Indicative A response

Dancing poems

Year 4	The Arts — Dance

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Queensland Government
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Partnership and innovation

Section 1. Creating a dance from a poem

"My Shadow" Robert Louis Stevenson < www.storyit.com/Classics/JustPoems/shadow.htm>

Information for teachers: This a written description of choreography for the poem.

1. I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me, And what can be the use of him is more than I can see. He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head; And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.	*Student A stands in front of Student B centre stage, hands on hips at high level. They jump sideways in contrast apart from each other and then back to original position. They do a slow sustained turn in a circle together wrapping arms around each other, getting lower in their turning until they reach a crouch position. A rises up pushing arms side to side in a percussive manner up past the body from a low position near the heels until they reach head level. B does the same movement in canon behind. B runs quickly forward in a squiggly pathway to downstage right and then jumps backward to land collapsing to the floor, then stretching out to lie on their back. A in canon follows doing the same movement.*
2. The funniest things about him is the way he likes to grow — Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow; For he sometimes shoots up taller like an India rubber ball, And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.	*Both slowly roll over onto their stomachs and slowly push back onto their heels into a crouch position with hands on the floor, facing the side wall. B suddenly jumps up and is returning to a low crouch as A jumps up quickly and then returns to a crouch.*

3. He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play, And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way. He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see; I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!	*They both lengthen out to kneel on all fours. A then crawls under B to take the front position. Then B crawls to the front under A and finishes standing up to run around and hide behind A. A has risen to their feet after B crawled through. They go back-to-back side-on to the audience, arms stretched out to side, holding hands. They turn towards the back wall and face each other swinging their arms in the same position. They continue these half turns until they reach the back. A runs in a big wide circle to return to centre stage attempting to dodge and weave to get rid of B. B follows copying movements exactly and ending up very close behind A at centre stage, hands on A's shoulders and peering over A's shoulder.*
4. One morning, very early, before the sun was up, I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup; But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head, Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.	*A does tiptoeing sneaking movement over to the side of the stage away from B. B stretches up into a big full body yawn and then slowly sinks to the ground. A returns quickly to B finishing in a contrast pose at a high level focusing on B's floor pose.*

Section 2. Performing your poem dance

- Performance displays skilful coordination and accuracy of actions in expressing ideas
- Performance is consistent and confident displaying sensitivity with respect to the focus and projection requirements of the choreography to express ideas. This does not mean always looking out to the audience but can often mean focusing (when appropriate) to particular body parts or areas of the stage space.
- Performance demonstrates highly appropriate energy types and tempo changes to express ideas
- Performance displays an astute sense of where the other dancer is in the space and positioning is adjusted accordingly to ideas expressed
- Performance projects a strong sense of energy, commitment and motivation in expressing ideas about the poem.

Section 3. Thinking about poem dances

Fill in this worksheet thinking about your dance and those of other people in the class.

Colour the number of stars to show how you felt about your dance. The more stars the happier you are!	
Describe a good example from your dance or someone else's that showed how movement expressed clearly an idea from the poem.	*I liked the part in our dance where we showed the person and their shadow shooting up taller. We made this part a canon with our movements overlapping each others. It looked like we were rocketing up out of the ground like shooting stars.*
Highlight a dance element below and describe how you used it to make your dance appealing for the audience Direction Level Shape Formation Pathways	*We put a variety of dance pathways into our sequence — sideways, circular, squiggly, backwards and forwards — to make it look interesting. It would be boring if you stayed in the same place. People watching never knew where we were going to go next. We used the whole space and it gave us lots of ideas for actions and plenty of room to move in. I think it showed the idea of the shadow needing to stay close as it (my partner, Jenny) was always to trying to keep in touch with the person (me, Angela).*
What was the most difficult part of the poem to put into movement?	*The third stanza seemed kind of playful and then changes to talk about the shadow as a coward. We found it hard to match actions with the words as there were not many "doing" words to match just a whole image or idea. We showed the playful bit at the start by crawling under each other's bellies like commandos and then the coward by the shadow hiding behind.*

What improvements would you now make to your dance?	I would like to change the ending so it was a shape we could hold easily so the audience knew we were finished. I would like to change some of the movements so I could be the shadow for parts of the dance to add more interest and something different.
Is it possible to express a poem through dance rather than just reading it? Why can this be effective? (Or not?)	I think that by doing a dance about a poem you get real physical pictures or shapes of what the poet tried to say in words. It can be effective. I saw everyone doing different things with the same words and this was really good. It is good to hear a poem but dancing it gives just another way of expressing ideas. It can have lots of meaning for an audience if presented in another way like we did by using movements.
What have you learnt about dance by doing this assessment?	It has shown me that dance is a really great way to express ideas about something like poetry. It gives the audience another look at the poet's ideas. As you make up your dance you can create the movements that suit the words and suit you. They can be different from everyone else's but still right.