

MANIPULATING YOUR CHOREOGRAPHY

Sometimes giving choreography new life can be as easy as reimagining a formation, or creating an additional layer of expression. Sound impossible? Use the three exercises below to find something new in a tired eight count. Let your dancers work with you to create a piece that is fun and engaging for your audience. Who knows, you may find that you have brilliance right in your midst when you let your students become the artists! Enjoy!

Activity 1: Go, Fight, Change

First, choose a phrase of choreography with very little movement across the floor. (something “arm intensive”) Create a 3 line deep formation/

- **Starter Version:** Level it – perform it in unison
- **More Challenging:** “Stairstep” it – create the levels as you go through the choreography – finishing with a leveled picture by the end of the second 8 count. You might do this by starting each group 2-4 counts behind the first (think “canon” or “roll off”), or by starting together and picking up the combination at different places in the choreography.
- **Most Crazy:** “Structured Popcorn” – have lines change levels throughout the choreography (might use Canon or Add Ins)

Activity 2: I Like to Move It, Move It

Pull from your knowledge bank an 8-12 count phrase that travels to a single direction. You can use any style of dance, but try to choose something with some dynamics like a kick, traveling turn or leap.

- **Starter Version:** Create a single file (larger groups make two files): Alternate parts A and B down the file. A’s Face the front and B’s Face the Back...and GO!
- **More Challenging:** Start in two windowed lines: All travel in unison for the first 4 counts and during the second part of the phrase – Line 2 change traveling (r or l) direction. (**Easy option:** change your facing OR **Challenge option:** reverse the movement)
- **Most Crazy:** Traffic Cops Needed! Experiment with the paths – forward, diagonal, in a circle! Just remember what view you’re giving your audience!

Activity 3: Prose to Poetry: Motif Makers

Recall an “expressive” phrase that is mostly stationary that you all know. It only needs to be 8 counts long. Establish pairs or trios. Choose a “Statement Maker” who will stay true to the original phrase. Others will be “Modifiers” who will utilize any number of strategies to create complimentary movements.

- **Starter Version:** All perform the phrase in unison in its original tempo/timing. The Statement Maker begins a “call and response” as she continues to repeat the original phrase, but puts in pauses between movements to allow for “responses” from the Modifier(s), which can be the same movement or something completely new that

compliments the original in some manner. The important thing is to maintain concentration and shaping to allow the conversation to progress.

- **Improvisation Version:** Utilize the entire group instead of pair/trios. Give individuals specific roles based on **variables to change** such as timing, levels and locomotion. (Locomotion refers to movement that takes the dancers to different places/spaces than their original forms.) Everyone begins by performing the phrase in unison and then break into separate roles. Heighten your awareness of the other dancers around you and respond to each other but always try to find your way back to the original phrase. When the Statement Maker feels it is time to conclude she should come to complete stillness and close signaling for all others to find their way to an interesting end shape whether they have completed the original phrase or not.