Sample Lesson Plan

**Focusing on the Fundamental Movement Skill of Balancing in a Gymnastics lesson**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Level</th>
<th>1st - 6th Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strand</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand Unit</td>
<td>Movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Curriculum Objectives**

The child should be enabled to
- Create and perform sequences of movement to develop body awareness with appropriate variations of direction, pathways, levels, shape and balances.
- Select and link a range of movement actions to travel on the floor.
- Develop good body tension and posture through gymnastics positions and movements.
- Observe and describe movement.

**Learning outcomes**

The child should be enabled to
- Revise all teaching points for the skill of balancing
- Practice the skill of balancing in a gymnastic sequence
- Understand the importance of balancing
- Identify how to improve their skill of balancing
- Develop their ability to work as part of a group
- Engage in a process of self-assessment of balancing

**Fundamental Movement Skill**

Balancing

**Resources**

Move Well, Move Often resource, spot markers, beanbags, music, Gymnastics Sequence Card 2, Partner Balances Card

**Introduction**

1. **Intended learning outcome:** Today we will revise the teaching points for the skill of balancing in our gymnastics lesson. Balancing is a very important skill. Why is this?
2. **Introduce teaching points:** Today we will revise all of the teaching points for balancing. Can anyone show me one of these teaching points? Why is this important? How will this improve our balancing technique? Demonstrate to the pupils how this is done.
   
   **Teaching points for balancing:**
   - Support leg still, with foot flat on the ground.
   - Trunk stable and upright.
   - Non-support leg bent and not touching the support leg.
   - Head stable and eyes focused forward on a target.
   - Arms as still as possible with no excessive movement.

3. **Revise prior learning:** Recap on the teaching point covered in the previous lesson “arms as still as possible, with no excessive movement, extended at the side” and limbs pointed. Can anyone remember what we learned last week that can help us when we are balancing?
Warm Up

Pairnéirí:
The pupils run around the play area. When the teacher calls out the number one, they must find a partner, shake hands introduce themselves and tell them what school they are from. This is partner handshake #1. The participants leave their partner and run around the hall once more (the way of moving can be changed each time by the teacher). This time teacher calls out the number two and the pupils must find a new partner and shake hands. This is partner handshake #2. The process is repeated up to number five. At this point call out the numbers can be called out at random. The pupils must find the correct partner that corresponds to that number. There is a lot of memory work in this activity and it is a great energizer.

1,2,3 Action:
- Invite the pupils to stand facing each other in pairs. Give each pupil a letter A or B. ‘A’ starts by saying the number 1. B follows by saying the number 2, and A says 3. Continue until the pupils are familiar with the three number pattern – 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3,
- Now ask the pupils to replace the number 1 with a jump, so instead of saying the number one, the pupil jump (two feet to two feet on the spot, high as they can). The numbers 2 and 3 are spoken as before.
- Once the pupils are comfortable with this (jump, 2, 3, jump, 2, 3,) invite them to replace the number 2 with an action of their choice. So the pattern is now jump, action, 3, jump, action, 3.
- Continue by replacing the number 3 so that all of the numbers are now actions. Allow the activity to continue for a set amount of time, and then reverse the process.

Main Content:

Remind pupils of the teaching points for balancing. We will revise these throughout the lesson.

Activity: Shape Detective (Book 3, Page 104)
Arrange pupils in a circle with one pupil in the centre. This pupil is the Shape Detective and their job is to discover who the Shape Leader is. The detective is blindfolded (or closes their eyes) while one pupil in the circle is chosen silently to be the leader. The leader guides the pupils through a range of shapes and balancing activities on the spot. The group copies the leader. The detective removes the blindfold or opens their eyes, and must try to guess the identity of the leader. The leader must keep changing the balance every couple of seconds, while trying to avoid being identified. The detective has three chances to guess who the leader is. Repeat the activity by choosing a new leader each time.

Development – Gymnastic Sequence (whole-part-whole approach)

Whole: exploring individual and partner balances

1. Individual Balances
- Invite the pupils to find a space in the room and perform a balance.
- Discuss what the balance should look like. It should be aesthetically pleasing with non-support limbs extended, straightened and pointed away from the body where possible.
- Pupils should be able to hold the balance for a minimum of 3 seconds.
- Invite pupils to perform a balance on
  - 2 body parts
  - 3 body parts
  - 4 body parts
  - 5 body parts
- Pause at intervals to point out a good balance that looks aesthetically pleasing.

