

# Adaptive Theater Games



# About **PEOPLE LIKE US**

**We all want a meaningful role in life, but people with disabilities are often given no part to play. At People Like Us, we believe the performing arts are key to teaching children with developmental differences life skills they'll carry into adulthood.**

**All while having fun!**

**Making your classroom or theater more inclusive doesn't have to be complicated. A few small changes can create a lifelong impact. By implementing the People Like Us curriculum, your students will gain improved social and communication skills, increased self-regulation, and workforce readiness.**

**And platforming these performers is a critical exercise in self-advocacy, helping students transform their own - and society's - expectations.**

Whether you're looking for curriculum, lesson plans, a few activities, or a full consultation, we'll give you the support you and your students deserve. Find out more by emailing us at [info@peoplelikeusdoc.com](mailto:info@peoplelikeusdoc.com) or visiting us at [PeopleLikeUsDoc.com](http://PeopleLikeUsDoc.com).

Sincerely,



# I Like, We Like

## Objective

We all know the feeling of walking into a room, seeing small clusters of people spread across the space, and not knowing where we belong. It's hard to feel disconnected. As an instructor, it's important for you to provide opportunities for your students to get to know one another in an engaging, pressure-free environment.

Students will make connections, increase social skills, and feel a sense of belonging.

## Goals

Develops belonging, trust, turn-taking, social awareness, relationship skills, and listening

## Directions

1. Ask everyone to spread out across the room.
2. One person announces something they like.
3. Anyone else who likes that same thing walks over to the person who shared, forming a small huddle.
4. Someone else, who is not in the huddle, announces something they like, repeating the process.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Offer a choice board to students who need additional support
- ↓ Play as a group, putting on person at a time in the middle of the circle to share

### Level Up

- ↑ Play until no participant is standing alone and the room is full of huddles

## Reflection

Ask participants, "What is one thing you have in common with another classmate?"

# Upstage, Downstage

## Objective

Joining the theater introduces new terminology that can quickly feel overwhelming. Help your students understand stage directions through this engaging activity.

Students will learn stage directions.

## Goals

Develops understanding of stage direction, active listening, following instruction, critical thinking, comprehension, and stage literacy

## Materials

- Stage Directions diagram (optional)
- Chairs, or a visual aid representing the audience

## Directions

1. Announce a stage direction.
2. Students move to that part of the stage.

## Modifications

### Level Down

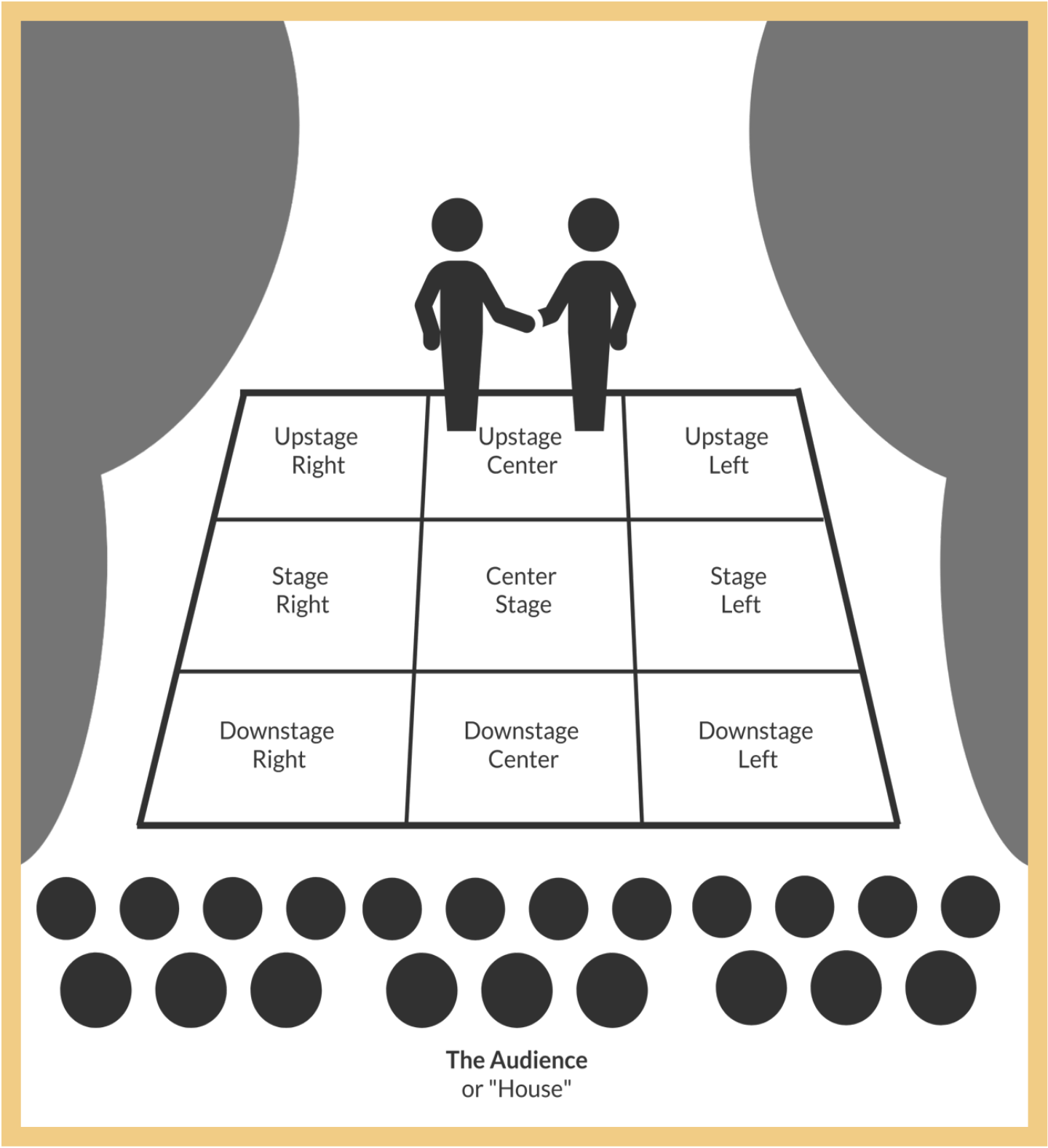
- ↓ Provide visual and gestural cues
- ↓ Label the stage
- ↓ Allow TAs to prompt performers
- ↓ Model the direction

### Level Up

- ↑ TAs form an audience
- ↑ Eliminate the last person to arrive at the stage direction; students in the audience can watch to identify who is last to arrive at the area called
- ↑ Give a student the role of calling out stage directions

## Reflection

Assess understanding by giving each student their own direction.



# Paradoxical Birthday

## Objective

Everyone loves a dynamic performance, but singing with emotion is hard. Students will develop their emotional range, leading to more believable and relatable performances.

## Goals

Develops improv, dynamics, investigating, reflecting, observing artistic work, musical expression, generating artistic ideas, and turn-taking

## Directions

1. Choose a familiar song (ex. Happy Birthday).
2. Ask your students to sing the song with a specific emotion. For instance:
  - Sadly, as if leaving your friends on the last day of camp
  - Cautiously, like walking a tightrope
  - Frightened, as if walking through a forest at night
  - Confused, like you're without directions
  - Caring, like singing to a kitten your family just rescued
  - Assertively, like your ordering dinner in a loud pizzeria
3. Explore skills like inflection, dynamics, and non-verbal cues.
4. Discuss each emotion as a group. Attempt to connect the emotion to your student's experiences.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Students mirror the instructor rather than performing on their own

### Level Up

- ↑ Place students into pairs and assign a different emotion to each student; ask them to sing the song as a duet

## Reflection

Ask each student to sing the song with a specific emotion. Then, ask the student to share what they did with their voice, face, or body to express the emotion.

# Move the Beat

## Objective

Students will learn note values, how to embody the beat, and how to improve audiation.

## Goals

Develops gross motor skills, evaluating and responding to a musical work, flow, group movement, balance, audiation, patterns, proprioception, and composing a musical work

## Materials

- *Note Values* poster
- Sample rhythms
- Glue or tape
- *My Rhythm* printouts for each student



## Directions

1. Introduce a note (*ex. Quarter*).
2. Speak an action word associated with the note (*ex. Jump*).
3. Perform the action.
4. Repeat Steps 1-3 for any note in your final rhythm.
5. Speak and perform complete rhythms together.
6. Allow students to create their own rhythm.
7. Perform each student's rhythm.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Modify movements to accommodate all physical ability levels

### Level Up

- ↑ Students combine their rhythm with one of their peer's rhythm to make a longer rhythmic sentence

## Reflection

Allow students to perform their rhythm with the associated actions in front of the class.



# QUARTER

“Jump”



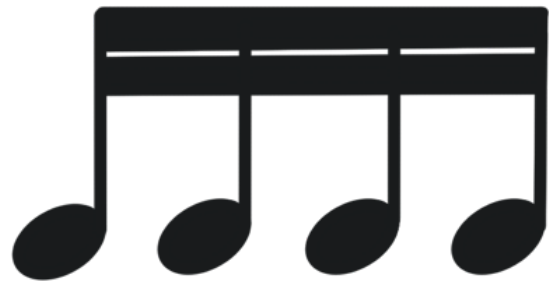
# EIGHTH

“Jazz Hands”



# TRIPLET

“Turn Around”



# SIXTEENTH

“Drying My Hands”



# Identity Web Monologues

## Objective

People are driven to be known and understood, but finding our place takes time. Getting to know others on a deeper level can be difficult. That's why identity webs are so helpful. Identity webs help to narrow down the internal and external factors that make up a person.

Students will synthesize personal experience into art, leading to better connections and increased participation.

## Goals

Develops making connections, conceptualizing artistic ideas, creativity, innovation, personalizing art, independence, and turn-taking

## Materials

- Blank identity webs (one per student)
- Blank monologue template (one per student)
- Writing utensils (pen, marker, etc.)
- Magazines, or photos (optional)
- Scissors and glue (optional)

## Directions

### Using a Template

1. Fill out an identity web.
2. Use a template to create a monologue.
3. Perform the monologue.

### Writing an Original

1. Share 3-5 facts from your web.
2. Choose one fact to focus on. Think of a story inspired by that fact.
3. Identify the beginning, middle, and end of your story. Then, choose a starting point (beginning, middle, or end) for your monologue.
4. Perform the monologue.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Student pantomimes the monologue instead of reading it aloud
- ↓ Instructor reads the monologue while the student stands up front
- ↓ Pair the student with a TA who can help them structure their monologue
- ↓ Provide visual cues during a pantomime (ex. images of each action to perform)

