

Lesson 1: Dance and Drama

The Arts Curriculum links

Drama

- Explore dramatic action, empathy and space in improvisations, playbuilding and scripted drama to develop characters and situations ([ACADRM035](#))
- Develop skills and techniques of voice and movement to create character, mood and atmosphere and focus dramatic action ([ACADRM036](#))
- Rehearse and perform devised and scripted drama that develops narrative, drives dramatic tension, and uses dramatic symbol, performance styles and design elements to share community and cultural stories and engage an audience ([ACADRM037](#))
- Explain how the elements of drama and production elements communicate meaning by comparing drama from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander drama ([ACADRR038](#))

Dance

- Explore movement and choreographic devices using the elements of dance to choreograph dances that communicate meaning ([ACADAM009](#))
- Develop technical and expressive skills in fundamental movements including body control, accuracy, alignment, strength, balance and coordination ([ACADAM010](#))
- Perform dance using expressive skills to communicate a choreographer's ideas, including performing dances of cultural groups in the community ([ACADAM011](#))

TrackSAFE outcomes of this lesson

Students should be able to:

- **Identify** the physical elements of the train network (pedestrian level crossing, train tracks, platform etc.).
- **Describe** the physical elements of the train network (pedestrian level crossing, train tracks, platform etc.).
- **Explain** the purpose of the physical elements of the train network (pedestrian level crossing, train tracks, platform etc.).
- **Describe** what they themselves need to do to stay safe on the train network.
- **Explain** why they need to do those things to stay safe on the train network.
- **Teach** others how to stay safe near trains and tracks.

1.0 Whole class learning session (25mins)

Improvisation: Playing it safe

Preparation/resources: None

Develop a learning intention and success criteria for experimenting with and manipulating movement for dance/drama.

Introduce Improvisation – a drama or dance performance with little or no preparation.

For warm up select a suitable activity from the Improv Encyclopaedia:

<http://www.improvencyclopedia.org/>

Develop a simple train and track scenario for improvisation with students. Ask students to come up with contexts for a scenario that fit with their local community's experiences around trains and tracks. Display the scenario.

Here are some examples to get started:

1. *You are using ear buds/head phones to listen to music when you are walking to school with a friend. You stop by the station to wait for some other friends to join you. When they arrive they are laughing so much they are just about falling over. Suddenly passengers come streaming out of the station and try to walk past you and your friends. You are surprised because you were beside the station and you did not hear or see the train arrive.*
2. *You arrive home from school and find that your mum needs you to get something from the local shops. Your mum asks if you will take your little brother with you. Getting there is OK but the walk home takes hours because he wants to explore everything you walk past. You are very tempted to leave him to get home by himself but there is a level crossing just before you get home and you know he is too small to cross safely by himself. What do you do?*
3. *You are being driven to school by your friend's father. He is in a rush and grumpy about having to drop you and your friend off before he goes to work. You arrive at a level crossing just as the boom gates are starting to go down. He accelerates the car around the gates. You and your friend look at each other. It was pretty scary. You do not know what to say.*
4. *A group of older students hang out near the station where you catch the train to go to school. They mess around near the tracks and are often in trouble for graffiti and petty burglaries in your local area. You are a little frightened by them. A few of them call out to you and invite you to come and see what they have found further down the train track. It looks like it might be interesting - you don't know what to do.*
5. *You see a new student at your school arrive at the station to catch the train. You know they speak several languages but not English. You wonder how they will know what train to catch or where to catch it from. The loudspeaker announcements are hard even for you to understand. The student looks a little lost and is standing in a place where they could be pushed across the yellow lines when the train arrives. What do you do?*

Ask students to work in groups to **devise** a drama based on the local community scenario. Give them time to practise. **Reflect** on how well the group met the success criteria for experimenting with and manipulating movement. **Wrap up** the activity with a whole class discussion on the experience of improvising a drama. **Reflect** on what was easy, what was challenging and what was interesting.

Activities

You can allocate the following activities to groups according to student learning needs.

You can also allow students to choose one or more activities themselves. All activities provide guidance to students so they can be completed independently. These can be read to the groups if not appropriate to their reading level.

Activities are designed so that students can complete their chosen activity within a one hour lesson. Each group can be working on different activities at the same time, or choose to do the same activity.

Activity 1.1 Dancing on the Safe Side (35mins)

Preparation/Resources: Yellow tape

Develop a learning intention and success criteria for experimenting with and manipulating movement for dance.

Place a yellow line on the floor that runs the length of the room (using tape for example).

Designate a platform side and a train track side of the line. **Discuss** with the class the importance of keeping your body on the safe side of the yellow line on platforms.

Ask students to:

- **Choreograph** a dance that shows the importance of moving in ways that keep your body and or other people's bodies on the 'safe side' of the yellow line. The dance message should stress that we can manage the ways in which we move on platforms to keep ourselves and others on the safe side of the line.
- **Choose** to represent the movements of:
 - a body or body part
 - several bodies
 - a train
- **Use a range of the elements of dance** to create a performance to represent being on the 'safe side' at a station. For example, when creating the dance think about your use of:
 - Body awareness (locomotor, non locomotor, body base, body shape, body parts)
 - Space (level, range, place, direction, pathway, focus)
 - Time (tempo, duration, beat, rhythm)
 - Energy (weight, flow, quality) and the dancer's
 - Relationship with other objects (e.g. yellow line) and dancers.
- **Share** your dance with other groups and provide feedback to each other about the effectiveness of the dance in conveying the TrackSAFE message.

Extension: Repeat the exercise, but this time use dance to represent the movement of the yellow line as it strives to maintain its place in the surge of people on the station platform

Provide opportunities for rehearsing, revising, conferencing, and presenting the performance.

Activity 1.2 Improvising for safety (35mins)

Preparation/Resources: Paper strips, pens, container

Develop a learning intention and success criteria for developing characters and situations using empathy and distance, to explore dramatic action in improvisations.

Ask students to:

- **Write** a short scenario that outlines important actions when keeping yourself and others safe around train tracks in your local community.
 - You can explore themes of managing track and train hazards caused by: Platform trips and slips; poor mobility; poor physical health (e.g. vision, hearing, dizziness, fainting); inappropriate use of equipment (e.g. baby strollers, wheeled bags, ear buds/head phones and music players); medication, alcohol or drug use; clumsiness (e.g. dropping things off the platform onto the tracks); distractions in the local environment (e.g. showing off to peers, mobile phones, looking after pre-schoolers and babies); inattention due to emotional states (e.g. happy, sad, afraid or fearful, surprised, disgusted, and angry); and/or complacency.
- Ask the questions:
 - **What do** people in your local community do that puts them at risk when they are around trains and track?
 - **How can** we help them manage this so that they keep safe around trains and tracks?
- **Place** the scenario in a container with other students' scenarios.
- **Form** groups of three to four students.
- **Pick** a scenario from the container.
- **Read** the scenario to the group and allow one minute for discussion.
- **Present** an improvised performance of the scenario.
Note: Your performance may include props, voice, mime, dance, instruments etc.
- **Seek feedback** about the performance and the safety message that is the focus of the improvisation.

Extension: Video the improvised performances and create an edited highlights (and/or an

Provide opportunities for rehearsing, revising, conferencing, and presenting more polished versions to clarify the messages presented.

Activity 1.3 Taking a stand for safety (35mins)

Preparation/Resources: None

Develop a learning intention and success criteria for developing characters and situations using empathy and distance, to explore dramatic action in improvisations.

Ask students to:

Work with a partner to:

- **Write** a scenario describing a context for demonstrating a TrackSAFE action.

For example:

- You are a member of the station staff and you see a child bouncing a soccer ball on the station platform.
- Your friend wants to jump down onto the tracks to grab his wallet that fell off the platform.
- Two older students tell you to follow them across the train tracks to get to school quicker rather than walk to the pedestrian level crossing.
- **Practise** your performance and then perform for another group.
- **Seek feedback** about the performance and the safety message that is the focus of the improvisation.
- **Discuss** whether the TrackSAFE action was clear and why it is important.

Extension: Video the improvised performances and create a mash up of the 10 best ways to look out for yourself and others around tracks and trains.

Provide opportunities for rehearsing, revising, conferencing, and presenting more polished versions to clarify the messages presented.