



Creative Movement for School, Art and Life



Young Theatre on the Move: Creative Movement for School, Art and Life

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“Creative activity is a type of learning process where the teacher and pupil are located in the same individual.”

Arthur Koestler

This book is for you, dear teacher, dear student. Whether you are already experienced in creativity, pedagogy, or both. Whether you are just starting with creative techniques or are already experienced. Whether you would like to have the ability to structure a whole programme or just want to insert something short and memorable into your lessons. This booklet is here to support you.

We are a group of different artists and pedagogues from different countries, who met in Young Theatre on the Move collaboration project, supported by Creative Europe programme. We have joined forces, because we believe that art is the fundamental human activity that enhances our lives and also has immense pedagogical potential. Since all of us are artists and pedagogues, we have been developing the art of creative teaching and learning throughout our professional careers, and would now like to share some of our insights with you.

This booklet has been designed in such a way that different artist trainers wrote about what is important to them when working with creative pedagogy, creative movement and improvisation. Even though every artist trainer has their own individual teaching and artistic style, there are a lot of commonalities that we hope will strengthen the understanding of creative pedagogy that encourages autonomy, cooperation, independence and focuses on the process first and the end product second.

This booklet is here because we know it is sometimes hard. When “teaching” with/through/about art, the first thing one needs to be aware of is that art is a fluid and non-exact field, which does not have a set curriculum or one right answer. There are some pinpoints and directions, of course, but the exact content emerges uniquely, every time. Learning through mistakes and detours can sometimes bring new possibilities and solutions. That is something we need to first embrace ourselves as creative pedagogues,

before we can pass it on as a method of learning and processing information.

This booklet discusses the potential of combining creativity and pedagogy, not only as a pedagogical process in teaching art (artistic pedagogy), but more as a method of teaching any topic selected in whichever field. It is about creating a safe, relaxed, focused, trusting, open, supported and inspiring learning environment, where the engagement of all involved is inevitable and necessary, where active experience is the key and where the whole body is incorporated and used – to make experiences and knowledge long lasting, memorable and imprinted in our bodies.

As this is primarily a call to practice and action, the first thing you can find in this book is a collection of games and exercises we strongly believe in and have proven to be useful for a variety of goals. The games are mostly taken from the field of creative movement, improvisational theatre and contemporary dance, as well. They are divided into different categories to encourage development of various skills and body awareness, and are suitable for all ages and levels of groups (with some adaptations, if needed). Games can be found in various sources – for that we also included bibliography at the end of the book, to offer the starting point of exploration and inspiration. The final and ideal outcome is to get acquainted with basic principles of games so that we can get the idea of processes, techniques and goals, but also to start developing our own games and formats. Those we can use for a variety of purposes and situations. They can be adapted and created for and by the young participants themselves and to encourage them to start playing.

To support the games, the artist trainers have shared some of their thoughts and experience in combining art and education by expanding the exercises and games (“the what”) with the different ways of how to implement them (“the how”). First chapter is devoted to the introduction of creative pedagogy as (not such a) new approach to pedagogical process, where creative techniques and tools are used to encourage active learning process that involves movement, creation and making mistakes.

Second chapter is an introduction of values we recognized as necessary to build upon and which help us establish supportive creative environment.

Third chapter focuses on creative movement - what we understand by the term and why we have chosen it as our main creative tool from which our creative pedagogical programme stems from. It also focuses on practical approaches when introducing creative techniques: What should we be aware of? How we can make the most and the best out of our creative learning situation? What should we ask ourselves? How can we prepare in advance? The chapter also shines the light on limitations we are all facing in our work and life as a fuel for creativity.

Fourth chapter discusses the value of mistake in creative pedagogy and creative movement techniques from both approaches – teaching and learning. It links creative pedagogy with (losing) control and discusses its benefits in everyday life, as well. The chapter also focuses on giving and receiving feedback in creative pedagogical situations (and beyond) and how to frame the feedback as a part of creative experience.

Fifth chapter is devoted to the process of preparing for an artistic performance with creative movement, especially with non-professionals and children. What happens with the process when its final goal is a performance? How can we keep the balance between relaxed and creative process and the quality of performance? How do we develop performance that is rooted in improvisation and creative movement? The chapter also reflects on closing moments of our practice and the opportunities of positive evaluation.

Along the whole booklet you will find creative signatures of some artist trainers with tips, ideas, imprints, confessions, motivation, impressions, etc. Even after years of experience, creative processes are usually filled with ambiguity, doubt, ups and downs, uncertainty and other often crippling emotions and thoughts. Therefore, we would like to share (creatively, of course) our own way of handling these issues and offer some inspiration and encouragement for anybody who needs it.

We hope that this will offer you support and encourage you to find what works for you and brings out the most creativity and playfulness to yourself and the group(s) you are working with.

Inhale, exhale, stretch and move a bit, keep your mind and heart open and most importantly – have fun!

Urša Strehar Benčina, editor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Urša Strehar Benčina". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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PART A

practice

INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAMME

The programme is divided into 4 different topics/categories, which are, as most categories, a bit artificial and not at all exact. They are mostly here to help us structure our work and activities, whereas they overlap almost all the time - if there is exercise or game about the emotion and movement, it can often be put in the movement basics if done on an elementary level of the exercises, or sensory awareness, as almost all that we do is in a way connected with our sensory perception, etc. It can be also said that the movement basics part focuses on the body, sensory awareness focuses on the relationship of body and its environment, emotion and movement chapter encourages the awareness of emotional response to the environment and the imagination, and story and movement chapter represents the possible storyline or imagined ideas that emerge from the relationship between the environment and the body.

Nevertheless, here are games/exercises/processes that proved themselves to be extremely applicable and useful for the shaping of an experience-based individual, that is open, relaxed, focused, imaginative, cooperative, expressive, inspired, playful, equal, curious, active and overall ready to experience life and art in full. The exercises are mostly based on the movement itself, but we encourage you to find more exercises and games that come from the field of improvisational theatre in the Young Theatre project outputs: Act II and Act III – Handbooks for professionals and pedagogues.



HOW TO USE THE GAMES?

Whether you will only use one game to change the energy of the group, to take a break from sitting or static activities, to connect the participants, etc. or you plan to do a whole set of games / workshop to a specific topic, choose your primal goal (to relax, to focus, to see where we are and how we feel today, to connect with each other, to just move, etc.) and give response, encouragement, comments and instructions in accordance with the selected goal.

Make the game your own, adapt it to your needs and situation, use, what you need and leave what does not serve you. // For example, adaptation, when the group is big: If the game is meant for 10 people and you have more than 20, maybe make two groups - sometimes they can work at the same

time and sometimes one group can play the game and the other observes it and later they switch. Focused observation is very useful for audience training and learning in general, we can choose special missions for observers since the young sometimes need more tools to keep the focus strong. //

Return to the same games and use them more often to see what happens - play it for a shorter or longer time, do it exactly by the rules, or adapt it if some other variations are found, play it for different purposes, play with playing. Children and young people are great in adding their own twists to the games - listen and follow the group and offer support, when needed (and sometimes you can let the situation reveal what the game is about for you and your group)

Try and do. Even if you are not sure whether you understand the game correctly or not sure whether you play it the »right« way, try it and find what this game has in it for you. If you need more rules, add them. If you need less rules, eliminate them. Do it your own way.

And, if possible, visit workshops on dance, theatre, improvisation and creative movement, try it as a participant and player yourself - or at least play the game together with the group. Nothing can give you better understanding of a game than your own experience.

Have fun. But really. Even with hard games that are frustrating, even if the goal is not met, try to keep positive and focused attitude - as a mentor/leader/pedagogue - the tone you hold, will reflect (in) the whole group. It is better to admit something did not go as planned and try again than feeling anxious and tense because something is not going our way.



WHERE TO USE THEM?

These games/exercises/processes are suitable to be played wherever - in the classroom, outside, on the stage, in the hallway, anywhere. Usually the games require some empty space and mostly do not require any special props or furniture, except for some chairs.



WHEN TO USE THEM?

Games can be used before or after some other activities, as a break, for conclusion, for introduction or group formation/team building, for concentration and focus, for body awareness, only one game can be used separately, or the whole set of games, whatever is needed or desired. A lot of games »wake« participants up or make them more energetic, some make them more focused, some calm, so it is good to think about that, when selecting them for your individual purposes.

Most of the games are »forms«, so HOW we do something. But often we can add our own WHAT - so we can select topics that can be inserted into and connected with the games.

You may know some of the games by some other names, or know the similar version of the game - these games are very similar to the lore and folk tales for example - some take it as it is, some adapt it and so the new versions are born.

THE STRUCTURE OF EXERCISES AND GAMES:



Age:

Most games are suitable from 5 up and until the body can move at least to some extent :)



Time needed:

roughly estimated shortest time needed for the exercise, it can always be prolonged or shortened if needed



Number of participants:

what works best, some games can be adapted for smaller/ bigger groups, but with all it is important that players have enough room to move, especially where they have to move through the space. Play games in more groups, while one performs, others observe and then change.



Position in space/materials needed:

what do we need for the game, what is the position of the players in space



Goals / purpose of the game:

are here for the inspiration, as a lot of games actually carry more objectives - every time the game is played, we need to decide what we aim for and give comments and guidelines accordingly



Ideas, notes:

Empty space for any associations, notes on how you adapted the game/exercise/process to your own needs, any other possible information and inspiration that might help you with further implementation of the material in your work.



Levels:

The categories are overlapping and it is mostly about trust and safe environment – exercises for the experienced do not necessarily mean experienced dancers/actors, but experienced group, that has a good connection and trust with the mentor and each other. It is sometimes about confidence and experience of the mentor even more than the one of the group. But do try whatever sparks the imagination and feels right for the moment.

Level of difficulty:

- Basic exercises
- Expanding, intermediate exercises
- For the experienced, exercises for the upgrade

A 
B 
C 

Type:

Game: activities that have quite exact rules, all of the participants including the mentor/pedagogue can participate equally and have some basic structure, position and clear goal.

Exercise: activities that are usually specific exercises for some skill, but offer a bit more variety in structure and position of the activity.

Process: activities that usually need a mentor/leader to guide it – the participants are taken through some (usually imaginative) body process, where they have to respond to the words of the leader in their own way. They can have more than one goal and the mentor/leader should adapt their instructions and find variations that can serve the selected goal in the most optimal way. Games and exercises might be used and practiced as a part of a guided processes as well.



Hints/Trust us: our thoughts on the game, ideas, comments

LET'S START WITH THE ACTION!

It is super hard to write about something that has to be experienced, felt, embodied.

But we tried :)

Some exercises and games are written from the standpoint of the participant ("we" step into the circle) and some from the standpoint of the mentor (the group steps into the circle) - there are more authors and perspectives of games, so the idea was not to unify it all completely, but to offer a variety of approaches.








In general, when giving instructions for the games, we aim to be short and do not have to always worry if everyone group doesn't »get it« completely or understand everything in total before you start the game - it is very hard sometimes to use the right words so everyone in the group can imagine it, but after doing it, usually most of the people will get it - if not from the beginning, they might catch up later, during the playing of the game.

So, don't worry, try, start with »trial runs« of the game so everyone catches up with the rules and then »play it for real«, make mistakes and try again, but you (and the group) will know when something works and you »got it« - even if it is in your own way. It is about playfulness and SERIOUSLY PLAYING - being immersed in activity together and having fun. After all, fun is not an escape from reality, it is a gateway to one.

1. MOVEMENT BASICS

Usually the starting point of our practical work, connected with posture, breathing, pace, quality and shape of the movement, the chapter is here to encourage movement in general and to raise awareness on the body itself. The attitude of the activities should be relaxed and encouraging, and the most important notion should be that there are no right or wrong ways of doing most of the exercises, the best way is (Y)OUR way. In the beginning ensuring safe space is especially important, that is why a lot of starting games are group ones, so we are all equally exposed, but also protected by the group. Safe space also implies that it is almost impossible to make a mistake, since »mistakes« are actually encouraged, desired and fun. The games are designed for warming-up as well, although we highly recommend a bit of physical warm-up before everything, just to have the body as ready and willing to work as possible.

1. SYLLABLES - MOVEMENT

 Any	 Works best in groups 5-10 people, but no limitations
 Empty space, anywhere, standing in circle with enough space between them to move freely	 5+ minutes
 to break the ice, to learn names, to start moving	
 Game	 Basic








Everyone in a circle presents themselves with a name and one movement they choose, which is then repeated by the whole group. In the next round, the names are broken down into syllables and each syllable is followed by a single movement, repeated by the whole group.



The exercise is good for getting to know the participants and creating a group atmosphere. You can use only first name or the whole name. To make the game more challenging, only movements can later be repeated to see if the group remembers all “moving names”.



2. SYLLABLES - FROM CLAPPING TO IMPROVISATION

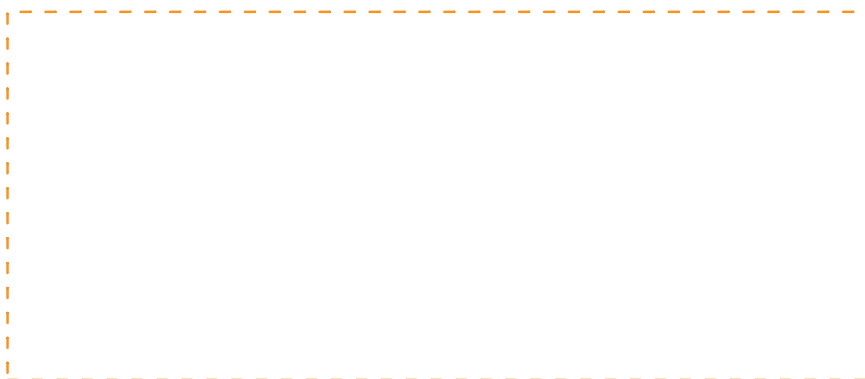
 Any	 Works best in groups 5-10 people, but no limitations
 Empty space, anywhere, standing in circle with enough space between them to move freely	 5+ minutes
 to break the ice, to feel the rhythm, to learn names, to start moving, to react, to feel the body	
 Game	 Basic/Intermediate

Everyone in a circle says their full name (first, middle, if they have it, and last) out loud and clap to each syllable. In the next round, everybody moves just their arms to this rhythm. Next round, everyone moves just their legs to the same beat pattern. In the final round the players move their whole body to








this rhythm. At the end they move across the space to the rhythm pattern. The game can be played so that everyone is working with their own name all the time or we can include repeating of others - one starts, we all observe them and try to repeat their movement as well.



This is already a base for movement improvisation - how to move in the space without any story or choreography. It can be used for warming up the body (and the mind, since we need to practice silencing our inner critic and what others could think of us if we move in a “weird” way) or as a way to create short choreographies. Children can also teach each other their favourite name choreography (only hands, only legs, the whole body, in space, etc.)



3. **SAY HELLO**

 Any	 Works best in groups 5-10 people
 Empty space, standing in line or one by one in front of the audience	 5-10 minutes
 to break the ice, to be aware of and use the body, to start thinking and learning about non-verbal communication	
 Exercise	 Basic

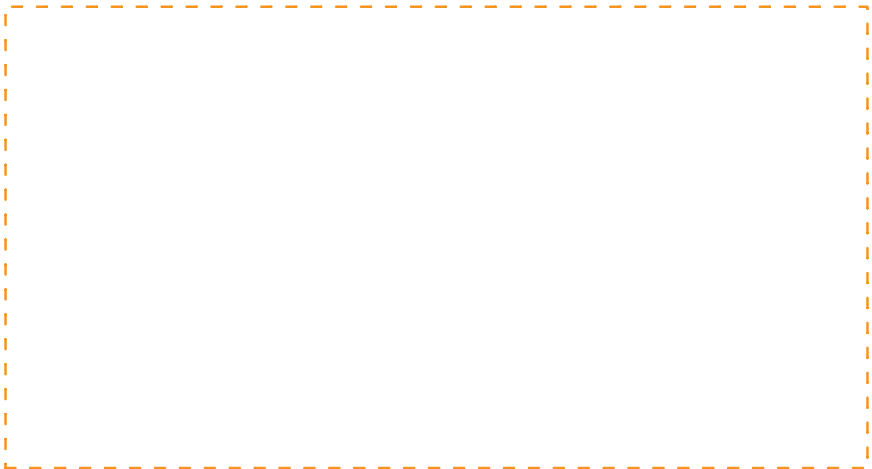
Each of the children involved should say hello in their own manner, using only their body. They can imagine that they enter a room with people, who speak language they don't understand and they have to greet everybody without words. Children can use their hands, their facial expression and also their whole body. The rest of the children should copy the form of the greeting. At the end of the exercises, the children involved can choose their favourite greeting by mimicking/repeating it at the same time.

The sound or invented language (gibberish) can be used to accompany movement.










The exercise can be played also so that players are congratulating someone, encouraging someone, apologising, etc. In this way we can start exploring emotional non-verbal communication - how does the body feel and looks in different emotional situations?

This is also a nice exercise to practice coming on and off the “stage” (the selected performance space) and accepting applause afterwards (and not running off the stage too soon).



4. CAT AND MOUSE


 Any	 Minimum 8 people
 Empty space, anywhere, standing in groups of 2 or 3 throughout the space	 5-10 minutes
 to warm up the body, to learn about taking control and responsibility for ourselves even in stressful/tense situations, to have fun and to play it seriously	
 Game	 Basic

Each group of two/three finds a space and stands shoulder to shoulder in one line facing in the same direction. They should link their arms.

One extra pair are the Cat and the Mouse. The game starts with the Cat chasing the Mouse. The mouse can escape by linking arms with any of the outside members of the groups of two/three.








When the mouse successfully joins on one end of a line of three, the person on the other end of the line becomes the mouse and must start running to be chased by the same cat. (if played in duos, the mouse links to the one person in duo and the other starts running)

If the cat manages to tag the mouse, the mouse immediately becomes the cat and vice versa.

 This is a chasing game that is moderated, so some chaos may emerge, but it is still contained. We encourage many changes in who is chasing and who is being chased.



5. THE CHAIR GAME

 Any	 Works best with groups around 10 participants
 Chairs that are scattered around the room. The number of chairs matches the number of players	 10 minutes or more
 to cooperate, to warm up the body, to practice being under pressure, to maintain order and calm in chaos	
 Game	 Basic

Everyone is sitting on a chair, except for one person - the walker. They stand somewhere far away from one empty chair and their objective is to sit on an empty chair. All other participants try to prevent this from happening by changing positions/chairs frequently and prevent the walker from sitting down. The only other rule with which we start is that the walker has to walk in a steady pace (that may gradually become faster, but not right away) and all others can speed up or even run when changing their place.



This game is a lot of fun and most of the young enjoy it a lot - it is engaging and when played in the right tempo, very interesting and creates good group focus. Some of the walkers might walk super-fast and some slow - everything goes, but is nice to point out, that the walker sets the pace for the game - if you walk too slow or too fast, it might not be as interesting as if the tempo is just somewhere between. The walker can also play with the manner of walking.

The additional rules that can be added later are:








1. If you stand up, you need to change the chair. (a lot of times people “flinch” and stand up only to see that there are already others running to a chair, so they sit back - in this version, everybody who stands up from a chair, needs to find a new one) - objective: make a decision and GO!
2. The boss - there is only one in charge, who says who should go and sit

where (this is one of the players who are sitting on a chair and can of course, still play the game her/himself as well, and change chairs to help the group) - objective: to successfully lead the group so the walker still cannot reach any empty chairs. This version of the game is here to learn that is much harder if one needs to have all the control and that we can be much more efficient when the control and responsibility is divided among more people, who communicate with each other.

Sometimes some frustration emerges, players might even start blaming each other - explain to them it is about teamwork, that we are all together, trying to fix each other's mistakes and taking care of the group.



