know from both Jo and Teresa that Ben is under immense pressure and that dance is not a priority for the school. He has to get permission from the head teacher for any staff training that goes ahead.

**Final Teachers and Plymouth Dance Evaluation:
Evaluation meeting Thursday 29th January 2015 - 3pm - Present: Jo, Jane and
Becky**

At the teachers evaluation meeting we discussed the HICTD training aims, outcomes and achievements, what has specifically worked well and what the difficulties have been.

Feedback took place around the following evaluation questions:

1) Do you feel more confident in planning and structuring dance sessions for your class/school?

"Yes definitely, I was always happy to do it but I didn't know what to do, what moves to use. I now feel confident to take a theme and build different movements and motifs from it. I can see how I can use the structure of the last dance we learnt to build upon. I'm now happy and confident to use canon and many other choreographic tools and to structure sessions to cover these topics".

2) Do you feel more confident about delivering dance sessions to your class/school?

"Yes definitely, I feel I have more confidence in this area".

3) Do you feel your skills and knowledge around how to deliver dance within education has been increased?

"Yes, I'd be happy to take a curriculum theme and develop a dance session around it. I liked how we used images from The Stone Age to develop movement and then work on qualities and rhythms".

4) Has the HICTD training project inspired your pupils to want to do more dance activity?

"Yes clearly it has. They make up dances and want to show it to the rest of the class. They are also combining music/singing with dance".

5) Are you inspired to deliver more dance activity as a standalone subject? And or as a cross curriculum subject encouraging pupils to also learn through the physical body?

"Yes. Through the sessions the students have developed better co-ordination, improved on their independent working and have a better knowledge of their own bodies. The students have improved their ability to observe and copy. Developing this control of their bodies has been especially beneficial for the children with special needs. The class has also learnt to understand the dynamics of movement and can differentiate between fast & slow and show contrast in rhythms & qualities. All levels of abilities have been stretched and their ability to evaluate their work has developed".

6) Any other comment/statement?

"It was nice that you built your plans around the children's needs and mine. It was a tailored dance program specific to what I wanted to learn. Your flexibility and adapting the schedule with dates and changing location-hall to drama studio etc. was really helpful. The memory stick resource with music and resource pack is also helpful. It is a nice after-care package of continued support.

The program was very well structured, what was happening when was very well organized and receiving the lesson plans was very beneficial".

The difficulties have been as follows:

Regular space availability:

Despite the space being booked out in advance within the school calendar other school activities were given priority at times. This is down to the heavy use of the school hall. For such a big school it is challenging to only have one space and this one space is also used as the food hall at lunch times.

Staff Dance Workshop Training Session:

The school did not prioritize the staff training session. Despite the email traffic, meetings and phone conversations a time and date for the training was never made available to Plymouth Dance. There are communication difficulties within the school.

Part 2: Pupils Feedback

1) What has been your favorite part of the dance lessons this term?

- 10 x Specific steps & moves-high kicks: turning/cannon/warm up/starting positions/stretching
- 9 x Performing to the class
- 7 x Music we used/specific music
- 6 x Making up our own dances
- 2 x I like doing exercise
- 2 x moving
- 1 x cool down
- 1 x the big gymnastic movements
- 1 x working in small teams
- 3 x Stone Age Dancing

2) What skills have you learnt?

(Skills will be listed on the paper: rhythm, co-ordination, flexibility, creative, confidence)

- 13 x Dancing/New dance Moves
- 8 x How to dance and move like cavemen (Stone Age)
- 7 x Dancing in time/Rhythm
- 4 x Be more flexible
- 4 x Learnt about dynamics
- 4 x Control/Balance
- 4 x Cannon/Unison
- 3 x Working in groups/with partners
- 2 x Creative/making motifs
- 1 x Co-ordination

3) Do you feel inspired to do more dancing?

- 14 x Street/Break dance
- 13 x Yes make up my own dance/Creative/Contemporary/perform
- 8 x Cartwheels/gymnastics/Athletic dancing
- 5 x Yes
- 4 x Yes I absolutely do/I definitely do/Yes I like dancing now
- 4 x Ballet
- 2 x Cheerleading
- 1 x line dancing
- 1 x Dance like Michael Jackson
- 1 x Hell yeh!
- 1 x Rock 'n' Roll
- 1 x Freestyle

4) Any other comments/anything you would like to say?

'Me and Katie are starting a new dance class at break times'

'It makes me feel good, like I have been exercising'

'I have been practicing moves on my own at home'

'Its been fun'

'I love dancing thank you'

'Thank you'

'Dancing is fantastic'

'I love doing dancing'

'I love dancing with you'

'I love dancing with Jane and Becky'

'I love doing flip overs'

The pupils really looked forward to their dance sessions. They enjoyed the physical movement, the music, the space and the social interaction. As well as learning about the curriculum subjects covered within the sessions; Stone Age and Rivers, they also learnt and developed fundamental physical and social skills. Including communication, language, spatial awareness, co-ordination, rhythm and Teamwork skills.

Part 3: Dance Practitioners and Summary

Reflections on the Teacher's Development

Jane Castree – Led Dance Practitioner

Both teachers have developed over the course of the project, although due to illness Mrs Skingle has missed the last three sessions. During the sessions we have covered the seven styles of learning as follows:

Visual (spatial): You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding. Mrs Skingle and Miss Spring selected images of The Stone Age and we talked about what we could see in the picture and developed movement material and qualities to match them from these images.

Aural (auditory-musical): You prefer using sound and music. We focused on rhythm, counting rhythms in music and connecting it to movement.

Verbal (linguistic): You prefer using words, both in speech and writing. The children learnt new dance vocabulary such as unison, canon, spacial awareness etc.

Physical (kinesthetic): You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch. We used contact to explore working together to create duets that develop balance, strength and agility. We focused specifically on symmetric and asymmetric balances, which we incorporated with their curriculum theme of rivers. We also worked on movement memory by rehearsing a set dance motif.

Logical (mathematical): You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems. We looked at developing spacial awareness and ensuring you use all the space when you move around and how you can incorporate using different levels.

Social (interpersonal): You prefer to learn in groups or with other people. We covered a range of big and small group tasks and duets. These covered learning set movement and developing your own through creative tasks.

Solitary (intrapersonal): You prefer to work alone and use self-study. There were individual choices to be made during warm ups were the children developed the ability to be responsible for themselves in the space. There were also individual choices within duet and group work.

Through the lesson plans the teachers have been able to see how these learning styles can be utilised in dance and with cross-curricular work. They can now use these as starting points when planning a dance session or a terms work. Additionally, the teachers have both increased their knowledge of dance vocabulary.

Reflections on the Children's Development

These sessions were the first time the children had taken part in physical activity in the hall. This meant they needed to get used to getting changed in the classroom, walking to the hall and taking their shoes off. I felt over the course of the project the children got more used to this format and when they arrived in the hall became more efficient at taking off their shoes and making a circle. This also meant that being in the hall was very exciting for them and initially their focus and concentration levels were low. Their concentration definitely improved over the course of the project and during their last session, when sharing their work with the children from the other class, they were focused and very generous in their support of each other when watching each others dances and giving feedback.

In the last session the children's observation and feedback skills had clearly improved. They mentioned not only what they liked, but also why they liked it\why it worked well\looked good. This was especially clear when one of the children with special needs said:

"I think everyone did the dance really well, everyone was dancing at the same time as each other and it looked really good, I think everyone should get two house points!"

Reflections on the Project

From this project and my other experiences of working in schools it is evident how important the ethos of the school is to how successful and embedded a project can be. It would be great to have an opportunity during the project to engage with other teachers in the school and the head teacher so that they have an understanding of the learning process the specific teachers are going through. This I feel would generate more support from the school as a whole for the teachers undertaking the project. Plymouth Dance offered this but the school did not schedule it, which I feel meant the teachers did not get the chance to share what they were doing with the other teachers in a supported session.

I feel it would have been beneficial to have more development time with the teachers and to have a studio space booked for this. This time is vital as it is when the teachers get time to focus on developing their ideas. Also if we are in a studio space then we can try out these ideas physically, which is key in developing the teachers confidence and movement vocabulary.

Becky has been an excellent assistant throughout the project. She has led warm ups, supported the teachers, led a session when I was away and independently created the final dance piece that we worked on. I received very positive feedback from Miss Spring about the dance piece that Becky created and also about her teaching style and enthusiasm when leading the session. Her organization skills and communication with the teachers have been excellent and I have felt completely supported throughout the project. I have very much enjoyed being part of this project and look forward to being part of its development in the future.

Reflections on the Teacher's Development

Rebecca Miles: Assistant Dance Practitioner

The main development I have witnessed with the teachers throughout this project is the confidence to ask questions and get involved and be open to taking techniques and devising tasks which we have shared and talked about during the sessions and use these in the future. As we have gone through the weeks their questions and want to understand how certain sessions could be developed into a longer scheme of work for their classes has continued to grow. Unfortunately as Mrs Skingle was ill for the past three sessions we were unable to evaluate the project with her and get feed back at this point however I believe that both Miss Spring and Mrs Skingle feel fully supported by Plymouth Dance and also each other to teach now teach and develop dance more confidently within the curriculum. I think both teachers would have been able to develop further by having the opportunity to watch and/or take part in each others class, in so having a weekly session whereby they would be able to make any teaching notes they may find helpful- specifically in relation to teaching dance in the space. I believe that more weekly time for the teachers to jointly reflect and try out any ideas with the practitioners would have further benefited them in having the confidence to try new and creative ideas for developing and teaching dance. Without this time they may not feel prepared enough to do. I think that by having more time to focus on their own learning outside of the sessions with the students would have been a big aid to the skills that they have been observing throughout the process.

Reflections on the student's development

I have seen a real difference in the students from the beginning to the end of this project. Their ability to work in the space together has really developed given their weekly opportunity to do so. They have matured in their ability to co-ordinate their bodies in space, becoming more aware of themselves and other students. Their eagerness to reflect and feedback and give constructive ideas, has grown and their attitude towards trying new skills and focusing there attention to work co-operatively with one another has been a real pleasure to witness. It was really great to witness the student's relationship to Miss Spring during the final session where both students and teacher danced together and gave constructive encouraging feedback. In a way it feels that this is only the starting point for these students and I can see how the opportunity to have continued creative dance within the curriculum would really benefit their social and physical learning.

Reflections on my development

As trainee practitioner on this project I have had the great opportunity to continue working and learning from Jane I feel now that having been in the same school twice it has given me a real insight into how dance is received and how it can be developed within the schools system by giving the teachers the support to do so. I feel more confident in leading the class through a session having had the opportunity to lead two of the sessions. I have had the opportunity to continue my learning with understanding of how to develop a scheme of work for such a project and enabling the teachers to learn from mine and Jane's practice with more confidence to give advice and tips for how the teachers can develop. I have felt more confident in going into a school environment through continuing to witness and work with Jane to facilitate the sessions. Watching the children develop an awareness of themselves and each other has been great. They also built up a good rapport with Jane and I, which has really made me understand the value in the work we do. Jane has been very generous with her time to mentor me throughout the project and this has been invaluable to me as an emerging practitioner.

HICTD Shakespeare Year 3 Summary: Jules Laville

2 x	Year 3 Teachers + 1 cover teacher
3 x	Dance Artists
20 x	Practical Dance sessions (over 10 weeks)
20 x	Planning and debrief sessions (over 10 weeks)
1 x	Sharing/Performance
3 x	Evaluation Sessions
58	Pupils

The Year 3 HICTD programme has over all been very successful:

The teachers have clearly grown in confidence and developed solid skills on how to plan and deliver dance sessions within a school environment using essential social development methods alongside curriculum subjects. For the pupils these dance sessions have enabled them to develop their social and physical skills in a verbal and non-verbal way. These social and physical activities have been an invaluable experience for them.

Plymouth Dance understands the value of dance and believe that dance activity should be accessible to every young person within the education system. Dance is a non-verbal way to communicate, express ideas and emotions. Through participation, dance can develop self-esteem, confidence, broaden individual's perceptions and widen aspiration. Dance is about freedom to express, community, respect, culture, celebration and health. Dance is a universal language, inclusive and beneficial to a wide variety of learning styles. Dance has the potential to offer a powerful anchor for pupils with attainment and behavior difficulties.

In schools where achievement is low, attainment is challenging and where there are high percentages of behavior difficulties, dance and physical activities should be a high priority.

It is disappointing that despite trying; Shakespeare has continued to not prioritise dance and maximize the benefits of the HICTD training programme fully. This is not down to the efforts of individual teachers. In my opinion there remains a lack of communication around staff delivery/training to other staff and the Head Teacher. This is very different from what I have experienced within other primary schools across the city.

Recommended developments for future HICTD training projects:

- Clear communication within the school across all staff that the project/training is taking place in the school and ensuring that the teacher's under going the training are given time and support. This can be done via a CPD dance workshop with all staff after school.
This opportunity was not taken despite a trail of meetings, emails and phone messages to set a date for the training. Ben Norris said it would only happen if the Head Teacher agreed it was a priority.
- Space & time for the teacher to plan, absorb the learning and put into practice outside of the training led sessions. *(This was an improvement from last time, but still not enough time to fully reflect)*
Future suggestion: The teachers and dance practitioners train together for a ½ or full day with no pupils.
- In addition to meeting with the teachers and dance practitioners prior to the training programme commencing to also meet with the Head Teacher to ensure full school engagement and support for the teachers undertaking the training.