



LESSON TITLE	DANCE PLANS
Group	Mixed group
Target Group	Adults with disabilities (mainly intellectual disability and down syndrome) that have workshop experience
Number of participants	18-22
Duration	1,5 hour
Materials	Coloured canson cards with shapes and words on them (see below) in dimensions min. 20x20cm, and markers.

Goals-Essential Question:

This lesson's goal is to lead participants to the creation of their own choreography through the following stages:

- 1. Choreography choices that are related to the movement material, the space, and the movement quality*
 - 2. Creating a choreography in space and time*
 - 3. Performing the choreography in a group*
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PROCEDURE

Group warm-up following the educator's instructions (10 minutes)

The whole group forms a circle. We close our eyes and after a few breaths we turn our palms outwards and look for the hands of the people next to us until the inside of our palms touch with theirs, keeping our elbows down. Then we open our eyes and start varying the pressure we apply with our palms, and we also vary the range of our movement, without losing touch with the people next to us, that is without breaking the circle.

We return to the neutral position, remove our palms and place them on our body. We glide them over our skin and clothes feeling the shapes of the different body parts, the temperatures, and the different textures, awaking all of the body parts. We can start with the head and slowly go down to reach the heels, or we can follow any path on the body. It is helpful to imagine that we have colour in our hands and we want to cover every inch of our body with colour.

1st Activity | in pairs (15 minutes)

We then bring our hands in front of us and slowly bend and curl our fingers to form fists. Then we start moving, each person on their own, starting from our fists, and we let the movement transmit throughout our body. It might be helpful to think that our fists are our eyes and they are curious, they want to see everything and they want to go inside all areas.

During this exercise, we can remind to the participants some of their body parts that remain motionless eg. they might be focusing only on one fist while the other remains still, or they may be moving only their upper body. We encourage the change of levels in space (low, medium, high), change of dynamic and of speed, as well as movement around space. Finally, we ask them to open up their view towards the other participants so that the fist-eyes can get entangled with those of others, creating duets and trios without touching.

We will be using the fist in the last activity of this class as a movement idea that the participants can use in their choreography. This means that we can explore the fist in other ways as well. For example, through the sound it makes when it hits in different ways different surfaces. Alternatively, we can focus on its image, that is on how many fists in a row can create the image of a moving serpent, or other shapes and images.

2nd Activity | transitional group (15 minutes)

We do a transitional exercise during which we walk around in order to coordinate the group and spread through the whole space.

After we've walked all around, we've looked at each other with the rest of the group, and we have become accustomed to the space, we show participants a card with the image of a spiral and we



appoint who will be at the centre. The person at the centre determines the speed and the direction of those who walk in a spiral around him. The person at the centre spreads one or both hands out and twirls changing speeds and directions, as if directing the rest. The rest of the group watch the person at the centre and follow the movement instructions and at the same time being careful of the rest of the people moving next to them.

In the next stage of this exercise, the person at the centre stretches or bends their hand bringing the rest of the group near them or pushing them away, all around the space circling the centre. In addition, this exercise can be developed by allowing free movement instead of walking, dancing around (again in a spiral), with the rest of the group “interpreting” more freely the instructions the person at the centre gives. It can also vary in other shapes in space.

Safety

Because this exercise requires spiral movement, some people may feel dizzy. In order to avoid that, it is best that the educator first presents the role of the person at the centre so that the rest of the people are not twirling at that time and so as to make sure that the person at the centre changes every now and again. Until everyone familiarises themselves with the exercise the spiral can move slower. Also, it can be done in two groups so one group can watch the other.

3rd Activity | each participant alone and in a group (25 minutes)

We ask everyone to spread out in space and for one minute we all simply walk around. Then we give the instruction for each participant to find their own walk, something like a “signature” walk and we give them a few minutes to find it. If the instruction is too hard for some, we can, if we want, create pairs so that they can help each other. As they are looking for their own walk we can help them by telling them that they can focus on one body part (one elbow, one shoulder, the head, the heel) or that one asymmetry can produce movement, and they should go ahead and find a walk they might find strange or comical.

We can later use the material that will result from this exercise in many different ways. Let's examine one possibility.

We form a line at one side of the room and one by one, starting from one corner, we cross the room diagonally walking at a steady speed. That way everyone can see everyone else's walk. Everyone who crosses diagonally then walks normally around the room to get back at the end of the line.

When everyone has crossed, we explain that the first person will show their walk again and the rest of the group will, one by one, cross the room copying the first person's walk. This will end with the first person crossing diagonally once more. Then the second person will show their walk and so on.

In the end, we can work on the movement in more detail if we pick one or two participants to teach their movement to others. Encourage them to give as many details as possible for what they are doing: shape elements, elements of feeling, dynamic and rhythm. They can also provide an image eg. Imagine having your knee in a cast, or that a ribbon tied to your left hand's pinkie finger, if the movement is



focused on one part of the body. They can also refer to the whole body, not just to the part they are focused on, eg. if the emphasis is on the head, the hands are hanging loosely, they follow the torso's movement, are they tensed or not?

4th Activity | choreographies in groups of three, four or five (40 minutes)

The basic structure of this activity can be repeated in almost every lesson with additions or changes to the cards.

At this point, we ask the class to remember what we have done since the beginning of the lesson and we let each participant to add their own detail.

We have prepared the cards on which we've drawn a fist (1st activity), a person walking (3rd activity), a circle (warm-up shape), a spiral (2nd activity) and a diagonal line (3rd activity) and two cards one for fast and one for slow (you can just write the words). As different elements of what we have done in class that day come up, we can show the corresponding cards and place them on the floor.

After you have presented all the cards, you explain their categories:

1. movement material: fists, walking
2. Shapes in space: circle, spiral, diagonal line
3. Speeds: fast, slow

Then you ask each group to choose or randomly pick:

1. At the first lesson one card
2. At the second two cards
3. In all following lessons one card from each category.

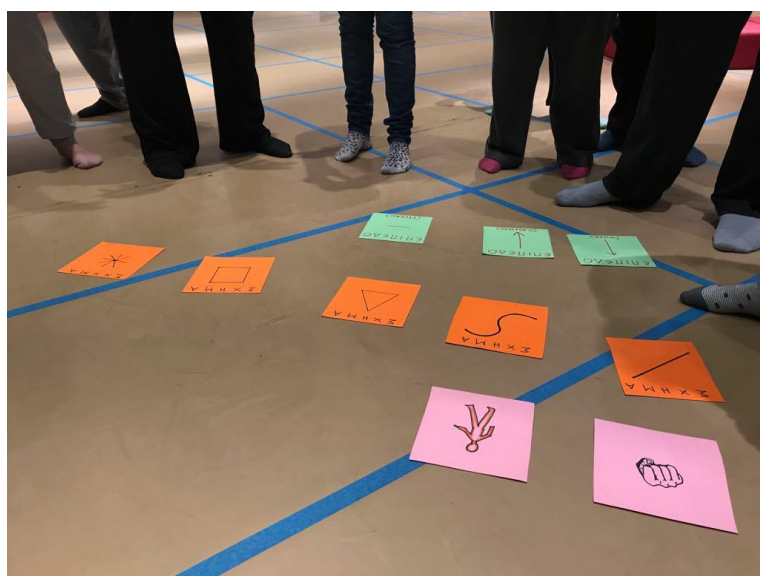
Then ask the different groups of participants to work, each group separately, and to create a choreography using the cards as a guide. Maybe each card corresponds to one part of the choreography, or they might work with two or three cards at the same time. That is, if they have two cards, their choreography can develop in a spiral for the first part and then in the second part go very slowly. Or they can create a choreography that includes fists, diagonal lines and fast speed all at the same time.

When all groups are ready, we signal the beginning of the “show” (see the introduction to improvisation that we did in the previous cycle of lesson plans). We say that we will not be applauding each group separately but we will applaud in the end after all groups have presented, and that we will keep total silence and concentration between groups. We can determine the order of the groups or we can let them choose when they each want to start. We wait for total silence and without saying “go” or “action” we let the first choreography begin and the presentation to unfold.



Discussion (10 minutes)

We give participants some time to relax after the presentation's concentration and then we sit in a circle to discuss the choreographies. We let everyone who wants to speak speak, stirring the conversation towards descriptive or interpretational observations and not to criticism. From the experience from this lesson cycle we learned that most participants are excited by their experience because they are rarely asked to create something on their own and then to present it with such freedom. When they manage to do it, they experience a great feeling of having accomplished something great and they feel very empowered.



END OF PROCEDURE