

Episode 16: Free Falling

Clip: The Fouetté

Activity: Fear of Falling

Theme: Dance Skill

Elements of dance: body, dynamics

1. As a class, view the clip, *The Fouetté*, where Tara is made to perform multiple fouettés: a turn on one leg, with the 'working leg' extending to the front, whipping to the side, and the lower leg coming into 'retire' (foot to the knee of the 'supporting leg'). Tara has problems with her turns because she is afraid of falling. Fear of falling is logical and understandable but restricts the dancer in the quest to defy gravity and the ability to control the forces around him or her. In contemporary and ballet dance training, dancers use the floor in different ways: as a launching pad, as something to press away from or as something to 'sink into'. In order to 'sink into the floor' the dancer needs to relax particular muscles (depending on the movement) and use momentum.
2. As a class, discuss and identify different kinds of dance falls, for example, into the arms of a partner, onto the floor sideways, forwards, with a lunge. As a practical exercise, begin with students lying on their backs, arms by sides, legs outstretched. Draw their attention to the rise and fall of their chests as they breathe in and out. Focus on the exhalation and the fall in the chest and concentrate on how this exhalation affects the rest of their bodies – slight shifts in the skeleton and the tension in their muscles.
3. Ask students to stand. Talk them through the following guided improvisation. Use some quiet instrumental sounds or music in the background:
 - a. Close your eyes. Slowly breathe in and out. Be aware of how your body responds to this simple breathing. If this were a scale of 1-10, this action would be a 3.
 - b. Now begin to exaggerate the breathing in and out to the scale of 5. Imagine you are an inflatable man – the kind you see outside car sale yards. With the breath in, you partially inflate and deflate. Consider the parts of your body that fill up or deflate first (perhaps an arm, or a knee). What parts follow? Keep changing the parts that fill up first.
 - c. Now bring the scale to an 8. Hold the breath in for a second before exhaling. Hold the exhalation before inhaling. Create a shape at the ends of the breathing.

- d. Now bring this to a 10. The inhalation will bring you to the highest, fullest shape you can make. The exhalation will bring you low on the floor. Keep changing the pathway the breathing takes as it fills and leaves your body. The action is effortless and smooth.
 - e. Teachers: aim for 8 breaths in each part of the scale explored above. More time and repetition is possible but be alert for cases of dizziness in some students. If a student becomes disoriented, a slight pause and rest will be necessary before resuming the activity.
4. Have students individually reflect on the improvisation by drawing an image of an inflatable man and what he might look like at 3, 5, 8 and 10 breaths. Ask students to use **Student Activity Sheet E16.3: The Inflatable Man**. They may elect to include words as descriptors for feelings, thoughts, similes or metaphors.

Download

Student Activity Sheet E16.3: The Inflatable Man

Useful resources

- [Ausdance Factsheet 16, Care of the dancer's body](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 11, Producing a dance performance](#)
- [Ausdance Factsheet 12, Healthy bones for female dancers](#)
- Minton, S, *Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation* - 3rd Edition, Human Kinetics; (May 29, 2007).
- Morgenroth, J, *Dance Improvisations*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, USA, 1987.
- Schrader, C A, *A Sense of Dance: Exploring Your Movement Potential*, 2nd ed, Human Kinetics, Champaign, Illinois, USA, 2004.
- Spurgeon, D, *Dance Moves – From Improvisation to Dance*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Group, Marrickville, NSW, Australia, 1991.



NAME:

Student Activity Sheet:
Activity:

E16.3
The Inflatable
Man

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The Inflatable Man

In the four spaces below, draw your 'inflatable man' at stages 3, 5, 8 and 10.

Include some words to describe your feelings, thoughts about your experience at each stage of the activity, or even use some poetry to describe it by comparing your experience to something else.

The inflatable man at 3

The inflatable man at 5

The inflatable man at 8

The inflatable man at 10