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Let's dance

Strands

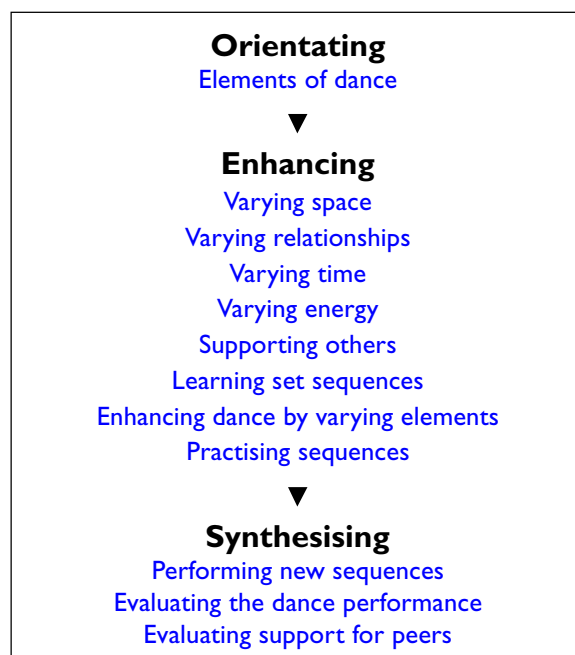
Developing Concepts and Skills for Physical Activity
Enhancing Personal Development

Purpose

Students learn a set dance sequence and then manipulate elements of dance to create and enhance group sequences. All students in the group take turns to be the dance maker, which involves making decisions about particular dance elements to be varied. During the dance-making process, students are expected to actively encourage and support the members of their group.

Overview of activities

Activities in this module are based on a learner-centred approach with an emphasis on decision making and problem solving. As the following diagram shows, activities are sequenced in **orientating**, **enhancing** and **synthesising** phases.



Core learning outcomes

This module focuses on the following core learning outcomes from the Years 1–10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus:

Developing Concepts and Skills for Physical Activity

4.1 Students create and perform movement sequences in games, sports or other physical activities, implementing ways to enhance their own and others' performances.

Enhancing Personal Development

4.4 Students demonstrate skills and actions that support the rights and feelings of others, while adopting different roles and responsibilities in social, team or group activities.

Core content

This module incorporates the following core content from the syllabus:

Developing Concepts and Skills for Physical Activity

- specialised skills for movement, in particular dance and rhythmic activities;
- components of movement, such as body awareness, space awareness, effort, and relationships with people and objects;

Enhancing Personal Development

- interpersonal skills in negotiation, cooperation, decision making and problem solving.

Assessment strategy

The following are examples of assessment tasks that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the core learning outcomes identified in this module.

Developing Concepts and Skills for Physical Activity 4.1

- **In groups, students create their own dance sequences by altering a set dance. They perform their sequences for an audience.**
 - Can the student use the identified elements (space, time, energy, relationships) to contribute to the creation of a group dance?
 - Can the student perform an altered dance sequence?
- **Students explain the elements they varied (for example, space, time, energy, relationships) to create the dance sequence, and identify how the variations have enhanced performance.**
 - Does the student show an understanding of the varied element?
 - Can the student explain how the dance was varied?
 - Can the student justify how the variation enhanced the performance of the sequence?

Enhancing Personal Development 4.4

- **Students make decisions about how to change a particular element of the sequence while acting as the dance maker.**
 - Does the student encourage and support others?
 - Does the student lead the dance-making process?
 - Does the student recognise the suggestions and abilities of other group members when making decisions?

- Students explain how they considered the rights and feelings of others in the roles of both dance maker and group member.
 - Can the student explain how others’ suggestions were considered when making decisions as the dance maker?
 - Can the student identify actions that facilitated the dance-making process and supported the rights and feelings of group members?

Background information

Movement and dance



Dance manipulates and emphasises certain elements of movement. This module involves students in dance making and focuses on manipulating the elements of space, time, energy and relationships. (Details of these elements are provided in Resource Sheet 1, ‘Building blocks of dance’.)

Space is the three-dimensional medium in which movement and dance take place (Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation 1997, p. 6). Aspects of space which are relevant to this module are personal space, general space, directions, pathways and levels.

Movement occurs in space and through **time** (ACHPER 1997, p. 6). This module focuses on the aspect of tempo. Tempo dictates the speed of a movement or piece of music.

Energy is the term used to describe muscle tension. The strength of an action is determined by the level of muscle tension — the more tension, the stronger the action; the less tension, the lighter, gentler the action (ACHPER 1997, p. 7). This module focuses on manipulating energy — for example, making a movement slow and sustained, or fast and bouncy.

Relationships in movement include:

- how body parts relate to each other;
- how partners and groups relate to each other;
- how the body relates to the environment and objects in the environment.

This module focuses on the relationships between members of a dance group in terms of where they are in relation to each other.

Terminology

Activities in this module involve use of the following language in the context of Health and Physical Education:

bouncy	encouragement	relationships	space
cooperation	energy	responsibility	speed
dance making	fast	rhythm	sustained
direction	feedback	sequence	tempo
elements	personal space	slow	time

School authority policies

Teachers need to be aware of and observe school authority policies that may be relevant to this module.

Safety policies are of particular relevance in 'Let's dance'. Some safety issues that teachers should consider are:

- including appropriate stretching exercises in warm-up and cool-down activities;
- ensuring the area for the dance activity is suitable — for example, flat, free of stones and loose objects, non-slippery, large enough for the number of students participating;
- ensuring students wear footwear and clothing appropriate for the dance activities.

Social justice principles

This module provides opportunities for students to increase their understanding and appreciation of supportive environments and diversity. It includes activities that encourage students to:

- understand and demonstrate actions that support the rights and feelings of others in their group;
- appreciate dances from other cultures;
- understand that, whatever their cultural origins, all dances have common elements.

Support materials and references

Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) 1997, *Dance: Upper Primary*, PEP series, Hindmarsh, SA.

Logsdon, B. J. et al. 1994, *Physical Education Unit Plans for Grades 5–6: Learning Experiences in Games, Gymnastics, and Dance*, Human Kinetics, Lower Mitcham, SA.

Purcell, T. M. 1994, *Teaching Children Dance: Becoming a Master Teacher*, Human Kinetics, Lower Mitcham, SA.

Queensland Department of Education 1992, *Dance: Years 1–10 Dance Curriculum Guide*, Brisbane.

Activities

Orientating

ELEMENTS OF DANCE

Developing an understanding that all dances have common elements and that these elements can be varied to enhance performance

► Students discuss and compare dances they know or have seen performed and identify aspects they find most pleasing or effective. They also consider aspects of a dance that can be varied to enhance performance.

Focus questions could include:

- What types/forms of dance do you know?
- What dances do you know or have you seen performed?
- What body parts did the dancers use?
- How did the dancers move? Where did they move?
- Who did the dancers move with?
- Did the dancers vary the speed/directions/levels in which they moved?
- Were there variations in the relationships between the dancers?
- What were some of the similarities/differences in the dances?
- What did you like about the dances? What made them interesting?
- What type of dance(s) do you prefer?

Teaching considerations

Students may be familiar with ballet, jazz, tap, Aboriginal dance, Torres Strait Islander dance and other dance forms from different cultures and ethnic groups. Specific dances familiar to students could include the Time Warp, Twist, Macarena, Bus Stop and Nutbush.

Highlight the multicultural diversity of dance forms and dances performed in communities throughout Australia and the benefits of this diversity.

It may not be appropriate to analyse sequences in some Aboriginal dances and Torres Strait Islander dances. Consult with appropriate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members before discussion.

Enhancing

VARYING SPACE

Developing an understanding that use of space in dance can be altered by varying directions and levels

► Students explore **direction** and **pathways** while travelling — for example, moving forwards, backwards, sideways, diagonally and in zigzags and curves. They then perform a simple sequence that combines movements in different directions — for example:

Four steps *forwards*, eight skips *backwards*, four slides *sideways* to the right then left, four gallops *diagonally* to the right then left, and eight runs around in a *circular* pathway.

- ▶ Students explore ways to change the sequence by varying the directions in which they move.

Focus questions could include:

- In what direction did you move?
- How else could you vary the directions in which you move?
- Does changing the direction make the sequence more interesting?

Teaching considerations

Before students perform the sequence, ensure they are aware of safety considerations that apply when sharing general space. Establish appropriate behaviours and rules — for example, always be aware of positioning in relation to others.

The movement sequence could be performed with or without music, or with other rhythmical accompaniments, such as click sticks, drums or a tambour.

Encourage students to demonstrate actions and skills that support peers as they attempt activities — for example, showing others how to perform actions and offering encouragement.

- ▶ Students explore different levels while travelling — for example, moving the whole body or a particular body part through low, medium and high levels. They then perform the movement sequence from the previous activity, varying the levels — for example:

Four steps forwards at a *low level* (close to the ground), eight skips backwards at a *medium level*, four slides sideways pushing *high* up off the floor, four gallops diagonally right then left while stretching as *high* as possible, and eight runs around in a circular pathway varying levels from *high to low*.

- ▶ Students explore ways to change the sequence by varying the levels through which they move.

Focus questions could include:

- Through what levels can we move in space?
- How else can we vary the levels through which we move?
- Which levels are easier to move through? Why?
- Does changing the levels make the sequence more interesting? Why?

Teaching considerations

Enhance students' exploration and understanding of space by asking them to consider how dances from other cultures use different pathways, directions and levels. To help students understand the cultural contexts of these dances and to ensure cultural sensitivities are observed, invite appropriate people from the relevant cultural backgrounds to offer interpretations.

Encourage students to demonstrate actions and skills that support peers as they attempt activities.

VARYING RELATIONSHIPS

Developing an understanding that a dance can be altered by varying where individuals are in relation to each other

► Students explore **relationships** as an aspect of space by performing the same movement sequence in a variety of groups and formations — for example, straight line, parallel to the audience, V-formation, circle, free form. Students can then try different formations for particular parts of the sequence and consider the effects of these variations.



Focus questions could include:

- How does the formation change the way the movement looks?
- Which formation did you like best? Why?
- Which formations were easier to organise? Why?

► Students could also explore the relationship between body parts — for example, vary the arm action of the same basic movement.

Teaching consideration

Encourage students to demonstrate actions and skills that support peers as they attempt activities.

VARYING TIME

Developing an understanding that the time element of dance can be altered by varying the speed of movement

► Students explore **speed (tempo)** using another variation of the same movement sequence. This time, they perform the movements at the speed specified by the teacher.

Focus questions could include:

- How does the movement change when tempo is varied?
- What are some other variations to tempo?
- Does a change in tempo add interest to a movement? Why?

Teaching considerations

Various methods can be used to dictate speed including clapping, music and simple instructions.

If music is used for this activity, have students double and/or halve the speed of their movements in time with the beat.

VARYING ENERGY **Developing an understanding that the energy element of dance can be altered by varying the quality of the movement**

► Students explore **quality of movement (energy)** by performing simple mimes of 'strong' and 'light' actions — for example, rolling or pushing a large or heavy object to a partner; tapping a balloon to a partner. They could demonstrate these actions to the class, exaggerating the contrasting qualities in the movements. For further exploration of quality of movement, students can repeat the sequence from previous activities, making some parts slow and sustained and other parts fast and bouncy.

Focus questions could include:

- How does the movement change when energy is varied?
- How could we vary the quality of movement to add interest to a movement?

SUPPORTING OTHERS **Planning ways to support peers as they learn, create and perform dance movements**

► Students suggest actions they could take to support peers when acting as dance maker and when participating as a member of a group.

Suggestions for the dance maker could include:

- giving everyone the opportunity to offer ideas;
- encouraging group decision making;
- taking into account the skill levels of group members.

Suggestions for group members could include:

- facing, and listening to, the dance maker;
- listening to other people's ideas and considering their views;
- speaking calmly rather than angrily when there are disagreements;
- contributing to group decision making;
- accepting the decisions of the dance maker.

► Students brainstorm actions they could take to provide positive feedback to peers when acting as dance maker and when participating as a member of a group. They could role-play these actions in pairs.

Focus questions could include:

- How could you encourage people in your group — for example, someone who is trying very hard, or who is reluctant to participate?
- When and how could you praise someone in your group?

Teaching consideration

Encourage students to suggest specific and practical actions they could take to provide a supportive environment for the activities that follow.

LEARNING SET SEQUENCES

Learning and performing simple dance sequences



▶ Students discuss how space, time, energy and relationships are varied in the dances identified in the orientating phase of the module or in particular social dances they know — for example, the Chicken Dance. Students learn and perform one of these dances.

▶ Students learn and perform a simple dance selected by the teacher. The Madeson is provided as an example on Resource Sheet 2; however, the teacher could choose or devise any other dance suited to the interests and skills of the class. The dance in this activity will be used as the ‘set’ sequence for dance making throughout the rest of the module.

Teaching considerations

Support students by selecting a dance that is simple and easy to learn.

Break the sequence into small workable sections for ease of teaching — for example, 4 to 8 counts. Model movements and verbalise counts when teaching the sequence.

Where possible, give students responsibility for teaching parts of the sequence.

ENHANCING DANCE BY VARYING ELEMENTS

Planning ways to alter a set dance sequence by varying the elements of space, time, energy and relationships to enhance performance

▶ Working in small groups, students explore how to vary the use of **space** in the set dance sequence — for example, changing directions, varying levels. One person in each group adopts the role of dance maker and takes responsibility for:

- coordinating the exploration (everyone should offer suggestions);
- consulting with the group to choose variations that might enhance performance.

Teaching considerations

This is the first time students take on the role of dance maker. Teacher encouragement and support will not only help them succeed in the role, but also provide a model of appropriate and effective behaviour.

Encourage the dance maker to demonstrate support skills and strategies discussed and practised earlier in this phase of the module.

▶ In the same groups, students explore varying the **tempo** of the dance — for example, making different parts of the dance fast or slow. A new dance maker should be chosen to coordinate the exploration and consult with the group to choose a variation of tempo that enhances the dance performance.

▶ Continuing in groups, students explore varying the **energy** element of the dance — for example, heavy/light, sudden/sustained, smooth/jerky. Another student should take on the role of dance maker and work with the group to decide how and where quality of movement could be varied to enhance performance.

► In the same way as before, students choose a new dance maker and explore varying the **formations** used in the dance. Together, they decide on the most effective formation for their sequence.

Focus questions throughout these stages could include:

- How have you varied aspects of the dance?
 - How have the changes enhanced the performance of the dance?
 - Does varying use of space, tempo, energy or relationships add interest to the dance? How? If not, why not?
 - If the set sequence is from a cultural background different from your own, what cultural protocols did you need to consider?
 - Have you considered the suggestions of people in your group?
 - How are you considering the rights and feelings of people in your group?
 - Which changes improved the performance of the dance? Why?
 - Could all group members perform the suggested variations?
 - Were some suggestions too hard or too easy for some group members to perform? Why? What did you do to deal with this?
 - As a group member, how are you contributing to decision making?
 - As the dance maker, how have you facilitated decision making?
- After finalising the variations, students could record their sequences using symbols, diagrams or words.

Teaching considerations

Teachers may choose to focus on some or all of the elements listed above. Whatever the case, group numbers should allow all students to have an opportunity to be the dance maker and share responsibility for the dance.

Encourage dance makers to:

- explore a range of variations to the elements;
- listen to the suggestions of group members before choosing variations;
- support the abilities of all performers in their groups.

If a dance from another culture has been chosen as the set sequence, consult with members of the relevant cultural community about acceptable variations. In some cases it may be culturally inappropriate to vary certain elements.



PRACTISING SEQUENCES

Practising dance sequences for performance

▶ Students refine and practise their dances. Group members can take turns to act as leader and provide feedback about particular aspects of the dance they were responsible for altering.

Teaching considerations

Move around the groups reinforcing the elements of dance and encouraging students to practise their sequences to improve performance.

Guide students to focus their feedback on enhancing the quality of the sequence and on providing support and encouragement to all group members.

Highlight the importance of consideration and cooperation within groups.

Synthesising

PERFORMING NEW SEQUENCES

Performing the dance sequence for an audience

▶ Students present their dances to the audience of their choice — for example, other classes, parents, peers. As part of their presentations, students should describe the dance element they varied and comment on why they thought the variation enhanced the sequence.

Possible focus questions are:

- How has the sequence changed from the original form?
- What elements were varied and how?
- How does the variation enhance the performance of the dance?

Teaching considerations

Encourage the class to demonstrate good audience skills during performances. Explain that being a member of an audience has certain responsibilities — for example, to show respect and appreciation for performers. Ask students to consider how they can apply the skills developed during this module to support the rights and feelings of the performers.

EVALUATING THE DANCE PERFORMANCE

Evaluating the effectiveness of variations to the dance

▶ Students compare the dance sequences developed by different groups, focusing on:

- how elements of the sequence were altered;
- how effective the variations were in enhancing the performance of the dance;
- how the sequences differed;
- what they liked about certain sequences.

▶ Returning to their dance groups, students reflect on the variations they made to the original sequence and the choices of other groups. They should evaluate whether their variations enhanced the original sequence and consider other variations that might be effective.

**EVALUATING
SUPPORT FOR
PEERS****Evaluating own effectiveness in supporting peers, both as dance maker and group member**

► In groups, students discuss strategies they used to encourage and support others during dance making. They should also consider the effectiveness of these strategies and identify processes that contributed to group success. After discussion, groups share their ideas with the class.

Possible focus questions are:

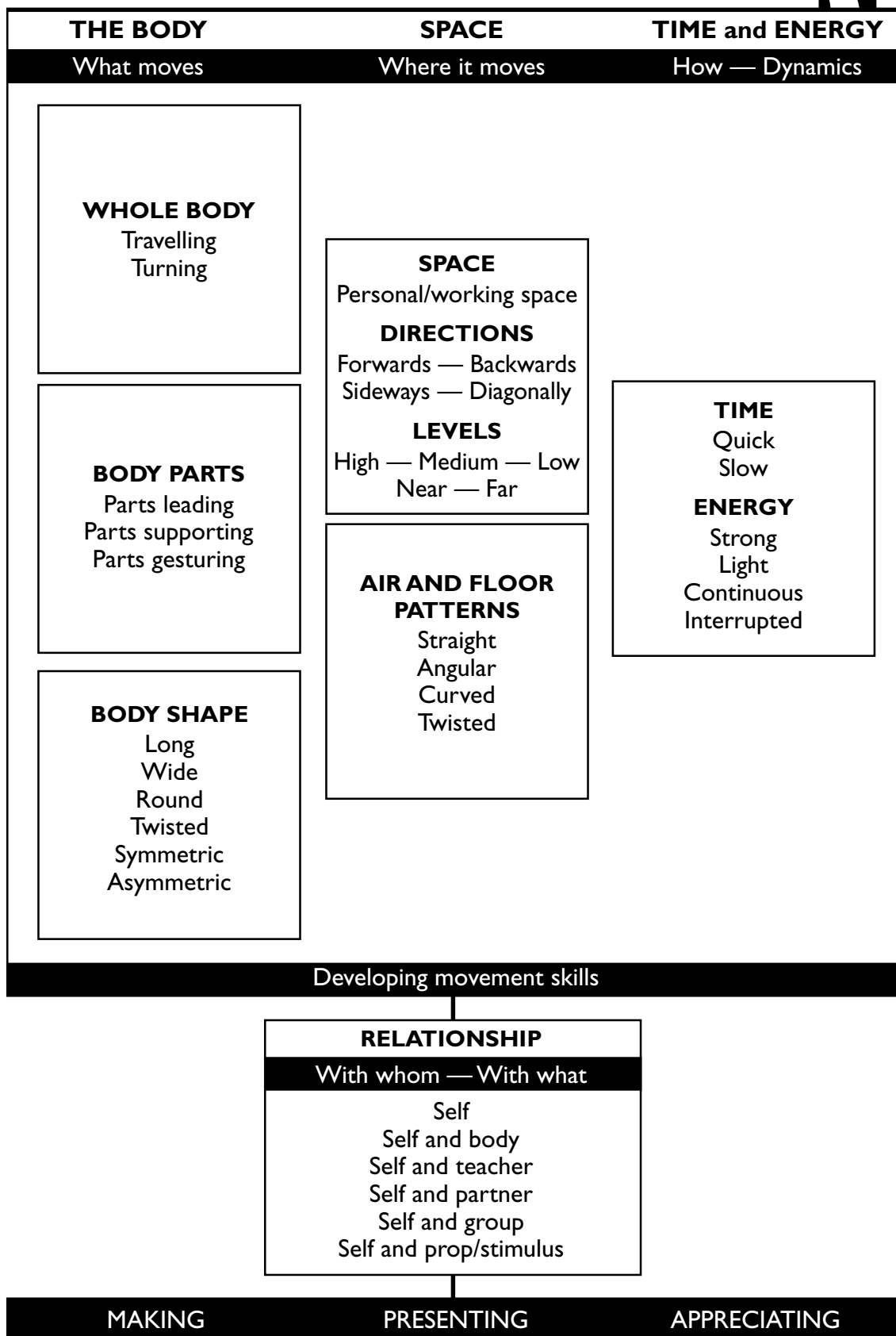
- As the dance maker, how did you encourage cooperation? Were you successful?
- Were there differences of opinion in your group? How did the dance maker deal with these differences?
- How were all members of the group encouraged to contribute?
- What processes did the dance maker use to make decisions or reach consensus?
- How did the dance maker consider the ideas and suggestions of others?
- Did you enjoy taking responsibility for leading the group?
- As a group member, how did you consider and support others? Did your actions help individuals and/or the group?
- What leadership qualities did you like the dance maker to display?

Building blocks of dance



Resource Sheet 1

LET'S DANCE • UPPER PRIMARY



Source: Adapted from Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) 1997, *Dance: Upper Primary*, PEP series, Hindmarsh, SA, p. 12.

The Madeson

R2

Resource Sheet 2

Step 1:

Stand with feet together.
Lift and tap right foot once to side;
tap right foot once next to left foot.
Repeat.



Step 2:

Stand with feet together.
Lift and tap left foot once to side;
tap left foot once next to right foot.
Repeat.

Step 3:

Tap right foot once back;
tap right foot once next to left foot.
Repeat.

Step 4:

Tap left foot once back;
tap left foot once next to right foot.
Repeat.

Step 5:

Lift right knee.
Repeat.
Lift left knee.
Repeat.



Step 6:

Jump on left foot as right leg kicks.
Jump on right foot as left leg kicks.



Step 7:

Clap; jump quarter turn to right.
Start the sequence again from the beginning.

Acknowledgments

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Diagram (p. 13), reproduced with permission from the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), 214 Port Road, Hindmarsh, SA.

This sourcebook module should be read in conjunction with the following Queensland School Curriculum Council materials:

Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Syllabus

Years 1 to 10 Health and Physical Education Sourcebook: Guidelines

Health and Physical Education Initial In-service Materials

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