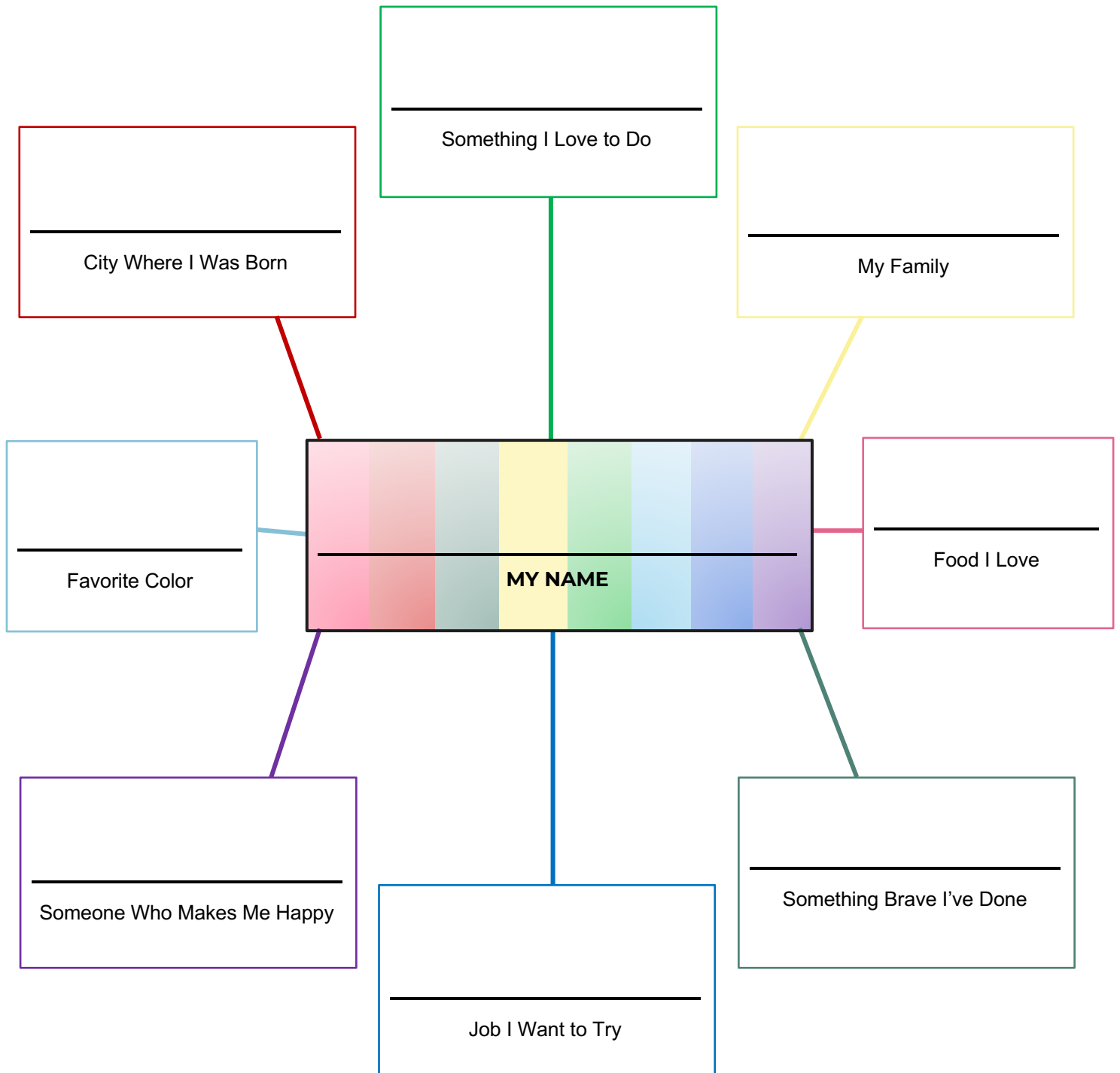
### Level Up

- ↑ Allow students to create their own monologue rather than following a template
- ↑ Direct your students to swap their webs with a partner to develop sharing, listening, and relational skills

## Reflection

Students perform their original monologue.

# IDENTITY WEB



# MY MONOLOGUE

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I love to \_\_\_\_\_. But do  
MY NAME SOMETHING I LOVE TO DO

you know what's even better? Spending time with \_\_\_\_\_. In fact,  
SOMEONE WHO MAKES ME HAPPY

the best day ever would include wearing a \_\_\_\_\_ shirt, eating  
COLOR I LOVE

\_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_, and getting to  
FOOD I LOVE SOMEONE WHO MAKES ME HAPPY

\_\_\_\_\_.

JOB I WANT TO TRY

I think I will be good at \_\_\_\_\_ because I am smart,  
JOB I WANT TO TRY

kind, and brave. In fact, one time, I \_\_\_\_\_  
SOMETHING BRAVE I'VE DONE

\_\_\_\_\_.

There's a lot more to learn about me, like how I was born in \_\_\_\_\_,  
CITY WHERE I WAS BORN

or was influenced by \_\_\_\_\_. But that's for  
MY FAMILY

another time and place. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Won't you get to know me?  
MY NAME

# Character Development

## Objective

It's hard to be impacted by a story when the characters aren't believable. That's why character development is so important. It gives your performance greater authenticity and empowers your students to feel more connected to themselves and to one another.

Students will discover the ways they are similar to and different from their character.

## Goals

Develops self-awareness, ideation, imagination, and character development

## Directions

1. Create an identity web for the character.
2. Share about the character with others.
3. Compare the character to self.
4. Determine similarities and differences.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Use images to fill out the identity web
- ↓ Complete the activity in a group

### Level Up

- ↑ Students play "Mirror, Mirror" as their character
- ↑ "Speed dating" circles where students ask the character more questions
- ↑ Write a monologue for the character

## Reflection

Ask each student to share one genuine connection they have with their character. Then, ask each student to share one difference between their character and themselves. Discuss what steps they will take to intentionally embody that element of their character.

# Largo vs Presto

## Objective

Students will learn to emotionally connect to a song as they understand its rhythms and timing.

## Goals

Develops tempo, critical thinking, audiation, flow, and responding to (observing, analyzing, interpreting) artistic work

## Materials

- Keyboard, if there is a live accompanist
- Largo vs Presto playlist
- Largo vs Presto cards



## Directions

1. Review tempo by playing some examples.
2. Play a song. Ask students to hold up the card that shows the tempo.
3. Instruct students to roam the room, moving in a way that embodies the song.
4. Place the cards on opposite sides of the room. When the song plays, students move to the correct card in a way that embodies the tempo.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Provide wait time
- ↓ Offer gestural cues
- ↓ Students mirror the way you move

### Level Up

- ↑ Encourage the use of technical terminology
- ↑ Add a competitive element by eliminating the last person to answer

## Reflection

Play a song and ask the student to identify if the song is at a slow (largo) or fast (presto) tempo. Ask the student to identify what emotion the composer may be trying to communicate through the tempo.

# LARGO

SLOWLY



# PRESTO

QUICKLY





# This is Not a Ribbon

## Objective

Great stories *show* before they *tell*. Think of your favorite silent film or animation short that didn't use dialogue. These pieces are so powerful because they engage our observation skills. The characters show us who they are rather than tell us who they are. After all, actions speak louder than words.

Far too often, we rely too much on dialogue, forgetting the effectiveness of nonverbal communication. Students will develop their pantomime skills through creativity and imagination.

## Goals

Develops choice making, proprioception, creativity, pantomime, observation, imagination, and play

## Directions

1. Gather in a circle. Give one student a ribbon stick.
2. The student says, "This is not a ribbon, it's a [fill in the blank.]" For example, the student could pantomime singing and say, "This is not a ribbon, it's a microphone."
3. The student then passes the ribbon to the next person in the circle who repeats the phrase with their own choice and action.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Choose between two items (i.e., wave or microphone)
- ↓ Offer a choice board
- ↓ Modify instructions to "This is a ribbon, and I am a [fill in the blank]"

### Level Up

- ↑ Use the prop to create a character
- ↑ Students collaborate by using the prop to create a tableau

## Reflection

Ask each student to pantomime the action before sharing their choice. Allow other students in the classroom to guess what the ribbon has become.

# Sequencing Your Name

## Objective

Boring choreography doesn't interest anyone, but it's hard to come up with unique ideas. Use *Sequencing Your Name* to inspire new choreograph and discover what movements feel most comfortable to your performers.

Students will conceptualize and refine an artistic idea.

## Goals

Develops critical thinking, conceptualizing and refining artistic ideas, creativity, innovation, personalizing art, independence, and turn-taking

## Materials

- Alphabet Key (one copy per student, or on a large poster at the front of your space)
- Pens
- Paper, or (if time is limited) write out each student's sequence beforehand.

<b>A</b>	Spin	<b>J</b>	3-Step Turn	<b>S</b>	Slide Left
<b>B</b>	Twist	<b>K</b>	Leap	<b>T</b>	Touch the Ground
<b>C</b>	Plié	<b>L</b>	Slide Right	<b>U</b>	Sashay
<b>D</b>	Sway	<b>M</b>	Jazz Hands	<b>V</b>	Grand Battement
<b>E</b>	March	<b>N</b>	Reach	<b>W</b>	Quick Walk or Run
<b>F</b>	Gallop	<b>O</b>	Roll Neck	<b>X</b>	Jazz Square
<b>G</b>	Hop	<b>P</b>	Shoulder Shrug	<b>Y</b>	Skip
<b>H</b>	Shake Foot	<b>Q</b>	Walk	<b>Z</b>	Small Kick
<b>I</b>	Swing Arms	<b>R</b>	Arms Overhead		

## Directions

1. Review the alphabet key and direct each student to write out their movement sequence. Have a TA readily available to assist individuals who need support.
2. Perform each movement in the sequence.
3. String the movements together with natural transitions, or through creating original transitions.
4. Add interest to the sequence by exploring levels, direction, force, and speed.
5. Use a prop.
6. Add music and perform the sequence.

## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Encourage modifications (ex. *Spin finger instead of body*)
- ↓ Provide chairs for students who have physical limitations, or fatigue easily
- ↓ Pair TAs with students who need additional support
- ↓ Work on a common word together (ex. *Name of your city, happy*)

### Level Up

- ↑ Encourage collaboration by asking students to link a move from their name with a movement from their partner's name
- ↑ Group students and ask them to combine their sequences into a short dance

## Reflection

Ask students to perform their original sequence.

# Self-Regulating Dance

## Objective

It's hard for anyone to function when they feel overwhelmed. An effective self-regulation strategy can make all the difference. In this activity, students will self-regulate by reconnecting to their body.

## Goals

Develops proprioception, self-awareness, self-management,

## Directions

Anne Green Gilbert's BrainDance consists of eight parts. Progress through each section together:

	Description	Example
<b>Breathing</b>	Encourage a comfortable, grounded posture. Emphasize flow.	Breathe in through the nose, and out through the mouth.
<b>Tactile</b>	Begin distinctively touching various parts of your body	Brush hands against arm, squeeze leg
<b>Core-Distal</b>	Think flexion and extension. Grow large and small. Extend and retract.	Laying down in the fetal position vs. stretching to wake up in the morning.
<b>Head-Tail</b>	Move only your head, and then tail. Then, move both together.	Shake head. Shake hips. Shake head and hips together.
<b>Upper-Lower</b>	Move one section at a time - either the upper or the lower.	Raise shoulders, lift arms, Bend torso, rotate ankles
<b>Body Side</b>	Move one side at a time while keeping the other half still.	Shake right arm and leg, Shake left arm and leg. Track eyes from left to right,
<b>Cross Lateral</b>	Reach across your body	Stretch right arm down to left toe, Twist torso, lunge
<b>Vestibular</b>	Practice balance	Spin, sit and lift feet off ground, bend torso over and swing side-to-side

(Gilbert, A. G. (2000). BrainDance [PDF]. Seattle, WA: Creative Dance Center.)

## Materials

- Nature sounds
- Images to set a theme (optional)
- Props (optional)



## Modifications

### Level Down

- ↓ Perform in a chair or seated on the floor
- ↓ Students mirror instructor

### Level Up

- ↑ Print the steps and allow a student to lead the activity
- ↑ Encourage students to make their own choice
- ↑ Set a theme

## Reflection

After the movement is complete, ask each student to express how they feel.

# Other Resources

## **Teaching Strategies for Students with Disabilities Self-Paced Course, 4 Credit Hours**

Learn practical strategies for engaging students with disabilities in mainstream or self-contained learning environments. Content focuses on best practices for educators who serve students with exceptionalities, and explores nontraditional and kinesthetic methods, like those in the performing arts, to engage all your students. Deep dive into topics like differentiation, scaffolding, and sensory sensitivities.

## **Teaching Movement to Students of All Abilities Self-Paced Course, 5 Credit Hours**

Getting students up and moving is an effective, non-verbal way to level the playing field and facilitate meaningful social bonds. Learn how to use creative movement to develop proprioception, fine and gross motor skills, cultural awareness, self-regulation, and sequencing. The first half of the course explores movement theory and differentiation, while the second half teaches twenty-one activities you can use with your students immediately.

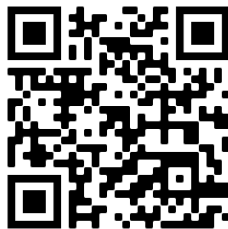
## **Teaching Theater to Students of Varied Abilities Self-Paced Course, 6 Credit Hours**

Sitting at a desk all day isn't good for any learner, particularly a learner with disabilities. Learn how to develop self and social awareness through putting on a production. Curriculum emphasizes expressive and receptive language skills, literacy, self-efficacy, independence, and classroom collaboration. Plus, you'll learn twenty-nine activities you can use with your students right away!

## **Teaching Music to Students with Exceptionalities Self-Paced Course, 4 Credit Hours**

When students engage in music-related activities, they develop a better mind-body connection and feel more a part of their community. Music offers academic benefits, too: increased standardized test scores, better performance in math and reading, and improved classroom behavior. Discover just how simple it can be to incorporate music into your lesson plans and create a more engaging learning environment for all your students.

## **Folklore and Fairy Tales** Adaptable Script Collection, People Like Us, Inc., 2017



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