

Shape Shifters 2: Shapes and formations

Lesson objectives

To be able to use different canon relationships in conjunction with formations and dynamics to develop and perform engaging choreography.

What am I looking for?

Ability to explore, select, and refine ways of using loose canon.
Create interest by applying formations and dynamics.
Perform with accuracy.

Warm up

Ask the students to make a large circle and recall the actions performed in CANON in the previous lesson (either in the warm up or during group dances).

Ask the students to select 1 and prepare to perform it.

Explain that you are about to start the process with a clap but this time each person will perform their chosen movement one at a time (but moving swiftly onto the next).

Be clear of the direction the canon will take.

Immediately repeat the process in the opposite direction.

Repeat several times encouraging the students to perform a different action each time.

If possible, recap the 5 basic actions - JUMP, TURN, TRAVEL, GESTURE, STILLNESS - eg "If you did a jump last time, try to think of a turn, travel, gesture or stillness this time".

Ask the students to repeat the process quicker.

It is likely that students may anticipate the action, reinforce waiting for the person before them.

Repeat 3 or 4 times, alternating directions, getting faster each time.

Canon, range of actions + dynamics

Context

Explain there are different ways to perform a CANON - usually the group perform the same action at a different time which is called a REVERTING CANON; however, when different actions are used it is called a LOOSE CANON which allows great opportunity to explore how these are performed.

There is also a SIMULTANEOUS CANON and CUMULATIVE CANON. These are more sophisticated skills that might be used at upper KS3 and in Level 2, 3 and 4 qualifications.

Exploration

Organise the students into groups of 3, 4 or 5 and create a LOOSE CANON with everyone performing a different type of movement JUMP, TURN, TRAVEL, GESTURE, STILLNESS.

Prompt them to:

- Organise the order

- Consider using a geometric shape as a formation

Add the music for 3 minutes or so and encourage experimentation - eg adjusting the movements; changing the order, varying the formation.

Canon + range of actions

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Composition

Ask the groups to repeat their LOOSE CANON 3 times adding a travelling action between each repetition, this may involve:

- Each person travelling to a different location resulting in a change of FORMATION
- Travelling and reforming the original FORMATION

Add the music for 2 to 3 minutes and encourage trialling different options before settling on their preferred choice.

The groups can decide whether to travel in UNISON or CANON.

Recap examples of TRAVELLING actions such as jog, shuffle, slide, leap, stride, walk, gallop, creep, slither...

Ask the groups to rehearse their work to ensure everyone is confident in recalling the content easily.

Add the music for 2 minutes or so and check that the groups are sustaining the CANON relationship.

Ask the groups to consider the SPEED of their LOOSE CANON and how this could be varied or developed - eg they could:

- Start slowly and gradually increase
- Start quickly and gradually slow down
- Alternate the speed with each repetition - eg slow; fast; slow

Add the music for 4 to 5 minutes and encourage the consideration of other factors affecting speed - eg the FORCE of the action - soft and smooth often complement slow, whereas strong actions are commonly used with fast; the SIZE of the action - big actions typically appear slower and small actions look faster; whether the PATHWAY travelled is DIRECT or INDIRECT.

Encourage rehearsal until everyone feels confident with the content and application of speed.

Canon, travel + speed

Perform

Number each group and explain that each will perform when called, upon completion they should pause and observe the work of other groups.

Play the music and start by calling group 1, when approximately halfway through call group 2 to start, when they are halfway through call group 3 and so on.

Depending on time these could be performed more than once.

Ask the students to give feedback on what was particularly eye-catching and why? Also, why you asked them to show their work one group after another (with a degree of overlap)?

Hopefully the students will spot this as another example of a LOOSE CANON. Encourage the use of subject specific terminology.

Review + analysis

Cool down

Ask the students find a space and make a low shape.

Recalling their group number from the previous task, when you call out their group number change to a high LEVEL and hold whatever shape they make.

Count swiftly through the numbers in whatever order you decide.

Repeat several times alternating between high and low LEVEL, the order of the numbers can be changed and speed gradually diminished.

Canon + levels