

Tailfeatherdance



# ELEMENTS

Inclusive Dance Framework  
for Children and Adults

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# INTRODUCTION

## Dedicated to Dance Education and Performance

Tailfeatherdance is the product of over 30 years dance teaching experience to students of all ages with varying abilities within a wide range of educational and dance specialist organisations and settings. The ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework has been designed to incorporate and harness this knowledge and understanding of dance education and performance.

With 21 years experience of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND-D) teaching also; including over 5 years of inclusive community project management experience (Mencap), the Tailfeatherdance ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework is underpinned by a belief in a person-centred approach; providing opportunities for involvement, participation and achievement for all.

By exploring elements of dance in exciting, innovative and flexible ways, dancers can work together to develop individual dance and performance skills to create unique and original dance work.



## WHO IS ELEMENTS FOR?

### Dance for all, achievement for all

The Tailfeatherdance ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework is flexible and can be easily adapted to suit the individual style, physicality and preference of each dancer.

This explorative and creative dance framework has been used successfully within primary and secondary schools, Further Education Colleges, Community Dance and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND-D) dance classes for children and adults since 2000.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ELEMENTS

### Include, Explore, Create , Develop - Together

ELEMENTS is all about equality; actively seeking to remove barriers to ensure equal opportunities for participation and achievement.

It also has an emphasis on encouraging and supporting personal development and progression in dance through inspirational teaching and learning.

ELEMENTS has been specifically designed to meet the needs of all dancers.

## DELIVERY OF ELEMENTS

### The what, where, how...

The ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework can be delivered in any education or community dance setting that provides adequate space for groups of dancers to move freely and safely.

As a dance framework, ELEMENTS has been created to provide structured developmental sessions that allow for assessment of the learner as they learn, explore and create together.



## ASSESSMENT

### Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement

Assessment is an important part of any learning experience as it provides students with the opportunity to recognise their progress and achievement.

Likewise, identifying areas for improvement can also be extremely beneficial for students as it supports them to take ownership of their learning and provides the individual with a focus and goal which leads to further progress and greater achievement.

Assessment within the Tailfeatherdance ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework is formative; informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers throughout the learning process. This also helps the teacher to modify teaching and learning activities to improve the individual learning experience.

Summative assessment such as a final dance performance is not necessary but may be incorporated at the discretion of the teacher and preference of the dance group.

Formative assessment within ELEMENTS is person-centred and should recognise progress for the individual *as* an individual. ELEMENTS recognises that we all have strengths in different areas and this should be celebrated; indeed, it is what makes the group dance work so unique and original.

There are many strategies and methods for formative assessment and the following assessment tools (Appendix B) are offered either as a resource or as a guide.

Frequency of assessment will depend on time available, the size of the class or how often the group meet. Assessing learners' progress regularly, however, does have many benefits:

- It communicates a learning environment
- It supports development
- It affords ownership of learning
- It develops a dialogue between dancer and teacher
- It identifies strengths and areas for development in the teaching process
- It provides opportunities for individuality

# SYLLABUS STRUCTURE

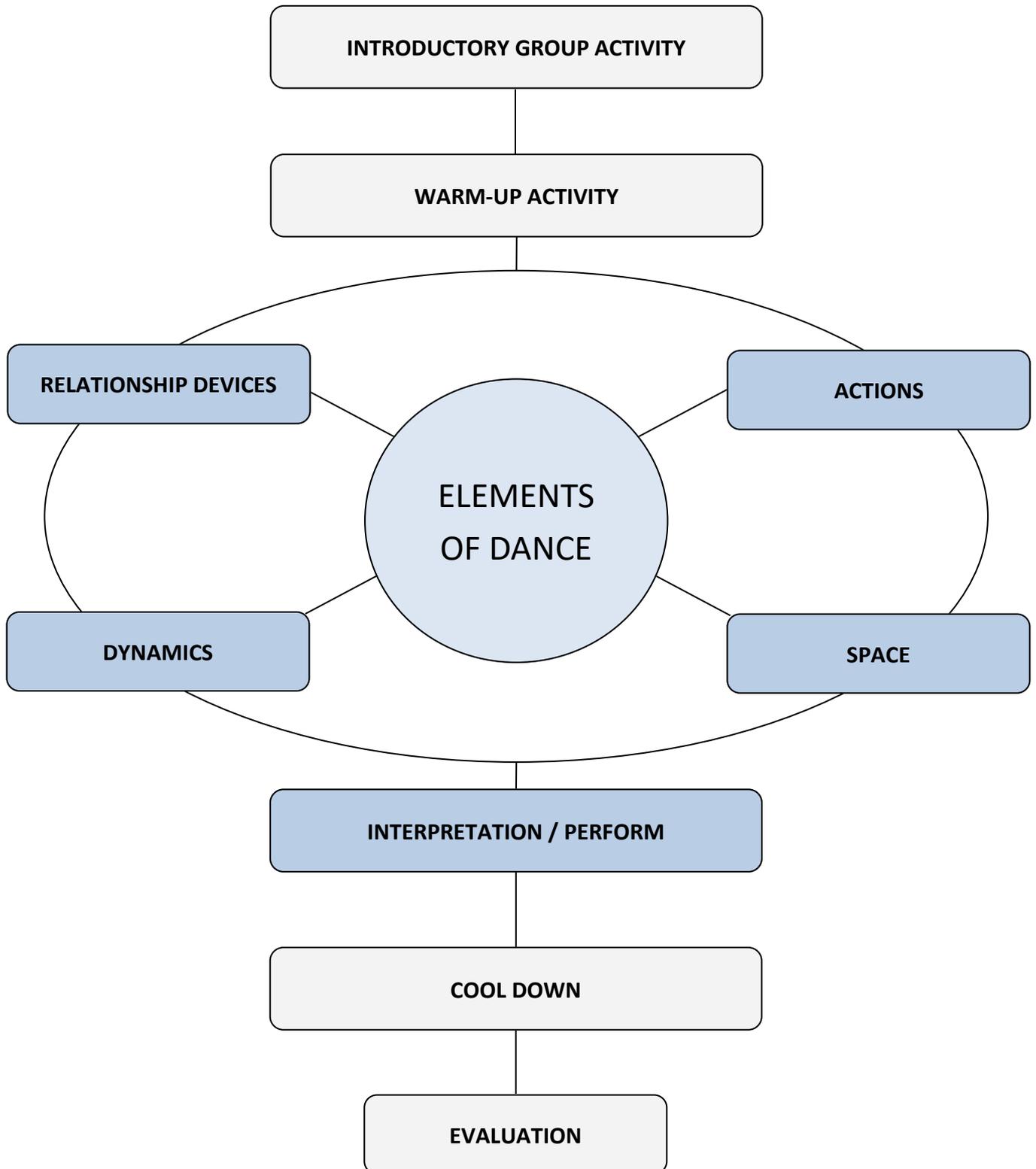
## The Elements of ELEMENTS

Section	Activity / Aim	Outcome (acquiring & developing skills) The learner will...
Beginning	<b>Introductory Group Activities</b>	Develop awareness of own body and other dancers in the group
	<b>Warm-Up</b>	Prepare the body for movement and group dance work,
Middle	<b>ELEMENT 1 - Relationship</b>	Explore choreographic devices in group dance work
	<b>ELEMENT 2 - Action</b>	Develop body awareness, focus and range of movement
	<b>ELEMENT 3 - Dynamic</b>	Explore the different uses of weight, flow and time in group dance
	<b>ELEMENT 4 - Space</b>	Develop spatial awareness in dance and choreography
	<b>ELEMENT 5 - Interpretation</b>	Explore and develop a sense of the 'inner self' in relation to stimuli Perform and watch others
End	<b>Cool Down</b>	Use breath and movement to bring movement to an end
	<b>Evaluation (Optional)</b>	State what they enjoyed / did not enjoy and make decisions about their progress



# CLASS STRUCTURE

## The ELEMENTS Framework for Dance Education and Performance



# ELEMENTS

Inclusive Dance Framework  
for Children and Adults

Tailfeatherdance



# INTRODUCTORY DANCE ACTIVITIES

## A Guide

Dance education and performance starts with a an understanding of the body and how it moves in relation to space, time and others.

With this in mind, the Tailfeather ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework has 4 introductory sections each with 3 activities. These develop a basic understanding of the human form in relation to dance and movement with others.

### 1 BODY PART (Page 11)

*Head, shoulders, arms, fingers, hips, legs, feet etc.*

**Outcome** To develop awareness of and use / move different parts of the body  
To use parts of the body / movement to interact with others

### 2 INITIATION (Page 12)

*The body part that initiates and leads movement*

**Outcome:** To explore different ways the body can move and develop within the dance space and in relation to others

### 3 BODY SHAPE (Page 13)

*The configuration of the torso and limbs into positions that change over time (i.e. Straight, curved, or jagged, angular contours). These shapes can be linked with transitional movements*

**Outcome** To use and combine parts of the body and movement to form different shapes  
To develop awareness of the body core and how it supports shape

### 4 WARM-UP (page 14)

*NB It is important to refer to the previous introductory exercises and activities (body parts, initiation and body shapes) within the warm-up so that dancers can identify development of ideas.*

**Outcome** To prepare the body and mind more fully for dance and group movement

# INTRODUCTORY DANCE ACTIVITIES

## 1 BODY PART

**Outcome** To develop awareness of and use / move different parts of the body  
To use parts of the body / movement to interact with others

### 1a PASS IT ON

- The starting dancer isolates and moves a part of their body
- They pass it to (or indicate to) the next dancer in the circle
- The following dancer copies this move and then chooses their own
- This continues around the circle until all have participated

Development:

- i All dancers mimic each move
- ii Each dancer passes to anyone in the circle until all have participated
- iii Use a variety of music and tempo to alter the dynamics
- iv Discuss / describe each move (i.e. circle, stretch, flex, wiggle etc.)

### 1b. MANNEQUIN MOVEMENT

- Dancer #1 starts in the middle of the circle / space
- Dancer #2 approaches and touches (indicates to) a part of #1's body that #1 should move in a continuous manner
- #2 taps (or indicates to) #1 to return to the circle, and takes their place performing #1's move in the circle /space
- This continues around the circle until all have participated in the centre / space

Development:

- i All dancers mimic each move from where they are in the circle
- ii Use a variety of music and tempo to alter the dynamics
- iii Discuss / describe each move (i.e. circle, stretch, flex, wiggle etc.)

### 1c. ADD IT ON

- The starting dancer isolates and moves a part of their body (move 1)
- All dancers in the circle copy this move
- The next dancer isolates and moves a different part of their body (move 2)
- All dancers execute move 1 and then 2)
- This continues (much like the memory game 'I went to the shop and bought...') until everyone has chosen an isolated movement



# INTRODUCTORY DANCE ACTIVITIES

## 2 INITIATION

**Outcome:** To explore different ways the body can move and develop within the dance space and in relation to others

### 2a LEAD ON

- The starting dancer initiates a move with a part of their body in their own personal space
- They develop and follow this move until its conclusion (natural stop)
- The next person in the circle initiates and concludes their own move and so on until all have participated

Development:

- i All dancers mimic each initiation move as it happens
- ii Each dancer continues their movement towards anyone in the circle until all have participated
- iii Use a variety of music and tempo to alter the dynamics

### 2b. LEAD AND CHOOSE

- The starting dancer initiates a move with a part of their body as before
- They extend and follow their own move towards the next dancer in the circle and touch (or indicate to) a part of the body that #2 must now initiate a move with
- This continues until all have participated

Development:

- i Dancers can move / travel to anyone in the circle to continue the activity
- ii Use a variety of music and tempo to alter the dynamics

### 2c. LEAD AND REVERSE

- The starting dancer initiates a move with a part of their body and follows their own move until its conclusion (natural stop) as before
- They then try to reverse this movement to return to their original position
- The next person in the circle then completes their own initiated and reversed move
- This continues until all have participated.

Development:

- i Dancers can copy each others lead and reverse
- ii Use a variety of music and tempo to alter the dynamics



# INTRODUCTORY DANCE ACTIVITIES

## 3 BODY SHAPE

**Outcome** To use and combine parts of the body and movement to form different shapes  
To develop awareness of the body core and how it supports shape

### 3a ONE BY ONE

- One dancer enters into the middle of the circle and makes (and holds) a shape with their body
- Another dancer enters and creates a connecting body shape with dancer #1
- This continues until all have participated and interlinked by different body shape

*NB Each new dancer may connect to any dancer of their choice*

Development:

- i Use a variety of music and tempo to alter the dynamics of entrances
- ii Each dancer, starting with the first, must weave their way out of the group shape and back to their original position in the circle

*NB This is a good opportunity to explore positional language, i.e. under/over, around, through etc.*

### 3b. SNAKE

- Dancer #1 travels to another dancer of their choice within the circle / space and creates a connecting body shape
- Dancer #2 then travels to a different dancer, with dancer #1 following, thus eventually forming an interlinked snake-like formation involving all

*NB Throughout, each dancer must link with their original chosen dancer / Dancers do not remain linked during the transitional movements but can move freely (improvisation)*

### 3c. SHAPE SHIFTER

- One dancer starts by choosing a body shape that all copy
- The next dancer chooses a different shape which the group also copy
- Dancers now explore ways to individually transition between these 2 shapes
- This continues with shape/dancer #3, shape/dance #4 etc. until a 'repertoire' of shapes and transitions has been created

*NB This involves memory much like word games in drama*



# INTRODUCTORY DANCE ACTIVITIES

## 4 WARM-UP

**Outcome** To prepare the body and mind more fully for dance and group movement

### 1. CENTRE WARM UP

A simple warm-up that provides dancers with the opportunity to express themselves, observe others and enjoy freedom of movement.

- Starting in a circle, one dancer enters the centre of the circle and moves freely to the music
- All dancers observe and copy this move
- Each dancer takes in turn to demonstrate a warm-up move in the centre

NB Dancers do not have to go into the centre if they do not to but they should be able to be seen by all others

### 2. MEET AND GREET WARM UP

A warm-up that incorporates the use of the general dance space and awareness of others within the space

- One dancer decides how the group will move around the room (This could include different actions, levels or dynamics; for example, walking forwards, shuffling sideways, crawling backwards etc.)
- All dancers use the dance space in the chosen movement style
- Each dancer should meet and greet other dancers as they approach / pass
- The choice of movement can be changed at any point

### 3. ALPHABET WARM UP

A structure to explore imagination and moving in a variety of different ways

- One dancer decides on a word for the letter 'A' and creates a move to correspond with this (i.e. Aeroplane, Ball, Cat, Drum, Elbow, Fly etc.)
- All dancers copy this move
- This continues through the alphabet

*NB As with all warm-ups, care should be taken that dancers are not over-exerting themselves or moving in a way that hinders warming up. It is at the teachers' discretion to use questions to support dancers to consider reducing or increasing range of movement / aerobic activity where relevant.*



# A GUIDE TO THE 5 ELEMENTS

## Elements and how they Work Together

### The First Four Elements

The four elements: Relationship, Action, Dynamics and Space are intrinsically linked and whilst this syllabus provides opportunity to explore each in turn it is important to remember that each move or sequence of movement will incorporate all these elements simultaneously.

They are divided and explored separately as a tool to develop awareness of each individual elements for choreographic purpose, for example:

Relationship	Action	Dynamics	Space
<b>Unison</b>	<b>Slide</b>	<b>Smoothly</b>	<b>Sideways</b>
<b>Counter Balance</b>	<b>Lean</b>	<b>Controlled</b>	<b>Forwards</b>
<b>Canon</b>	<b>Jump</b>	<b>Suddenly</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>Meet &amp; Part</b>	<b>Travel: Walk, Run etc.</b>	<b>Powerfully</b>	<b>On the Diagonal</b>

The Relationship Element is listed and taught first in order to establish and strengthen group dance work. Without 'over-loading' dancers it is a good idea to increasingly refer to different elements over time; when students are familiar with the various devices within each element.

### The Fifth Element

Whilst separated here from the previous four, the fifth - Interpretation, should be encouraged and embedded throughout the dance class experience. Dancers need to have a foundational knowledge of how the eyes, the use of the face, the angle of the head, the turn of a shoulder etc. enhance dance performance.

Whatever the music, tempo, style of dance or stimuli, a sense of 'feeling' the music and communicating thoughts, ideas, and emotions using the whole body should be supported, encouraged and praised.

Dance is an expressive and performance art. Providing dancers opportunities to perform for others within the class structure is important. ELEMENT 5 - Interpretation concludes the dance session but can be utilised at any stage.

# ELEMENT 1 - RELATIONSHIP DEVICES IN DANCE

## Devices and Definitions

<b>Outcome</b>	To explore and use different ways of moving with others To explore and use group work to develop awareness of others, the space and group timing
<b>Canon</b> (Page 17)	A move or movements introduced by one dancer that are repeated by each dancers in turn (such as a Mexican Wave, for example)
<b>Unison</b> (Page 17)	To move together as one
<b>Flocking</b> (Page 17)	A canon device usually performed in a pyramid shape (or cluster) whereby the top dancer leads spontaneous, controlled and continuous movements which subsequent rows follow in turn
<b>Lead &amp; Follow</b> (Page 18)	A move or movements that are initiated by the contact of one dancer and followed by another / others (Such as taking someone's hand and using weight to turn them, like in ballroom dancing, for example)
<b>Call &amp; Response</b> (Page 18)	A device whereby a dancer/dancers perform while a second dancer/dancers perform a direct response or 'answer' to the first
<b>Meet and Part</b> (Page 19)	Simply to come together and then part
<b>Mirror</b> (Page 19)	To mimic another's move or movement whilst facing them
<b>Push and Pull</b> (Page 19)	To use weight (either direct contact or non-contact) to cause another / others to move away or towards
<b>Counter Balance</b> (Page 19)	Each person relies on the balance (hold) of another / others to maintain their own balance (hold)
<b>Over and Under</b> (Page 20)	A relationship and use of space device
<b>Contact</b> (Page 20)	A devise which specifically explores movement through contact with another dancer / dancers

# ELEMENTS 1 - RELATIONSHIP DEVICES IN DANCE

## 1. CANON, UNISON AND FLOCKING

Outcome: To observe and move with others

To develop awareness of and use group timing in dance work

To develop awareness of inclusivity

### A CANON

*Commence in a circle*

- One dancer executes an action or move which is then copied by each subsequent dancer in the circle/space until it reaches the originator
- The second dancer now repeats this with each dancer copying in canon
- This continues until all have participated

### B UNISON

- The group choose actions / moves from section A (the quantity may vary depending on the ability of the group). *NB Guidance can be given to identify moves that contrast one another, rather than choosing moves / movements that are too similar*
- Each move is performed in unison by the group
- This activity can repeated with a new set of moves / movements

### A&B

- The chosen moves from 'B' are now performed by the group in canon and then in unison with one dancer leading the canon section. *NB A definite stop or pause may be used between each device*
- This activity can be repeated with as many variations of movements as required

### C FLOCKING

- Form a pyramid, cluster or group in the space
- The top or lead dancer begins to move continuously in a slow and controlled way
- Dancers directly behind the lead copy the moves, and so on until the continuous fluid movements pass from front to back, like a wave.
- The top or lead dancer can be changed at any point using a move that changes direction, thus changing who is at the top, or lead, of the pyramid (shape)

### A, B, C

- A&B can now be repeated with a transition into the centre to perform C



# ELEMENTS 1 - RELATIONSHIP DEVICES IN DANCE

## 2. LEAD AND FOLLOW / CALL AND RESPONSE

Outcome: To observe, move and interact with others

To use leadership skills to direct others in group dance

To develop awareness of inclusivity

### A LEAD AND FOLLOW

Split the dance group into groups of 4-8 dancers.

Dancers choose a partner (there may be a trio) and number themselves 1 or 2

- #1 uses contact (or indication to body parts) to lead #2 slowly and smoothly
- #2 follows their lead (as a trio, 1 dancer will lead 2 dancers and vice versa)
- This is continued (slowly and smoothly) to allow #1 opportunities to explore leading
- This is then repeated with #2 dancer leading

Development:

- i After #2 dancers have been 'led', they come to a stop (or pause) while #1 dancers move within the space to find a new (paused) dancer to lead etc.
- ii Join 2 groups together to form a more complex dynamic of leading and moving

*NB This is a good opportunity for more able leaders to support others within a group.*

*Allow dancers opportunities to split themselves into groups as it will identify those with leadership skills.*

### B CALL AND RESPONSE - Practice

- One dancer claps, slaps or stamps a beat/rhythm which all copy (take turns to lead)
- Once dancer executes 2-4 moves which all copy (take turns to lead)

### C. CALL AND RESPONSE

#1 dancers from activity 'A' form one group while #2 dancers form another.

Each group works at either end of the room

- Each group devises a set of 2-5 moves to perform for the other (inclusive moves should be encouraged)
- Both groups face each other
- Group 1 'calls' their moves one at a time to allow group 2 dancers to 'respond' (copy) to each
- This is then repeated with group 2 'calling' and group 1 'responding'

Development:

- i One dancer from each group enters the centre and performs the call and response. This continues until all have entered the centre and 'called' and 'responded'.
- ii Calls can become progressively more complicated depending on the level of the group.
- iii Call and Response can be performed in different formations. Try circle, lines, cluster etc.
- iv Once practiced, A, B & C can be performed one after the other



## ELEMENTS 1 - RELATIONSHIP DEVICES IN DANCE

### 3. MEET & PART WITH MIRROR / PUSH & PULL WITH COUNTER BALANCE

**Outcome:** To demonstrate awareness of and interaction of others

To use observation to form dance with others

To use weight to make shapes with others in the dance space

#### A MEET AND GREET with MIRRORING

Dancers choose a partner (a trio will also work) and number themselves 1 or 2.

#1 dancers go to one side of the room and #2's go to the other; facing the middle.

- One pair (or trio) move toward each other into the centre of the dance space using an individual choice of movements (improvisation)
- Dancers 'meet' in the middle and then part (meeting and parting can be any action, gesture or move that acknowledges the other dancer)
- This is continued until all pairs have participated
- Repeat this exercise but with each dancer mirroring their partner between the 'meet' and 'part'

Development:

- i Multiple pairs can perform this at the same time (i.e. pair 1, 3 and 5 then followed by pairs 2, 4 etc)
- ii All dancers can perform this at the same time by standing in two lines that face the other (i.e. start opposite partner)
- iii Dancers can develop this over time by choosing different elements to add one at a time to each section. For example: Adding a turn, jump, leg extension or roll (action) whilst travelling towards partner / The mirroring section can be developed using direction, pathways and levels (space)

#### B PUSH ME PULL YOU (Push and Pull)

Dancers choose a partner (a trio will also work), and number themselves 1 or 2.

**Contact** Dancers take it in turns to explore controlled push and pull movements using contact of different parts of the body

**Non-Contact -** Like a puppeteer controls a puppet, one dancer uses imaginary 'strings' to manipulate their partner's body / movements

Development:

- i Dancers can develop these by selecting preferred actions / movements (i.e. a flexible dancer may wish to include leg extensions, or a dancer who likes to turn may add these between pushes, pulls or balances)
- ii Once practiced, A & B can be performed together (i.e. meet, mirror, push & pull, part)

#### C COUNTER BALANCE

- Dancers explore ways to maintain a balance (hold) with their weight towards or away from each other using different parts of the body

Development:

- i Dancers can develop these by selecting preferred actions as before
- ii Once practiced, A, B & C can be performed together



# ELEMENTS 1 - RELATIONSHIP DEVICES IN DANCE

## 4. CONTACT WITH USE OF OVER AND UNDER

**Outcome:** To demonstrate awareness of and use of continued / extended interaction with others  
To develop trust between dancers

### A PASSING BY

- Dancer #1 moves forward from the side into the dance space and comes to a stop
- Dancer #2 repeats this moving past #1; using contact until reaching a connected hold
- This continues until all have passed down the 'line', using contact, over and under

Development:

- i Perform with two or more groups starting from opposite sides of the space that meet in the middle
- ii Encourage different ways of using contact through the use of different body parts
- iii Encourage lengthened travelling sections by weaving, using over & under,
- iv Develop this by adding / exploring different elements: Varied actions, dynamics and use of space

### B CONNECTED

- Split the group into smaller groups of 4-6
- Each group works together to remain connected by a least one person as they move within their dance space

Development:

- i Add rules of how many connections dancers must maintain throughout the moves / space
- ii Add chairs, benches to (SAFELY) explore the use of different levels
- iii Add props such as scarves / ribbon to explore different ways to remain connected
- iv Once practiced, dancers and perform A & B one after the other

### C CONNECT & DISCONNECT

- The group is split in to two groups and numbered group 1 & group 2
- Dancers from group 1 find a space in the room and hold a position
- Dancers from group 2 move through the dance space, connecting and disconnecting from #1 dancers as they meet / pass them (dancers 2 may alter the shape or level of group 1 dancers through contact)
- Following a sound (i.e. tambourine, clap etc) group 1 & 2 swap

Development:

- i Perform with dancers numbered 1-3
- ii Once practiced, dancers can perform A, B & C one after the other

**NB** *The term 'move' refers to the individual, stylised movement preference of each dancer. It is important to realise that some dancers may feel uncomfortable with touch. Sensitivity needs to be shown to allow dancers to explore this in their own time. Using a body part to indicate to another's can be used if a dancer does not wish to touch or be touched. Over time, placing a hand gently onto another may be introduced but ask people if they are comfortable for this to happen as contact can be intrusive to some.*



## ELEMENT 2 - ACTIONS

### Definitions and Examples

**Outcome** To explore the body and the ways it can move independently and with others in the dance space

Action in dance refers to any movement of the body and as such, 'actions' are used continuously throughout all elements and dance classes by all participants

Within the Tailfeatherdance ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework, however, the actions section allows for a greater exploration and development of movement skills and repertoire.

For ease, they have been defined in the following way:

#### Non-Locomotor (Axial) - Actions that are done in place

Stretch, Extend, Gesture/Acknowledge/Motion, Drop, Curl/Contract/Fold, Sway, Twist, Rise, Turn/Spin, Kick, Bend, Clap, Slap, Stamp, Click, Flick, Pivot, Stillness, Pose/Stance, Use of Arms, Lunge, Open/Unfold, Jump etc.

#### Locomotor (Travelling) - Actions that travel away from own personal space

Walk, Step, Run, Crawl, Glide, Slide, Chasse, Hop, Skip, Gallop, Leap / Jump / Spring, Roll, Turn, Pivot, Fall, Lunge, Turn, Trot etc.

NB Dancers will prefer some actions/movements over others due to experience, physicality and knowledge but opportunities to explore a variety of actions should be provided where appropriate.



## ELEMENT 2 - ACTIONS

### ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

**Outcome** To explore the body and the ways it can move independently and with others in the dance space

#### A REMOTE CONTROL (Axial)

- Split into 4+ groups
- Each group spends time creating a simple rhythm using claps, slaps, stamps, or any sound they can create using their body
- Once all dancers / groups are ready the teacher indicates (using a remote control or phone as a prop) to each group in turn to commence and continue their rhythm; the teacher then causes each group to stop in turn
- This produces a unique and original set of group sounds and movements

Development:

- i Each dancer in each group creates their own rhythm
- ii Develop rhythms interspersed with non-sound actions (i.e. clap, stretch, stamp x2, pause = 1, 2, 3+,4)
- iii Encourage lengthened travelling sections by weaving, using over & under

*NB Music does not have to be used but if it is it should enhance and support the exercise.*

#### B LINKING (Axial and Travelling)

- Split into 2+ groups (depending on size of group)
- Each group explores and chooses 4 non-travelling moves and practises these together
- Each group then explore and choose a travelling move to link each and spends time practicing these together
- Each group performs to others

Development:

- i Each group teaches their combination of travelling and non-travelling moves to others and perform as a whole group in unison, canon or call & response
- ii Develop use of relationship devices such as lead & follow, meet & part, push & pull, and counter balances within traveling and non-travelling sections
- iii Develop the use of direction, levels and pathways in both travelling and non-travelling sections

#### C DIAGONAL (Travelling)

- Split the group into 2 and commence upstage right and upstage left
- Each person from each corner takes it in turn to travel to the opposite downstage corner (i.e. #1 from right corner followed by #1 from left corner etc.)

Development:

- i Develop movement practice by adding specific actions to be performed
- ii Develop dynamic by reducing the time before each dancer starts (criss-crossing)
- iii Develop relationship with 2 dancers from opposite sides starting at the same time and meeting in the middle before parting
- iv Develop use of space by asking dancers to travel to opposite corner using different pathways or levels



## ELEMENT 3 - DYNAMICS

### Definition

**Outcome** To explore quality of movement and how it adds richness, depth and layers to other elements and group dance work

Dynamics, or energy, encompasses all other elements and so opportunities to explore this will have already been provided.

The Tailfeatherdance ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework provides an opportunity to explore dynamics in more depth to develop a greater awareness of the following:

**Weight** - **Gravitational:** Relationship of the body towards earth  
**Effort:** Light or Strong

**Time** **Rhythmical:** Relationship of movement and tempo  
**Effort:** Sudden or sustained

**Flow** **Free:** Less controlled and harder to come to a stop  
**Bound:** Controlled and easier to come to a stop  
**Continuous:** Does not stop

NB Dancers may prefer certain dynamics over others due to experience, physicality, preference, personality and nature but opportunities to explore a variety of dynamics should be provided to develop a more rounded dance and performance experience.

## ELEMENT 3 - DYNAMICS

### ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

**Outcome** To explore quality of movement and how it adds richness, depth and layers to other elements and group dance work

#### **A WEIGHT (Gravitational and Effort)**

- Allow dancers time to explore raising, lifting & stretching and then lowering or dropping different body parts from different starting levels (i.e. the floor, kneeling, crouching, sitting, standing etc.)
- Use a tambourine (or other noise) to identify the dynamic (i.e. shake tambourine = raise & lower lightly / bang tambourine = lift & drop heavily and with strength)
- Spend time watching individuals, pairs or groups

Development:

- i Once practiced use choreographic devices from the Relationship ELEMENT to develop pair or group ideas (i.e. Lead & follow, meet & part, push & pull, connect & disconnect can naturally lead into use of weight. Movement can also be performed in canon, union or with flocking)
- ii Explore adding use of weight to exercises from actions ELEMENT to develop ideas

#### **B TIME - EFFORT (Sudden or Sustained)**

- Split the dancers into two groups
- Allow time for each group to explore one use of time / effort (sudden or sustained)
- Once practiced, watch / perform to each group
- Work as a whole group to combine and perform movements alternately (sudden, sustained, sudden, sustained etc.)

Development:

- i Once practiced, explore transitional / linking movements between each

#### **C FLOW (Bound, Free and Continuous)**

- Split the group into 3's (an even number of dancers is ok)
- Each group takes it in turns to explore the 3 types of flow alternately (Bound = controlled and easy to stop / Free = less controlled and harder to come to a stop / Continuous = Does not stop)
- Once practiced, each group performs to others

Development:

- i Each dancer in each group explores and uses movement to demonstrate one type of flow only. This can be developed within the trio using relationship devices. Each group can then perform to others
- ii To combine each group, stand in a circle and ask each type of 'flow' to perform alternately (i.e. Dancers who have been exploring 'bound' perform first, followed by 'flow' and 'continuous')
- iii This can be further developed by all dancers performing simultaneously

*NB Each dancer should have the opportunity to explore each type of 'flow'*



## ELEMENT 4 - SPACE

### Devices and Definitions

**Outcome** To explore and develop use of space within group dance work

Whilst space (the available area) is used continuously throughout the dance class. this section allows for greater exploration, awareness and development.

**Personal Space** The "space bubble" around the body, extending as far as the body and body parts can reach, without travelling.

**General Space** Space in the overall dance area that is shared by all dancers

**Size** The breadth, length, height and depth of movement within the dance space

**Level** The height in space at which a dancer is moving (for example, high, medium, low).

**Pathways** Patterns created in the air or on the floor by the body or body parts as a dancer moves in and through space.



## ELEMENT 4 - SPACE

### ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

**Outcome** To explore and develop use of space within group dance work

#### **A BIG, SMALL, HERE, THERE (Personal & General Space / Size)**

- Split into groups of 3-6 and give each group 4 x word cards (Appendix C): Big, Small, Here (personal space), There (general space)
- Each group works together to explore and use movement to demonstrate these words
- Groups then decide on combinations to explore: Big & Here (large movements that are executed in own personal space) / Big & There (large movements executed in the general space) / Small & Here / Small & There
- Once practiced, each group performs to the others

Development:

- i Once practiced use choreographic devices from the Relationship ELEMENT to develop group ideas (i.e. all can be performed using big or small movements in own personal space or in the general space)
- ii Use of different dynamics can also be consolidated here with use of music and sound (i.e. The size and use of space can be altered by different use of weight, effort and flow)

#### **B THE POWER OF 3 (Levels)**

- Split into groups of 3 (an even number is ok)
- Allow time for each group to explore different levels (high, medium and low)
- Once practiced, dancers move simultaneously but alternating between levels at different times (i.e. when one dancer executes a low move, the other two must make a decision to execute a medium or high move)
- Once practiced, each group performs to the others

*NB This is difficult and requires keen observation between each dancer*

Development:

- i Once practiced use choreographic devices from the Relationship ELEMENT to develop group work

#### **C SIGNPOST (Pathways and Directions)**

- Split into 2-4 groups and give each a pathway word card (Appendix D): Circle, Line, Zigzag, Random, Curved, Angular
- Allow time for each group to explore moving along / within this pathway
- Once practiced, each group performs to the others
- Repeat this to allow dancers time to explore different pathways
- Add a noise / sound (i.e. tambourine) to indicate a change of direction which dancers must work together to respond to

Development:

- i Once practiced increase number of groups that perform simultaneously; responding to the noise / sound to change direction
- ii Use canon, flocking, levels, pause etc. to create performance pathways/directions



## ELEMENT 5 - INTERPRETATION

### Definitions

**Outcome** To develop a sense of 'inner'; explore imagination within dance work

Interpretation is communicating dance and so it will rely heavily on a number of factors: The music, the dynamic and the stimuli (such as the 'feel' or 'idea' of a piece) conveyed through verbal instructions or demonstration.

It may also be affected by a number of environmental and physiological factors including the way a dancer is feeling; mood, illness or injury; the space available, noise and light for example.

Interpretation can be seen as the following:

**Musicality** The ability to perceive music and incorporate it in the execution of dance

**Expression** The ability to communicate thoughts, feelings and emotions

**Projection** The skill of intentional expression and communication

NB Dancers may prefer certain interpretation over others due to experience, physicality, preference, personality and nature, but opportunities to explore a variety of dynamics should be provided to develop a more rounded dance and performance experience.

Interpretation is more widely used when a group is working on a choreographed piece especially if performing to others outside of the group.

The stimulus for this dance piece will then determine how the dancers perceive the music, communicate and project thoughts, ideas and feelings.

## ELEMENT 5 - INTERPRETATION

### ACTIVITIES AND EXERCISES

**Outcome** To develop an awareness of ‘inner-self’ and explore imagination and perception to communicate within group work

#### A RESPONSE TO MUSIC (Musicality)

A simple but effective way to develop music appreciation and explore movements to communicate

- Dancers improvise and move freely to any type of music or song

Development:

- i Once practiced dancers may perform to one another
- ii Encourage dancers to try out devices learnt within the lesson (i.e. Relationship, action, dynamic and use of space)

#### B EXPRESS YOURSELF (Expression)

This requires some planning if using music to support learning but a ‘bank’ of music that uses different tempo should suffice. It can be delivered without music, however.

- Ask the group to think of different emotions
- Ask the group to choose one and discuss this; how it affects our face, head and body
- Allow time for dancers to explore and use movements to communicate this feeling / emotion
- This can be performed to one another

Development:

- i Explore a variety of different emotions
- ii Encourage the use of choreographic devices from the Relationship ELEMENT to develop ideas
- iii Encourage the use of different dynamics
- iv Encourage use of space

#### C MIME (Projection)

Mime is an excellent tool to explore character and story telling using the face, head, and whole body. It really doesn’t matter how simple the mime is as the aim is to explore how the body can communicate. This can be learner-led or learners can choose themes and ideas from the cards provided (Appendix E)

- Ask the group to think of different ideas for mime (i.e. everyday activities, well-known traditional stories such as fairy-tales or their characters, types of job etc.)
- Ask the group to choose one and discuss this; how it affects our face, head and body
- Allow time for dancers to explore and use movements to communicate. This can be done in pairs or small groups
- This can be performed to one another

Development:

- i If telling a story, pairs/groups could communicate a different section each



# CHOOSING A THEME FOR GROUP CHOREOGRAPHY

## Strategies and Ideas

As much as possible, the theme or style of the choreographed piece should be a reflection of the ideas and thoughts of the dance group. As such, if a choreographed dance piece is to be created, there will need to be discussion and a sharing of ideas where all are able to contribute.

This can be done simply through discussion or by watching examples of dance work. It may also be decided through the use of flow-charts or mind-mapping exercises.

NB If the dance piece is part of a bigger production, the theme or style may have already been decided. In an education setting, the theme may also be pre-determined as it may link to a core subject such as literacy, history or science etc.

Using the ELEMENTS framework, the following are some of the ideas and themes that have been used by groups of dancers that I have worked with to create unique group dance

Age Group / Level	Theme / Style
Reception Year	Toy Shop / Minibeasts / God's Garden / Learning Songs
Key Stage 1	Dinosaurs & all that Rubbish (Puffin Books) / Rainforest / The Natural World
Key Stage 2	Theseus & the Minotaur / Food Chains / Teeth & eating / Solids, Liquids & Gasses / Electricity / World War 2 / The Tudor Period
Key Stage 3 & 4 and FE College	Musical Theatre / Jazz Dance / Contemporary / Street Dance / Cabaret
SEN-D Community Dance (16+ years)	Stories / Poems / Books / Nature / Specific Songs / African Dance / Latin Dance / Ballet and Famous Ballets / Contemporary / Musical Theatre / Street Dance / Jazz Dance



# STRATEGIES AND METHODS FOR GROUP CHOREOGRAPHY

## Developing Ideas and Themes

The following are some of the strategies and methods that can be applied to create and develop group choreography.

Having explored each ELEMENT of dance in turn within the Tailfeatherdance Inclusive Dance Framework, dancers can select, apply and develop these within their chosen theme, idea, story or style.

**Whole Group** Whole group work can have great impact and so it may be that it is used for that very reason: To add emphasis or weight to sections of the dance piece. Consider what the group are trying to communicate; unity, for example may lend itself to contact dance, whilst confusion may lend itself to a greater use of pathways, levels and directions.

**2 Groups** 2 groups can communicate opposition and may result in contrast. For this reason, using different weight, time and flow can be effective. 2 groups may also refer to a 'coming 'together' which would suit meet and part, lead and follow and mirroring.

**Small Groups** Groups of 4-6 can allow for more individuality within the piece. Any of the exercises / activities from the syllabus may be utilised to develop the theme of the dance piece.

**Trio work** Trio work can be very effective as it allows greater opportunity for individuality of movement and relationship. Dancers can explore and develop moving as 3 by gradually building exercises from the syllabus. For example, use of levels can be incorporated first, followed by push and pull, contact and counter balance

**Pair work** As with 2 groups, 2 dancers may also be used to communicate division, a barrier or opposition as well as joining, meeting, togetherness. Any of the ELEMENTS exercises can be used to communicate the idea or style of the dance piece.

**Words** Using words as a basis for creating dance can be very effective. Ask dancers to choose words or a sentence relevant to the theme or idea of the piece. Split into smaller groups and ask dancers to create a move / moves for each word. This can be further developed by splitting the groups further and asking them to explore shape (Introductory activity), axial and travelling (Element 2 - Action), weight, effort and flow (Element 3 - Dynamic), and size (Element 4 - Space).

**Using Props** Props such as furniture can add a further dimension to dance work as long as it is relevant. Additional props such as scarves, objects, pieces of clothing etc. can be utilised within any of the ELEMENTS exercises where applicable to the piece.

**Using Rules** Creating rules provide dancers with opportunities to move and express themselves in ways that are new and challenging. For example, Stay as low / high as you can, Move with curved / angular shapes, Always keep one foot / hand on the floor, Move with wide / narrow movement etc. Learners can make up their own.

## SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT

### Developing Dialogue and Evaluation

Providing and receiving relevant and supportive feedback allows dancers many benefits, it can:

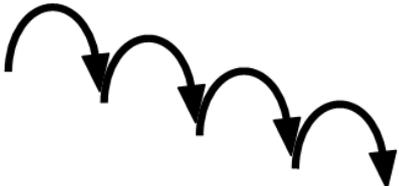
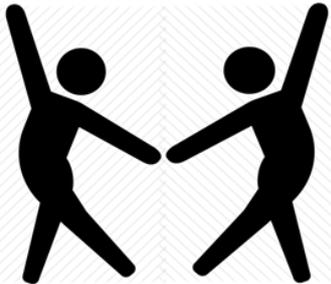
- Increase confidence in speaking
- Increase confidence in performing to others
- Strengthen relationships within the class
- Support and embed understanding of elements of dance
- Support and develop vocabulary
- Develop observation skills
- Promote respect and kindness
- Support the development of dance ideas and/or performance
- Provide opportunities to share thoughts, ideas and preferences
- Support analytical thinking
- Provide praise, encouragement and advice

Self and peer assessment does not have to be complicated or take a long time but it should serve a purpose and be relevant. Dancers can be supported to provide feedback with visual aids (APPENDIX B)

#### Consider using:

- Praise, improvement, Praise (PIP) as some people do not like to just receive improvements
- Specific questions for feedback on different Relationships devices used
- Specific questions for feedback on different body parts used
- Specific questions for feedback on different space used
- Specific questions for feedback on different dynamics used
- Specific questions for feedback on interpretation used
- Questions to find out WHY someone liked a certain part (specific)
- Questions about how it made dancers feel

# R - Relationships in dance

 <p>Pair</p>	 <p>Trio</p>	 <p>Group</p>
 <p>Canon</p>	 <p>Unison</p>	 <p>Lead &amp; Follow</p>
 <p>Act &amp; react</p>	 <p>Mirroring</p>	 <p>Above / Below</p>
 <p>Around</p>	 <p>In front / Behind</p>	 <p>Towards / Away</p>

# A - Actions in dance



Jumping



Stretching



Leaping



Extending



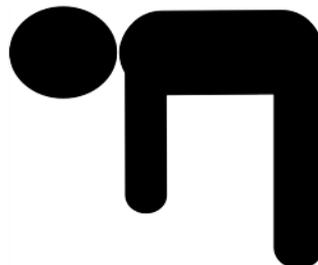
Walking



Running



Turning



Bending



Kicking



Kneeling

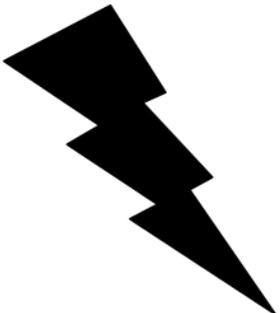


Crawling

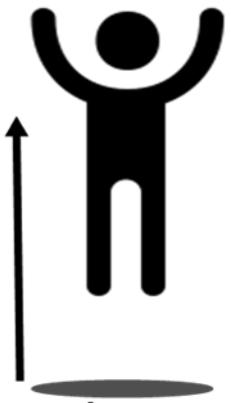
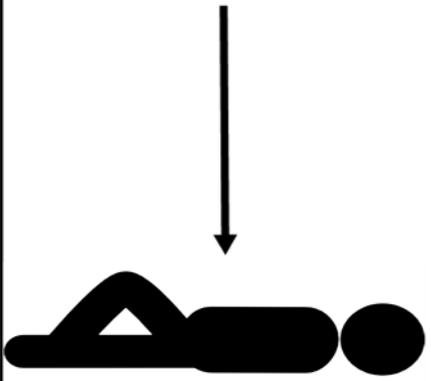
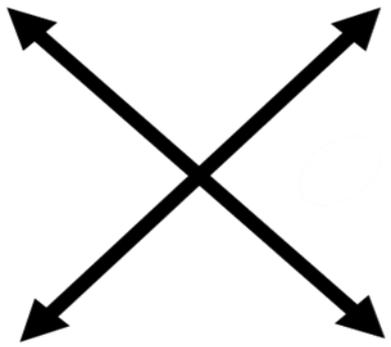


Sitting

# D - Dynamics in dance

 <p>Fast</p>	 <p>Slow</p>	 <p>Sharp / Heavy</p>
 <p>Soft / Light</p>	 <p>Sudden</p>	 <p>Gently</p>
 <p>Gracefully</p>	 <p>Jerky</p>	 <p>Powerfully</p>
 <p>Passionately</p>	 <p>Aggressively</p>	 <p>Tiredly</p>

# S - Space in dance

 <p>Forwards</p>	 <p>Backwards</p>	 <p>Sideways</p>
 <p>Up / High</p>	 <p>Medium</p>	 <p>Down / Low</p>
 <p>Straight line</p>	 <p>Circular</p>	 <p>Diagonally</p>
 <p>Zig Zag</p>	 <p>Curved</p>	 <p>Random</p>

# I - Interpretation



Joyfully



Sadly



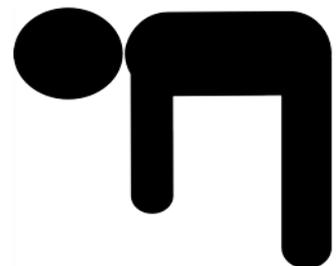
Fearfully



Courageously



Angrily



Humble



Flirtatiously



Cautiously



Expressively



Comical



Sternly



Despairingly

## Giving Constructive Feedback

(Feedback that is helpful to others and yourself)

You can look at the following to help you:

<p>Line &amp; Shape</p>		
<p>Range of Movement</p>		
<p>Angle (what the audience will see)</p>		
<p>Use of Space (Levels, Direction &amp; Pathways)</p>		
<p>Dynamics (Weight, Flow &amp; Timing)</p>		
<p>Interpretation (Musicality &amp; Drama)</p>		
<p>Connections with others (Are they reacting to others and to what is happening?)</p>		

## CONCLUSION

### Dance Education

The Tailfeatherdance ELEMENTS Inclusive Dance Framework aims to provide ideas to dance teachers who are seeking to implement an inclusive teaching practice.

It allows teachers and students the opportunity to break down elements of dance in order to better understand the creative nature of explorative dance work.

The exercises and activities within this framework are not exhaustive and therefore, many approaches can be taken to further explore ideas.

I have found that one of the best ways to explore and develop ideas, as well as to create dance work is to afford the dance students the opportunity to take the lead.

### Performance Education

Performance underpins dance whether there is a final product or not. Opportunities to explore performance are invaluable as it is within performance that dancers often feel most inspired, motivated and excited. Spending some time developing drama skills such as facial expression, reaction and imagination to communicate an idea, theme or feel will allow students to broaden their knowledge of dance and promote dance appreciation.

### Finally

As a framework, activities and exercises may change and evolve naturally over time as dancers engage with material and explore their own ideas. This is the key to a dancer-led and inclusive practice. I often tell my students that there is no right or wrong. Sometimes dancers will go off on a tangent, possibly away from the set aim or objective. I have learned that often this is where amazing new and creative ideas come from which, in turn, can re-shape the class, aim or performance in exciting and unexpected ways!

### Happy dancing!

Best wishes,  
Imogen Butler  
Founder & Director, Tailfeatherdance