

2018-06-01

Improv in Dance Classes

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Recommended Citation

Dunn, Elizabeth, "Improv in Dance Classes" (2018). *Academic Excellence Showcase Proceedings*. 108.
<https://digitalcommons.wou.edu/aes/108>

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Improv in dance classes

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Background on improv

- Improv was born when dance was born, people found music and with it movement and that movement was not structured making it improv
- Rhythmic tap
- Forsythe improv
 - Is based on reconstructing ballet
 - Has 30 movement concepts
- Contact improv
 - Created by Steve Paxton in the 1970s



Uses of improv

- Many auditions ask dancers to improv
- Allows one to become aware of their natural movement vocabulary
- Improv isn't limited to modern or postmodern dance which can be seen if you look at the roots of improvisation, so it may be used in other forms
- In many companies creation of new choreography
- Dance conventions or competitions may require improv



Skills that improv builds

- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Ability to express oneself
- Ability to adapt
- Performance skills
- Trust
- Breathing while dancing



Example class structure

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Warming Up (<i>Teacher-directed work</i>) | Remembering |
| 2. Exploring the Concept (<i>Student-centered work</i>) | Understanding |
| 3. Developing Skills (<i>Teacher-directed work</i>) | Applying |
| 4. Creating (<i>Student-centered work</i>) | Analyzing/Creating |
| 5. Cooling Down (<i>Teacher-directed and student-centered work</i>) | Evaluating |



Example exercises

- Spelling
- Using an image (copying the images pattern or flow, or being inspired by the aesthetic of the image)
- Using words (using verbs or using a poem or story)
- Provide a stimulus real, imaginary or emotional
- Copying
- Conversation



An exercise example

- The exercise is a warm up done across the floor
- It involves progressively changing levels from the floor to standing, with each pass made across the floor
- It is meant to allow the students to stretch what they need



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