

STOP DANCE VARIATIONS

Music	Ruud Lucker
Dance	Maria Speth
Time	4/4
Prelude	4 bars
Formation	free use of space
Equipment	cardboard shaped balloons in different colours, cards with different formations (see below), cards with numbers and/or letters
Target Group	suggested 4 to 8 years

Explanation

- Stop Dances, the pupils love them. They thoroughly enjoy the contrast between physical action and moments of standing still. It's that simple: turn on the music and the pupils hop and skip around the room. When the music stops everyone stops, standing absolutely still! Freeze!
- There are also many possible variations in which one can combine the play of moving around and standing still or 'freezing' with learning goals. A number of examples will follow.

Dance Exploration

THE COLOR DANCE

- First check if the (youngest) pupils know the various colours. Hold up separate balloons made from coloured cards. Begin with the 4 basic colors: red, yellow, blue and green. Once this is understood more colour variations may be introduced.
- When the pupils can identify the colours, the play begins. They can check to see if they are wearing a selected colour. If so, they can perform the chosen physical action. For example, 'If you are wearing red you must hop up and down on your spot'. Repeat this step a number of times with different colours and encourage the pupils to help each other. Sometimes a child will have forgotten that they are wearing a red hairclip or blue striped socks. It can help when others point this out.
- After this preparatory exercise the dance can begin; the pupils dance through the room as long as the music is playing but when the music stops everyone comes to a halt. The teacher then shows a cardboard balloon with a particular colour and the pupils check to see if they are wearing that colour. The children with that colour may continue to dance... but only once the music recommences! The other pupils remain 'frozen' on their spots. Be aware of the fact that two different instructions are given here at the same time: 'identify a colour worn' and 'remain frozen until the music starts again'. This can be quite challenging for the youngest pupils.
- This Stop Dance variation facilitates the development of colour awareness as well as encouraging concentration and cooperation (like aiding each other in discovering the designated colour).

- Tip: In Ballet schools the clothing is usually limited to white, black and pink. In this event one can make use of coloured bracelets or other accessories to achieve variation.

Music: Practice Music #2, #13 and #14

STOP DANCE WITH ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS

- The teacher can help the pupils to playfully develop their spatial awareness using formation cards on A4 sized card representing where and how to position oneself in a space. Suggestions for formations are: free in the space, in a circle, in a single row with the children facing forward, in two rows opposite each other, with a group of children in each corner of the room, etc. See examples below
- This too needs preparation. Start for example by showing a formation card with the children spread freely in the space and ask them what they think this could be. Explain to the pupils that the drawings designate heads with noses and emphasize the fact that the noses should all be pointing in the same direction. Did they notice that one head is larger than the rest and that the nose is directed in the opposite direction? That's the teacher or a leader. Another important observation: do they see that no heads lean against a wall or touch each other? Each head has its own position in the room.
- Practice this assignment a number of times in the Stop Dance: the pupils dance throughout the room while the music is playing but when the music stops, hold up the formation card and each pupil must find their position accordingly. Carry on introducing new formation cards with different positions. Consider ending with a round formation to bring the pupils back together in a circle.
- The most challenging card is the one with groups in each of the 4 corners of the room. It is not necessary for each group to be equal in size. This can be illustrated by drawing groups of different sizes onto the formation card. What is important for the pupils is that they are capable of filling all of the corners. Increase the challenge for older pupils by assigning a number to each corner on the formation card limiting the number of pupils to gather in each corner. This activity provides links to rudimentary counting.
- Young pupils tend to gather together in their friendship groups when seeking a corner. This may lead to a lot of commotion and possibly empty corners by the time choices have been made. This is not strange behaviour, young pupils naturally tend to follow and copy each other. Making choices is also a part of the learning process. Point out to the pupils that the goal is to fill all corners with some pupils. This activity provides links to developing independence. The best way to learn to make one's own choices is by repeating.
- The main aim of this Stop Dance is the development of spatial orientation.

Variations

- For older pupils these activities may enhance math and language skills. Create formation cards with numbers or letters. The pupils will be asked to illustrate tasks using their bodies. An example: a group of 6 pupils work together to demonstrate the sum of 6, in as many ways as possible, using their bodies: $1+5$, $3+3$, $2+4$. Explore this also with multiplication: 2×3 and so on.
- The same kind of cards that were used for the toddlers can be used for the older pupils replacing the heads with images of shapes such as a square, triangle, rectangle, circle, oval, diamond, hexagon, octagon, and pyramid. You might make use of more abstract images such as zigzags or spirals. The task for the pupils is to represent the image with their body; individually or in a group. It's not just the cognitive ability that is stimulated in this way but also spatial orientation, creative ability and cooperative learning.
- The pupils will need time to plan their stop poses for the tasks but... when the music stops everyone must be ready in 4 counts!
Practice Music #1, #2 and #10











