

## ***Community of Movers: Freeze Dance***

### **Valerie Branch, Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist**

*Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Valerie Branch shares an adaptation of the popular children's game "Freeze Dance" to help children **explore space**, practice **self-regulation** and **listening skills**, and **express their creativity** while **developing language** using the **elements of dance**.*

**This experience is designed to provide educators with an opportunity to:**

- Explore creative strategies for integrating dance and movement by adapting the freeze dance activity to support children's language and motor development.
- Promote self-regulation and cognitive flexibility through guided and creative movement.
- Use movement as a tool for arts integration to build language, listening, and expression skills.

**Target Age:** Pre-K, ages 3 to 5

**Key Vocabulary:** level, low, middle, high, tempo, fast/slow, body part, locomotor movement (i.e., walk), non-locomotor movement (i.e., twist), improvisation, creative movement

#### **\*Connections to Early Childhood Learning Goals**

- **Language and Literacy:** Child attends to communication and language from others. Child understands, communicates, speaks, and builds vocabulary.
- **Approaches to Learning:** Child develops self-regulation, attention, and persistence while listening for cues and controlling movements. Child demonstrates flexibility in thinking.
- **Cognitive Development:** Child uses imagination, and exercises creativity and creative self-expression.
- **Social Emotional Development:** Child recognizes self as a unique individual with abilities, characteristics, and emotions. Child expresses their own ideas and confidence in own skills.
- **Motor Development:** Child develops awareness of body in space, develops large/small muscles, movement, control, and coordination.

#### **Arts Concepts Highlighted in this Experience**

- **Dance/Movement:**
  - Teacher guides children to explore the elements of dance (body, space, time, and energy) through a familiar children's game.
  - Child explores non-locomotor (moving around the body's axis, such as twist, wiggle, bend, shake) and locomotor movements (moving through space, such as walk, jump, hop, gallop).
  - Child explores shape (the frozen position your body makes in space) to develop spatial awareness and enhance creative expression.

#### **Extending the Experience**

- This activity can be played sitting on the floor, at a desk, standing, or moving around the room.
- This activity can be played for a short amount of time or for many rounds.

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- Use music from different eras, cultures, and genres.
- Keep the music on and allow children to move and stop at their own pace.
- Reverse the directions: have students “freeze” when the music is on and move when the music is off to really challenge their listening skills and impulse control.

#### **Getting Ready to Try this Experience with my Classroom or Group**

- Is there anything I need to do to prepare children and adults for this experience?
- Where could I do this experience? Do I need to make adjustments to my space to make it successful?
- Do I need to have any special materials?
- When would this experience work best for my class or group?

#### **Reflections for Inclusive Practice**

- Do I need to adjust this experience for the mobility, sensory, or processing needs of children or adults in my class or group?
- Would I want to change the content or context of this experience to make it more relevant or accessible to the children and adults I work with?
- How can I implement this experience in a way that considers the language needs of the children and adults I am working with?

#### **Resources**

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/interactive-head-start-early-learning-outcomes-framework-ages-birth-five>

#### **Notes from the Teaching Artist:**

**Valerie Branch:** “I believe that dance has the power to transform, enhance, and open the mind to new and different possibilities. Integrating dance into the traditional classroom setting helps children gain confidence, increases their memory, develops their social skills, and helps them to think more creatively, critically, and outside of the box.”

**Valerie Branch** is a Maryland-based dance/movement artist and a Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist.