

2

Beginning to move

This chapter introduces the use of movement activities in your learning environment. We will offer some suggestions based on our experiences, then take you through four experiments that are representative of the fifty-two activities you will find as you go through the book.

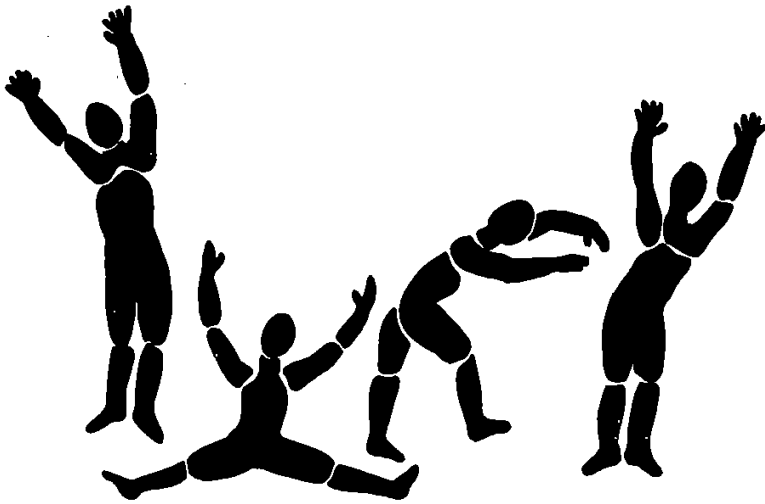
There is a short introduction to each activity to define its goal and give suggestions to you, the leader. This is followed by instructions that have been written to be read verbatim to the group. Please do not feel limited by our suggestions or our words. We hope you will feel free to improvise and create new variations on the themes we have suggested. As you discover your own additions and changes, we suggest that you note them in the margins so that you will have all the information you need in one place.

Beginning to move

Some of the materials you might want to assemble to facilitate the activities are:

- material remnants: excellent for improvisation, making costumes or structures, hiding behind, and so on
- stretch ropes: available from surplus or marine stores; can be used individually or in pairs or groups to define body boundaries, invent games
- drop cloths: get the thinnest kind; under supervision, great fun for group interaction, costumes, movement exploration, sensory integration
- balloons: get the strongest kind; endless inventions possible, great for stretch break or warm-up
- percussion instruments: anyone can play and be expressive
- pastels and butcher paper: end rolls are usually free from your local newspaper; useful in many activities
- costumes: easy to collect from thrift stores; good for fairy tales, dream work, fantasy, role playing
- newspapers: a great way, when wadded and thrown, to release tension safely; people *love* it
- bubble solution and wands: to lighten things up, teach qualities of flow and lightness
- feathers: for relaxation, tactile awareness
- stuffed animals and puppets: a place for students to put their feelings and fantasies.

There are several attitudes that have been found useful in making movement exploration easier and more fun. First, it is perfectly all right to make mistakes. There are no right



or wrong answers in movement exploration—the goal is simply the joy of learning. If you can master this attitude and foster it in your students, the activities will be a much greater source of enjoyment. Second, you don't have to be a dancer or know anything about dance to be successful with movement activities. Some of the most profound learnings grow out of experiences with people who swear they can't dance. Everyone can benefit from learning more about the body and how it moves. Third, take some time to tune your own instrument and those of the group with which you are working. Take a stretch break to limber up your body, do some deep breathing to fill the body with energy, acknowledge how you are feeling at the moment—in short, do anything you can do to help yourself and your group warm up and feel more comfortable. Fourth, and perhaps most important, give yourself and the group per-

Beginning to move

mission to have fun. Nobody ever said learning had to be dull. Movement can make the driest subject absolutely exhilarating.

Now on to the experiments.

BODY PARTS DANCE

TO THE LEADER This experiment explores body awareness while giving participants a chance to feel more alive and share in the joy of moving.

The choice of music for this experiment is important. It is a playful activity and can be enhanced by fun music such as honky-tonk, New Orleans jazz, or carnival music. Students may be seated, standing by their desks, or in a circle.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP I'm going to put on some music, and we're going to focus on moving different body parts in all the ways we can think of. During this activity, feel free to look around and get ideas from the way others are moving. I'll start by calling out a part.

(Start music; allow approximately 1 minute for each part.)

Shoulders . . . let your shoulders lead your movement up . . . around . . . hunched . . . high . . . wiggling. Now chins . . . how can you move your chin? . . . jutting . . . snooty . . . drooping . . . let your whole

Beginning to move

body follow your chin. Now you can call out different parts and we'll focus on that part.

(Continue for 3 or 4 minutes.)

Now move any part of you that wants to move . . . and now slow down until you are at a good stopping place, then sit down.

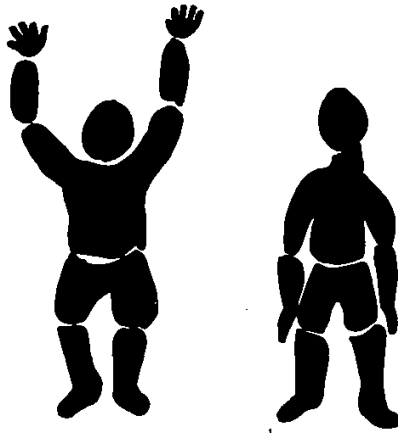
FLYING FREE

TO THE LEADER Movement is like a radar screen on which you can see the passing thoughts and images of the mind, the emotions and sensations of the body. The blips and tracks are similar to the passing selves and roles we wear; the screen itself represents our underlying unity of self.

It is only when we hold onto or try to fix these passing blips that we encounter problems such as tension, unhappiness, and lack of satisfying contact with others. This activity can remind participants that life is a continual flow of events, feelings, and interactions, and that satisfaction comes from enjoying the dance rather than holding onto the moment.

This activity can be done in a circle or with students randomly spaced throughout the room. A circle provides more structure and gives students an opportunity to see others easily. Random spacing of children uses the normal arrangement of many classrooms.

You will need a drum or a tambourine.



INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP I'm going to beat the drum in an eight-count beat: four counts loud—BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM—and four counts soft—Boom Boom Boom Boom. I'll start slowly, then I might increase the speed later.

On the strong beats, freeze your body into a sculpture that says **HERE I AM!** On the soft beats, breathe and let your body melt and come unglued. Then on the next strong beats, freeze into another sculpture that says **HERE I AM!**

Hold . . . BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM . . . Melt . . . Boom Boom Boom Boom.

(Repeat 5–10 times.)

Now we'll try some other positions. Again, hold the sculpture on the strong beats, then melt and dissolve on the soft beats.

(Repeat each of the following 3–4 times.)

Beginning to move

- I'm big . . . BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM Boom
Boom Boom Boom
- I'm lovable . . . BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
Boom Boom Boom Boom
- I'm capable . . . BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
Boom Boom Boom Boom
- I can do it . . . BOOM BOOM BOOM BOOM
Boom Boom Boom Boom.

VARIATIONS Have the students jump and change the sculpture each time they land.

Have them dissolve all the way to the floor.

Ask them to take on sculptures that look like people in their family or TV characters.

FLYING FREE—DUETS

TO THE LEADER This experiment follows the same theme as the previous activity while adding a new dimension. It gives participants an opportunity to listen actively with their bodies and introduces the skills of interacting with others through movement.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP Choose a partner and stand facing each other. Decide who will be Partner One and Partner Two.

Partner One, find a way of standing that most looks like how you feel when you are solid as a rock or a moun-

Beginning to move

tain. Do it now, making your body very big and solid, and hold that position as long as you can.

Partner Two, take the same position as your partner is doing. Try it on in your body—head, elbows, back, feet, everywhere—and notice how it feels in your body.

Great! Both partners, shake out your arms and legs and let go of that position.

(Repeat with Partner Two leading.)

Now, Partner One, again let your body become solid as a mountain. Hold onto that position as long as you can. Then when you're ready, totally melt down, let go of the position, and let your body fly free. Move around however you want. Partner Two, when Partner One melts, it's your turn to take the position. Keep switching back and forth. When one melts and flies free, it's the other's turn to take the position.

VARIATIONS Try these positions:

- feeling good about yourself
- feeling scared
- feeling at home, knowing you belong here
- a position that says, "Right now I feel _____."

Imagine

- you're a race car frozen in the middle of a turn
- a way you meet people: shyly, loudly, confidently
- the way you stand when you're talking to other students . . . to older people . . . to your parents.

DOMINOES

TO THE LEADER The purpose of this activity is to continue the process of increasing flexibility that was begun in the previous experiments.

Your primary task in the activity is to tap the beginning domino when the group is ready. This experiment involves the whole group in the letting-go process and is best done in a circle. Later you may devise other patterns such as letters, shapes, or numbers.

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP Form a circle with enough room around you to swing your arms. Now everyone freeze. Hold your body in a sculpture that says **HERE I AM!**

Now glance around without moving your head, and notice everyone's position.

In a moment I'm going to tap one of you. When I do, begin to melt and ooze out of your position into a puddle on the floor. When you ooze all the way onto the floor, that will be a signal to the person next to you to start melting down, too. When that person dissolves onto the floor, the next person starts melting. Any questions?

Let's do it totally in silence. You can make faces and soundless yells, but nothing we can hear.

(Tap the first person.)

VARIATIONS Try different positions:

- I'm shy
- I'm fierce

Beginning to move

- See me!
- I'm hiding.

Try to see how fast the dominoes can melt. How slowly.
Go in random order rather than one person after the
next.