
IADMS Education Committee

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Dance Imagery

Dance Imagery can be useful in teaching dance skills

- Consider the experience level of the learner. Beginners may need more physical practice prior to the use of motor imagery or metaphorical images.
- Consider the environment – a quiet environment may facilitate the use of imagery.
- Consider the task. Complex tasks may require more physical practice before images are appropriate.
- Motor imagery can be useful in teaching skills. By imploring a learner to “see” and “feel” herself performing a skill in the correct manner, dance skills can improve.
- Metaphorical imagery practice can be useful in teaching skills and improving the quality of movements. However, in order for metaphorical images to be effective, dancers need to have experience with the object, experience or process – ask young dancers to provide you with examples in nature that relate to a specific quality of movement i.e. “Imagine walking across the room in a field of feathers.”

Dance Imagery can reduce anxiety and improve performance

- Performance anxiety can be controlled through imagery use. In preparation for a performance, provide students with a guided imagery session that can lead to relaxation and improved focus.
- Have students imagine dancing before an audience or in a competition. By imagining the most stressful situations, they will begin to feel more in control of themselves. “Imagine you are on stage in a filled to capacity theatre. You feel relaxed and in control, as you perform your dance.”

Dance Imagery can enhance motivation

- Self-confidence can be boosted through dance imagery. Providing dancers with positive images of the outcomes of their performances. For example, “Imagine seeing and feeling yourself perform every movement with perfection.”

Dance Imagery may heal

- Since imagery works for healthy dancers, it can be very important to the retention and recovery of injured dancers. Have injured dancers practice both mental practice and metaphorical imagery of choreography and technique. As the dancers listen to the sound/music of their dances, they can do the following: “Imagine seeing and feeling yourself perform your dance to the music. Repeat 8 – 10 times. Each time make your performance more expressive.” If injured, the dancer can spend a few minutes each day, imagining healing taking place in the affected body part.