  - Use four parts – two hands and two feet.
  - Use three parts – two hands and one foot.
  - Use two parts – one knee and one elbow.
  - Use one part – one foot.
  

  Balance on a large body part (belly, back, bum), tightening the core to straighten all limbs.

  Balance on the back and shoulders with the legs and feet pointing straight up in the air. Hands should be on the lower back supporting the back and core. Teacher can stand behind the pupil with their feet either side of their head, and support them in holding their legs straight in the air. Invite pupils to attempt this with one leg straight in the air and the other leg bent if they are finding it difficult to lift both legs.

  Raise and stretch the legs and arms that are not touching the mat.
Partner Balances:
- Arrange pupils in pairs. Partners face each other, crossing their arms and holding hands, leaning back with both bodies straight.
- Partner A begins with all fours on the ground. Partner B performs a high plank on the ground with their feet on the back of their partner.
- Invite pairs to explore and create three further partner balances.

Examples of partner balances are outlined on Gymnastics Sequence Card 1 which can be downloaded from http://www.pdst.ie/physlit

- Invite each pair to perform one partner balance for the group. Pause the balance and offer feedback where necessary (straighten limbs, elbows locked, toes pointed, head up, shoulders directly over wrists, etc.)

Part: Self-assessment
Invite the pupils to complete the self-assessment wheel on balancing. This is available to download from www.scoilnet.ie/pdst/physlit, and is attached at the end of this lesson.

Whole – Embedding balancing in a Gymnastics Sequence:
- Invite each pair to partner up with another pair to create groups of four. In their groups, pupils create a sequence incorporating each of the following:
  - A strong starting shape
  - At least 2 different ways of travelling
  - 2 jumps
  - Balances: 2 x individual (including T balance), 2 x partner, 1 x group
  - A strong finishing shape
This sequence and all of the partner balances are outlined on Gymnastics Sequence Card 2 which can be downloaded from [http://www.pdst.ie/physlit](http://www.pdst.ie/physlit)

- Play some music and allow each group time to prepare and practice their sequence.
- Half the class perform their sequence while the other half observe.
- Music can also be played during the performances.

## Conclusion

### Opportunity for Feedback
Teacher gives and discusses feedback on the skill of balancing or the performance of the sequence that was observed. On returning to class, pupils draw a picture of all the ways they incorporated balancing into their sequence in their PE journal.

### Summary:
Use the balancing poster to summarise the teaching points of balancing:
- **Support leg still, with foot flat on the ground.**
- **Trunk stable and upright.**
- **Non-support leg bent and not touching the support leg.**
- **Head stable and eyes focused forward on a target.**
- **Arms as still as possible with no excessive movement.**

## Cool Down activity

1. The pupils jog around the area gradually slowing from a jog to a walk to a slow walk to standing.
2. Breathe in slowly while stretching the arms out and up and breathe out slowly as the arms are lowered.
3. Make large circles with a variety of body parts while breathing in and out slowly (arms, elbows, knees, hips, wrists, ankles).
4. Take ten steps on tippy toes then ten steps on heels.
5. Shake out the legs and the arms.
6. Pupils face each other in pairs, holding hands. Each pair side skips for ten steps to the left then the right. Then nine, eight, seven, etc. until they are standing still. Clasping wrists they pull against one another and sink down to the ground and then back up again.
7. In pairs, they perform whole body stretches wide, narrow, high, mirroring each other’s actions.
8. Holding hands, gradually sink all the way down to the floor this time.
9. Sit with legs out in front. Gently stretch to the right and then back, forward and then back, to the left and then back.
10. Sit cross-legged or lie in a comfortable position breathing in and out slowly with eyes closed. The teacher asks them to: (a) listen to sounds around them; (b) to think about their favourite part of the lesson and to visualise the activity. Play some calming music. After a couple of minutes, call the pupils one by one to line up before returning to class.

### Take Home Activity:
Practise balancing on one leg at home every day this week when you are brushing your teeth.
Self-Assessment Web

Balancing

Support leg still with foot flat on the ground

Non-support leg bent and not touching other leg

Arms as still as possible

Trunk stable and upright

Head up and eyes forward

1. I don’t think I can do this
2. I can do this but I find it hard
3. I can do this most of the time.
4. I can do this all of the time

Pupil’s Name:
While attempting this skill, I felt:

Rate your effort level:
Light  Moderate  Vigorous

Teacher comment:

Date: