



Rhythm4inclusion - Dance

Introduction

In this project we aim to create an environment that allows all students to be a part of learning through rhythm and movement. A compliment to traditional teaching methods. We are focusing on using our bodies to create rhythm and through that get a better understanding of what each individuals needs are. We aim for this to be a place where young students can find focus and concentration to take part and learn how to manage their energy levels to benefit their traditional schooling. The hope is that this will enhance their capabilities to take part in a more traditional studying environment. The exercises on their own allows the student to activate their motor skills to keep up with the movement - this in turn leads to a better understanding of coordination, maths, language, physical abilities as well as each persons self-esteem and self-image. A safe space where we can all develop no matter our starting point. The exercises are developed through movement, rhythm and play, to make the students want to join in, no matter pre-existing conditions such as a diagnose or not.

The project is developed as a method and to see the benefits of this alternate way of working we suggest you work through the entire syllabus.

The method is made up of 3 modules, each in which we have suggested a working plan and specific exercises and movements, however if you as a teacher feel like your students would benefit from slight changes feel free to adjust the material to suit your students.

Props - space - atmosphere - preparations

Props:

For this course some props are needed. We have used something called “tri-its”, they are pyramid shaped beanbags. However small soft balls or normal beanbags would work just as well. The important thing is that they are easy to grab for the children and don’t bounce. The props needs to have individual colours - matching the geometrical shapes as you can see in the document “geometrical shapes”.

Space:

You need to have an open space where the students can move around without obstacles - for example: a classroom where desks have been moved, a dance studio or outdoors in an open area.

Atmosphere:

It is important to create an atmosphere that is forgiving and respectful. Remind the students and yourself that there is no competition and that the success doesn’t lie in the ability to catch the tri-its. The success lies in trying to keep up with all the different components of each exercise - the rhythm, the movement, the spacial awareness and the groups ability to interact without much speaking.



Preparations:

As the teacher you need to have the tri-its (or equivalent) ready, and you need to know what colour means what geometrical shape. We suggest you also have big cut outs of the geometrical shapes in the classroom for the students to look at.

You should also have practiced the movement to each colour/count/shape so that you can teach it with confidence.

Dealing with students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

All the exercises are made in a way that it can work both sitting or standing. One can walk around the room or if one is in a wheelchair the exercises works just as well.

In the cases of students who have a hard time joining in, not comfortable with being in groups or facing new classes - it is vital that those student are not forced to join. Invite them to watch if they want and let it take time. We have found it hard for students to not want to join in once they have had a chance to watch from a "safe" distance. Try and encourage everyone to join from the start but if this is not possible - they need to have a chance to watch first. Repeat this for every time you do the class and let them join in on their own terms - let them join for only one exercise if they want. The benefits of the class are lost when we force the students. Encourage and create a safe and respectful place by listening allowing the students to have a voice - without letting them decide and take charge over the class.

Class layout.

- Introduction (talking about what rhythm is and what the purpose of doing this is, this should only take a few minutes).
- Focus and warm up, in this stage we aim to find focus, be aware and get moving.
- Movement and rhythm exercises.
- Start by talking to the kids about rhythm and what benefits it has. Working with rhythm and movement enhances a persons ability to focus and find co-ordination. It is a way to help children develop the ability to take in information and to manage their energy levels.