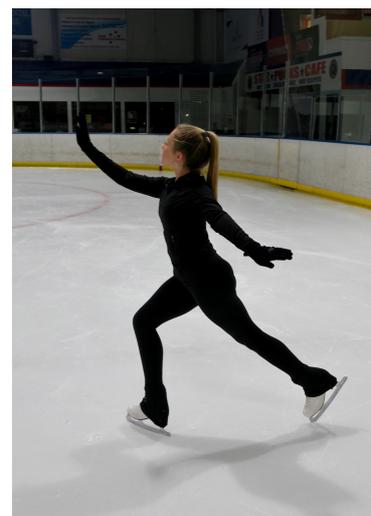

Program Components - Figure Skating

Leah Cloke

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Within the figure skating industry there is a great emphasis on the development of the main elements of a skating program, jumps, spins and steps; but there is little input and development of performance quality, musicality and expression. As these elements are a part of the new judging system it seems imperative to address and develop these qualities in young budding skaters. A fun and enjoyable way to teach these skills I've found is to incorporate figure skaters of all ages into dance, more specifically: Jazz, Contemporary and Ballet.



My previous students,

Hunter Ice-Skating Rink NSW

Amelia , Ella and from the

A little bit about myself,

I am originally from Newcastle NSW and I began figure skating at the age of 4 at the Hunter Ice-Skating Rink. I trained morning and night for 7 years and reached Primary Level. At the age of 11 I began participating in dance classes in order to compliment my skating quality and expression. It turns out I had a bit of knack for it and I auditioned and was accepted into the Australian Ballet School's full time training program in Melbourne.

My parents helped me move interstate and I trained with the Australian Ballet School for 4 years, leaving with a **Diploma of Dance**.

Since then I have taught off and on ice dance classes in Newcastle NSW at the Hunter Ice-Skating Rink. There I worked with a number of girls (aged 8-17) who had little to no experience with dance. I found that by implementing these classes in their regular training schedules (1-3 times a week depending on skill level) I witnessed a significant change in not only their competition scores but also in their approach to the 'program components' area of their skating. At present, I have my **Level 0 Accreditation** and I have only to complete my figure skating training hours in order to receive my **Level 1 Accreditation**. I have insurance for on and off the ice in the meantime (certificate of currency is available upon request).

In Melbourne this year, I am teaching dance classes at a small dance school in middle park, I am a part of the skate school program at the O'Brien Group Arena and I am studying a Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Science at Deakin University.

Classes

The Classes that I offer span from Contemporary, Jazz, and Classical Ballet.

Contemporary Dance

The contemporary dance classes that I offer are largely based on my experience with Martha Graham inspired technique which I acquired from the Australian Ballet School along with a variety of more popular pop culture references which I've found can be appealing to young people and is great at sparking their interest in this type of dance.

All my Contemporary classes will include a strong 20 minute warm-up which covers the whole body and involves a small amount of strength and conditioning. Following the warm-up routine, I work through contemporary dance technique for example kicks, turns, floor movements (Working at different levels) and I modify movements to be more similar to an "on ice setting" which allows the skaters to easily transfer certain aspects of this training to an on ice environment. The students are also tasked with attempting challenging movements to different musical tempos and styles which teaches the importance of listening to the music and understanding different 'beats'.

Lastly, I will usually finish with teaching a short choreographic sequence which tests student's abilities to pick up dance sequences while incorporating certain teaching points from the class and transposing them into a similar though different setting.

Jazz Dance

The Jazz classes that I offer are more upbeat and pop culture focussed, these classes are always very appealing to children of all ages and are guaranteed to have a fun and upbeat class environment. The structure of the jazz class is very similar to the contemporary class structure, the style of dance is what is different. During these classes the music styling will also be very different and is a lot of fun for the children to dance to. The jazz classes provide the students with the ability to let loose a little and to learn how to accent movements in order to gain greater affect to a larger audience (such as on a full sized ice-rink).

Classical Ballet

I am experienced in two 'variations' of classical ballet, these are 'RAD' and 'Vaganova'. Both styles emphasise the importance of technique and posture although Vaganova is a more fluent style which focuses on expression and movement of the upper body that can be easily transferred to a skater's quality on the ice and can positively enhance their coordination.

Class duration for classical ballet can range from 60 - 90 minutes depending on the experience of the students and of course their age.

I teach students a 20-40 minutes 'Barre' syllabus (Each between 30 seconds to a minute) which they must remember week to week for the term duration. Each exercise I develop includes sports specific training goals that will improve placement (for arms, head, hips, and back). Following the 'Barre' work the students will then learn a syllabus for the 'Centre' which is a progression from their work at the barre and can be more challenging as there is no bar support and students must rely on their own muscles.

Stretching

All the classes that I offer include significant stretching before and after class which is unquestionably an important and often overlooked area of figure skating. I am also able to offer separate 15 minute stretching classes post figure skating training, as when students are warm the best results are achieved.

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