

CLAP-A-PATTERN DANCE

Music	Ruud Lucker
Dance	Maria Speth
Time	4/4
Prelude	4 bars
Formation	front circle*, consisting of partners sitting cross legged
Target Group	suggested 9 - 12 years

Explanation

- This sitting dance is meant to be used as a coordination activity. It is a great energizer in the classroom. But once the pupils really know the order of the dance it is also suitable as a focused cooling-down moment at the end of a dance lesson.
- This dance aims to develop numerous skills: cognitive, social, musical and creative.
- Calling out the patterns in a random order will also reinforce the action-reaction responses of the pupils.

Dance Structure

- The following procedure can be followed in the presentation of the dance:
 - Start with the basic set up: a 4/4 measure consisting of two claps on your knees, one in the hands, and the fourth count is a rest! Practice this a couple of times and call out the rest moment.
 - Allow the pupils to learn the first clapping pattern (see below: pattern #1). Continue repeating this until all the pupils master it.
 - Then present pattern #2. Encourage the pupils to try out as many variations on the fourth count as possible. Watching others is a great inspiration for the next attempt!
 - Introduce pattern #3 where the pupils work in pairs.
- When the patterns have been sufficiently practiced, they can be presented in any sequence or time duration in the dance.

Every pattern can be repeated as long as one wishes. Thus, there is no determined time frame for the dance. Pattern #1 could take 4, 6 or 8 bars before calling out the next pattern. With every change of the pattern the new number is called out only once.

The description below explains the composition of each pattern and therefore does not use a repetition of a pattern. It is an entry to the possibilities of this dance. It's fun to play with the pupils' anticipation by waiting a long time before changing the figures or, vice versa, calling many changes out and then stop calling. It is surprising how quickly the pupils may get into an 'automatic mode'.
- Important! The change in pattern should be called out on count #4 when repeating the pattern for the last time. In this way the pupils will have ample time to prepare for the change. This creates time for the pupils to think about how to deal with the fourth count while 'automatically' performing the first three. This is a challenge for the caller who is participating and calling out the next figure at the same time!

* Front Circle: the pupils sit in a circle facing inwards towards the centre.

- An extra option for the older pupils. Once the pupils have sufficient command of the dance they can allow a peer to be the leader and call out the sequences. A 'safe zone' can be built in by following guidelines such as: when the leader makes a mistake by calling out the change at the wrong moment (only on the fourth count is correct) the group ignores the change and continues with the previous pattern. What often happens is that the greater part of the group will follow the announced change, which means that the leader's mistake becomes a group 'mistake'. This helps to lower the threshold for making mistakes!
- Of course, all kinds of new variations can be created together with the pupils.

Bars	Count
	Pattern #1 (<i>whole group, partners work independently</i>)
1	1 - 2 clap twice on both knees with your hands 3 clap once in own hands 4 clap once on the hands of the two people sitting on both sides of you (hands are now at shoulder height)
	Pattern #2 (<i>solo, partners work independently</i>)
2	1 - 2 clap twice on both knees with your hands 3 clap once in own hands 4 clap with both hands anywhere you want on your own body
	Pattern #3 (<i>partners were together</i>)
3	1 - 2 clap twice on both knees with your hands 3 clap once in own hands 4 one clap against both hands of your partner



Variations

The following example is meant for the older pupils. The pupils assemble in partners facing each other, spread out in the space. This can also be done in the classroom! The basic dance remains the same but the calls are a bit different. On the 4th count one can make use of the following possibilities:

- 'together' = 2 hand clap against partner's 2 hands
- 'right' = high five with the right hand
- 'left' = high five with the left hand

This can be taught in the following way:

- Two claps on the knees. One clap in both hands and one count rest.
- When the previous pattern is acquired, change the 'pause' to 'together' where the partners touch each other's both hands.
- When the group can follow add 'right' and 'left' with a high five with the right hand or a high five with the left hand.
- Keep in mind to give the command on the 4th count. This gives the group at least three counts to prepare for the change in pattern.
- When the group manages this, let the pairs work together creating their own patterns but keeping within the clapping pattern of the whole group. One pupil of each pair is the leader who calls the change. It helps when you tell the followers they may not follow the order when it is NOT given on the 4th count. In this way both partners are responsible for keeping the pattern. Partners may switch roles in order to allow each to have a turn as leader.
- A clear start can be achieved when everyone begins with 'together' followed by each couple creating their own pattern. Should one couple lose the count and miss the beat they can be encouraged to look around, listen to the rhythm of the rest of the group and try to re-join the rhythm and clapping of the whole group.

Tip

This is also a suitable dance or dance activity for international exchange. When pupils from another country are visiting the school all they have to learn in the host language is 'TOGETHER, RIGHT and LEFT' which is also a playful way of communicating with each other.

Below some examples, the rest you can google yourself...

Dutch: SAMEN, RECHTS LINKS	EEN, TWEE, DRIE
German: ZUSAMMEN, RECHTS, LINKS	EINS, ZWEI, DREI
French: ENSEMBLE, DROITE, GAUCHE	UN, DEUX, TROIS
Italian: INSIEME, A DESTRA, A SINISTRA	UNO, DUO, TRE
Spanish: JUNTOS, DERECHA, IZQUIERDA	UNO, DOS, TRES
Chinese: 在一起, 左, 右 Zài yìqǐ, zuǒ, yòu	Yī, èr, sān