

Instructional Sample for Dance

by Kimberly Wolski



(Based on *A Seed Is Sleepy*, by Dianna Hutts Aston, with illustrations by Sylvia Long)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CMzQyljGBM>

Overview

The book *A Seed Is Sleepy* explores the natural world of seeds and plants in language that is accessible to young children. The intent of the *A Seed Is Sleepy* dance exercise is to introduce students to the relationship between movement and language. Students are asked to interpret and embody vocabulary and phrases from the story as dance movement.

After reading *A Seed Is Sleepy*, the teacher leads a discussion about the shapes, sizes, colour, and textures of the seeds that are illustrated in the story. Students are then given the opportunity to choose a specific seed and embody it. Using the book as a reference, students are led through the story's narrative, using a wide variety of dance movements to explore the interplay between language and the elements of dance.

Teachers may also consider adapting this lesson by using any of the books in Nature Series Book Read Aloud, such as:

- *A Rock is Lively*
- *A Butterfly is Patient*
- *A Nest is Noisy*
- *An Egg is Quiet*

Arts Education Grade 3 (Dance)

Big Idea:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry, and purposeful choice. 	
Curricular Competencies:	Content:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose elements, processes, materials, movements, technologies, tools, techniques, and environments of the arts • Apply learned skills, understandings, and processes in new contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements in the arts, including but not limited to: body, space, dynamics, time, relationships, form

Cross-curricular connections

Science Grade 3

Big Idea:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems. 	
Curricular Competencies:	Content:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate curiosity and a sense of wonder about the world • Identify questions about familiar objects and events that can be investigated scientifically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity in the local environment

The Learning Experience

The following dance lesson embodies understanding of biological process in nature expressed through four of the elements of movement: body, space, dynamics and relationships.

BODY (What):

- **Locomotor (travelling) movements:** Walk, Run, Hop (one foot to same foot); Skip (hop + step); Jump (two feet to two feet); Leap (one foot to the other foot); Gallop (lead foot/follow foot); Slide (side gallop)
 - *Seeds find lots of ways to move from their plant out into the world to find a place to grow.*
 - *“leap from its pod,” “cling to a child’s shoestring,” “tumble through a bear’s belly”*
- **Non-locomotor (stationary/axial) movements:** stretch/extend, bend/flex, twist, rotate, turn, rise/grow, elevate, fall, swing, rock, shrink, shake, enclose, open, close, etc.
 - *The root “digs down deep.” The shoot “reaches for the sun.”*
 - *snug, secretive, reveal, textures, adventurous, drift, currents, inventive, germinate*

SPACE (Where):

- **Place:** Personal Kinesphere (self space) and General Space
- **Size of movement:** big, small
- **Size of reach:** near, mid, far
- **Level:** low, medium, high
- **Directions:** forward, back, sideways (right/left), diagonal, upward, downward
- **Pathways:** (floor and traced in air) curvy, straight, zigzag
- **Shapes:** curved, straight, angular, twisted, asymmetrical, symmetrical and/or **Still Forms** (Laban Movement Analysis): pin (long, linear), ball (round, spherical), wall (flat, wide), pyramid (wide base with point on top), screw (twisted, spiraling)

DYNAMICS (How):

- **Qualitative vocabulary:** oozing, moving through molasses, melting, aggressive, thrusting, explosive, delicate, soft, spongy, squishy, fluffy, prickly, etc.
- **Qualities combining different effort factors:**
 - Weight: Strong/Light
 - Time: Quick/Sustained
 - Space: Direct/Indirect

RELATIONSHIPS (With):

- **Individual/group and environments:** near, far, alone, scattering, gathering

Possible Extensions

The following ideas show how teachers could modify this lesson to connect with other grades and areas of learning.

Aboriginal Content/Worldviews

Teachers could extend this lesson by exploring how First Nations communities use dance as a way of expressing their understanding of biological processes within the natural environment.

Other extensions to aboriginal content could include:

- The medicinal use of seeds
- The use of seeds in aboriginal artwork
- Harvesting seeds as food and for planting new crops

English Language Arts Grade 2

Big Idea:

- Playing with language helps us discover how language works.

Curricular Competencies:

- Create stories and other texts to deepen awareness of self, family, and community

Content:

- Story/text:
 - elements of story
 - literary elements and devices

Science Grade 3

Big Idea:

- Living things are diverse, can be grouped, and interact in their ecosystems.

Curricular Competencies:

- Demonstrate curiosity and a sense of wonder about the world
- Identify questions about familiar objects and events that can be investigated scientifically

Content:

- Biodiversity in the local environment

Science Grade 4

Big Idea:

- All living things sense and respond to their environment.

Curricular Competencies:

- Experience and interpret the local environment
- Represent and communicate ideas and findings in a variety of ways, such as diagrams and simple reports, using digital technologies as appropriate

Content:

- Sensing and responding:
 - humans
 - other animals
 - plants