6. TRIANGLES (THE FLOCK/DIAMOND)

 Any	 Groups of three
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to move the body, to observe, to be focused, to copy, to lead, to follow, to develop spatial awareness	
 A B C Game/Exercise	 Basic

The game is played in groups of 3, who stand in the shape of triangle and all face the same direction. The person who is in the front of the triangle creates movements that others follow with an effort to perform them as accurately as possible. We can start with walking in different ways and later the movement can become even more varied (jumping, running, even crawling, etc.). When the leader does not want to lead anymore, they can turn to the side (e.g. turn to the right) and the other two players follow them. This way the leadership role is now taken by the one who is in front now.

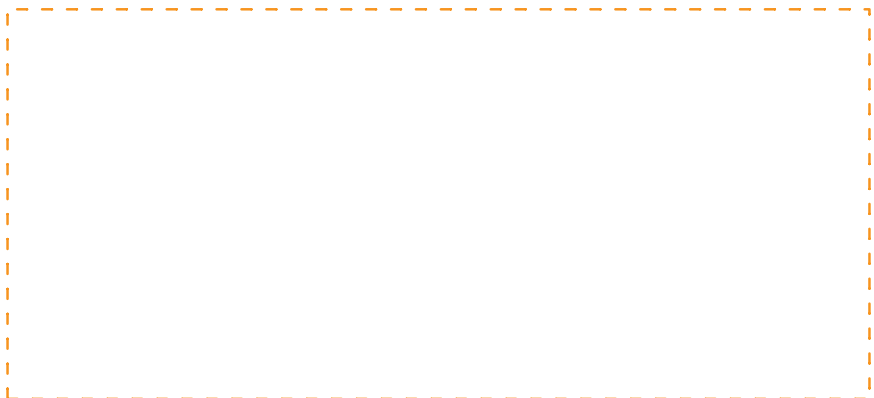
The game can also be played in groups of four (diamond shape) or any other bigger number of players - then the group is like a flock, and has to stand close together, so they remain a connected group at all times.










It is important for the leader to keep in mind that the movement should be seen and repeated by others (so they for example do not introduce movements in which the head is lowered downwards, thus losing contact with the leader, taking the tempo into account, etc.). It is sometimes very hard for the groups to maintain the shape of the triangle/diamond/flock, so keep reminding them to maintain the same distance between the players and preserve the shape.

Groups can start with different kinds of walking, then they can explore different levels, characters, tempo and they can also add sound.

Notice if the groups have a certain time pattern when changing the movement – try to play with that as well – one movement can be done for some time, another for very short time before we switch to another, etc. – surprise people with changes and have fun.



7. LAUGHING LIKE ...

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, standing in circle with enough in between so they can move freely	 5-10 minutes
 to break the ice, to be aware of the breath, to synchronize the breath with the movement of the body	
 Exercise	 Basic

The mentor can start by proposing a certain type of laughter (haha, hehe, hihi, hoho, huhu) - it can base on a rhythm or an animal/character/cartoon/object, etc. They laugh and everybody repeats it one at the time (or together, depends on our preference and choice). When all repeat it, next player gives their own laughter which they all repeat and so on, until all have players have proposed the laughter.









It is good to talk about the breath before the exercises, so that players have a bit more focus on it throughout the game. It is also a good starting point to build a character - how do they laugh?

We can adapt it into a guessing game and encourage participants to think about one character and when is their turn, they laugh like this character would. Everyone repeats it and try to guess who this character is/could be.



8. RE-POSE

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, standing in semi-circle or line	 5-10 minutes
 to observe, to practice focus, to react quickly, to repeat and reproduce movement in the detail, to listen to music, to feel the rhythm	
A = B = C = Exercise	 Intermediate








When everyone is ready, the music starts to play. We wait for a few seconds, so that we learn the rhythm and then the first in line starts a pose or a movement and freezes. The second one must reproduce it, and so on, until the last person in the semicircle has done the movement and sent it backward (when you go backward, the person who starts the poses/movement can change it, so another pose/movement travels back).



In this game rhythm is important, so the goal is that the players should freeze and start the movement in the rhythm of the music. The first/last participants may change, so that everybody has the chance to propose pose/movement. The poses/movements can eventually become more complex and the rhythm can also get faster.



9. MOVING AROUND / MOVING AS... / MOVING ON...

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to start moving freely, to warm-up, to connect imagination with the movement	
 Process	 Basic

All participants move freely through space.

1) Different types of movement are performed by instructions that are given by the mentor - for example rolling, crawling, walking, jumping, running through different levels in space.

2) One person (usually mentor) is the leader. They lead the process by giving verbal instructions such as: "A strong wind blows in your face, making it difficult for you to move We move through the water ... We walk in the clouds ... We move through a terrible crowd, we barely crawl, etc..." For younger participants these instructions can for example be connected with fairy tales or animal world: "We move like giants, like dwarves, like princesses, like snails, like a rock that rolls under the sea, like a leaf in the wind, like a wave, like a lion, etc. " We can also add adjectives/emotions (sad lion, elegant giant, wild princess, tiny dragon, etc.) or use different surfaces. This exercise can also guide participants through some simpler narrative that inspires movement from beginning to end, while the other half of the group is watching and then they switch.










You can add sounds, it is just a bit more challenging to give instructions, when the whole group is doing the sound of a whale. The variety and individual self-expression can be encouraged, although the players can

definitely inspire one another with their movement (so don't copy, but let it affect you).



10. MIRRORS

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, standing in two lines facing each other or pairs in space	 5 minutes
 to observe, to be aware of the body, to lead, to follow, to copy, to develop sensory awareness	
 Exercise	 Basic

Exercise is done in pairs. Couples face each other.

1) One player in each pair is assigned a lead role. A leader makes movements at a pace that allows their partner to imitate them as faithfully as in a mirror. After a while, the roles are reversed.

After this stage, the leader starts moving his feet through the space without losing sight of the partner following him. They do not lose contact at any time. Movement evolves through space so that this play acts, when viewed from the side lines, as choreography in a duet. Sequences are repeated multiple times.

After that, the roles change.

2) In the next phase, the couple follow each other, without agreeing on who is leading and who is following. They should both initiate and adapt, lead and follow.










With younger children it is sometimes hard to achieve that they move slowly enough so others can repeat their movement at the same time - what worked for some of our groups was to give them assignment that the mentor cannot know who is the leader and who follower - mentor can turn around, go to other part of the room or outside for a moment and every couple selects a leader. When mentor comes to observe, the participants are trying to be as precise as possible, so the mentor has a challenge of noticing who leads and who follows - that way the focus is usually much higher.

You can also select one leader and all others repeat after them and then we change.

Music may be added for the atmosphere.



11. POSITION AND NUMBER/TELEPHONE NUMBER

 Any	 at least 3
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to move the body, to observe, to be focused, to copy, to lead, to follow, to develop spatial awareness	
 Exercise	 Intermediate/Experienced

The game starts by selecting a certain number of poses - for example 5, but you can also choose less or more. For every number, players make one pose and remember it so they can repeat it. The mentor counts at a certain pace so the movements are repeated and remembered. After that numbers can be mixed and simple choreography can be done from these poses.

1. There can be a further development of the game. In the second stage, each one is given the task of making a short sequence in which they will connect their 5 poses / movements with movement / choreography. When they finish half of the group can observe the other half and vice versa.

In the third phase, we can try to “rewind” the movement - do the choreography backwards.

In the next phase, players change levels - what was originally high in space is now low, etc.








2. The variation of the game can also be a “Number choreography” game. We introduce the movement key, for example: 0 - Head, 1 - Shoulder, 2 - Elbow, 3 - Arm, 4 - Torso, 5 - Hips, 6 - Knees, 7 - Feet, 8 - Low level, 9 - High level (or we can of course make up our own). You can use your own telephone number (or any other) and create a short choreography that players perform to the rest of the group.



– It is a game that develops movement memory and encourages players to focus on the movement and learn to trust the body.



12. SHARP / GENTLE MOVEMENT

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to move the body, to explore the different types of movement, to be aware of the body, to play with the energy of the body	
 Exercise	 Basic/Intermediate

Players select three different movements. These must be clear movements, using one part of the body and making movements from beginning to an end. Usually the child stands with slightly spread legs and relaxed hands next to the body, and from that attitude we choose and make the movements, a mentor can always help with suggestions. When we define movements, we repeat them sharply (fast) and gently (light).

For older groups we can do five different sharp and five different gentle moves with different body parts.

You can make pairs of children that will alternately show each other their movements (as a gesture talk).








For more advanced groups, some abstract sound may be involved that they will utter along with the movement and recognise/use/explore the emotion that drives the movement. You can take the game further and create characters - what kind of animals, people move in sharp/gentle way?



In order to explain to the children (especially younger children) what kind of movements we want, we can ask them to imagine: Capturing a delicate lovely white flake. To catch a fly in flight. To remove a strand of hair from their face, etc.



13. LEVELS

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 awareness of different levels in space and in the body, body movement, space work	
 Process	 Basic

Starting on the floor, exploring with the movement of different body parts and space levels.

We explore movement on the floor, in the middle, horizontal, vertical, space behind, around and inside the body. Start with separate body parts and slowly use the whole body. From the ground we continue up and end with the movement of the whole body in space - with awareness of levels of different parts of the body.

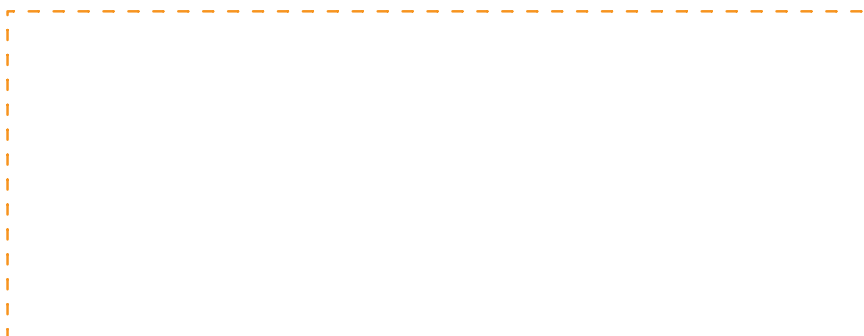
From that point on, level exercise can be played, where players are given a designated number of counts to move through the mid-level and end in a high-level shape. They then reverse the process, moving from the high level back to the floor. This exercise can be adapted by encouraging players to:

- move in different tempos
- initiate movement with different body parts
- move with different qualities (staccato, fluid, strong, light, bound, free)
- move as if they were in different locations (on the moon, underwater, inside a volcano, etc.)
- follow a movement “rule” like keeping 3 limbs on the floor at all times, never letting your bottom touch the ground, not using your arms, etc.










With these kind of exercises, mentor's instructions can be a big game changer. Remind the players about all the different parts of the body, keep reminding them about levels - what is up and what is down in different body

movements and use some stories or imagination for the younger groups - invisible obstacles can be helpful, or instructions/limitations like: reaching for the stars, walking through the jungle, crawling under the bed, etc.



14. WRITING THE NAME IN SPACE

 Any	 Any, ensure they have space to move, so play it in two groups if needed
 Empty space	 10+ minutes
 to wake up the body, to be playful, to warm up, to start moving the body without too much thought	
 A B C Process	 Basic

We start with group walking through space and acknowledging how we are and how we feel and take a close look at our body and mind. Everybody takes a spot in space and root out feet into the ground. While standing, we again take a close look at our body and mind.

The group starts with writing their names, with one hand on the invisible canvas.

We start slowly, static, imagining our feet are roots, that are grounded into the floor.

While writing our name we encourage players to think of small letters, big letters, dynamics (slow and fast), levels (vertical and horizontal space). After that we can start playing with different body parts that can write name in space.








Writing name with nose, elbow, head, pelvic floor, etc. After we write the name in space with different body parts on the spot, we start to slowly move through space, still encouraging players to think about different tools to play with (big-small, slow-fast, down-up, one part-whole body, etc.)



In the end of the game, music can be added and we can create short improvisations just by using our names. It is a game that can be played with any group and it is kind of a “trick” since people are moving and “dancing” without the feeling they need to “do” anything - they are just writing their names.



15. DIFFERENT SHAPES

 Any	 Any, ensure they have space to move, so play it in two groups if needed
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to wake up the body, to be playful, to warm up, to start moving the body without too much thought, to think about different qualities of the movement	
 Process	 Basic/Intermediate

We start slowly, static, imagining our feet are roots, that are grounded into the floor.

We start by drawing little circles with the head, while standing still. We go through all body parts while drawing little circles in space. When we finish, we can start thinking about moving through space, constantly drawing circles in space with different body parts. We can play with different size of the circles, dynamics (slow and fast) and levels (vertical and horizontal space).








Same goes for square and any other shapes we use and we can also encourage players to make up their own shape (can be imaginary or actual shape that we know: shape of love, color, wind, triangle, etc.).



In the end of the game, music can be added and we create short improvisations just by using the shapes. It is good to encourage the players to use the space around them and move around with this shape.



16. ONE PART OF THE BODY LEADS

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to warm up the body, to focus, to move creatively	
 Exercise	 Basic

1. We start slowly, static, imagining our feet are roots, that are grounded into the floor. We direct our focus onto one part of the body, e.g. the head. We move on the spot exploring the movements with our head, finding different shapes, qualities, levels. After a short exploration we start moving into the space, how does the head lead the movement? How do other parts of the body respond, when we try to guide our movement from the head? We select different body parts and go through the same process.

2. Another version of the game is that players start in pairs. One in the pair touches the other on one part of the body and this person has to make a movement out of that part (it can be short). Then we repeat this a few times. After a while the touches become more frequent, and the player who moves tries to respond to every move by moving from the touched body part. Even though there are now more impulses, the player needs to stay aware of all parts of the body.



We can also select body parts that are part of our inner organs to think about, where they are and how they would move us. When one body part moves us, it is important to emphasise that all body parts are connected and encourage players to be aware not just of the body part that leads the movement, but of the whole body - how does movement of one part of the body affect other parts?

This is also a physical approach to develop characters – what kind of character could be guided by their head or by their pelvis? All can walk like their head is guiding them and we can choose any of the players and start asking them questions – where are you going? What makes you happy? What is your favourite...? The player is still walking as if the head would guide him, and answer in the character – playing with the voice and finding the character's story through the answers to the questions.










A large rectangular area enclosed by a dashed orange border, intended for writing or drawing.

2. SENSORY AWARENESS

Games and exercises collected here are focused into senses and sensing - how do we perceive the world around us? Are we aware what we see/hear/taste/smell/touch/feel? What kind of effect do impulses from environment have on our bodies? We see all the time, but do we really notice? We listen, but what do we hear? Do we even know how to listen “deeply”? Do we focus on the smell at all? Can sensing be improved? We believe it definitely can, as it is an awareness training. With these types of exercises, it is useful to ask participants questions to try to “catch” their inner experience. By working on sensory awareness, we can make bodies and people more open, relaxed and in the long run, more resilient to any, even uncomfortable, situation. To focus on how we are feeling in our bodies and minds and what makes us feel that way is a step in taking control over our own wellbeing and a big step in the direction of knowing ourselves.

Note: With this kind of exercises sensibility of the mentor/pedagogue is extremely important - we have to try to be emphatic and see, hear, feel, smell and taste for ourselves as well. It is often the tension in people’s bodies or the tremor in people’s voices that tells us what goes on in their insides and then we can decide where do we want to go - do we want to “push” them a bit, or try to keep them “safe”? We recommend to do it by the estimating and evaluation the situation and trusting yourselves with what you feel and believe is right in the specific moment and situation. We believe in a manner of mentor guidance that does not prevent experiences, but tries to expand them with feedback, conversation and verbalizing to give all participants the feeling that whatever they feel is legitimate, worth noticing and something they can build on from. It is very important for these exercises that the safe and trustworthy group environment is already created to some extent at least.

17. FOLLOW THE SOUND

 Any	 2+
 Empty space, pairs	 5-10 minutes
 to trust, to listen, to follow, to be guided by the sound	
 Exercise	 Basic/Intermediate

One player in the pair has their eyes closed and another player in the pair leads this person around the room only by making a sound. The person that is doing sounds is moving around (with their eyes open) and their “blind” partner moves and follows them in the direction of this sound. It can be calling their name, or any other sound we agree on beforehand (animal sounds, we can agree on a word or specific sound, etc.)

You can play with levels (when voice goes down, we move down or the person who is leading actually makes a sound while on the ground, and that gives the blind the hint that he should follow the voice down) and directions to make it more challenging. More couples can do this game at once - this makes the game harder and more challenging, but sometimes more interesting as well.








The game can also be played so that all in the couples who have their eyes closed, stand in the middle of the room and all others next to the walls of the room (or a bit further away around them if played outside) and then start to call their own pair back to them.



It is very hard for a lot of people to keep their eyes closed, so we can cover them with some cloth around player’s eyes. Some variations of this game exist, so feel free to explore what works best for your group. It is good sometimes to remember the group to move slowly, so if any bumps happen, they are mild. Also, good exercise for loud speaking.



18. SOUND PAINTING

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, one laying on the floor, others around them	 5-10 minutes
 to focus on the sound, to listen, to think about and understand the atmosphere	
 A = B = C = Game	 Basic

One person leaves the room. The rest of the group agree on a location/ situation/atmosphere they will portray with their voices. The person comes back in and (preferably) sits or lays on the ground and closes their eyes. Others start with sound painting, trying to make the sound as it is/would be in selected location. After a while a person with their eyes closed tries to guess the location/situation. Then the next person leaves the room/space and we choose new location.










Relaxing exercise that makes participants think about the sounds of different situations. We can choose anything from location (e.g. hospital), situation (e.g. wedding), to atmosphere (fairy tale forest in the night) or anything else that can be portrayed with sound. It is an exercise that shows students, that silence is important as well (if you choose library or some other usually more

silent space, a lot of times students portray it too loud, because all want to share their voices, so we can use this opportunity to discuss that sometimes the creative decision is about being silent and still as well - and this can have even stronger effect and more power than being loud). Observe how the ones who are making the sounds, often use their whole body (even though the one who guesses, has their eyes closed) to help themselves with the convincing sounds - we encourage that a lot, but as always, we invite you to decide what your goals of the game are/could be.



19. OBSERVING WITHOUT EYES

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5+ minutes
 to imagine, to move freely, to be brave and careful at the same time, to move softly, to be aware of all other senses than vision	
 Process	 Experienced

The group is slowly walking in space with closed eyes. Forward and backward. The goal here is to connect within the group - can players “feel” where others are? How do we react to accidental touch/bump, etc.?

Encourage players to think about decision making, when and how to move, when to stop, when to touch something and connecting that into observing the whole space with the body.








We can continue the process by having people move around freely with their eyes closed, taking care of them so they do not hit anything. This can grow into movement and dance improvisation with the closed eyes, we can add music as well.



It is very hard for a lot of people to keep their eyes closed, so we can cover them with some cloth around player's eyes. This exercise might not seem super exciting, but it is a very useful experience for participants and for the mentor as it gives the players different energy focus.



20. **BLIND LEADING**

 Any	 2+
 Empty space, pairs	 5+ minutes
 to trust, to lead, to follow, to explore the senses, to feel different body parts	
 Exercise	 All, depends on the chosen version of the exercise

The exercise is performed in pairs. One person closes the eyes, the other leads.

1. First, we suggest that the movement is very simple - just walking. The leader can lead by holding their hand, hugging the person around the shoulder, only touching one finger, standing and touching shoulder to shoulder or similar. The person who is following moves only how the other person is leading them. In the first phase, the person moves only as much as the other person moves.

The leader must be very mindful of other persons around to make sure that the “blind” does not run into anyone or anything else.

The leader can introduce “obstacles” – something to step on, something to crawl under, etc. We can also play with touching the surfaces around us and slowly exploring the environment with the closed eyes.

2. In the next phase, the leader merely gives the impulse as the person following from the given impulse develops the movement, how much he feels the impulse has caused. We can start this phase on the floor. One in the pair lays down on the floor with closed eyes. Other person starts slowly, with light touch, putting hands on different body parts: Manipulating the body. The one with closed eyes moves from that body part.

We start touching different body parts faster and faster and at the end, person that was manipulating moves away from the person with closed eyes.

Person with closed eyes keeps on moving, feeling invisible hands touching and moving the body. At the end person with closed eyes is dancing through space. The other one takes care that they are safe in space, since they don't see. It is also an exercise for trusting the other, letting go, and following impulses.








Person with eyes open is observing the dancer and later we sit down, talk about what we saw, felt, heard, smelled.



It is very hard for a lot of people to keep their eyes closed, so we can cover them with some cloth around player's eyes. This is a trust exercise, so it is somewhat scary for a lot of people. Discussion about how participants felt, and how they feel about trust and cooperation can follow this game. This game is similar and related to the games “One part of the body leads” and “Follow the sound”.



21. TAKING UP SPACE

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5+ minutes
 to warm up the body, to observe, to take up space with our bodies	
 Exercise	 Basic

We start by walking around the space. Players should have their heads turned straight ahead, their shoulders relaxed, feel their feet on the ground and have their bodies opened. When walking around, we try not to walk in the circles, but change directions, surprise ourselves (as a mentor it is good to remind them to change). The main rule of the game is that while walking everybody should be aware of their position in the space as the goal is to achieve “balanced space” - players should be standing equally spread apart around the room. (The common metaphor is as if all the space is a ship and we don’t want all of the people on the same side, as it can sink)

When the mentor claps, everybody should stand still and observe everybody’s position in the room? Are there any empty spaces to be filled? If the group thinks there are, they can fix that by spreading equally around

again. Then they walk again and mentor claps again and they play this a few times to get the feeling of how to fill the space.

The next step is to encourage the players to take up as much space with their bodies as they can when they stop (so e.g. arms and legs spread wide to achieve maximum in taking up space around us or similar strategies).










This is a part of wider group of games that starts with walking around the space. These games usually encourage spatial awareness, connection with the group and train the orientation in space. We can play with tempos of the walk (regular walk is e.g. tempo number 5, then you can use numbers from 1-10 to encourage players to change the tempo of the walk. We can also play with surfaces (we walk on hot sand, thin ice, pointy rocks, etc.), or combine this with exercises like “where are people/things in space”, where the players walk around and on the clap of the mentor close their eyes and mentor asks, where does _____ stand, and players have to point in the direction they think the selected person/object stands. We can combine that with the game of stopping - trying to stop together as a group, or when one stops, all stop, etc.

Taking up space is an important game to practice being and feeling big, as most of us tend to close ourselves a lot and spend a lot of time with our posture being folded together - it is good to spread out our bodies and feel the whole body.



22. LUMPS OF CLAY

 Any	 4+
 Empty space, pairs	 10 minutes
 to think about the body, to explore shapes, to encourage touch, to cooperate, to accept, to take care of each other	
 Exercise	 Intermediate

One player starts in a neutral position as a “lump of clay.” Their partner begins moving them, one body part at a time, sculpting them into new shapes. After a while “the leader” can put their clay in a certain statue and we have an “art exhibition”. We walk around the art to look it from different sides, maybe even select the name of the artwork. The players can have a possibility to change the sculptures from one another and “clay” has to respond to all impulses.

Later the prompt and the touch of the “sculptor” can become a movement initiation. The “clay” dancer will follow the initiation of the sculptor and move by following the impulse of the partner. With touching, the “clay”, it gets new impulses on what part of the body to move and in what direction.

This exercise can be adapted by:

1. encouraging players to make their clay into different kinds of shapes (on or off balance, symmetric or asymmetric, wide, narrow, big, small, specific shape, character, emotion, etc.)
2. turning the exercise into a game; rather than working in partners, several dancers start as “clay” while others are the “sculptors,” and any sculptor can interact with any clay lump, a designated signal could be used to change roles.










Added music brings different texture to the exercise, and it is also nice to play with the WHOLE body and to be precise - how are the fingers

positioned, what kind of face does the sculpture make, how are the shoulders, the pelvis, fix the hair, etc.

For those who do not like to be touched by others, this is not a very pleasant game, but it can be a good practice for accepting the occasional touch, since it is gentle and the touch lasts only for a short time.



23. MULTI TASK

 Any	 Groups of 4-5
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to focus on doing more actions at once, to deal with some level of frustration and stress, to multi task	
 Game	 Intermediate

Here we introduce two multi task games:

1. One player is given a task (e.g. washing the dishes). They play a short scene, where this task needs to be portrayed in as much detail and as focused as possible. Second player is given a distraction (e.g. a fly is flying around their head). Now the second player plays a scene of washing the dishes, but with added annoying fly. Third player gets another element (e.g. there is a dog around them) and has to perform a scene with all three

elements, fourth another (e.g. talking on the phone) and fifth player, who is last, has to now play the scene, where they are washing the dishes, handling the fly that is flying around, the dog that is around them, they have to talk on the phone and all that, e.g. on a moving boat (fifth element of multi-tasking).

2. One player will be multi-tasker. Second player stands in front of them - they will make movement that multi-tasker has to mirror at all times. Third player stands on the left of the multi-tasker - they are posing personal questions to multi-tasker (e.g. how many siblings do you have, what is your favourite sport, where do you want to live, etc.). Fourth player stands on the right - they are asking simple mathematical calculations (we can set limit, up to 20 or up to 100 with younger children, e.g. 2×5 , $3 + 9$, $16 - 9$, $36 : 4$, etc.). All of this is happening at the same time. After a while, change - now the second player is multi-tasker and others change places, etc.










With the first variation, the biggest encouragement should be made in direction of really imagining what we are doing and seeing in our imagination - sometimes is enough if we only look at “a fly” (which is only in our imagination), or even just think about it, but because there is an intention, the audience “sees” something as well. It is the same with the original task - how do we wash the dishes to be as faithful to real action as possible? (e.g. adding more soap, scratching some dirtier parts harder, opening water which is too hot, etc.)

With the second variation, the encouragement should be that the three players who are challenging the multi-tasker aim to find speed of their questions/movement that is challenging enough, but not necessarily too much. The first thing that usually stops is the movement, since we are used to being in our heads more than in our bodies, so we can add the rule that the one who is making movements can make a sound, if multi-tasker is not mirroring them as faithfully as they should.



24. TRANSFORMING WEIGHT INTO EASE

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 15+ minutes
 listening to the body, space, time and everybody that we share space with, to focus, to observe	
 Process	 Experienced

This can be a longer process, so we can only do some parts, or all, depends on our goals and plan for the activity.

1. The players lay down in space with closed eyes. Scanning the whole body, body parts - how do we feel when we are laying down? Listening and putting attention to our breathing.

We put attention into the weight of each body part. Slowly lifting it of the ground and playing with it, how heavy or light our arm is, our head, our belly button, leg...

After we have looked closely at every body part and its weight, we take this weight and start using the floor to help us stand up. Pushing away the ground, using weight from different body parts, and while standing slowly transforming weight into the lightness and thinking about ease in every body part.

2. We can open our eyes, while we start standing up being aware of space and the other bodies in the room. We listen to each other, while walking with ease through the whole space. When one in the group stops, we all stop. When someone goes, we all start walking again. Transforming weight into ease. Players thinking about feather lightness as they walk.

3. Players walk, stop and stare into someone's eyes, for as long as they need, want or feel like. Then again, they start walking through space, meet another person. And repeat that until we feel it is enough. All the time

keeping in mind the weight and the ease of the body that is moving us through space.

4. Next step is when we stop and stare with someone in the group we write our name in space in front of them, playing game with writing name of the other, our name.

Repeating walking and staring, writing names, using different body parts. Raising awareness of space, the other, the time, the body. Space can also be “a person”, next to which we stop and stare at, react to it.

While being aware with all the things we add a simple touch of another player.

What does touch do and change in the body, where does the movement start and end while we interact with each other?








The idea is to follow the impulse of the touch through moving in space. Being aware of how does it feel, what changes in movement and awareness in the body, space and time we share with others.



This is an awareness game, almost a moving meditation of some sort, where the process is longer, has more parts, and you can even add your own additional instructions and guidelines if the group could use it. You can add music so the players get even more immersed into the game. Mentor can remind players often about trying to move with ease, being and feeling light, soft and playing with the weight of the body.



25. **BALL GAMES**

 Any	 6+
 Empty space, pairs, circle, ball	 5+ minutes
 to connect the group, to develop creative movement, to follow and react to impulses, to observe	
 Games/Exercises	 Intermediate/Experienced

We can use props for some games, and there is a lot we can do with a simple ball. We use props mostly because we want participants to be focused on something other than themselves and how they might “look” while doing some of the movements. Getting rid of “shame” for doing non-typical movements is an important part of creative pedagogues’ work, so if props help, feel free to use them from time to time.

1. The game is performed in a group. Participants can stand in a circle or anywhere in space.

The game begins by tossing the ball. From ordinary throwing it moves into motion. The one who catches the ball, guided by the impulse the movement of the ball gives, develops a shorter movement and then passes the ball to the next person. From static movements in place, the movement that is created slowly moves through space and into different levels. The game can be further developed by having all participants repeat the movement performed by the person with the ball.

2. The game is performed in pairs. The couple stands with their backs to each other, with a ball between their backs.

The couple moves spontaneously, taking care not to drop the ball, but exploring different movement, levels, possibilities.

After this stage, the ball is dropped, and the couple rely on each other. A movement is developed in the couple, which is guided by playing with the body weight between two people in the couple.

We can also start with the leaning back in pairs and squatting to sitting and leaning back in groups.








3. Virus ball: The game is played in group - two of the players are trying to catch all the others. One of the two “catchers” has the ball and the rule is that whoever is holding the ball, must not move their feet. His partner in chasing and all others, however, can move freely. So, there must be a lot of cooperation between the two “catchers”. The point of the game is that whoever has the ball has to pass it to other catcher/s, and their common goal is to touch somebody with the ball - then they become catchers as well. The ball is thrown only when it is passed to another player, who is catching others, but when we want to actually catch someone, we have to hold the ball in the hand and touch them with the ball (no throwing the ball at them to catch them as the ball must not leave the catchers’ hand when catching). If they are successful, the one who was caught becomes one of the catchers, so there are now more people, who can pass the ball among them and confuse the ones, who try to avoid the catcher. It is good to play this game in a limited space, as it is very hard to cooperate successfully and catch all of the players, which is then the end of the game.



Playing with the ball or other props shifts focus from the body onto the prop and brings something new to the games. You can also play the simple passing the ball around, trying to prevent the ball falling and celebrating if it does - celebrating the failure.



26. BOXES AND BUBBLES

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5+ minutes
 to think about the space, to understand concepts related to space (front, back, levels, wingspan reach, etc.) to explore, to find new ways of movement	
 Process	 Intermediate/Experienced

Have each player imagine that they are in a box that is as tall and wide as their bodies. [from floor to finger stretched overhead, as wide as they are with arms outstretched, and as deep as they can reach front to back]. On each side of the box (top, bottom, front, back, each side) is a button. As the students improvise with the movement in the box, their movement goal is to hit the buttons with different body parts.

Variations: This exercise can be adapted by:








- encouraging players to use a range of body parts to press the button, not only their hands and feet
- making the imaginary box much larger or smaller
- having the players move the box through space as they travel across the floor or around the room
- adding more buttons – in the corner of the box, or multiple buttons on each plane
- having the dancers imagine that they are in a bubble, or pyramid, or other 3-dimensional shape
- having two or more dancers share a shape



A lot of movement exercises are actually guidelines for the mentor how to lead the group to get as many different movements as possible, so add your own “rules” if they come to mind, the main goal is that the players explore the stretch and curl of their bodies, play with space, find new movement patterns and start to move with intention.



27. CITY LIMITS

 Any	 3-5 in each group, others can observe
 Empty space, with markings on the floor	 10+ minutes
 to share space, to think about the space and others using the space, to be mindful to others	
 Exercise	 Intermediate

Mentor draws/maps 4 boxes on the floor of the selected space, and the group of players begin to move throughout the largest one first. There will be a lot of room for them to explore. After a little while, the players will continue moving but into the next smaller shape. Now, their movement has to become a bit smaller. The exercise continues until the children are moving in the smallest of the established boxes. Now, after moving in four shrinking spaces, the movement has become minimal. How can they continue moving and exploring all of the limited space, yet be mindful of one another as to avoid collisions - but not necessarily avoiding touch?








Variations: we can add the rule that, for example, in this square, everything smells like roses/strong wind is blowing/there are bees around us, so we start to incorporate even more senses and maybe even emotion and story.



This exercise is good for the groups who have already done at least some group games so they understand the concept of being mindful to others at least in a basic sense. It is also good to talk with the group in advance, that some touching is unavoidable and that the goal is to compromise - maybe your desired path crosses with another player, try to find the way that both agree upon, interact - without words, only with the movement, of course. It is good to start slow, but as the group becomes more experienced and sensible, they can start playing with the tempo as well (if we add music, it is therefore useful to start with slower, calmer music).



28. TOUCH AND TALK

 Any	 2+
 Scene work, so designated space for performing and for the audience, here some chairs may be used if needed. pairs	 5-10 minutes
 to share space, to think about the space and others using the space, to be mindful to others	
 Game	 Intermediate

The game is performed in pairs. It is a scene, where the audience suggests a situation, a relationship between two people or a location and then two players play the scene with/by the rule that you can only talk, if you touch the other player in the scene first. So, one line, one touch. The idea is to

make the touches as “natural” and organic as possible, so the players have to think about all the small gestures that we are making in everyday life that include touching (cleaning something from someone’s shirt, petting, pushing, pulling, fixing the hair, clothes, etc.).



Some players become very technical with this game - how long should the touch last, should it be different touching gesture all the time or can we repeat it, etc. Try to encourage players to try the game first and not to overthink beforehand. After the game, a conversation can take place, about the players’ experiences. Since touch usually appears in the situations where people know each other, start by choosing situations and relationships that enable this (e.g. grandmother and grandchild, in the hospital, preparation for the dance, etc.) and then move to the sphere of “formal” situations where touch is scarcer.



3. EMOTION AND MOVEMENT








Even if games, exercises and processes that are part of this section, could be put elsewhere (they are still mostly quite basic, inevitably predispose sensory awareness and require at least some imagination), we see of utmost importance the fact that awareness of our own emotions and emotions of others becomes an important focus in our work. Even if we are often taught that showing emotions is unprofessional and are encouraged to hide them from the public eye, we call for bigger attention and focus towards emotional awareness and growth. Emotions are essential part of us and manifest themselves through the bodies. Learning how to “read” and interpret emotions can help us tremendously with all kinds of service work, and even more so, pedagogical. Being able to detect our emotional state (even in situations, where we are encouraged to suppress it) can be of great help with building relationships with ourselves, others and the world.

In learning environments emotions are often neglected as well, which is a shame - not that we need to always be in the optimal emotional state to learn, but recognizing emotions is extremely important for pedagogues, who can then select appropriate approach and attitude that will resonate with students the best and will offer the best learning results.

The hardest thing to achieve with emotions is to stop talking about them, when we are performing them (even though this is an important and necessary start) and start to feel and embody them - on different levels (intense/light), in different parts of our body, with different manifestations (we can add sounds, movement, gestures, etc.). We can play with stereotypes, but have in mind that experiencing emotions is essentially an individual experience and that what we feel (as observers) tells us sometimes a great deal more than what we see (even though if what we feel is sometimes hard to pinpoint and describe, it is extremely important to learn to trust our feelings and our gut).

Note: When we say “emotion”, we sometimes include some moods, mental states, and character traits as well. It can even be a worldview or general attitude towards life; our main goal is just to be exposed to, to experience and to explore different vibrations, energies and textures of our feelings and behavior.

29. THINKING ABOUT EMOTION

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 10+ minutes
 to think about emotions in different body parts, to think and feel through moving, to warm up	
 Process	 Intermediate/Experienced

1. We can start with movement and end with discussion or vice versa. The main idea is to say the emotion and explore it with movement.

How do emotions move us from inside out and outside in? What kind of emotion is e.g. love: how do we talk about it, what features does it have, is it light, scary, fun, spread out, fast, slow...? Where do we feel it, in what body part? Where does it come from, how does it move us? How can our arm be in love? Or our liver?

2. We can do the same by mixing different emotions and explore how does that influence the body and movement in space.








3. Another version with which we can play is to start with discussion about the relationship between movement and emotions, how we recognize some emotions in other people, whether it is possible to separate bodily expression from emotions. It is a task for everyone to think about how emotions are seen/ expressed through movement/gestures and the like. We might start with still images/tableaux of different emotions and body positions and then take it to space and find movement as well. One possible exercise is to find 4 movements that represent different emotions. In the next phase, they should connect these movements and develop them in space. The goal is to create short choreographic sequences, that can be later discussed with the audience - what did we see? What did we feel? What could be the story behind it?



This is again very free process, where the point is to start thinking and feeling about/through emotions. Mentors can select an emotion for the group and first the players in the group explore it themselves and move with this emotion, later the instructions can follow - take this emotion and express it in only one part of the body, try to meet someone in this emotion, what does it do to you? The conversation is much needed after the game, since a lot of work with emotions is internal and it great to have an insight into the individual processes. Even when players express discomfort, you can remind them, that this is great to know - this emotion makes me feel bad, uncomfortable, annoyed. But still, all emotions are equally useful to be in connection with ourselves. At the end you can shake emotions off by moving freely for a while.



30. EMOTIONAL STATUE

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 10+ minutes
 to wake up imagination, to connect the movement with the mind, to embody emotions	
 Process	 Basic/Intermediate

1. The players start by positioning themselves in space, mentor gives the instructions to transform into love (or any other emotion: anger, fear...) and move as love is moving (and the way the players imagine it) - here we can think about how for every person love is a different feeling which brings out different movements. When mentor stops the music, we freeze. Talk about what kind of love we were, how did we feel while moving... This can go on with different emotions for a couple of times.








2. After the mentor stops the music and bodies freeze, we can also select and observe one statue and we all copy it, put ourselves in the same position as the one that we choose, name the statue and start with imagining what is the story behind the statue.



Younger groups usually need more guidance and additional instructions, so while they are moving, when they seem stuck and don't know what more to try, we can start talking out loud about different levels and colours of emotions - we can be madly in love, or just have a small crush, it can be a happy love, or full of suffering, etc. (similar can be done with all other emotions - are we super mad or just a little angry, are we careful because we are afraid, or because we are precise, etc.) From here, stories can emerge - when do we feel this emotion, in what situation, what is the reason for it, what kind of character would feel it this way, etc.



31. **EMOTIONAL CATWALK**

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 10+ minutes
 to think about and practice emotions, to be aware of oneself, to be focused	
 Exercise	 Intermediate/Experienced








We write different emotions on pieces of paper. A player selects one piece of paper and starts his “catwalk” from the end of the (selected space for the) stage to the front and back. In the first round the players portray the highest level of showing their emotion. In the next round the portrayed level of emotion is lower - the emotion becomes more internalized, but the intensity remains. In the last round the emotion should be felt, embodied, internalized - the level of display of selected emotion is low, but the intensity of emotion does not lower - it is only more felt than shown. Players can use their voice as well as the whole body to embody the emotional state in full.



We can play this game by having more players do it at the same time - one at the time they all portray the “bigger” version of the emotion, then middle and then internalised emotion. We can have more of them together, in a line or a group or have them walking around the space and reacting to each other as well. It is very useful to have the audience in this game (so half of the group is doing the game and the other half is observing) as their feedback can help a lot with players understanding when the emotions are felt and not only shown.



32. EMOTIONAL REPLAY

 Any	 2-5 per group
 Empty space, scene, designated space for performers and the audience	 5+ minutes
 to connect as a group, to explore emotions through the movement and the mind	
 Game	 Basic

1. The audience will give the suggestion of an imaginary space and/or action that the players will be using for the scene. A short scene is played by one group. This is then repeated two or three times with different emotional states. The selection of emotions is left to the audience.

2. Similar game is emotional replay with different intensity of emotions - so the first round we play one emotion on level 1 (e.g. just a little scared), the second time we play it more intensely - level 2 (now we are already quite scared) and in the last replay of the scene, the performers play it as intense as possible (super scared).








Similar can be done by having three people in the scene, all playing the same emotion on different levels (they can draw numbers 1-3 at the beginning, so the audience does not know which level do they have and they have to guess at the end).



A lot of times performers are wondering if this means that EVERYTHING they do in the replayed scene has to be in the selected new emotions - not necessarily, as the suggestion is to play with different levels and intensity of emotions, and to think about emotions as a reaction. Usually different emotions bring out different versions of one character, which is very interesting to observe. As with all games, exercises and processes - this is an experience, so we listen, try, go and do and then discuss what happened and of course do it again, if needed/desired.



33. EMOTIONAL QUADRANTS

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, markings on the floor	 10+ minutes
 to explore emotions and emotional reactions through the movement, to have the feeling about the space	
 Exercise/Game	 Intermediate/Experienced

1. Create a cross in the center of the playing area. This can be done with jump ropes, chairs, duct tape, chalk, etc. The goal is to make it clear there are four distinct quadrants that the students will pass through as they walk around in a circle. Tell the children that each quadrant (section) represents a different emotion. You can start out with easy emotions such as “Sad”, “Happy”, “Angry”, “Shy”. Clearly label the quadrants. (For younger students you can simply write the emotions in big lettering on scratch paper and place in each quadrant, or attach to a chair in each quadrant. For older students you could write a corresponding chart up on the board)

Have the children walk neutrally around the circle. Play music during this time. When the music stops, each student should notice their section and begin acting out/moving/dancing the feeling. They can do this however they think best. Remind children there should be no physical contact with any other child. After about 15 seconds, play the music again and repeat. Play a few rounds. Then assign the quadrants new “feelings”.

The quadrants can be used for any category that you want the children to explore, i.e. professions, ages, locations, weathers, sports, decades, etc. For older students, consider having them walk in slow motion, instantly putting the quadrants into their bodies/acting as soon as they pass into a new section. Consider giving the students a specific prompt for each round. i.e. You are all spies! And they must act out the different emotions as that character.

2. The same can be done in a scene - we can have 3 or 4 people play a scene, where they will have to react in accordance with their position in the space - if they stand in the quadrant of happiness, this is their emotion, if they step into anger, they have to (logically) transform and change the emotion, etc.

3. When playing the scene, different techniques can be written in quadrants as well: dancing, playing in silence, talking, using gibberish, etc. When the audience gives the suggestion for a scene (family dinner), the same scene is performed with different styles of movement and acting.

4. There can be different objects throughout the space - on every object that will be used in the scene a paper should be stuck with one emotional state written on it. Anytime any of the players touches or uses the object, they are “possessed” by the emotion that is written on the object.










This game can be challenging at times, but it works really well for spatial awareness and feeling of where we are on stage. Again, this exercise offers a lot of possibility for playing with instructions and different versions of the game.



4. IMAGINATION, STORY AND MOVEMENT

One of the most appealing traits of working with movement is, that we can explore and develop a sense of abstraction - in a world, where “everything” has a reason and a meaning, it is very important to nurture the idea of abstraction that makes us feel, more than think. But, since it is sometimes hard to just start working with abstract movement, it is very useful (especially when working with the young) to work with their imagination and use the power of meaning making we all have and start with the connection of abstract movement and our associations, ideas, stories that emerge when we are doing or observing the movement. Here, the most important thing is trying not to get to drawn to set fixed stories, but leaving open spaces for the individual interpretation of the movement. That way we can nurture artistic interpretation and raise audience members who know how to use their imagination when observing the performance (or anything else).

34. **BIRD STATUE**

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 10+ minutes
 to wake up imagination, to think about the meaning, to feel and use the feeling and emotions for inspiring our imagination	
 Process	 Intermediate/Experienced

We start in space, mentor gives the instruction to transform into something (anything that we can imagine, from concrete objects to ideas, from realistic to imagined, etc.) and then we start moving while music is playing. When music stops, we freeze.

We can name our own statues, thinking about associations, things that this statue reminds us of. It can be concrete, abstract, made up.

We repeat this couple of times and in between we write titles and names of this statues.

At the end we have couple of words and we remind ourselves of statues, movement that is hidden in the name.








After that we start writing stories with these words that can be made up, imaginary, abstract or concrete. Thinking while writing, about moving. Walking, running, up and down, over, under, behind. Things we can use while we create stories and later translate them again into movement: choreography.



The stories here can be pretty incoherent and wild, since the sense is not the most important goal, but inspiration and imagination. If there is a story about the chair who changed into the tree and flew around space, where he tripped and fell into volcano, this can work very well for our final goal - translating the stories back to movement. Again, we as mentors, are exploring how to get the players to move differently, how to get a lot of material that can be later used for fixed choreographies as well if desired.



35. IMAGINING DIFFERENT SPACES, SHAPES, STRUCTURE, COLOURS, ETC.

 Any	 Any
 Empty space	 5+ minutes
 to wake up imagination, to move, to let ourselves be, to trust our imagination and instinct	
 Process	 Intermediate

We start anywhere in space. The mentor is giving different impulses and suggestions:

How do we move if our feet are sticky / if wind moves us in space / how does the color blue move / we are in a volcano / climbing / random words, etc.

Thinking about feelings, memories of things we know, or things we make up and transform that into a story, that can be written down. Story is translated into movement.








Emphasis is on imagination. Nothing is right or wrong, thinking outside the box and finding new things again and again.



This is a good exercise to use when wanting to approach the abstract - how do we “know” what is right, when there is no one, right answer? We feel it, we follow our impulses, our instincts. We cannot know how the colour blue moves, but when we hear the instruction, something starts to move us or we move something differently as we maybe would if this instruction would not be given. It is about trying to open players to new experiences, feelings, emotions, stories and use the intention for the energy/movement change.



36. MOVING AS AN ORGANISM

 Any	 8-15
 Empty space	 10 minutes
 to move together, to take care of ourselves and each other, to connect with others, to observe	
 Exercise	 Intermediate

Game can be played in different ways, depending on how experienced are the players.

1. For the beginners and younger players, firstly we select an organism - we can start with dinosaur or human being, but use your imagination. The players make a still image of this organism and we talk about, who in the group represents the head, mouth, hands, feet, stomach, tail, heart, etc. The mentor then continues with giving instructions - e.g. the dinosaur is slowly moving forward, backward; he is afraid (does his heart beat faster, is he slowly moving backwards, is he sweating, does his belly hurt, etc.); mentor throws him something to eat (or they “eat” the mentor - what is the mouth doing, the stomach, the tail) and the end it poops as well, etc. What else is can dinosaur do?

2. Second variation is for players who already developed some awareness for the group and the movement. The group of players stands at one side of the room really close together with their eyes looking at the audience at all times. They start to move slowly through the space by the rule, that the ones who are in the back have to slowly make their way in front, by moving by/ under/through/over the bodies of others. Then those, who are now in the back, start moving forward, etc. Nobody is still at any time, since everybody has to adapt their stance and slowly move along, when someone is passing them. When music is added, it is already a form of collective improvisation. The exercise is completed when they travel through the whole room and








make a final pose with a final stare at the audience. Then the ones who were the audience, become the players and vice versa.



If the group is big enough, it is really nice to have some audience and to finish with discussion how the game was felt by players and what the audience saw and felt. The basic idea is to pay attention to others and the group and be focused on your own task at the same time.



37. MACHINES

 Any	 Groups of 4+
 Empty space	 5-10 minutes
 to move together, to take care of ourselves and each other, to connect with others, to observe	
 Game	 Intermediate

1. One player starts by making a repetitive movement and making a repetitive sound. Second player joins and makes a repetitive movement and a sound that is connected to the action of the first one. More players join. At the end, we can ask the audience, what kind of machine this could be.

2. We can play this the other way around - first we decide, what is the machine used for or what is its name, and then we create it.

3. With bigger groups we can divide them into smaller groups of 4 or 5 and give all the same task - e.g. make the most modern washing machine. After a couple of minutes when they can try to figure out, how their machine will work, each of the groups presents themselves - a mentor/pedagogue can go around the room and use the machines and asks questions, or there is someone from the group that is “making a presentation” of this new product.










Building machines with our bodies is a very useful creative movement tool, since it encourages collaboration, requires imagination, trains focus, persistence and repetitive movement and gives players inspiration for their other work - anytime we need some action with an object on stage we can play with invisible objects (so we can open an invisible refrigerator), real ones that we use in a variety of ways (see also a newspaper game) or “use” the bodies of our co-players to do the action (e.g. “opening” the hand of the player who represents the fridge).

We can also play with machines - stopping all parts but one, slowing the machine down, or making it work faster, adding new “pieces” and steps in the machine, etc.

Don't forget that the machine does not always have to be “people in line”, but can have a variety of shapes, movements, sounds.



38. YES, LET'S

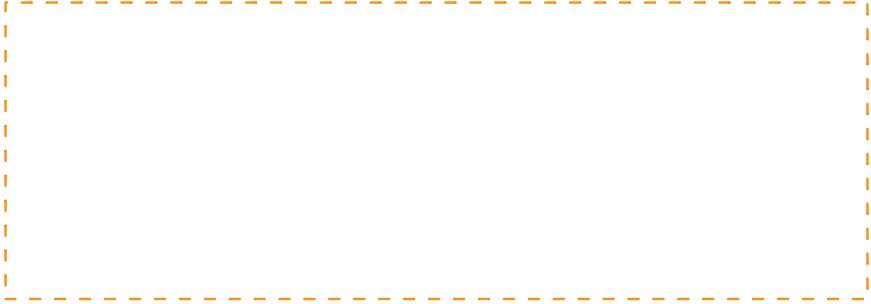
 Any	 Any
 Anywhere, no special requirements	 5-10 minutes or more
 to practice agreement, to learn how to take responsibility, to feel safe and supported in a group, to warm up the body, to use the imagination	
 A B C Game	 Basic

The rules of the game are very simple: someone says: “Let’s all do... (something) and everyone starts doing it - they “support” the idea by following it. If someone else wants to do something, they now say: “Let’s all...” and now everyone should start doing that. The variety is encouraged (if the suggested action is: “Let’s all move in slow motion” everyone can move in whatever way they like, as long as it is slow movement).










Originally the game is played so that after the “Let’s all ...” the whole group screams in agreement “Yes, let’s”. In our experience most of children are not too eager to say it every time, so we omitted it - the agreement can be expressed by doing the action, not necessarily by shouting the words. Usually the mentor is the one who suggests the first few actions, because the participants are sometimes shy to do it, but it is nice to use the moment of hesitation - when someone does not necessarily want to do something at first, the direction can be - you have to support the action for a while, but after some time, you can suggest your own idea/action and everyone will support it as well.

The same game can be played in smaller groups and set in a specific setting or with specific characters (for example, we are pirates or we are in the jungle)



39. GIVING GIFTS

 Any	 Any, work in pairs
 Empty space	 5+ minutes
 to imagine freely, to practice mime, to name invisible objects	
 Exercise	 Basic

One in the pair starts by forming the shape with its hands, as if they were holding an invisible object. They give this object as a gift to another player in pair. The receiver has to accept it cheerfully and says: "Thank you for ..." and names the object. Then they throw it away and the second player makes another shape with their hands and passes it to the first player and now they have to name it (and throw it away/use it/put it somewhere).










The idea is that players present to each other "gifts" that are different shapes and sizes, so that we have different "triggers" for imagination. Even though it is sometimes good that players pass the object with intention and that they already know what they are passing, it is not about guessing - it is about imagining. But it is also good to give inspiration without necessarily knowing

what you have in your hand and other player names it. This is very useful exercise for naming invisible objects, as it is quite hard sometimes to decide on something literally out of thin air - it is all about the courage, observation and imagination, and all of these can be practiced and trained with games and exercises like this.



40. **INVISIBLE OBSTACLES**

 Any	 Groups from 2-5
 Empty space, one side for performers, another for the audience	 10+ minutes
 to imagine, to be precise, to use the body for telling a story, to be aware of the space, to observe	
 Exercise	 Basic

A group of players is standing in line, far away from the audience. The instruction for them is that they have to imagine five different (imaginary) obstacles, which they will have to overcome. At the end of this journey there is a treasure chest, which they open up and “use” their treasure (make a movement/gesture with it and freeze in the final pose so we know they finished their action). For every player we assign one (or more) audience member, that will watch them and will later tell the story of what they saw. After we hear the stories from the audience, the players reveal what kind of obstacles they imagined and what was their story.

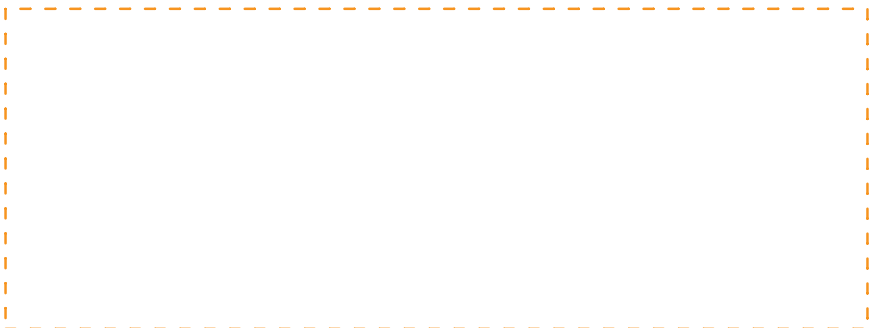
After one round, the groups switch the roles and repeat. The game is usually played in silence or accompanied by music.










Obstacles can be physical or psychological (we can climb the tree, crawl in a cave or walk on a tightrope, but maybe we also have to overcome the hunger, the sadness, have to write our homework or talk to our mother, etc.) and can be ANYTHING players perceive as a possible obstacle. A lot of time (especially younger) performers go through their obstacles very fast, so it is good to encourage them to slow down and be precise, so the audience can have some time to be immersed in the story. If we add music, the atmosphere also changes, so this might help with the tempo and quality of the movements.

Players don't have to imagine everything in advance, but can make up obstacles as they go.

The conversation at the end is not necessarily about whether the audience have "guessed" what the performers thought and imagined - it is about what the audience saw, which is just as important as what the performer thought of. When telling the story about what they saw, audience a lot of time avoids being concrete (he was climbing instead he was climbing on a big cliff) - we should encourage them to use their imagination and "fill in the gaps" with their own imagination and imaginative material. Being an audience is an active position where we have a right to co-create the story. Of course, it is nice to also know, what the performer had in mind (that is why we open space for that as well), but it is not the only "right answer". With this we are teaching participants that art is a two-way road and audience has a right to use their own experience, knowledge, memories, etc. for meaning making - and it is what art is about.



41. NEWSPAPER GAME

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, newspaper/s	 5+ minutes
 to manipulate an object, to move, to be aware	
 A B C Game	 Basic

1. All participants in the first phase run with the newspaper on their chest, experiencing/catching the wind or air movement.

2. In the second phase, participants use the newspaper as a prop to include in the movement, creating small choreographic sequences.

3. In the third phase, participants attach new meanings or functions to the subject (newspaper) – what could that be and how do we move when the object “changes”?

4. In the fourth stage, participants use the newspaper as part of the body (for example by holding the item on the surface of the palm, transferring it from one part to the other).








After discussion, the group can select an example that is repeated by all participants.



This is great exercise to remind us that props that we can use for our creative work are all around us and that the focus we give to the object helps with shifting from feeling uncomfortable to focus on the work on a task that is given. We can use objects as they are or use them to imagine other objects with similar traits.



42. **STOMP**

 Any	 Groups 5-7 children
 Empty space, scene, performers on one side, audience on the other	 10+ minutes
 to imagine, to cooperate, to connect as a group, to observe, to become more sensitive about the environment, to practice embodied memory	
 A B C Game	 Basic/Intermediate

1. The audience will give the suggestion for starting location and/or action. The first player will enter the “stage” (or other selected area for performance) and choose an action and a sound. Then the second player will join completing the first player’s movement with something new that is in accordance with the chosen location/action. And so on with the maximum number of players. With experienced groups you can even go more than one round (so instead of e.g. 5 movements and sounds, you get 10 or 15).

2. We can choose different type/genre of music and the same action will slightly change accordingly to the music.

3. We can use the same method for building an imaginary scenery. An audience suggests a location. First person “enters” this location and uses one imaginary object in this location, then leaves. Next player has to use the








first object (although the action can differ - e.g. if the first one threw something in the trash, next one can move or empty it) and add another object and use it. The third player uses both previous objects and adds their own, etc.



This game is very useful for practicing observation and precision. It is also about understanding the atmosphere of the situation/scene. It might be useful to discuss the difference between the view of the audience and view of performers if needed - some elements are much more visible to the audience, because they are there “just” to observe and performers have to observe, perform, think and create at the same time. That is why it is good to remind the group that their role of observers and the audience is very important to the artistic experience.



43. USING POETRY

 Any	 Any
 Empty space, some selected poems	 10+ minutes
 to imagine, to “translate” between the arts, to be inspired, to move	
 Exercise	 Intermediate/Experienced

Since creative movement is a technique, with which a lot of topics and themes can be presented and explored, we give a couple of examples of

how to take e.g. poetry and practically use it for inspiration for creativity.

1. Reading poetry in foreign language: the mentor (or someone who knows the language) can read the selected poem and players have to move to the sound of words or listen to the poem and improvise with movement afterwards. It can also be used as an inspiration to perform a scene.

2. Reading poetry in different emotions: one of the players reads a poem out loud. While they are reading, the mentor or other group members suggest an emotion and they have to read in that emotion. After a line or two, we can suggest another emotion and now next parts of a poem are read in that emotion, etc.








3. Poetry - word - movement: mentor or players themselves read a poem - it is always nice to also read it out loud, because of the melody of the words. Players choose one word or a phrase out of the poem with which they play - can say/sing it out, write it with their bodies, move in different ways that are inspired by this word and maybe even write a new story inspired by this word and then translate it to movement.



The same/similar can be done by observing the visual art (paintings, sculptures, movies) - to use the material and transform it into something new, something of our own. It is also nice to discuss “original” interpretations of the poem, as a lot of times meanings leave and feelings stay. It all depends on the selected goal, of course.



44. MUSIC, STEPS, CHARACTERS

 12+	 Any
 Empty space	 10+ minutes
 to focus, to listen, to be coordinated, to move, to be spontaneous, to be mindful	
 Exercise	 Experienced

Everyone starts walking around the room. At the mentor's sign (clapping, any given signal), they all jump spontaneously and allow their bodies to fall as they wish and then to stop their positions, freeze. We should look at our bodies and see what kind of "character" our body gave us. Will it be a hunched figure or maybe a straight one, maybe the arm or leg will be wobbly somewhere. This is very important because in the next step, as the body wanted, we will walk around the room. Who are we? How do we feel when we move certain way? We repeat this procedure several times so that we can try different possibilities - characters that we will build spontaneously.

Next part includes music. It's best when it's rhythmic, instrumental music where you can clearly hear the rhythm. Depending on the rhythm, we loudly calculate the rhythmic division, e.g. 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4, etc. or 1,2,3,1,2,3 or 1 2,3,4,5,1,2,3,4,5 if the rhythm is at 5 quarters. Ask everyone to count loudly. Then ask to speak only 2 or only 4. That is -, 2, -, - or -, -, -, 4. Depending on the age of the participants, the level of difficulty can be increased. When we can do the vocal exercise, we move to walking around the room. We turn on the music and ask everyone to take one step only at a time, and each time where there is 1, -, -, -, take a step. Then you can ask them to take a step on 3 or 4.

In the next approach, ask for steps to be taken, e.g. on 2 and 4, or on 1 and 3, or on 2 and 3. Try to create different combinations. You can also divide

the group into 2 groups and, for example, let the first step into 1 and the second into 3. If the rhythm is 4/4, you can do 4 teams. It's good for every team to have captain or a person who hears well and in case of a mistake you can follow him. You can also move every other bar.








Once we get the grip of it, we can combine music and rhythm with our first exercise building stage characters.



Somewhat challenging exercise, but very useful for experienced groups. The sense of rhythm is important for all stage work, let it be improvised or not, so it is very useful to experience it. You can upgrade the exercise by connecting characters with different rhythms, for example, a turtle can only move for 1 and a squirrel 2,3,4. You can talk about how the rhythm can be matched to the character, how the rhythmic type of movement creates the character, or helps in its creation, what movement features have different characters.



45. 5 CHAIRS

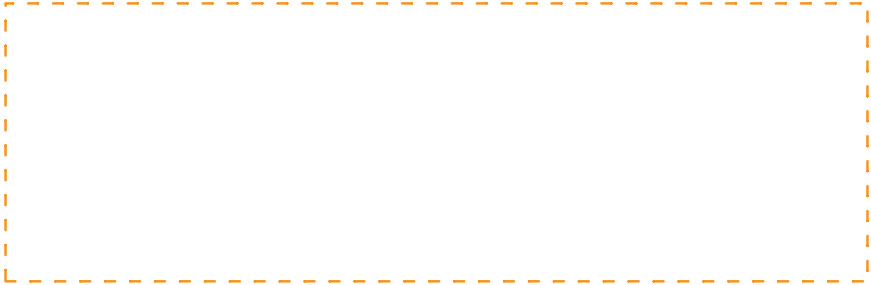
 12+	 Groups of 5
 Empty space, chairs as in the scheme	 10+ minutes
 to learn about performance, to imagine, to interpret, to express emotions, to move	
 Exercise	 Experienced

5 players sit on the chairs, 2 in the front and 3 in the back, try to make sure that all are visible to the audience. We ask them to focus only on themselves for start and not look at the other participants. When sitting they try different possibilities of using the chair: sitting front, back, side, being above or below, sitting next to, leaning on as many variants as possible to finally choose three poses. Then ask each of these people to repeat the chosen three positions over and over, playing with their own rhythm: slowly one by one, very quickly all three players, one slow and two fast, extremely slow, or one position held for longer, others not, the transition from position to position is smooth or not, etc. In the next round, ask the players that each time they change their position, they look at one of the other players in the game, you can meet with your eyes, but it is not necessary. We just make a choice in what position we are looking at whom, try to remember it at and repeat it. In this way, relationships between participants will be established for the viewer. At the end we let our imagination run wild, we combine all the elements, we can also look at who we want. We give in to spontaneity.










This is a very interesting experience showing how body language allows each of us to individually create our own interpretation and story. We “read” bodies all the time and this is a great exercise for audience development. There are more possible steps to this game, so explore it and use it for performances as well. It is good to discuss what we saw/felt during the

exercise afterwards - from the perspective of the audience and that of performers as well.



46. **SITTING, KNEELING, LAYING, STANDING**

 Any	 Groups of 4
 Empty space, performers on one side, audience on another	 10+ minutes
 to think about our body position, to justify our movement, to explore levels, to observe others and react to them	
 Game	 Intermediate

Four players are needed for this game and they start in four different body positions: one is standing, one sitting, one kneeling and one laying on the floor. We can start this game for the warm-up with only movement - when one changes the body position, everybody else has to change and adapt their level of movement as well, so that there is still one sitting, one kneeling, one laying down and one standing.

After the concept is understood, we can put this in a scene. The audience gives a suggestion about the location/situation. Performers start their scene and the rule is the same - every time someone changes their position (e.g. stands up from sitting position), everyone else has to change their position as well. This should be justified in the story at least to some extent - if we

were standing, maybe we imagine something fell from our hands and we are now kneeling to pick it up, etc. This goes on throughout the scene, trying to always respond to the change of position of anyone in the scene.



It is very hard to build a rich storyline here, because often players are too occupied with their own tasks to listen well and pay careful attention to the story. But, of course with more experience and practice this can be improved as well. You can introduce a sound with which the audience reminds the players to follow and make a change (sometimes one changes the position and others do not even notice). Try to play this game so the players understand that they (or their characters) need to find intention for the movement - we are standing up, because we have to, it is a part of the rule of the game, but why is character standing up? What is their motivation? Remind them that they are still in a group activity and should focus on all, not only themselves – the suggestion is here our help to bring us together, to the same focus.

You can of course select different “rules” or types of movement - maybe one is moving slow, one fast and one medium speed, maybe it is about lightness, strength, flowy, sharp, etc. Find your own rules and variations and explore what they are bringing.





NOTES:

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PART B

WHY AND HOW?

1. LEARNING WITH/THROUGH ARTS AND CREATIVE PEDAGOGY

PLAY!
FEEL!
LEARN!

“Creative pedagogy is above-the-criticism mutual activity in which the learner is raised from the object of influence to the rank of creative person (...)”

Andrei Aleinikov

““ My greatest wish is to make a change in the Romanian educational system – improv can make a change. (...) The kids that we met along were thrilled and curious about improv. And they need this kind of experience. I felt the same good energy also from the adults that we worked with. We all need to become better – better human beings. And I have a feeling that Improv can help towards this goal.”

Irina Furdui, Opera Comica pentru Copii,
Romania

1.1. What is creative pedagogy (in short)?

Creative pedagogy is a methodology of creative teaching/learning process that is not only used for art pedagogy and teaching creativity per se, but can also be applied to any subject matter. Its main goal is to transform any subject class/programme/course into a creative teaching process, which produces creative learners – efficient learners that are actively included and engaged in the learning processes.

1.2. The issue

“ Dear teachers and pedagogues,
Do you still remember how good it feels to be lost in the joy
of game playing?
Do you know how much we learn and how many life roles
we rehearse during a game play?
That there is no better person than you to initiate children's
imagination, play and fun?
Free yourself, surprise yourself and enjoy!
P.S. You have to admit that even though we are adults, we
are still playing some games by the rules of our societies.
The games from this book are much more fun!”

Ivana Tabori Obradović, Dečji kulturni centar Beograd,
Serbia

In most European countries the ministries of education and culture are separate entities, which cooperate on different levels but to a limited extent. Arts and culture in schools are still mostly represented by a few of the arts subjects (often music and visual arts) and after-school activities. More and more projects and programmes similar to ours are emerging, but what we want to address as the final goal is to include the culture and arts as another way of teaching, which can in turn support the traditional schooling while engaging and involving learners in a more efficient and all-rounded way. And above all, to include more culture and arts into young people's lives. The concept of “traditional school” predisposes the concept of learning, which is based on the transmission of knowledge that predicts teachers to be the carriers of selected knowledge, and learners to be more or less obedient recipients. Combined with grading system that tries to measure the effect and success of this processes, that can lead to an uninspiring learning environment, where the main motivation is the pressure of “getting it right”. Moreover, the main way of receiving the knowledge is through sitting still and listening for a couple hours straight, because this is the tradition and because it is easier to manage students and their behaviour that way.

Along with digitisation and general lack of movement in the lives of the young, this poses a big issue, especially with young expressing themselves and feeling and being independent and creative.

Of course, this is sometimes changed by an enthusiastic teacher/pedagogue, who realizes that the traditional way of passing the knowledge is very much useful and needed, but can be supplemented with tools and methods that engage the students more and show them all the possibilities that lie in learning.

Still the teachers and pedagogues mostly face more and more bureaucratic tasks, classes are big with diverse students that face various challenges, teachers lack autonomy, as they are under the scrutiny and pressure of parents, principals, ministries, etc. Therefore, it is extremely unfair to demand the teachers to do “the dirty work” and propose the change of the system from within. However, because we do believe that these methods and tools can help the teachers, as well, we still propose and encourage everyone to dare try something new and we promise everyone will learn – students and pedagogues. Nevertheless, our ultimate wish is to include these types of learning processes in the curriculum and school policies and to spread it as widely as possible.

That is why we recommend this method even more – to catch, to support, to encourage all pedagogues – even in different systems and countries similar problems occur and we believe that more support for the teachers is needed, in form of different materials and tools to keep the teachers and students motivated and actively involved in the learning process. So, what will you experience on a journey with us?



"Creative process"

Urša Strehar Benčina, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih, Slovenia

What is more: after school is finished, learners are met with different expectations and demands from the generations before them. Yet the school curriculum and learning processes often do not reflect and respond to that at all. More than ever, flexibility, inovativity, imagination, self-confidence, communication, and creative thinking are necessary skills to ensure that individuals can handle and master the uncertainties of modern times.

“ The true purpose of arts education is not necessarily to create more professional dancers or artists. [It is] to create more complete human beings, who are critical thinkers, who have curious minds, who can lead productive lives.”

Ana Romih, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih, Slovenija

1.3. The solution?

Creative pedagogy and learning through/with art in general offer methodologies, techniques and tools that actively include learners in the teaching process. They offer active engaging experiences, they establish and strengthen connections between teachers and learners, and offer meaningful creative learning experiences, where the learner is also the creator. The main idea is to create a learning environment, which is filled with possibilities, acceptance and is built on trust and responsibility of all included in the learning process. Ideally all the participants feel free to share their voice and ideas and are allowed to make a mistake and fail (including the teacher). Not only can a mistake inspire something new, it is often a necessary step in the evolution of our creative and learning processes, and it is something to value and cherish. Since the pressure of perfection has crawled its way into the creative and learning processes, we believe that mistakes have to be revived and celebrated even more.

““ *Letting go, not insisting on what is yours. Letting go freely. Let the land you live in be an example – your home. It flies like a spaceship. It's changing. Sometimes it's winter. Sometimes summer, fall and spring. The Earth doesn't insist on summer to be more summer or winter to be more winter. If a large object is found on the earth's flight line and the earth is damaged in a collision, something will change. Will it be better or worse? You don't know. Let yourself collide with your weaknesses – only then will you discover new ones. Your weakness pushes you in a new territory. It might be a discovery of your unknown strength.”*

Wiktor Malinowski, Elckie Centrum Kultury,
Poland

Learning through and with mistakes is a key feature here, as it predisposes a learning process to being relaxed and supportive, where being occasionally wrong is necessary for progress and experience, while keeping

clear goals and values in mind. We believe that in times, where school system does not necessarily follow the changes in social systems and structure, different pedagogical approaches are needed to grasp attention of the young, to include them actively in the process, to focus more on the use and awareness of the “learning body”, to present learning material in different contexts and to make it as applicable, useful and available, and above all, to create long lasting learning experiences that have an impact on students, as well as pedagogues.

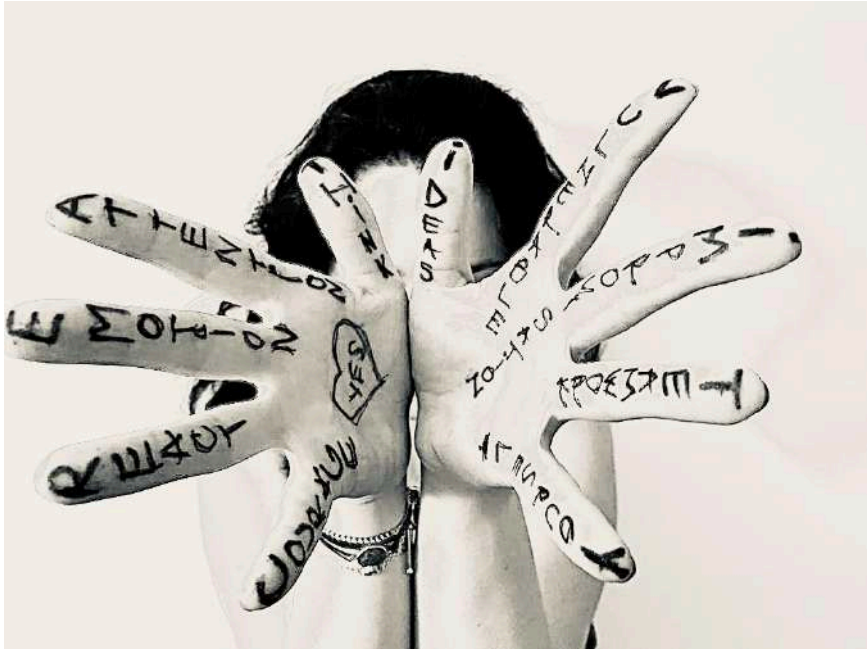
We strongly believe that the best and most straight-forward way to do this is through focusing on the (whole) body. Not only is our body one moving part – our head with our brains is not separated from other body parts – but the movement of the body has been already recognized as extremely important for cognitive development. Therefore, we call for more focus on the learning activities that involve the whole psychophysical body and more active and creative experiences in life of children and young people in general.

1.4. Still, why?

Even though it is a big challenge to put into words the processes that are often very subconscious and multi-layered (such are both, pedagogical and creative process), and even though creative process and teaching through arts can often feel scary, overwhelming and can make you (the mentor) even feel lost, without control and doubtful, we believe and want to advocate for more arts – in life, in school, in our everyday life. Creative activities simultaneously enhance self-awareness, self-consciousness and group work, offer somewhat different learning experience that is positive, memorable and efficient, and overall change the (classroom) energy and spirit.

Giving the students a share of responsibility and active engagement, introducing active experiences and waking up the body can indeed result in a louder and (at the beginning) more chaotic classroom. The sense of freedom that people get, when they are able to express themselves is

sometimes so strong, that it evokes additional movement and energy bursts and can almost seem as too much (to handle in formal settings).



"Embodiment of the creative process."

Irina Furdui, Opera Comica pentru Copii, Romania

But artistic experiences, especially in the field of theatre and dance, from which our tools derive, have so many incredible potentials that it is worth handling all the possible disruptions and moments of "chaos". Body experience is something we need more than ever, and since the bodies are often "put somewhere and left there" in our learning processes and life, as well, exploring the expression of the self through the body and its actions, is extremely valuable. Therefore, we encourage pedagogues to take up a role of creative pedagogue. During and through the exploration of this role, we guarantee you that one learns to handle this chaos in the way that it still contains structure and order, but is at the same time encouraging free form and active expression (may it be the students or pedagogues themselves).

1.5. A journey to a creative pedagogue – who?

“ *Be playful and present. Watch and listen carefully. Laugh and cry, feel the change and enjoy the moment. There is no doubt that when you keep yourself fresh by exposing yourself to inner spontaneity and the environmental beauty, you will find the ease, serenity, truthfulness and powerful vulnerability. Others will see you as more reliable, honest and brave.*”

Anna Sochacka, Elckie Centrum Kultury,
Poland

The main difference between a traditional pedagogue and a creative pedagogue is not in the content or curriculum, but the manner of leading the group. It is, for example, in the level of control they are sharing with their students and the participation in activities. In creative learning processes, pedagogue often takes an equal place to learners in the activity and therefore shares the responsibility and control of the learning situation with students to some degree. This does not mean that the pedagogue is not responsible for the learning situation, quite contrary, as they are maybe even more responsible for creating safe, free, accepting and inspiring environment. They have to be even more sensitive and observant of everyone in the group and ensure safety on one hand and freedom to explore and take creative risks on the other.

What it mostly means is that the pedagogue is not only the person in position of knowledge, but also the learner, who can still learn a lot about everything and anything, accepts their own limited knowledge and is an equal partner in some learning situations, not always the knowable guide.

We all know that working as a pedagogue means much more than just writing a plan, sticking to it and then writing the report. But still, with all pressures that pedagogues are facing, having too many plates spinning at the same time (educating, sharing values, raising, providing them with additional assistances, communicate on all levels, discuss the current world

matters, etc.), meeting the expectations of different “audiences”, achieving results, losing the autonomy, and more, we definitely understand some pedagogues feel the pressure of not being (good) enough and at the same time not having the motivation to do things differently in a big way. Therefore, we do not preach for changing everything, quite contrary, we would like to inspire to not entirely focus just on “the what” (as this is already set in curriculums, rulebooks and guidelines), but on “the how”.

So, what are some traits that creative pedagogues strive for?



they observe the group and meet the needs of the group

Much easier said than done, as this sometimes means to follow them – participants feel energetic, so offer them an energetic activity, and sometimes it means to try to offer them something quite the opposite – they feel energetic, maybe they need something calm and focused.



they prepare lesson’s goals and plans, but are flexible and willing to take a detour and change them to some extent, if the situation warrants it.

Similar as above, for example – the selected activity is focused on verbal expression, but the students are visibly not in the mood for talking. We have an option to try to encourage them, if we believe this could be of use to them, or follow their energy level and focus on non-verbal storytelling or something else, so we still keep the storytelling as the focus, but change the method, etc.



they play with their status

This never means that the pedagogue stops being a pedagogue. It just means that they are not always “the know-it-all”, they show their vulnerability and highlight their equality to students in some aspects and situations, they can have fun and be relaxed, but set clear boundaries, can change the tone/the vibration/the energy of the situation by taking it seriously, yet being

playful, light and even humorous about it, they can even change the regular teaching body position – that is why sitting or standing in circle is useful, etc.



they accept ambiguity and uncertainty of life and creative and pedagogical situations and try to work with it and through it

Ambiguity is a fact of life – we should be obedient, but not too much; we should have our own ideas, but have to combine it with the ideas of others; despite the want to do it right, use the mistake, if it happens, etc.



they are true to themselves and honest with themselves and the group

Creative pedagogues have to work from their own character, share their own insecurities to some degree and especially be honest – if you forget something, do not know it or do not do it properly, admit it and try harder next time. Everyone can make mistakes and the best way to teach accountability and taking responsibility is to practice it, and try to improve it the next time. It is no shame to say “I don’t know, let us find out together.” We even believe that this kind of teaching can sometimes bring different and inspiring outcomes.



they are brave and have the courage to try something new in order to get different results and experiences

They are brave enough to follow their intuition and gut feeling and trust themselves that they know why they want to offer their students an exercise in creativity; they patiently and bravely deal with the unexpected and admit when something does not go as desired. We can always return to the classical pedagogical methods, or choose any other tool from the bag of pedagogical approaches and methods we are gathering through our practice.



they choose their main values and stick to them

In addition to particular learning goals of every lesson, for example, cooperation, taking initiative, kindness, playfulness, respect, democracy, listening, spontaneity, etc.

What we see is that those are all traits of an attentive pedagogue, one who treats students as co-operators, not only listeners, who is flexible, resilient, accountable, free, relaxed, supportive and open. We believe there are already a lot of pedagogues, who teach with all that in mind, so what we aim here is to offer more tools and techniques to enhance learning processes and support them to include even more movement and engagement in the classroom.

We are aware of some initiatives and alternative approaches to schooling (Montessori and Waldorf education, for example), where more movement and expression is involved, which is wonderful. However, there are advantages and disadvantages to these approaches (and sometimes different goals). We aim to assist all pedagogues, no matter the school system they come from/work with – to add more tools in the toolbox of teaching approaches.

Since we put the main emphasis on the freeing of the body and movement, the chosen methods of our work are improvisational theatre and contemporary dance. Both promote and strengthen development of some of the very important traits and skills for art, learning and life: careful listening; observation and improved sensory awareness in general; finding agreement, but keeping personality and individuality; development of the group mind; focus on the relationships (of bodies with their environment); development and understanding of different points of view; strengthening self-awareness; following the intuition; being playful, curious and brave and testing one's limits (and moving them); sharpening the focus and concentration; becoming more relaxed and aware of one's body and everything around it; and many more important "side-effects" of active creative experiences that can enrich people's ability of experiencing the world around them and their lives in general.

2. VALUES

**BELIEVE!
STRIVE!
COMMIT!**

“Creativity involves moving beyond what is exists now, using resources brought from the past to devise potentially better options for the future.”

Seana Moran

“ *Healing the body, mind and soul through the process.”*

Ana Romih, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih,
Slovenia

Before we describe more thoroughly what we understand under the term creative movement, we will focus a bit on the values that support the method as they not only help us with setting the goals for our activities, but they help us to create encouraging, safe and open work environment and to organise our creative work material (which is seldom “fixed” as it is in curriculum). These values apply to performers and pedagogues equally, the biggest difference is their “playing field”.

We will focus on some specific values: listening and paying attention, being active, honesty, releasing the need of constant control, trust, willingness, acceptance, the value of saying yes and, group mind, importance of self-expression, playfulness, spontaneity.

Listen and pay attention!

As simple as this seems, it is probably one of the most difficult skills to master. Observing and listening can free us from having to think of what we are going to say/do ahead of time. Improvisation and creative movement are all about seeing/hearing what others are offering, and building off it.

Be active!

We try to avoid long speeches (even when explaining rules) and explanation – while teaching, playing games or performing. Don't just talk about it, do it. Don't describe it, show it. This does not mean not talking, just consciously using the dramaturgy of focus.

Be honest!

In your body, in the movement, in teaching, trusting the intuition and responding truthfully to oneself is essential. To express and incorporate whatever comes in that moment (and is connected to what has already been built) means to stop the judgement and censorship of our brains, as well. This does not mean to do or say everything that comes to one's mind, but to not deny the reality that is around us (whether this be a dog bark outside of the classroom window that is included in the game/learning process/scene, or that two people fought before the class, which gets addressed and commented on in some way to release the tension and to build the awareness of everything that is going on around us). It takes some training, but can definitely be achieved.

Release the need of constant control and let it go!

The only thing we can control are our own choices (and not even that sometimes; if we are spontaneous enough, we even make choices on an almost sub-conscious level). Realizing that we are not in control of almost anything is one of the keys to de-stressing and getting into the flow. What happens when we stop focusing energy on things that we can't control? That energy gets focused on things that we can control, and ironically, we end up exerting more influence on everything around us.

 **Trust!**

Trust yourself, your students, your co-players/partners (on stage and in life), the situation, our choices, impulses, etc. Trust that even if something slips out of hand, you can pick it up again and use safe choices to find the rhythm again. And then, trust some more and dive into unknown sometimes, as well.

 **Be willing!**

Be willing to play, to fail, to mess up, to feel, to try, to make mistakes, to have fun – all of these in a spectacular way that is entirely your own.

 **Accept!**

Don't block and don't deny what happened. Even if we are not so excited over the proposed choice/idea/movement, support it in some way. Magic might happen. Or at least a possibility of it.

 **Say “Yes, and...”!**

Accept, support and incorporate everything that happens as an offer and as a gift (even if we do not like it personally that much). “And” implies that one should always add their own impulse, reaction or response, as this gives others something new to respond to.

 **Support the group mind!**

Improvisation and creative movement are built on a vast mechanism of giving and taking and supporting. The group mind is greater than the individual. You can look good, if you make your partner look good. No person is responsible for the success or failure of a scene. It succeeds, or not, based on the ability to work together.

 **Encourage personal points of views and interpretations!**

If we enter and play the situation with a point of view, opinion or intention, the commitment of the one performing/doing something will be clearer and so will be the commitment of all observing it.

Be playful!

Play is intrinsic to children, as it is very important for development and learning, but it is equally important to nurture playfulness in adult age, as well. Play means complete immersion in a situation (game), which includes, develops and restructures the whole psychophysical body. The games include movement, exploration, communication, socialization, observation and imitation, exercise, discipline, learning and especially pleasure. The essence of the game is the reflection and imaginary transformation of the surrounding reality.

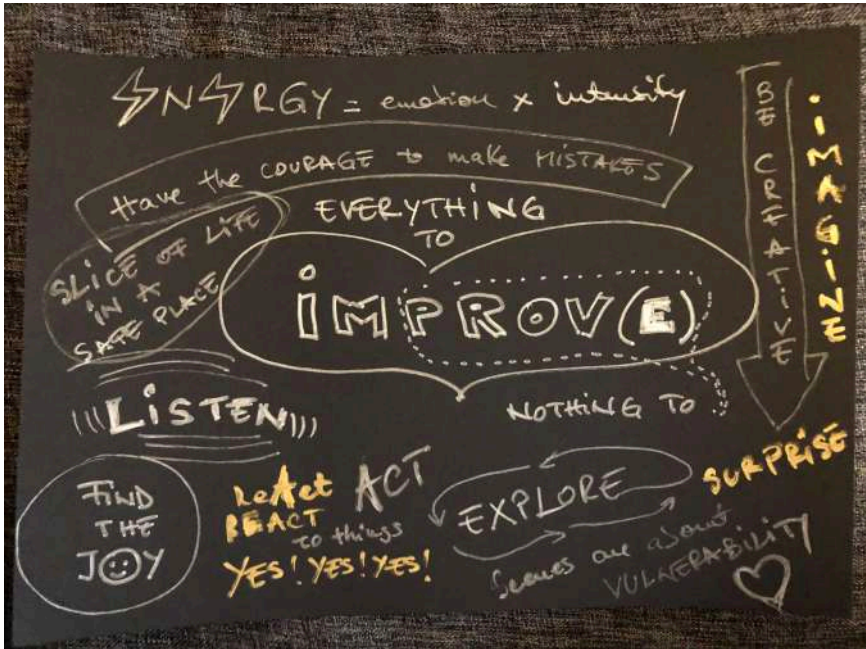
Play is completely serious (in its focus and taking the rules of the game seriously) and not serious at all (as it needs to remain participatory, voluntary and has to be able to return to the starting point, if it is still a game). It has rules, but often they are challenged and creatively bent. The main point is to play it, not to necessarily make a result, and even though competing games have competition as a motivator, it is good to know that if the competition overcomes the joy of playing, it is not play as we see it anymore.

Play creates a suspension of reality. In play activity, we experience without worrying about the “real”, long-lasting consequences – it creates a safe space to experience situations, emotions and actions. It’s a place where mistakes and failure are positive results of the actions leading towards play as an exploration of powers and potentials. We play to find out what we can and cannot do and to see if we can extend our capabilities.

Be spontaneous!

It means being in the moment, not thinking ahead or about what has happened too much, but building on, responding to, reacting to and especially discovering of what is already there (so not trying to invent something clever, but responding with impulse that comes to our minds). When we are fully immersed in an activity that occupies us completely, we are in the zone, with an energized focus and losing awareness of time – we are achieving “a flow state”, an optimal experience where we are sharp, ready and open for everything that happens. It is the desired state of mindfulness, “here and now”, through which we can have a fuller experience.

And last, but definitely not least: Don’t forget to value mistake immensely – mistakes are opportunities, which can be built upon.



"The presentation of the values of creative pedagogy."
Irina Furdui, Opera Comica pentru Copii, Romania

3. CREATIVE MOVEMENT - TO MOVE IS TO BE

**MOVE!
FREE YOUR MIND!
CATCH THE MOMENT OF FREEDOM!**

“Movement is the most powerful means of expression in the creation of a theatrical production. Deprived of words, costumes, footlights, wings, theatre auditorium, and left only with the actor and his mastery of movement, the theatre would still remain theatre.”

Vsevolod Meyerhold

““ *Dance frees the body, impro frees the mind.*”

Staša Prah, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih,
Slovenia

When we propose to connect culture, arts and education more deeply, we of course encourage the use of all range of art forms and techniques. But what we focus on as our set of tools and techniques, is the creative movement, the methodology which encourages exploration of movement, feeling and thought.

3.1. What is creative movement and why is it important?

Creative movement is an individual expression through movement. It is based on games and processes that inspire participants/players to move freely, but in accordance with rules or suggestions given by the mentor. Limitations and rules are in fact a fuel of creativity to some extent, since we need to find our own way to solve the challenge. Even though it is mostly connected with dance, the project Young Theatre on the Move is developing it also through other theatrical and dance improvisation games and exercises, which encourage creativity, coordination, self-expression, body awareness and simply the movement itself.

Benefits of movement have been recognized for a variety of reasons (better physical and mental health, brain development, reducing of the anxieties and similar), and not only because of released hormones and direct physical effects. Our bodies and minds are intimately connected and affect one another – the way we feel reflects in our body posture and movement, but the way we move also affects the way we feel and think.

Creative movement encourages seeing, feeling and thinking in a different way, finding solutions that are “out of the box”. It develops critical thinking, social engagement, problem solving abilities and encourages individuals to be open to changes, different proposals and solutions on how to approach everyday life. Players/movers/participants become more aware of their wishes and goals, improve their decision-making skills and mostly improve sensing, feeling, experiencing and being with others in a sense of openness, thoughtfulness and kindness.

In the modern world and throughout the most of the Western world, the division has been made between our bodies and minds, with the latter being on a pedestal, and body being almost only a carrier/a machine for our mind. However, the body is our temple and our tool, so we urge for more attention and care to it, as we only have one. Sitting for longer hours, at school, at work, at home, behind the computer or any other technology is mostly excluding our whole body from using it – so we need to address movement, body awareness and creativity more than ever.

But to connect with ourselves, to connect mind and body, is not always an easy task (but it is somewhat easy to try).

3.2. Creative Movement Programme



Stop controlling yourself.

Take a risk.

Be attentive to what is happening around you.

Give up daily rituals and your own comfort.

Sail into the unknown.

“I always wanted to do it” - do something new!

Change place – it will always do you good, but it will also show you a new perspective!

Meeting with teachers and youth in the Young Theatre on the Move has been a revealing practice for me.”

Grzegorz Sierzputowski, Elckie Centrum Kultury,
Poland

The method of creative movement we propose is based on body awareness, sensing and transforming known into unknown and vice versa. Experiencing and going through processes (games, exercises, techniques) actively is a key point here, as we can feel, know and accept our body and thoughts the way they are in any given moment better through active experience. As pedagogues, we have to start with ourselves, as only embodying brings understanding on a physical level, which can help us with transferring information to others.

Creative movement can be approached from many different angles and we based it on four pillars:



Movement basics

It involves movement processes, games and exercises where we recognize and start being aware of our body, all body parts and mind as one moving entity. We connect our body and mind while moving and we observe what is happening, how we feel, how the movement affect us.

Benefits: Better understanding of the body's anatomy, motor skills, stretching, relaxing and an energy shift for the body. Better understanding of time and space.



Sensory awareness

It is the direct focus on some specific sensory aspect of the body or outer/inner environment. Focus is on listening to our inner self, feeling, touching not only with body but also with mind.

Benefits: Better sensing, hearing and listening of our environment and of our inner self, making decisions that are not judged by our inner censor and understanding of what we feel and how. Focusing on all our senses.



Emotion and movement

It is the step when we are recognizing and learning how to express our emotions and the way they move us. What happens to our bodies when we are emotional? How does the position of the body affect our emotions and how do different emotions show in our bodies?

Benefits: We learn about different emotions, expressions and how they affect our body. Most importantly we learn how to deal with them, how to transform them and share them in a safe and supportive environment.



Imagination, story and movement

It is the step when we start to give meaning to the movement we make, encouraging imagination – everything is possible, unusual can be welcomed, we research and give new meaning to things we already know – connecting with movement.

It is also important to learn how to read and independently interpret movement or even broader – art, to educate the young that art is an important meaning maker and a necessary part of our society.

Benefits: Waking up creativity and imagination. Making choices and creative decisions. Connecting, associating and creating. Better understanding of artistic performances.

3.3. How do we do it?

The learning process of creative movement is based on the values we have already mentioned. Here are some suggestions on how to achieve them. When going through the games and processes, pay attention to:



accepting the current here-and-now

We don't feel the same every day so it is important to stay truthful – if we do not recognize and accept our current emotional state, this can get stuck in our minds and bodies, which can lead to anxieties. Goes the same for anyone of us, pedagogues or students or anyone else.

Practice: Tuning in with the group, for example, how everyone is feeling right now; where and how do they sense that feeling in their bodies; how can that feeling move through/out of their bodies. Playing games in the way that students use their current state as the starting point (e.g. building characters on their real emotions, using the body posture and attitude, etc.)



recognizing the potential of body as our tool for communication, expression and function in general

Most of communication goes through non-verbal expression, consciously or not. So, we propose more body and self-awareness.

Practice: Self-reflection, questioning and discussing what we see and feel and comparing it with the subjective experience of others. What was the idea and how was it understood? This can improve the way we think, can help us break the patterns, improve interaction with each other, helps us to

take better care of ourselves and others in the long run and bring more positive input to the society we are a part of.



embracing mistakes

Judging ourselves and each other can evoke frustration and can be a stopping factor – embracing mistakes and taking them as a necessary learning step and essential part of the process is much more useful for the development and progress.

Practice: Practice quick thinking, exercises and games where mistakes are essential – overcoming them in fun and relaxed way relaxes us, but also sharpens us and makes us ready for every challenge that might come our way.

The final goal of the practices of creative pedagogy is not necessary to educate future artists, but to give everyone tools and experiences of art, free movement and improvisation, which can help individuals and communities to thrive.

With introduction of artistic techniques people learn how to deal with obstacles and challenges better, handle life difficulties more efficiently and learn about body processes that make them feel more aware of themselves and their needs.

That is why we call for more arts, and especially, creative movement in school – with intention of more intense experiencing, combining thinking with feeling, using more imagination, learning with doing and doing more than following and fitting to the same frame. We call for more connection of different school subjects and curriculum topics with movement and to not forget about the power of learning process itself, which is not occupied only with outcome and results.

And don't underestimate the children!

“ Listen to children, don't just impose answers and solutions.

L. (7 years old): "I will never get married. I want to be as light as a plastic bag in the wind."

T. (9 years old): "Girls should smell like perfume, and boys should smell like what comes out of the car exhaust!"

S (8 years old): "When I sit in a boat, I turn off my brain and turn on my soul."

M. (4 years old): "And then came the naughty Santa Claus."

"Why naughty?"

M: "Well, something should happen (storywise)!"

Yes, you read that right: M. is 4 years old!

So, once again: listen to children, don't just impose answers and solutions."

Tijana Kesić-Stamenković, Dečji kulturni centar Beograd,
Serbia

3.4. Improvisational theatre and contemporary dance/ creative movement - our inspiration and source

Creative movement has roots in different artistic forms and uses a variety of techniques. However, we based our interpretation of creative movement method on two art forms, which have developed as "freer" versions of already developed arts.

Improvisational theatre

Improvisational theatre (also known as improv or impro) is the form of theatre, where the performance is unscripted and created spontaneously by performers. The dialogue, action, story, characters, even scenography and costumography are all created jointly by the players as the improvisation

unfolds in present time. Impro developed as a freer form of theatre that relies on the audience for suggestions and inspirations for the scenes and often includes them in the performance itself. There are many shapes and forms of improvisational theatre, some of the most famous ones have a strong comedic note and sometimes focus more on the verbal than body mastery. However, we understand, practice and use improvisational theatre in the widest sense possible – as the theatrical form that can cover all genres and borrows also the tools from other fields – drama theatre, physical theatre, clowning, etc.

“ *Impro was a complete novelty to me and in a way it still is, because I always only watch from afar. But what I see touches me because in so many projects I did throughout my professional life, I've never experienced anything that rewarding. And its potential is not only personal, it has the potential of bringing about a huge change in the Polish educational system, which is rigid and more about the past than future. So impro is hope.*”

Monika Mużyło, Elckie Centrum Kultury,
Poland

Contemporary dance and Creative movement

Creative movement is rooted in dance – dance is a performance art, which uses movement for aesthetic and symbolic values. It could be said that we base our creative movement in contemporary dance to some extent as well, as it promotes free form and encourages self-expression. However, since contemporary dance has its own specialties and rich history of styles and schools, we rather work with the term creative movement. It differs from more canonized dance forms especially in the way choreographies are made. Often, they are connected to the story and goals, and not as much the exact position of the body/bodies. It is about solving creative challenges in our own individual way. Creative movement uses body actions to: communicate an image (e.g. the wind), communicate an idea (e.g. a journey) or communicate a feeling (e.g. strength).

Both are strongly rooted in freedom, cooperation, strong awareness of oneself and environment around us, observation and focus, creativity and imagination, courage, decision making, problem solving and other similar foundations of free expression. Of course, we aim for technical improvements, as well – making our movements whole, intended and big; using our voices loudly and clearly; repeating faithfully; leading confidently; trying to have the body free, but being aware of it, etc.

But in the long run, it is mostly about enabling positive movement experiences that wake up bodies and minds, and bring out positive and cooperative energy out of individuals and groups that leave a lasting mark on the participant.

3.5. Why is there a need for more creative movement and play especially in education?

One of the basic needs of a person the need for expression by which they confirm their own personality in relation to the world around them. There are verbal and nonverbal (bodily in our case) forms of expression that are equally important. Unfortunately, non-verbal communication, which is expressed in younger children, is often suppressed by conventional forms in modern society.

Movement is very important for the development of children, for both physical development and the development of the child's brain. That is confirmed by various theories.

“Because of not understanding of its nature (meaning movement), it has always been considered less important than it actually is. This especially refers to the movement in the period of early childhood: in the educational process in which all attention is paid to intellectual learning, the movement is completely neglected. It was recognized only in the field of physical education, although even here its direct connection with the development of intelligence was overlooked.”

Maria Montessori

When we take a closer look at today's teaching and literature on child development, there have been no major and significant changes in the school's attitude towards the movement since then. In 2003, in his book “The Little Genius” Tony Buzan states that today parents are in doubt as to whether to choose a school in which children “play” or one in which they “learn.” Experts have concluded that both are equally important for healthy development of a child.

That is why it is necessary to introduce more dramatic and movement activities to education, especially games based on free forms, such as creative movement and improvisation. With that new possibilities for pedagogical processes will emerge.

In classic European schooling, children spend about 8 hours in school per day and mostly sit. During the classes children usually even sit in a “train” in which they are unable to communicate, because they look at each other's backs. Lecturers more often than not forbid communication and moving in class to avoid murmurs, excessive moving, walking and eventually losing control in class. Losing control is the greatest fear of every lecturer, so the games and philosophy that we propose and practice are systematized and organized so that even if the children move and communicate, the pedagogue will not lose control in the classroom. Such fears of pedagogues are not a surprise, because the term “game” is often equated with

"insignificant", "futile", "unprofessional" or "frivolous", but this deprives them of a whole list of advantages that confirms the fact that play is a powerful learning tool. The double benefit that we want to achieve with this project is a game through movement.

Our goal is the development of physical expression, from spontaneous activity (play) to artistic creation, as well. This is done through the development of creative abilities: imitation, improvisation, imagining, communication, etc.

In the next pages we will focus on some of the practical guidelines on how to start introducing the proposed material into our (school) work.

3.6. Teaching preparation and organization (limits and challenges) - How to start creative process?

“ I am 50 years old and I love to play, somehow, I have never stopped with that feeling of joy that is unfairly tied only to children. In addition to having crazy fun, you can learn from children what adults jealously hide and, of course, teach children and young people useful things that will make it easier for them to go through conventional schooling. By opening new vistas for them, they will realize that abstraction is a spectre and that it does not exist wrongly. And you will understand that not everyone in the game has to be a hen to have those who want to be the egg.”

Dragana Stanisavljević, Dečji kulturni centar Beograd,
Serbia

In the following pages, we will present some aspects we believe are important when including the creative movement in the classroom or in other learning/artistic experiences and situations. We can use the games as tools for different goals:

- as a warm-up,
 - a break from or addition to other activities in the class using only one game or exercise at the time),
 - as a fun way of connecting a group or class and encouraging them to creatively work together (in class meetings, camps, for beginning of the school year, etc.),
 - as an inspiration to enhance the lesson or lecture about any topic with exercises that include the whole body (for example, exercise Moving as a group/organism can grow into a practical demonstration of digestion process, Sound painting can make a great introduction to whatever environment we need to study/discuss and Using poetry actually offers different ways of how to play with poetry in the classroom even more, etc.)
- You can find all the games in the first part of the book and, of course, you are encouraged to find your own ways of using games. You can even

expand it into a “cultural day” with longer process and (optional) performance at the end!

Although the focus of the authors in this chapter is on the younger children, the method works extremely well with participants of all ages and predispositions – teenagers, adults, participants with special needs, mixed groups, etc. Different institutions involved in this project work with a variety of different participants and even though adaptations are always welcomed, in general, what works for the youngest can definitely work for all others, as well. If anything, children are much easier to motivate for games and exercise that base in movement and play, as the play is something they already do and love. So, sometimes it is harder to start with older children/ participants, but encourage them to try and usually after a warm-up, they open up more and are more open to our proposals and suggestions.

“In organized activity – through upbringing and education – art is the ultimate tool which cannot be replaced or compensated for in order to develop a child as a versatile personality and a social being, and in turn to make adults more ennobled, humane and able to defend themselves from spiritual poverty and one-sidedness.”

Milenko Misailović

In many years of experience in working with children, we have heard time and time again from parents, who wanted to enrol their children in a drama activity: “My child was born to be an actor. They play all day with a toy and imitate life, neighbours, etc.” But almost every child plays in the same way. Every child plays games instinctively and on their own, and if we start playing with them on time, without putting them into a mould, then they will preserve and furtherly develop their imagination. Intelligence is also the ability to cope in unknown situations, and the goal of every creative pedagogue (especially when using the method, we present here) is to put them in as many such situations as possible.

Another thing that artists, especially actors, have been studying and trying to figure out for centuries is "the truth of the game" and honesty. There are no more sincere beings in the world than children. Until we put them in social-emotional moulds, children remain the most honest viewers. This method will help them to get to know themselves, preserve the sincerity and love themselves, because they can make no mistakes – everything is a gift.



Preparation of programme, materials and games

As you prepare to work with children, by using this method, try to look at yourself as one of the participants and not only as someone who sets and observes. Choose goals and find games that will help you achieve them.



Preparation for different types of workshops

You first have to ask yourself: Is this the only workshop that will take place with the group or will there be more? Is this a presentational workshop where we need to inspire participants to come for more or do we have any other goals in mind?

PRESENTATIONAL WORKSHOP

If we want to start with only one (informative workshop) in order to see the reactions of the participants or try ourselves in this method of work, we need to choose the games that are the clearest to us, ones that we enjoy and believe in and that we would play ourselves. As mentors we can choose the games that left the strongest impression on us. During the workshop, do not worry or correct yourself or the children (too much). Enjoy all the "mistakes" and discoveries. Only in gaining your own experience and coming to your own knowledge will you build yourself as a sensitive and all-rounded "creative pedagogue".

PREPARATION OF CYCLE OF WORKSHOPS

Important notice: Choose one topic/goal!

Experience tells us that choosing one topic (emotions, senses, genre, character, line, colour, addition, aggregate states, or any other theme), whether abstract or tangible, is the best way to create a series of workshops that will have clearly processed material for the final outcome. You will digress less and choose and customize games more easily. You will even surely (often together with children) design new games during your work, only if you give yourself one topic as a task.

Always (whether you know the children or not) choose basic games and games in which all children can participate for the first workshop. Try to avoid observers (an audience) in the first couple of workshops and let everyone participate (if the number of children allows it). Slowly develop your observation skills in the group. Especially nowadays, children generally like to be the center of attention and do not have the patience to observe one another. Shy children, on the other hand, initially do not want to be separated from the group. Such children are braver when they do something in the "mass of people". Through the regular application of this method and through observing and analysing the reactions of children, it has been shown that in the beginning, the games in which children sit on the chairs or on the floor work very well. By sitting like this, they feel safer and keep their privacy. A circle is a bit more exposed, but participants usually get comfortable quite fast as it predisposes equality and togetherness. When a child stands in front of a partner on stage or in the audience, they are immediately open, more vulnerable and are not sure what to do with themselves. Our suggestion is to give them a chair to start with so that they can get up slowly. Later, choose games with fewer participants and more spectators. At the same time, do not leave children who do not participate to be mere observers, sometimes give them different tasks to think about while watching. In this way, critical thinking is developing in children, but at the same time any form of mocking should be "nipped in the bud". Conquer the space together with them and use it as much as possible.

By choosing games like this and organizing workshops, you will easily develop a new theatre/art audience and bring up open and confident people.



Adjusting to the group structure (number, age, experience)

You first have to ask yourself: How to adapt exercises to the need of the participants that we know? Do we need to prepare different exercises, if we teach kids that we don't know? What is the number of children in the workshop? What ages are the children?

Often, we cannot choose the number of children or the children we will work with. There will be over thirty children in one class in public schools. Children are sometimes very reserved and refuse to cooperate. How to adapt and apply this method in that case?

Experience tells us that it is most difficult to work when there are too few children (two) or too many children (over twenty). In both ways it still possible – with pair games and processes for one or two performers and separation in two groups when the group is bigger – one can do the exercise and the other can observe and vice versa. As we pointed out the tasks for the observers are a useful way to keep their focus.

Although most of our team has decades of experience working with children, we still cannot give you an exact solution to these problems. Nobody will ever will. But you can find more answers to a specific situation and if you are willing to try more of them out, you will build courage, gain knowledge and develop your intuition to recognize useful solutions that can be used in similar situations.

In workshops you can sometimes group children of different ages into one group. The division could be as follows: pre-schoolers (4 to 6 years old), younger school children (7 to 10 years old) and older children/young people (in this group, indeed, we can put an 11-year-old child with a 22-year-old boy, or make smaller groups 11-15, 15-18 and 18+). In today's pedagogy and educational work, mixed age groups are supported. Improvisation and creative movement are especially suitable for such age mixes, because the limitations are only in the awareness of one's body and speech, while the

generationally different view of the game or the problem given in the game is very desirable and inspiring.

Working with participants of different ages in creative movement is therefore really not that different. Since playfulness is the main value, the young usually thrive and older need to be reminded of how much fun the play brings and how well one feels after activating the body, cooperating with others and achieving different goals. The main difference is not in the form – the games can be the same – but in content. Different ages are interested in different topics. For the youngest, the topics of nature, animals, and the world that they know, are themes they connect strongly to. For the young some relationships, statuses and current affairs are also interesting. And topics of emotions, situations we all know and have been a part of are a good starting point for all ages (all ages can play the game of waiting at the bus stop where different characters meet, for example). Don't be afraid of any age. Even if at first people are not entirely engaged, often the power of games is so strong, that people get involved, even if they are reluctant at first. And, if someone is still not enjoying themselves, they can be told that we do not enjoy all life situations. This can be an experience they have to have and, of course, it is in their right not to like it. More often than not, people respond to this freedom and invitation to honesty.



Adaptation of the space and means of work

You first have to ask yourself: How can we use the space in which the workshop is taking place? What means of work do we spend and what do we really need?

Lecturers and performers all have something in common: they change performing spaces and the "audience". Throughout history stage performers did not have a specific venue or their home theatre, but they travelled and played wherever there could be audiences, in squares, theatres, markets, etc. Fighting for education throughout history, people who educated others had travelled, changed places and spread literacy.

We, as creative pedagogues, carry the possibility of adapting to the space, situation and characters we have around us – as oppose to mere "frontal teaching" – in our historical heritage.

For this method you simply need empty space and chairs.

Let the children be creative. Sometimes you can leave the cleaning, storage and space transformation to them. Assign the roles and give tasks to prepare the space for work. Do not always do everything for them before class and just start the class. Even today, parents do too many things instead of their children (they tie their shoelaces for too long, fasten their jackets for too long, finish all the housework for them, etc.), so we encourage you to include them in the preparation of the space for a change and share responsibilities.

As far as props and scenography are concerned, empty space is ideal for developing imagination, because as Stanislavsky puts it:

"if" there was a tree or a child was a tree, then the others would behave (set) in relation to "if". "If" a child held a fan in his hand, he would have one type of movement, and the others would have one attitude towards that, but "if" a child held a sword in his hand, we would immediately have a completely different energy, movement and relationship.

Pointless action and movements with imaginary objects are the closest to children's play and the strongest tool in the development of imagination.

If you surpass the traditional school pattern, the imagination can be developed in you and your children during the entire work process, including the preparation for it.

Tip: When including creative movement in regular school lessons, it might prove itself as great help and an efficient tool for preparation of all sorts of school performances and events (for different holidays and occasions).

3.7. What do we want to achieve?

Here we can choose different topics, but if we think about the child (or us as creative pedagogues), we could single out two basic goals: individual development and the development of teamwork.

"Theatrical literacy enables children to discover and learn about the important issues of their world and life behaviour in an attractive and exciting way, because watching theatrical performances encourages children to enhance their emotions by thinking and experiencing – inferencing and thus enriching the experience into appropriate concepts."

Milenko Misailović

The same could be said for dance performances with additional focus on abstract and connecting emotion, thinking and experience in an even deeper metaphorical way. Therefore, we could say we are building "creative movement literacy".



Individual development

When we apply this creative movement literacy in school through the Young Theatre on the Move method of work, we notice an increased stimulation of physical and intellectual development and the development of creative abilities in children. Entering the role and certain given situations enable children to channel anger by expressing it through strong movements and controlled conflict situations. In this way, internal conflicts in children get released, which are often unresolved on an unconscious level, while in given situations they are placed in the conscious aspect of the child's personality. In addition, it encourages the speed of reaction and resolution of various situations. Movement control and manageable impulsiveness are also gained through various games. Motor skills coordination and moderation of movements are encouraged.

We can conclude, based on the evidence/insight from the long-term application of this method, that children become more aware of their abilities and show more confidence. In practice, the parents of withdrawn and shy children have confirmed that after a certain time (at individual speed), children open up, start communicating more easily with their peers, are no longer afraid as much to speak up in school, and become louder.

Children who do not have problems with communication and are confident in themselves, "establish" their security, they solve encountered obstacles and doubts more easily while growing up.

While children who are restless and usually reprimanded at school due to discipline, have found a way to express themselves and release their energy, they calm down and adjust more easily at school.

The development of visual and auditory attention is also emphasised. In other words, careful and patient listening and observation are developed.



Group development

“Theatrical activity of young people makes it easier for them to enter their future lives. “

Milenko Misailović

Through games and the application of this method interaction, cooperation and emotional maturation (socio-emotional development) are encouraged. Creative movement, which we base equally on dance and theatre, is a collective act. A performer cannot do it alone even when he plays a mono-drama or dances a solo – if nothing else there has to be at least one person observing so we can call it a performance. Children that mostly grow up indoors today, often sit behind the screens and are becoming more and more self-centred and isolated, will easily get acquainted with the mechanisms of teamwork through dance and stage/theatre improvisation. Through teamwork and a variety of imagined scenarios and situations children develop empathy and solidarity.

Pay attention to your own development as a person and creative pedagogue as well, take up workshops and courses yourself, develop and grow with children, because through this method of work you will always gain new knowledge, get to know the children (through generations!). These experiences offer something new every time.

Including the parents in our work – Family Involvement for better understanding (Experience from Serbian team from Dečji kulturni centar Beograd)

The family involvement in extracurricular activities is often low or is limited to “open classes”, “showcases” and performances.

The "product" of this working method with children is sometimes very "abstract". Through the educational activities with a pedagogue, children are already accustomed and prepared to understand and participate in creative movement performances. However, we cannot expect the same understanding from their parents (or other family members who monitor the child's development), especially in culturally less developed environments. That is why it is very important to educate parents, but not in reproductive manner as they are used to. By describing and explaining what you have done you will achieve very little, it would still seem only as silly game to them and not serious work with the impact on the complete development of their children.

The best way to do that is to take at least one of the classes and involve the parents into our creative work. Choose the games you went through with the children and conduct another creative workshop in which everyone will participate, both children and parents (including grandparents, if the children spend a lot of time with them). During this workshop, you will see in a very fun way how parents are beginning to understand the value and benefits of the method you use in creative development of their children. They will also understand the difficulty of the tasks during the games and will better understand their children, who will probably obtain a "higher status" than their parents during the joint workshop and thus express more than during regular classes. Undergoing such an activity, the children would gain self-confidence and parents would become prouder of their children, by looking at them from a different, new and improved perspective.

EXTRA TIP – DO IT YOURSELF!



"Leaving a creative footprints."

Staša Prah, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih, Slovenia

Like we already pointed out – this are methods to be experienced and not simply to be read or listened about. So, we suggest playing the game yourself at least once (even if you do it with the children for the first time), so you know what kind of emotions could emerge, when put in a specific situation. You can even find a couple of other pedagogues, who aim to include the method in their pedagogical work, and try it out. That way you can have a better knowledge of how the process can feel in your own body. It is extremely important for the development of empathy, as well.

In general, you can play games with the group of young or not – we mostly suggest you play it with them at least at the beginning. When guiding the processes, it is worth investing some time at the end to ask how and what participants felt, and what was happening inside them during the process.

4. LIMITATIONS, MISTAKE, CONTROL AND FEEDBACK

**FAIL!
FAIL ONCE AGAIN!
EMBRACE THE MISTAKE!**

“By helping to free the student-actor for the learning process and by inspiring communication in the theatre with dedication and passion, it will be found that the average person will not fail to respond to the art form.”

Viola Spolin

“ *The feeling of not holding back, feeling and being vulnerable, but not entirely personal and private (so, using what we know and feel, but transforming it into artistic form).”*

Urša Strehar Benčina, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih,
Slovenia

In the next few pages, you will find some thoughts of our trainers on some of the topics that emerge through our work. They are here to inspire and encourage the readers to look on the proposed creative movement pedagogical methodology through different lenses and hopefully also resonate with your goals. And there is no harm in following the advice in everyday life, as well.

4.1. Limitations in our work – the well of ideas

In our pedagogical creative approach, we could be facing many obstacles. It is not only (a matter of) time, space and art tool we provide to students during our lessons that could be a challenge to us, pedagogues and students. Proposing a new exercise like acting, singing, moving, drawing can be a challenge to the students, as well. So how we can turn situational difficulties in the classroom to profit everyone and gain satisfaction?

Openness, flexibility and trusting atmosphere could turn challenges into something that brings new possibilities and awake our creativity. Creating environment of trust and acceptance, which supports whatever we try, and confirms that we are just in a right place in our process – it removes the fear that blocks our creative potential.

Often as teachers we need to execute the plan and strategy in order to follow the curriculum, and during process the teaching monotony drains us. We are ready to apply new tools to break the routine and try something refreshing. We wish to get up from chairs behind the school tables to break the stagnancy, move a bit, wake up senses, possibly play games and refresh the atmosphere. In such moments a small space, tables, lack of a sound system should not necessarily be a limit to slightly change the plan of the lesson. We need to remember we are not alone in this – our students can be a huge help to us, they can quickly change the way the space is organized. Also, the how we work in the space could already be an exercise in imagination: for instance, building a construction together, building a façade or river meanders from the tables. Imagination and courage are the key forces against our limitations. We need to also remember that limitations force us into finding new solutions and possibilities.

In the pedagogical process it is good to offer the space for students to propose their own ideas, as well. Asking them questions how to modify exercises could be a great fun and a developmental challenge of their creativity. We do not need to repeat the same exercises over and over again. Together we can start to create new ones, starting from modification of exercises or trying student's new brave ideas. If ideas require further work, for instance they could be processed in smaller groups.

What happens to all of us sometimes is the feeling of limited imagination, but let's not forget that our students hold the well of ideas. Together we can build something fantastic! So, let's celebrate our limitations as they are often the fuel for creativity!

4.2. Mistakes, failures and feedback in art and pedagogy

When learning how to walk, we are constantly encouraged to keep trying, no matter how many times we fall. But also, when our fields of knowledge and studying expand, we should not forget the principle remains the same – we are always in the process, our trials and errors are a way to progress. Instead, too many “errors” grow into a “failure” which is accompanied by impatience, lack of self-confidence, fear and hesitation. In time, we only know mistakes, so we assess ourselves and others poorly and become very demanding with ourselves and others.

The right to be wrong, to make mistakes but not be determined by them and to understand that making a mistake above all means that we tried is what makes all the difference – self-confidence, patience and tranquillity can grow and translate into our lives and to people around us.

In most countries in the world, education is based on a grading system. Students get numbers which are supposed to relate to their knowledge – from not achieving minimal standards to outstanding. The system has been with us so long, that we can hardly imagine any other way of assessment. But, if we turn back to the child learning how to walk – not all children do it at the same pace – the time discrepancy among different children can be surprising. It is the same with the way we learn and try – some will happily fall and catch bruises, while others will be patient and careful. But instead of using these differences as an advantage, the system aims to bring us to a common denominator and uses differences for comparison and ranking. This can cause strong feelings of frustration and bitterness, since there are always those that are more successful in some way than we are. The only person we can compare ourselves with is the person we were yesterday.

With all this in mind, we aim to respond to the work of our students with positive remarks, because we want the attention of the learner to be focused

on the behaviour we want them to repeat. We praise courage, doing something with determination, praise groupwork, even when the result is not always perfect – we learn through the process. If we only point out mistakes, the next attempt will only be to avoid mistakes and, as a consequence, a child will become impatient and limited or even have a desire to stop learning. If you have any suggestions on how the game and activity can be improved, say **“Try this: _____”**. We only give them new experiences to try and they do not have to “correct” anything. The first try was like this and the second will be like that. With as little judgement as possible. With acceptance and growth. We choose our goals (collaboration, listening, repeating, etc.) and respond to that, not to the artistic quality of performance. There will be plenty of time and opportunities for that.

And last but not least – don’t forget, it all starts with you. Watch how you approach yourself and your “learning” process. In every aspect of your life, even when you prepare a new dish for the first time. What are you saying to yourself? What are you building on?

Failure does not exist; error does not exist. There is only trying. Failed? Well done, great, keep going.

4.3. Challenge your fears and control

Why do we avoid mistakes so much? The unknown is the biggest fear of everyday life and making a mistake means to go into the unknown territory. Predictability and regularity have given a better chance of survival in times of bigger dangers, so it is no wonder, that every human being has a natural need to control his surroundings. Because of that, we think that if we are controlling each step, we can avoid mistakes and thus failure. That is why we are creatures of habits and perform rituals that provide us with a sense of control, security and predictability every day. This is how this chaotic, complex world becomes predictable and easy to control. We have “our” mug at work, we sit at “our” desk at school, we go to the same store, take the same way home. However, there is something better than having a sense of control, something more efficient and even pleasant. Instead of trying to control everything, try to be open to whatever happens from time

to time, to cope with the unknown. And when you don't have a plan, let yourself improvise – respond, react and face the situation as it is in that particular moment.



“Trust yourself even in the situations of failure.”
Ana Romih, Pionirski dom – Center za kulturo mladih, Slovenia

Giving up control is directly connected to the feeling of making a mistake, since we don't know what will happen, we assume that since it is something we have not yet “practiced”, mistake is unavoidable. The solution is to accept it. Mistakes are totally fine and only by making them we head for development, which is the most important in the process of learning. To learn how to accept mistakes and give up control, you must be able to take risks. Comfort zone might be comfortable to some extent, but for growth some pain and discomfort are inevitable.

To give up control, try the following rules:



Be attentive - if you stay alert, you won't miss opportunities, you'll be able to react and act faster.

Exercise – **Anthropologist's walk** – take a short walk around the area, imagining you have just landed on Earth from an alien planet. Many things seem new, different and surprising. Watch very carefully, pay attention to the elements that you have missed so far. Note what is the new you have noticed.

Exercise – **Listening improvisation** – during any conversation, start listening to the other person as if your life depended on it. Listen with all you being. Challenge yourself to remember as many things you have talked about as you can, also details such as the interlocutor's tone of voice, their behaviour or their body language.



Take risks – remember that children who run away from the tag usually miss out on the best fun.

Exercise – **Say YES to things you usually say NO** – choose one day when you will carefully consider offers and see what you would usually refuse. Accept and develop other people offers. Agree with their ideas and invitations. Check out new restaurant, order something you never have before, ask the waiter for recommendation and follow it. Make a note of what was the hardest in this exercise.



Abandon everyday rituals – check how it is when you replace your regular daily activities with some new ones.

Exercise – **Change morning rituals** – add new activities or change their order.

Exercise – **A new way home** – change your way home, take a different route for several days and observe your behaviour. Does it scare you? Has it offered you anything new? Did the different impulses bring about different thoughts?



Give up your own comfort – make others comfortable, make them feel like stars.

Exercise – **I will make you a star** – choose one day when you will take care of the comfort of other people, regardless of where you are and who will be nearby. Agree with their ideas, opinions, listen to them carefully and "step in their shoes".



Sail into the unknown – abandon the remains of control and give into fate. Check what is awaiting you there and improvise. Let's try to change the habitual ways of spending free time from time to time, as well.

Exercise – **I've always wanted to do this!** – write six things (number them) on the paper that you always wanted to do, but you did not do for various reasons. Then take the cube and throw the number. Do the thing the cube has shown you by number. Whatever comes out, overcome your fears and just do it!

In all exercises, allow yourself to make a mistake. Remember that mistake does not mean failure. The most important is that you took the risk and tried! After all, when we improvise, there is always a surprise, so it's good not to withdraw from such moments. Reflect on what happened, use what serves and works for you and leave the rest be. It is all about new experiences that make us get to know ourselves better and grow, grow, grow. Allow yourself to make some mistakes from time to time and follow the creative process of your development.

4.4. Feedback

Feedback carries specific information directed to the person in his or her learning process. It is based on observation and listening of the whole learning situation, person's reactions, performance and efforts.

Everyone has probably experienced criticism and judgement during school education and noticed that it was not encouraging to hear negative words. Superficial criticism can sometimes be devastating for students with learning difficulties or low self-esteem. Negative words close students up and block their learning abilities.

““ *I feel that a lot depends on the relationship, if we make it our priority in the beginning, with a new group, then our further work will be nothing but pleasure.*”

Katarzyna Michalska, Elckie Centrum Kultury,
Poland

So how to change the approach for feedback and evaluation? If we value the learning process more than only the outcome, we notice that our approach to given feedback changes. We start to see the steps of development and student's effort to reach the goal. Even a small step forward can be a success and be applauded. The answer to little setbacks could be found through right questions pointing to the students' potential rather than their mistakes. (As we already suggested – “Try this ...”, “What about this ...”, “You can think about including this ...”, etc.) This is how the constructive feedback looks like. It's important for the pedagogue to create the atmosphere of dialogue and trust. Students should know that teacher is on their side. The mentor's comments are to build the situation in order, to point towards the goals and to make the learning ground fertile, remembering that improvement happens quicker in a positive, relaxed environment. Feedback should not be personal. Everyone experiences the moments of failure and success, that is why feedback could be directed to the whole group through thoughtful statements, propositions or questions. It should focus on (general) behaviour rather than the person to whom the message is directed.

The best feedback is immediate and comes while all the details are fresh in mind, but it is also desirable to reflect on problems in a group after the exercise, when students are able to share their observations. Ending with the circle of dialogue and exchanging thoughts can discharge the stress of unfulfilled expectations and opens the space to see problems differently. When we talk and share together, we learn faster and with less frustration. When discussing feedback, we are learning to learn.

Feedback should always serve development and has to be carried with empathy, love and intelligence for it should help to move mountains on the way to entering new unknown territories of learning.

To be able to give constructive feedback, it is good to first observe our own tendencies in being critical or judgmental. Feeding ourselves with patience and grace helps us to set new goals for establishing a creative environment of learning.

Exercise: Take time to observe your own reaction to your daily successes and failures. Write it down to your diary. See what thoughts and reactions are encouraging and discouraging to you. How would you change your inner feedback to turn negativity into constructive outcome, blockage to active resolution of the problem?

Exercise: Take time to practice positivity in all your daily tasks. Applaud yourself for the smallest successes and feel the power of good affirmations. Try to carry similar atmosphere to your class.

Note: The feedback varies in accordance with the set goals. When doing activities for processional use, when using them as support activities and when focusing on their experiential, not necessarily performance value, the feedback will differ from the one given where the final goal is a sort of performance. But with the latter, it is important to state what kind of the role the mentor also has – the role of the director/choreographer/trainer can be explained at the beginning, which has a bit more focus on aesthetics and achieving repeatable movements and scenes – which sometimes means a bit more “structured” and strict feedback (which can be still given in an encouraging and positive manner).

5. PROCESS VS. PERFORMANCE

**ENJOY THE PROCESS,
OWN THE PERFORMANCE,
LOVE THE EXPERIENCE!**

*“The beauty of art is precisely that there is no recipe.
We create the world with our own, smallest everyday actions.
The world is not present but always is and is only created as
we make it, as we want it.
We do not move around IN the world; the world CONSISTS
of our movements.*

*So, do not say to a child: “No, wrong 2+2 is not 5 but 4.”
We should say: “great fantastic, how did you work that out?”
World can be made.”*

Cornelia Albrecht and Franz Anton Cramer

“ *All of us were slightly outside of our comfort zones one way or another and this brought a sense of togetherness with the group and between the group and facilitators.
On both days the atmosphere was friendly, fun and productive with all four facilitators offering different but related exercises. What the form is (Dance/theatre. movement/improv) that we are creating I am not sure how to define, but it seems to be freer than improv and more dynamic than straight contemporary dance...I like it as a methodology, something new for us and the teachers it seems.”*

Paul Leonard Murray, Dečji Kulturni Centar Beograd,
Serbia

Working towards the performance is a different type of work in comparison with the work we do when we are focusing mostly on the process. Even though the games and guided improvisations are rewarding activities by themselves that build a variety of competences and skills on individual and group level, the performance presents another important experience. Not only do we have to perform a lot during our school and work obligations, but being able to handle and carry oneself in a stressful situation (which performance generally is) and develop courage to handle challenges confidently is extremely important for developing resilience and persistence for personal challenges, as well. So, we warmly suggest to offer students opportunities for performing, with awareness that the same principles and values that guide us in our workshops apply here, as well – mistakes as something to be used and built upon, playfulness, spontaneity, cooperation, support, etc.

In this chapter we will discuss how to prepare creative movement performance and how to offer support to the young performers so they feel like they can overcome stage fright and perform bravely.

5.1. How do we start the process of developing and preparing the performance?

First, we need to have an idea, a concept, a story. We choose what type of performance we have: **completely improvised** or **devised** (we use improvisation for developing the material, but in the end, we have a fixed result). Will we rely more on the theatrical or the dance tools? How do we envision the performance? All decisions are great, as long as they are made.


For developing a **creative movement devised performance**, you and your group need the following ingredients:





getting an idea,



going through the process (collecting materials through games and processes),

 connecting all the dots between thought, body, time and space (developing the story),


 trusting your instincts,

 staying true to your own vision.


Some questions that need to be asked during the preparation:

 What do we want to say/convey with the performance?

 How do we want to say/present it?

 What are the limitations we need to work with (time, space, body limitations, how skilled are the children, what are our technical limitations, etc.)?

 How much time do we have for preparation?

 What is the purpose of the performance (school presentation, public performance, part of bigger performance, etc.)?

How does a DEVISING PROCESS look like?

Process is the preparation phase of performance. In the process we are using the games and process exercises along with improvisation that help us with finding and creating material that can be later set and used in a performance. All the tools we are proposing in this book can be used as guidance for developing and creating the performance.

As a mentor it is important to have/develop a vision of what the performance is about, but it is also extremely important to include what interests the students, what do they want to research, learn, portray, etc. One of very important goals we want to achieve is for the young to stay “in” the performance the whole time – so, they don’t “forget” they are performing and drift away, but are really being focused and immersed in the stories, the scenes and the movement.

The young performers should be seen as creative minds that are co-creating the performance. As mentors, we need to be reminded that our own approach to creativity might not be the same that creativity of the students – they have to be encouraged to find their own channels and ways of expressing ideas and topics. The mentor should learn not to be disappointed or even insulted when the students do not share the same creative ideas or cannot always do things in the same creative way the mentor has envisioned. We must encourage them to do creative tasks in their own way and then teachers can observe what students can teach them and include and allow different approaches – while still keeping focus on the main idea. With that in mind the mentor can let students create freely and find material that is inspiring and interesting.

Example:

If we use the process exercise “Writing name in space”, it can be linked to different themes or addressed in different ways and directions – the main thing is that children understand and know what their primary task is, which is writing in space (their name or anything else, if we agree/decide on it).

How they are doing it is not as important as being true to the task and being aware and occupied with that action all the time. The mentor is here to remind them of all possibilities of creation (use levels, use big/small movement, play with pace, etc.)

Some basic performance elements:



Choreography/directing is a choice making task, where each artist, pedagogue, mentor should follow their own instincts and knowledge about stage time (dynamics), space (where in space we do certain things) and intensity of each part of the performance. It is a decision about what is done as a group and what individually, where all of the students will perform, and where there might be a solo performance, duos or anything else.

It is usually great for children, if you guide them through a story where each and everyone knows what they are doing, how they are doing it and who they are portraying. It can also be done in more abstract way, without setting too much of a fixed story and allowing the audience to feel and take their

own meaning from of it. But performers should nevertheless always know their tasks and the order of events.



Translating the story into the movement

It is good to start with who we are, and how and why are we moving.

Example:

We are all different seeds on the ground, each and every one grows in a different way, direction, character, statue.

It is important that imagination is encouraged through the process, unusual things and ideas that children have in their imaginative minds should not be rejected, they should be accepted or transformed (with suggestion of the mentor, how to adapt or develop movement) into material that we use for the performance.



Thinking about space

After gathering materials that can be used in the performance we need to start thinking about space. How big is the performance space? Where in space do we want things to happen? Horizontally or vertically? On the spot, still or moving through space? Where is the audience?

We can imagine the movement in the performance as if the performers are traveling through space, and for that you set a few goals (what are we doing, how are we doing it, and who does it) and set certain points for better orientation and dramaturgy of the performance.

Example of our guidance to get creative material for performance:

In the right corner of the space there is a stop station where our legs are glued to the floor, then the wind blows us through space and we all land in different spots, directions, statues – frozen. One of the statues is starting to move, etc.



Thinking about time

Adding the dynamics to a task (fast, slow, flowy, sharp, etc.) can help us develop our performance, in a way that includes our students as creators. And, of course, think about the length of the performance, as well. Our artist trainers suggest the “less is more” approach – it is better to have a shorter performance, where performers know what is going on and what their tasks and goals are, rather than to make it too long. This sometimes happens because of the “attachment” to certain material collected – the process is important too, and even if some parts are not used in the performance, it does not mean they were not helpful or useful for the end result.



Thinking about other elements that support the performance

We need to think about lights (if there are any), costumes (if there are any), music, scenography, props, text and movement all at the same time and how to create a whole piece from the beginning till the end. We can omit any of the mentioned elements, but we need to think about an element and consciously decide to not use it.

Lights: An atmosphere of the performance can be achieved/enhanced through lighting. Is there only one light, which stays mostly the same through the performance? Do we use cues with spots? Do we just use white/yellow or different colours? etc.

Costumes: Costumes can be simple, or not. It depends on the options you have, but it is something to be thought about, since this is the first thing the audience sees – what are they the performers wearing and why?

Scenography and props: Everything that is set in a theatre or dance piece needs to have a reason and needs to be used, if possible – having something on stage just for aesthetic reasons rarely works well, if it remains unused. We want more space for the bodies, as these are still the most important elements of the creative movement performance. Props and scenography should help and support our work, so we definitely encourage thinking about and playing with scenography and props, as well.

Developing text and movement: This happens during the process of gathering the material, and in the end, it is about making choices, and deciding where to put the selected material, if anywhere.

As we already said: LESS IS MORE (which usually means sticking to one idea, one main focus) unless your concept is trying to express a different, over the top story.



Observation, feedback and stage preparation

Through process, choreography, organizing time and space, we need to learn and teach the students how to observe, articulate and give feedback. Giving the right feedback is crucial in a way that does not say, “you are doing it wrong”, but questioning why and how they are doing it and finding whether there is any other way to do it.

If children can convince you and give a good argument why they are doing what they are doing – don’t forget there is no wrong or right – you succeeded in translating your vision and connecting it with everyone involved, so through communication, trust and understanding beautiful communal thing called PERFORMANCE can be born.

Stage preparation as a part of the performance event should consist of warming up the bodies, relaxing and finding ways to prepare individuals or group for their task (before going on stage, games and exercises in this booklet can also be used for warming up) and focusing on the mental and physical presence on stage. It is nice to establish that this is a group effort, so some warm up that connects “us” as a group is very useful. And in the end, don’t forget to remind performers to have fun, as well.

After the performance, take care of the space, costumes, props and put them away carefully – this can be a final ritual and can help us to slowly calm down after the performance. The evaluation is sometimes useful right after the performance, but we encourage mainly positive feedback right after the show and on the next rehearsal we can go into more details – what can be done to make the performance even more convincing and appealing?

TIME TO PERFORM!

Expectation and the audience

The main division in theatre, dance and other performances is the one between the performers on stage and the audience, between the actor (someone who is doing) and viewer (someone who is observing). This is a predisposition of all performances and is the main source of adrenaline rush, but can also be the biggest frustration. “What will they think of me?”

On one hand, each viewer comes with a different attitude and in a different emotional state. Some are expecting something, some are more critical and judging, others try to always find something that inspires them. We do not know how a single viewer feels, what they have done so far (in their days and lives before the performance) and what they have been through. On the other hand, there is an actor with more or less experience, also coming with some emotional luggage and their own feelings. The performer stands on stage in the awareness that they will be judged. On stage, the viewer sees the performer from head to toe and in the subconsciously asks themselves: “Now show me what you can do. Show me how you prepared yourself. Show me how the director developed a role with you. Show me what will you come up with.” The performers always face judgement. To make creative movement process work, we must try to move away from the negative assessment pattern during our work process.

Our attention should be directed to catching the smallest bits of interesting, funny, effective parts that work, the ones that resonate and vibrate with us. The mentor must try to pull out light, positive stage incidents that occur during work, and show it off. Even if as a mentor/ teacher we wanted to lead a stage work or class differently – we should sometimes let go of our ideas and let the group take the initiative. This allows us to build group confidence and make real impact on the classes co-conducted by class participants. During such work, we achieve moments of satisfaction with the work of its individual members or by the whole group. Often, good ideas that come from class participants are the result of fun and it is sometimes even difficult to create them once again. But we try and if this does not work, we find something else.

A mentor as the director/choreographer

Even if we encourage mentor guidance in a way of taking care of students and performance, we need to realize that we too can be vulnerable, showing that we don't always know what is "right", that we have our doubts and that we do not always have all the control over the outcome of the process. Creation is an ambiguous process, so being doubtful and having a goal does not mutually exclude each other. But in the end, we would suggest mentor to be an anchor, a calm force, that helps everyone to find their focus and to remind them of their tasks, their purpose, their story. Before the performance, there is usually a lot of stage fright and that is the time for the mentor to be as focused and even calm as possible. We know why we are here, we know what we need to do, so what we can do now is to breathe and to connect with the group as to understand this is something we are doing together, with our co-players/dancers and with audience.

5.2. End of the class – why is closing up always important?

As teachers we might be more concerned about the structure of the class, execution of the material, preparation of the performance and the development of the group process, rather than the closing up moment. We might not even plan extra time for reflection and thoughts exchange during the class. However, creative pedagogy should keep high value on dialogue and shared moments in discussion. As artists and pedagogues, we highly recommend giving even a short moment at the end of the class to the students. Let them answer the questions on what has happened during the class; ask what they have noticed, what was new and inspiring. This is also a moment to emphasize the positives over the feelings of negativity by turning them into important part of learning process. You as a pedagogue might be surprised how many new ideas can enter your mind in that very moment, how much deeper you can understand not only process of learning skills but learning and developing our human potential by realizing our weaknesses and strengths, habits of acting that we were not aware of earlier. An ending circle could be recommended as a closing up moment. Here everyone is seen and understood as an equal. Everyone gets a chance

to talk and those who tend to be shy, could be encouraged (never forced) to answer simple question like: “Did something change in you during the class?”, and if the answer is affirmative, you might ask what really has changed, what resonated with them or what happened. Encourage to share and if they want to discuss one subject a bit more, talk about it more! Observe and listen to your students, be the wise conversation guide. You might even ask students to keep their own diaries to note down new, freshly noticed experiences in order to preserve them. Let these new experiences sink deep into their beings. Sharing our opinions builds strength and teaches us to be more dialogical and communicative. To hear with ease about our weak moments without feeling shame, it is a success of a pedagogue who teaches that careful listening and empathy is what makes us better humans, who are creative and are able to converse with everyone. Good closing up moment can benefit in breaking the distance between people. It also encourages the development of creative community and creative democratic human beings. And it gives the students the important skills of observing and listening to themselves – how did something make me feel? What do I think of something?

Creation is an ambiguous action and so is teaching. One has to balance all forces and goals and find the optimal path with each new group and with every new lesson. That is why the sensibility and playfulness are the most important. Make it your own. Make it relaxed. Make it focused. Make choices. Be brave. Have fun.

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WHERE TO GO NEXT?

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How does an IMPROVISED PERFORMANCE PROCESS look like?

If we are choosing to present our work in an improvised way – so the performers do not know what exactly they are going to perform, it is even more important to offer them a clear performance frame. We can choose improvisational games with set rules that we know in advance – this is our safety net, so we at least know what is going to happen to some extent. Usually MC or the host is needed – someone who explains to the audience what is going on, what “the rules” of the selected games are and how they as an audience will be involved – the most interesting part of choosing the improvised performance is using audience for the inspiration for the scenes. Not only does this convince the audience that it is really improvised here-and-now, but they rise to become the co-creators of the show. With inclusion of audience in the performance, this can become more unpredictable and even more “dangerous”, but overall can present a great opportunity for audience development – we are all responsible for the performance and the show.

The main tip for beginners would definitely be: use games that you know and are clear to you. Explain what is going to happen to the audience and collect needed information from them (location, emotion, relationship, etc.). It is also nice to mark the start of the scene and end of the scene (with light/applause/any other way).

1 project
youngtheatre
on the move

5 countries



20 artist trainers



75 impro and dance professionals



150 pedagogues and youth workers



10 artists trainers exchanges



Joint module 1



175 professionals and pedagogues

2 - 4 regions per partner country



Joint module 2



500 - 1.000 participants

intensive 10-hour workshop



Joint module 3



175 professionals and pedagogues

IMPRO MOVE DAYS

20

groups in each country

100

impro-dance formats

5.000

audience members