

Elementary Drama/Dance: Junior - Public

Adapted from <https://www.code.on.ca/resource/or-out>

Lesson 4: Expressions of Power Dance

Students use brainstorming and bodystorming to generate movement vocabulary. In this movement activity the concept of different expressions of power: power over, power to, power with and power within are explored. Student explore the idea of power and powerlessness as it relates to inclusion and exclusion while explicitly referencing the elements of dance.

Physical Distancing Adaptations

When conducting these warm-ups and conventions, it is important to adhere to the Physical Distancing guidelines from your school board. Students should remain 2m apart at all times. Students in grades 4 -12 are required to wear a mask. CODE recommends that all dance and drama work be done with 1-2 metres of social distancing. Think about using alternate learning spaces such as the gymnasium, library or school yard.

Whole Class Instruction: With floor tape, demark areas where students can stand in the classroom with a metre grid or a peripheral circle so that they can participate in drama/dance conventions at a safe distance from one another. Floor tape that is slip-resistant and made of vinyl to prevent wear and tear during cleaning is recommended.

Partner work: Students can face a partner 2m across from each other. When face to face, outstretched hands should not touch one another. Refer back to personal-space warm-ups.

Small Group work: No more than 3 or 4 students per group to allow for recommended spacing of 2m between students.

If you must move your desks to create space, please ensure that each student is moving only their own desk and chair and then retrieving their own desk and chair in order to avoid contact with others belongings.

Refer to *General Tips for Safety in our Classrooms* in the overview.

Safety adaptations specific to the instructional strategies and drama conventions in this lesson are embedded in green throughout it.

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How to use Materials and BLMs during Physical Distancing

In a classroom following physical distancing guidelines it is important to reduce the amount of paper and other materials distributed in class. Many Dance & Drama experiences include source images and text which can be projected safely instead of distributed to students. To avoid the use of hand-held manipulatives and artifacts, take photos of them and project the images to students.

Often *Black Line Masters* (BLMs) are given to students to generate ideas, report, self-assess, peer assess, reflect, and to use as final exit cards. BLMs in our resources are all PDFs. Some can be projected, however others will need to be converted for independent or group use.

A few ways to do this include:

1. Convert the PDF to a Word or Google Doc and assign it to individuals or groups of students via Google Classroom:
 - Download the PDF onto your hard drive
 - Upload the PDF into your Google Drive
 - Open *file as a Google Doc*
 - Reformat as needed
 - Share copies with students
2. Create slides and assign them to individuals or groups. The slides have the original document as a background and add a text box on top of it so that students can type into it.
3. Put the questions on a Jamboard or other collaborative interactive program and assign a board to each group.

Materials

- BLM #5: Elements of Dance Anchor Chart posted on the wall
- Chart paper
- Pencils/Pens/Markers/Music/CD Player
- BLM #6: Physical Warm Ups
- BLM #8: Poem for Choral Speaking
- BLM #12: Dance and Drama Exit Card
- Appendix #2: Different Expressions of Power
- Appendix #3: Reasons for Exclusion
- Appendix #4: Observation Tracking Sheet

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Curriculum Expectations

Drama

B2.1 Reflecting, Responding and Analysing: express personal responses and make connections to characters, themes and issues presented in their own and others' drama works

Dance

A1.1 Creating and Presenting: translate into movement sequences a variety of images and ideas from other classroom subjects, including the arts

A1.2 Creating and Presenting: use dance language to explore, interpret and communicate ideas derived from a variety of literature sources

A1.4 Creating and Presenting: use the element of relationship in short dance pieces to communicate an idea

A2.2 Reflecting, Responding and Analysing: identify the elements of dance in their own and others' dance pieces and explain how they help communicate a message

A2.3 Reflecting, Responding and Analysing: identify and give examples of their strengths and areas for growth as dance creators and audience members

Big Ideas

People feel excluded for many different reasons and exclusion is directly related to various forms of discrimination.

Power relationships and dynamics are always present in acts of inclusion, exclusion and discrimination.

There are different forms and expressions of power.

Awareness and understanding of different expressions of power is empowering to individuals and communities.

Dance, drama and critical literacy are effective vehicles for understanding power and combating exclusion and discrimination.

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MINDS ON

Whole Class > Setting the Context for the Lesson

Explain that this lesson will explore the concept of power and power relationships, and that students will be challenged to make connections between power, powerlessness, inclusion and exclusion.

Pairs > Performing One Word Scripts of Power

Brainstorm words that are used or associated with getting or having power. Discuss how the idea of power enters conversations and dialogues. Share an example and invite students to share everyday examples from their experience (e.g., a parent and child discussing/negotiating bedtime).

Depending on space only half the students may be able to engage in active drama activities at a time. The teacher can repeat activities and then add to them with each grouping.

It is advisable to create a large grid on the floor to create a 'home space' for each student. You may also consider an outdoor space if students are able to focus there. Organize students into physically distanced pairs, and ask them to assign themselves as A and B. Give A the word "yes" and B the word "no." Challenge students to adopt a stance inspired by their word and to improvise a dialogue using only those two words. For example: **A** could ask the word "yes" by kneeling down and softly begging and **B** could reply sternly with a "No" by turning away and folding their arms.

Encourage students to experiment with voice, body, and spatial relationships to communicate their stance. After some exploration and experimentation, invite a volunteer group to demonstrate.

Direct viewers to observe carefully to analyse the power dynamics in the dialogue.

Prompts: *What sorts of power were being exercised? How was that evident?*

Invite one or two more groups to demonstrate, and again analyse the power dynamics.

Ask one group to demonstrate using only the body and spatial relationships.

Prompt: *How or to what extent do the power dynamics change when the words are taken away?*

Ask students to find a new partner and repeat the exercise, but change the script so that both students have the word "yes." Use the same prompts for discussion and analysis, as above.

Prompts: *Who has the power? Why? How would you describe this form of power? How did the power dynamics change when the words are taken away?*

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Optional Extension:

Invite students to create, perform, and analyse their own one word 2-person scripts (between 6 and 8 lines) or to use their bodies to illustrate another power dynamic.

Small Groups > Introducing Different Expressions of Power

Project or display on chart paper Different Expressions of Power (see Appendix #2) which defines four different kinds of power: Power Over, Power With, Power To, and Power Within. Read and discuss the description of each expression of power. Assign small groups an Expression of Power and give them the opportunity to discuss and generate an example of that form of power in action. *This can be done on a collaborative document if there is not enough space to safely group. Another option is to brainstorm as a whole group.* Have each group report back to the large group. As a class, identify examples of inclusion and exclusion that have been shared in relation to each form of power.

Whole Class > Review > Connecting Concepts

Facilitate a review and encourage students to connect the ideas of power, powerlessness, inclusion and exclusion.

Prompts: Referring back to our one-word scripts today- what kind of power was at play with Yes-No? and with Yes- Yes?

Whole Class >Choral Speaking

Project and/or read **BLM #8: Poem for Choral Speaking** to the class.

Work with the full class to read the poem aloud in a number of different ways. Refer to [Choral Speaking Techniques](#) for some ideas.

Prompts: What kind of power do you think this boy is lacking? (Power within, Power to, power with)

Project or post a large POWER CHART. Invite students to brainstorm movement words for each expression of power. Complete the following chart with the class: (a sample word is included in each column - verbs work well).

Power Over	Power With	Power To	Power Within
Dominating	Linking	Changing	Expanding

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Whole Class > Warm up

Lead the class through a warm-up to prepare them for the dance lesson. See **BLM #6: Physical Warm Ups** for suggestions. *This may need to be done in 2 groupings depending on space. Ensure students remain in their 'home spaces.'* *You may also consider an outdoor space if students are able to focus there.*

Full Class > Movement

Review the elements of dance, referring to **BLM #5: Elements of Dance Anchor Chart**. *If space permits (e.g., gym/studio or outdoors) form a large circle*, ask students to choose a power word from the list they generated during the 'Minds On' section. Invite one student to take the lead by demonstrating how to communicate the power word through movement. (Ensure that the movement is something simple that everyone is able to do). Assist the student as they teach it to the other students. Help the student simplify and amplify the movement if necessary. Direct students to repeat the movement until they are able to execute every detail with precision. *If it is not possible to do this activity in one circle, divide the class in half so one group gets to try while the second half observes and then switch groups.*

Individual > Symbolic Movement

Direct students to find their own space in the room *(this may need to be half the class at a time)* and choose a new word from the list that demonstrates an expression of power. Instruct students to apply what they learned during the last activity, to create their own movement that expresses the word they have chosen. Encourage students to work past small miming movements to create larger more symbolic movements that use the whole body. It may be necessary to model this. *Observe* and encourage students to use the elements of dance to make their body shapes and gestures more communicative. (Continue to coach until satisfied that everyone has experienced the feeling of power in their bodies.) Instruct students to return to neutral. Direct students to create a second movement that communicates an expression of powerlessness. Encourage them to move beyond obvious or literal representations and try to find their own unique way to express the idea. Have them return to neutral. Ask them to compare and contrast the two movements. Have them consider how size, agility, and space can be used to express power.

Prompts: *Can small be powerful? Why is size associated with power? How can this be disrupted? Under what circumstances? What are the challenges of demonstrating these ideas of power when we are working from a distance?*

Dance Vocabulary Prompts: *How did you use your body to show different expressions of power? Were the shapes big? Small? Open? Closed? How did you use your body differently when you were showing powerlessness? Was there a difference in the quality of energy or amount of force in the two movements?*

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Instruct students to use dance terminology and refer to the **BLM #5: Elements of Dance Anchor Chart** when responding to these questions.

Pairs > Power Dance

Direct students to get into pairs from physically safe 'home spaces' and label themselves A and B. *You may also consider an outdoor space if students are able to focus there.* Inform the students that they will now use the elements of relationship (such as mirroring) to create a movement sequence that shows a contrast between different forms of power and powerlessness. *Students will not be able to explore interconnectedness in the same way during physical distancing. They can be encouraged to try the ideas of responding to one another and working with levels, negative and positive spaces, shapes, and angles from afar. Students might also like the idea of working with projected images or projected shadows. Projected image: Record A and live feed or replay the video and B could respond to A's movements. Shadow: Shine a light on A and B interconnects with A's shadow.*

Advise students that they may use the ideas generated from all of the previous activities to help them create this movement sequence. Direct them to choose their favourite powerful movements, and their favourite power negotiating movements. Partner A may start the sequence by doing a movement that is powerful, and partner B may respond by showing a movement that represents powerlessness. Instruct them to develop deliberate transitions between these movements as they change roles and pass the power between each other. Instruct students that they must show this struggle for power *at a safe distance* without touching one another. When creating their transitions, ask students to consider the following prompts.

Prompts: *What caused the power shift - was it given or taken?*

Continue to refer students to the element chart, especially the element of relationship, as the dynamics between the dancers will be important to work with and recognize. This brief dance sequence must have a clear beginning, middle and end, and allow students to switch roles within the dance. Once students have developed the work, add music.

(Royalty free music sources: [BenSound](#), [Audionautix](#))

Small Group > Sharing

- *When everyone feels close to being ready, play 2 contrasting pieces of music & pairs will choose which music works best with their piece.*
- *First group (half the class): Pairs can share with another pair, get feedback from one another and use the feedback to refine their work*
- *Switch to the second group, share and refine as above*
- *Final sharing: The first group (half the class) can perform for the second group. Students will perform their dance sequence and freeze until the rest of their group has finished. Switch to the second group and repeat.*

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Whole Group > Discussion > Critical Literacy Focus

Facilitate a brief discussion. Prompts: *How do people use exclusion to gain power over others. Can you think of an example? Who benefits from these examples of exclusion? See Appendix #3: Reasons for Exclusion.*

Explain that people are always negotiating power. Invite students to role play a scenario to make the concept more concrete. You may use an example generated by the students, or alternatively, you may present students with the following scenario to improvise a negotiation of power:

Pairs > Role Play Scenario or Forum Theatre

In partners, A adopts the role of teacher and B adopts the role of a student. The student has received a B- for a project that he/she thinks deserves an A. The student feels this is an unfair grade and wants to negotiate a grade that he/she feels reflects the amount of work that went into the project.

If space is available and it is safe to do so, students can role play this scenario in pairs and the teacher observes. *You may also consider an outdoor space if students are able to focus there.* During physically distancing it may be more advisable to extend this role play into a **forum theatre structure**, to engage all students in a shared experience of the negotiation of power. Following the role play, facilitate a brief discussion to prepare them for a personal reflection.

Prompts: *What strategies supported the negotiation of power? How does a low mark operate to exclude a student from something? What was the most powerful thing that the student said or did? What was the most powerful thing that the teacher said or did?*

Whole Class > Discussion

Engage students in a discussion about today's work. Prompt: *How were you able to use the elements of dance to negotiate power and communicate different expressions of power? What forms of power were expressed in the role play scenario? In what ways was the dance exploration different than the role play scenario? In ways was it similar?*

Students complete **BLM #12: Dance and Drama Exit Card**.