

“Gymnastics That Your Students Will Flip Over” Part 2 – Wilhelmina “Willie” Wilson
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Learning Objectives for Part 2:

What? To learn instructional strategies to help facilitate the learning of basic individual, partner and small group static balance skills from simple to complex.

Why? So your students can successfully learn the principles and skills related to balance in a developmentally appropriate way.

How? You will have the tools to successfully teach the content in an engaging and appropriate way.

The content area of gymnastics includes many skills. It's convenient to group these skills into categories that can organize units of work. I prefer to use three skill themes to form the framework: the body's traveling actions, static (balance) work and rotation actions.

In the earlier Part 1 session teaching traveling and rotation actions were explored. In this session the focus will be on how to teach the principles behind balance using exploration and guided discovery as an individual, with a partner and small group. The 4 C's of the 21st Century Learning (Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical thinking) will be the cornerstones for our learning.

Static Work

The focus of static work is to achieve stillness or balance in a controlled manner. Students need to learn to feel the tightness or the tension of the muscles held in a static position. Balances are also a means to move into, out of, or from one balanced position into another.

Static Characteristics of the Body

| Characteristics of balance | Principles of balance | Types of balance |
|--|---|---|
| Moments of stillness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold 3 seconds Tightness of body (muscles) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No saggy bodies – muscles show tension Control Use of eyes to focus | Base of support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider with more body parts acting as the base will be more stable than a narrow base with fewer parts. Center of gravity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low center of gravity is more stable Line of gravity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the center of gravity over the base of support • Align the body parts that serve as bases - distributing weight equally Counter tension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to balance with your center of gravity outside of your base of support by PULLING against another person or piece of equipment. Counter balance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to balance with your center of gravity outside of your base of support by PUSHING in opposite directions with a partner or piece of equipment. Linking Actions as a way to move into, out of, or from one balance position to another Movements into and out of balance (such as: rolls, steps, twists, turns, etc.) | Upright <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head higher than hips Inverted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head lower than hips Symmetrical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The left and right sides of the body mirror each other or they are the same Asymmetrical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right side and left side are different Hanging Supporting Relationship to equipment Individual or partner |

Exploring the Principles of Balance

To help you balance remember to “**BE a CAT**”

B= **Base** of Support - Wider is more stable.

E= **Eyes** look at something that does not move.

a

C= **Concentrate** on being quiet and still.

A= **Align** your body so it stays balanced over the base of support.

T= **Tighten** your muscles!

Guided Discovery with a partner includes exploring:

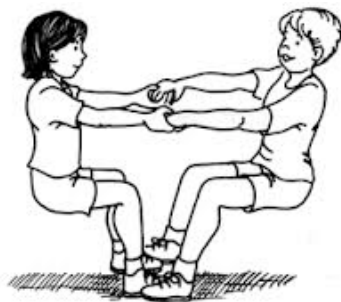
Counter Balance...

Allows a person to maintain a balanced position even when their center of gravity moves outside their base of support. The support is provided by **PUSHING** against another person or object – without this support they would fall over.



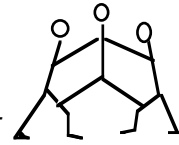
Counter Tension...

Allows a person to maintain a balanced position even when their center of gravity moves outside their base of support. The support is provided by **PULLING** against another person or object – without this support they would fall over.



Give an example or two and allow them to create their own balance poses! Let them whiteboards to draw out their ideas if that helps them solidify their ideas. Then take pictures of each created pose with your phone or tablet and have a slide show at the end of class. A fun way to assess!

Group Balance Assignment Sheet



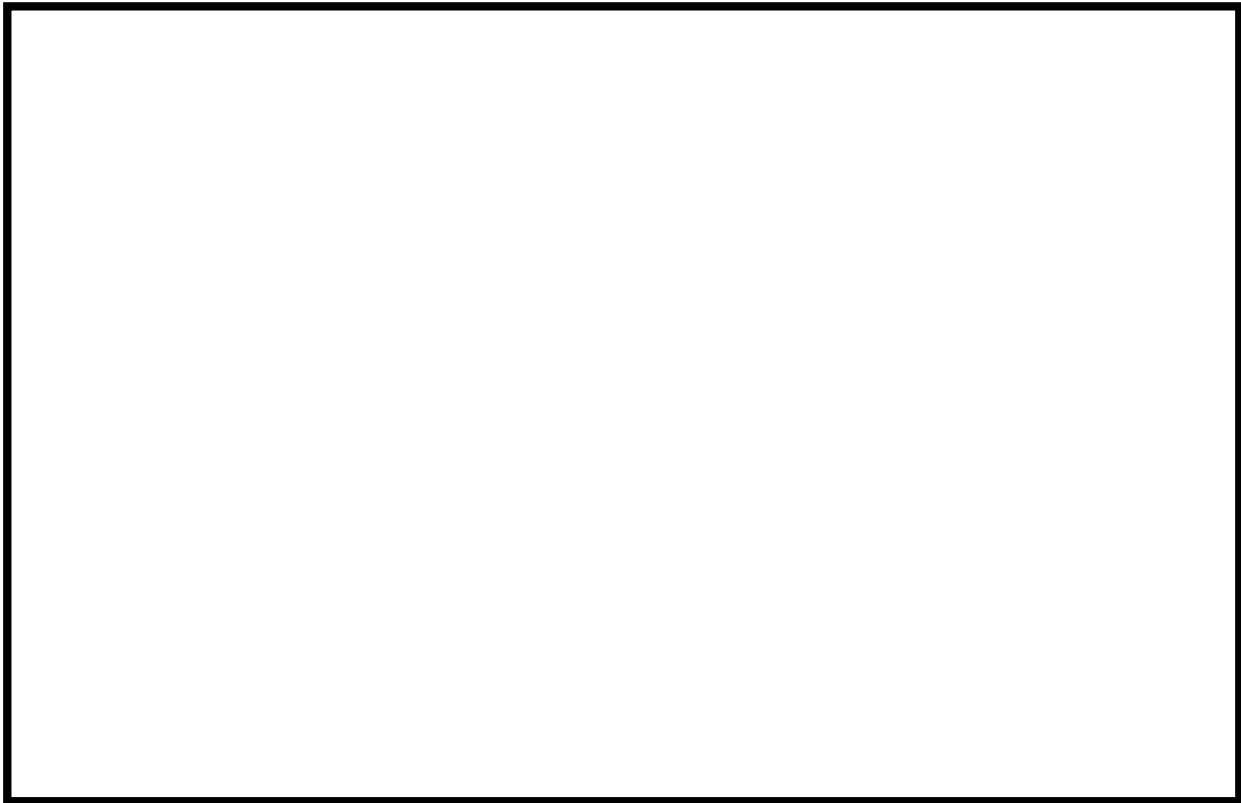
Group Members names:

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 2. |
| 3. | 4. |
| 5. | 6. |
| 7. | 8. |

Assignment:

Using your own ideas or ideas from Mrs. Wilson's group balance sheets, and design a 4 to 8 person balance pose. The pose must have at least 2 end balance poses and a center balance pose. Groups must be able to enter in and out of their pyramid poses safely and smoothly. The group must be able to hold their pose for at least 5 to 10 seconds. Work together as a team!
Good Luck!

Here is a picture of our group balance:



Rubric for Scoring Group Balances

| Criteria | 1: Novice | 2: In Progress | 3: Meets Expectations | 4: Exceeds Expectations |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Pyramid Design | Pyramid only uses 1 or 2 people . | Pose only uses 3 or 4 people . It has a centerpiece but does not have end pieces. | Pyramid uses 4 to 6 people . It has a centerpiece and 2 end pieces . | Pose uses 6 to 8 people . It has a centerpiece and 2 end pieces . Uses difficult positions that require extra strength and balance |
| Execution | Group cannot achieve a balanced position. Execution is unsafe. | Group balances for 3 seconds . They move in and out of balance poses with some wobbliness . | Group balances for 5 -10 seconds . They move in and out of balance poses smoothly and safely . | Group balances for 5 -10 seconds . They move in and out of difficult balance poses smoothly and safely . |
| Poise during performance | Group acts silly or confused . They do not have a plan. | Group has a plan but their organization is shaky . | Group is confident . They are focused . They have a planned order in and out of poses. If a mistake is made group recovers very easily. Great communication is shown. | Group is confident . They are focused . They have a planned order in and out of poses. It is performed perfectly even with difficult poses. Great communication is shown. |

Teaching Considerations:

Children enjoy exploring how their bodies can balance in a variety of ways.

- Exploring balance in their own self-space with their eyes open/ shut, wide and narrow base of support, on 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 body part.
- Balance in symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes that are upright and inverted.
- Balance with a partner matching and mirroring their shapes.
- Play Symmetry Detectives and have partners make balanced poses while their partner guesses whether it is symmetrical or asymmetrical.
- Create balance puzzle cards for students to figure out.
- Let them explore more traditional balances used in gymnastics using drawings or pictures on task cards.
- Teach them the concepts of Center of Gravity, Line of Gravity, and Base of Support. Apply an outside force to see how well they can maintain balance. Use a lot of hands on and visual examples to show they concepts in action.
- Discuss positions that are used in sports when balance has to be maintained during a performance or under an outside force.

- Teach the concepts of Counter Tension and Counter Balance. Allow them to work with a variety of partners to create their own poses. What happens when two people of different sizes try to balance together?
- Provide white boards or paper to draw out their ideas first if it helps the students learn.
- Take lots of pictures of their creations and have a slide show at the end of class celebrating their collaborative and creative effort.
- For fifth graders, let them expand their group to create small group poses.
- Allow them to design and perform their small group pose for the class.

Safety considerations when balancing with a partner or small group:

- Teach children that safety and consideration of the other person comes first before ever attempting a balanced pose.
- Partners must always agree to try a balance before attempting it.
- Help children to recognize their “strengths and weaknesses” Taller and bigger students will be a stronger base while lighter students are better to be on the top part of the pose.
- Help children to recognize the importance of their contribution. Give them all the opportunity to express their ideas for poses.
- Teach children how to “spot” each other.
- Teach children how to enter into and out of poses safely.
- Limit stacking “pyramids” (on hands and knees) to two levels.
- Do not allow squash pyramids of any kind.
- Never allow horseplay or out of control behavior.

Notes: