

## *DAI Teacher's Guide and Curriculum for Youth Outreach Performances*

### ***Mission Statement***

*DanceAbility International's mission is to encourage the evolution of mixed-abilities dance by cultivating a common ground for creative expression for all people regardless of abilities, economic status, age, or race. The mission is accomplished through performance, educational programs, teacher training and workshops. The work of DanceAbility International helps decrease the prejudice and misconceptions about diversity in the field of dance, and by extension in society.*

### ***Message to the Teacher***

Thank you for taking the time to review these materials in advance of our performance scheduled for your school. We hope that you will be able to use these materials to integrate our performance into your curriculum, thus enriching and deepening the learning experience. We recommend that you both prepare your students for the performance and provide follow-up, so that students have the opportunity to not only enjoy the assembly, but to learn valuable lessons about cultural competence and inclusive learning communities. The more the students are aware of the following six themes, the more they will be able to enjoy—and learn from—the dance performance:

- Cooperation
- Communication
- Personal expression/Creativity
- Wholeness/Inclusion
- Interdependence
- Disability/Is-ability

The performance by DanceAbility International is a unique opportunity to directly address topics that might otherwise be dealt with in a more oblique manner. This work will be especially important for those of you who have students with a physical disability in your classes. It will give you a guide to developmentally appropriate ways to include those students in movement activities and cooperative groups.

Additionally, if you choose to follow the lessons as a unit, it will help you meet your standards in physical education and the arts. Research has shown that both movement and the arts also support learning in the content areas.

Therefore, as you lead your students through these activities, you will be teaching towards many important standards.

The unit can also help you meet your goals for building inclusive learning communities and cultural competence in your classroom. Building a classroom community is like making a weaving—the more strands of community we include, the richer it becomes.

How is a classroom community developed? We can identify 10 strands of classroom community: shared leadership; communication; responsiveness; shared ethics; cooperation; shared environment; shared history; wholeness; interdependence.

Cultural competence involves working effectively with all students. The diversity that we so value in our schools include differences in physical and mental ability. As we work to create classroom communities that are truly inclusive, we must teach our students to work with people with a variety of disabilities. The six themes of this unit - listed above - were selected to help students become more skillful as culturally competent members of inclusive learning communities.

We recommend reading the following two articles: *The Creative Arts: A Process Approach for Teachers and Children and Relationship*, and *The Fourth “R” : The Development of a Classroom Community*.

### ***Brief History of DanceAbility International***

Alito Alessi is the Artistic Director of DanceAbility International (DAI) and founder of DanceAbility. DanceAbility is a non-isolating dance method for people with and without disabilities to come together to explore and create movement and dance. Alessi has been involved with the evolution of contemporary dance for the past 30 years, and is internationally known as a pioneering teacher and choreographer in the fields of contact improvisation, and dance and disability.

Alessi began training teachers in DanceAbility in 1997. He has conducted these month-long DanceAbility Teacher Certification Workshops in Eugene, Buenos Aires, Milan, Amsterdam, Trier (Germany) and Vienna (at the Vienna International Dance Festival, also known as ImpulsTanz). More than 300 dance artists, people with disabilities, and those interested in working with people with disabilities have attended, coming from 18 different countries to attend the DanceAbility Teacher Certification Workshops in the above locations. Many have continued teaching DanceAbility in their home communities. Since 1995, Alessi has also performed in schools for tens of thousands of children with a dance partner in a wheelchair. These performance assemblies educate children about arts and the potential of people with disabilities.

## ***A Guide to Maximize Learning Before and After the Performance***

### **Before the Performance**

- Complete as many lesson plans as possible. Choose the plan for the appropriate age level.

#### **Lesson Plans for Early Childhood:**

Lesson One: Cooperation

Lesson Two: Communication Lesson Three: Personal Expression Lesson Four: Inclusion/Exclusion Lesson Five: Interdependence Lesson Six: Disability/Is-ability

#### **Lesson Plans for Upper Elementary:**

Lesson One: Cooperation

Lesson Two: Communication

Lesson Three: Personal Expression/Creativity Lesson Four: Inclusion/Exclusion

Lesson Five: Interdependence Lesson Six: Disability/Is-ability

- Read and discuss a story (see [Resources About and For Children with Disabilities](#)) about a person with a disability.
- Teacher: Learn more about how [IDEA \(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act\)](#) defines the 13 Disability Categories.

### **After the Performance**

- Facilitate a conversation with the kids to share their learning, observations, and their perceptions of disability and dance.
- Continue with the lesson plans listed above to complete the unit.

# DanceAbility Curriculum for Teachers

## Lesson 1 (Early Childhood Education) Topic: Cooperation

**Objective:** The learner will be able to apply principles of cooperation by participating in movement activities in small groups.

**Set:** When I say freeze, can you make a sculpture with your body? Now we're going to make sculptures in small groups.

### **Activities:**

#### Sculptures

In groups of 3, choose one person to freeze at each level:

Teacher asks: What does a "high movement" mean to you?

What does a "medium movement" mean to you?

What does a "low movement" mean to you?

[Note: children might stand or sit and reach arms upwards, or they might look upwards]

Students try to combine these 3 movements as a sculpture

When teacher says, "Go," students make sculptures and freeze in their sculptures. Teacher says, "Look around and appreciate all the levels and shapes."

Repeat, asking them to change positions each time. Encourage children to make up new ways to move each time.

#### Dominos

Students are in groups of 3

Teacher says, "Can you make a triangle together, using all 3 of you?"

Students are in groups of 4

Can you make a rectangle together, using all 4 of you?"

Students are in groups of 5

Can you make a circle together, using all 5 of you?"

Students are in groups of 6

Can you make a line together, using all 6 of you?"

Now, we'll take turns making a movement. Start with the first person in the line. That person makes a movement. The next person should try to make your action a response. Repeat all the way down the line, like dominos.

### **Closure (link to performance)**

How do the dancers use low, medium and high levels?

How do they cooperate with each other during the dance?

## Lesson 2 (Early Childhood Education) Topic: Communication

**Objective:** The learner will be able to apply skills of expressive and receptive communication through guided physical activities.

**Set:** Teacher demonstrates actions and facial expressions that indicate happiness and asks, “How do you think I feel when I look like this? How do you know?”

### **Activities:**

Expressing emotions through facial expressions

If possible, students stand in a circle, so they can see one another’s faces. Teacher asks a student to model a “happy” face and points out how the student created the expression (lifted eyebrows, eyes open wide, broad smile).

Ask all students to show “happy” on their faces.

Repeat with sad (pull down outer edges of eyes and lips, make pouting lower lip, crease between eyebrows).

Repeat with surprised (eyes opened wide, mouth in an “O”, eyebrows lifted)

Repeat with angry (eyebrows drawn downward, compressed lips).

Demonstrate a “neutral” facial expression and teach the word “neutral.”

Teacher says, “Now I’m going to call out a feeling, and you show it on your faces. Every time I say “neutral,” relax your face and take the expression away. It is as if you wipe your hand across your face like a windshield wiper and erase what’s there. Teacher demonstrates.

Teacher calls out: happy, neutral, sad, neutral, surprised, neutral, angry, neutral, etc. After the students demonstrate understanding, try to go from emotion to emotion without neutral in between. Some children will find this difficult.

Expressing emotions through actions

(remind students not to touch anyone else during this activity)

If possible, students make a circle, so they have room to move as freely as they are able. Repeat the pattern used above. Teacher asks a student to model a movement that means “happy” and points out how the student created that feeling by moving in certain ways. Ask all students to move in follow-the-leader pattern around the circle or in place. Teacher calls out directions for students to move in ways that express emotions:

Happy

Sad

Surprised

Angry

Identifying emotions (receptive skills)

All students sit facing the front

Teacher demonstrates an emotion through facial expression and or movement. Teacher asks, “How do you think I feel when I look like this?”

Call on students to come to the front to demonstrate emotions and students in the audience identify which emotion is being expressed.

**Mirroring (expressive and receptive skills)**

Students are in pairs, facing one another.

Teacher demonstrates with a partner how to mirror. One person takes the lead and moves and the other person does the same movement.

Remind students to do only one movement at a time—move one arm, one leg or the head, or bend to the side—so their partners are able to follow.

(If children are physically unable to imitate or mirror each other, have them interpret each other's movements. This means that they may use a different part of the body that expresses the same feeling.)

**Following the music (receptive skills)**

Students can be in large or small groups in open area.

Teacher explains that when the music is on, it means “go.” When the music is off, it means “stop” or “freeze.”

Teacher plays music and stops it at random. Praise students for careful listening.

**Closure (Link to performance)**

Describe the emotions expressed by the dancers. Give examples. How do the dancers use music during the performance?

### **Lesson 3 (Early Childhood Education) Topic: Personal expression**

**Objective:** The learner will understand the value of personal physical expression for all children, including those with disabilities.

**Set:** Teacher leads a discussion about expression. For instance, “How does a dog show that it is happy? Right, wags its tail. How do people show different feelings? All people need to express themselves. Today we’re going to do some activities that are fun ways for you to express yourself. There is no right or wrong way to do these movements. I’m going to call out suggestions, and you move when I say go. When I ring the bell (or any other noise-maker), you stop.”

**Activities:**

Before we start, we need to understand personal space. [Students should spread out so that they can’t touch anyone else. Explain that these are individual movements, and that they should be careful not to bump into anyone.] Teacher calls out the following suggestions in any order. Give students enough time to explore the movement, then ring the bell for stopping.

Make yourself very, very tiny, as tiny as you can. Make yourself very, very large, as large as you can. Make your body into a straight shape.  
Make your body into a circle.

Move in a zig-zag line.

Move sideways.

Move close to someone else, but do not touch anyone.

Move very slowly, as if you are stuck in quicksand.

Move lightly, as if you are on the moon.

Move as if your feet are very, very heavy.

Move as quietly as you can. Try not to make any sound at all.

Move like a spider, creeping and crawling.

Move like a monkey.

Move like an elephant with a long, heavy trunk.

Move like a bird, and fly around the room.

Move like a fish, and swim around the room.

Move like a happy puppy.

Move like you are a tree, with your roots in the ground and the wind blowing in your leaves.

Move like you are a flower, growing from a tiny seed.

Move like you are a snowflake, coming to earth softly.

### **Closure (Link to Performance)**

What did the dancers express during the performance? What did their movements remind you of?

[adapted from Linda Edwards, *The Creative Arts: A Process Approach for Teachers and Children*]

### **Lesson 4 (Early Childhood Education) Topic: Inclusion/ Exclusion**

**Objective:** The learners will understand how they can turn exclusive situations in inclusive ones, by participating in a cooperative movement game.

**Set:** Begin with a classic game of "Musical Chairs":

1. Place chairs in a circle with one fewer chair than there are students.
2. Play music and have the children walk around the chairs.
3. Tell students that when the music stops, they should quickly find a seat.

### **Activities**

Now play the game again, with different rules—you must find a way for everyone to be sitting or leaning on a seat. Children can sit on each other's laps, stand on the rungs connecting chair legs, or squeeze next to someone else on the same seat. Remember to be safe and to help one another.

Continue with a few successive rounds in which an additional chair is removed each time. Every time the group accommodates someone who would normally be excluded in a traditional game of Musical Chairs, compliment the students on their creativity.

With each new round, the students will have more contact with each other and will be challenged to work even harder to find ways to be inclusive.

(Note: If students are in a wheelchair, you may bring in an extra wheelchair so an able-bodied student can try to play the game using a wheelchair. Also, if students are in a wheelchair, they can lean on a chair to be counted “in.” Be flexible!)

### **Closure: (Link to Performance)**

“If Emery were in this class, how could we make sure that he was included in all of our activities?” List some activities and have children brainstorm about ways to include him.

This lesson adapted from *Partners Against Hate*, Ant-Defamation League. Website: [www.partnersagainsthate.org](http://www.partnersagainsthate.org)

### **Color Matching**

#### **Lesson 5 (Early Childhood Education) Topic: Interdependence**

**Objective:** The learner will experience activities that require them to depend on others in their groups, so they understand the principle of interdependence.

**Set:** Can you think of something that you can do all by yourself? Now, can you think of something that you need others to help you with?

#### **Activities:**

##### **Leapfrog**

Students are in groups of 3, standing in a line, facing front. Have them count off 1-2-3. They will “play leapfrog” by taking turns moving behind the two students behind them. That is, number 1 moves behind number 3. Number 2 moves behind number 1. Number 3 moves behind number 2. Repeat over and over. Once the students can do this smoothly, try it moving forwards. That is, number 3 moves in front of number 1. 2 moves in front of number 3. 1 moves in front of number 2. Repeat over and over.

After they can do this in groups of 3, try it in groups of 6, with students moving in pairs.

##### **Building a House**

Students are in the same groups of 6. They will build a house, using all of the students. First, 2 students make the roof. Then 4 more students make the walls. Once they can do that, ask them to be creative and build their houses with a floor, windows, doors, chimney, etc.

Builder's Choice

Students can decide what they want to "build." They must use all 6 group members in their new structure.

**Closure (Link for Performance):** How did the two dancers make shapes with their bodies together? How did those shapes create pictures?

### **Lesson 6 (Early Childhood Education) Topic:** Disability/ Is-ability

**Objective:** The learner will comprehend what it's like to live with cerebral palsy, by listening to a picture book and answering questions.

**Set:** Has anyone ever gone skiing? Do you think you need to use your legs to ski? **Activities:** Read story by George Moran, *Imagine Me on a Sit-Ski!*, stopping to ask

questions, such as the following:

What disability does Billy have? (cerebral palsy)

How does Billy get around? (he uses a wheelchair)

How does Billy get up into the building (a ramp) Why? (stairs are difficult for someone in a wheelchair)

What does it mean to be "physically challenged" (it is a challenge to do things with your body)

Can you describe other ways people can be "physically challenged" (cast on leg, can't see, only have one arm, etc.)

Look at the ski equipment and describe how the children will use it.

Which one of them would you like to try?

Why did Jack and Cindi put Billy's wordboard around his neck? (in case he needed to communicate while skiing—remember that he can't speak clearly)

Can you sit like Billy in his sit-ski? Now lean to one side and imagine that you are sliding down a mountain.

Why is Billy wearing a helmet? (to protect his head when he falls to the side)

What is the "fall line?" (the place on the mountain where the ground starts to go downwards, and Billy starts to slide down)

Imagine that you are sitting in a sit-ski and you lean all the way over to the right. What might happen? (fall over)

Why does Billy say he "felt so free?" (he can move by himself)

Why doesn't he want it to end? (so much fun, feels free, likes moving fast...)

If you used a wheelchair to move around, what activities would you like to try?

Did you know that a boy or girl who uses a wheelchair could go skiing?

In what ways is Billy different from you?

In what ways is Billy the same as you?

Billy uses a wheelchair and can't speak very clearly. Does that mean that is isn't smart? (no, his mind is not affected by his physical condition)

## **Closure: (Link to Performance)**

Emery, one of the dancers, has cerebral palsy, just like Billy in the story. He can dance, even though he uses a wheelchair to get around. Listen to Emery speak. Is it easy or difficult to understand him? In what ways is he like Billy?

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## **Lesson 1 (Upper Elementary) Topic: Cooperation**

**Objective:** The learner will be able to apply principles of cooperation by participating in movement activities in small groups.

**Set:** You've all made statues by yourselves, like in freeze tag. Now we're going to make sculptures in small groups. You'll have to pay attention to what others in your group are doing in order to create the sculptures.

### **Activities:**

#### **Sculptures**

In groups of 3, choose one person to freeze at each level:

Teacher asks: What does a "high movement" mean to you?

What does a "medium movement" mean to you?

What does a "low movement" mean to you?

[Note: children might stand or sit and reach arms upwards, or they might look upwards] Students try to combine as a sculpture

When teacher says, "Go," students make sculpture and then freeze in their sculptures. Teacher says, "Look around and appreciate all the levels and shapes."

Repeat, asking them to change positions each time. Encourage children to make up new ways to move each time.

#### **Contrasting shapes**

Teacher asks, "What does the word contrast mean?"

"How are different ways we can contrast shapes?" (size, level, focus, body parts, types of shapes)

Students get into pairs. One person makes a shape. The second person the makes a contrasting shape. Teacher directs the movements by saying "Go," or "Freeze."

Teacher identifies the contrast in each pair. ("Notice how these two are using contrasting levels.")

Ask a student to describes the contrasts using the correct movement vocabulary as stated above.

#### **Corners**

All students stand in the center of the room. Ask 4 students to go to each corner. Each of these students makes a shape. Students in the center look at the shapes and then go to a corner of their choice. Once there, they make a shape in relation to the one they like.

Add a requirement for self-regulation, so no one is left out, such as: there have to be at least 4 people in each corner.

#### **Large group sculpture**

All students move to the center and make one big shape. Each student should relate his or her frozen movement to one other student. It is like playing statues with whole group at one time. Teacher says “freeze” or makes some sound to indicate freeze.

### **Closure (Link to performance)**

What contrasts did you notice during the dance?

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### **Lesson 2: (Upper Elementary) Topic: Communication**

**Objective:** The learner will be able to apply skills of expressive and receptive communication through guided physical activities.

**Set:** Do you need to use words to let people know how you feel? How can you guess how someone is feeling just by looking at him or her?

### **Activities:**

Begin with activities from the ECE lesson plan as a warm up.

The following activities are parallel to skills needed in conversation. Students can practice these skills physically and then talk about how they are the same as verbal skills they use when talking with others. For each movement activity, the teacher should model in front with a partner before asking the students to follow the directions.

#### **Paraphrasing (in partners)**

One person does one movement and the second person watches and then makes the movement they feel from watching the movement. The second person is interpreting the feeling of the movement, not copying it exactly. Note that a person with a physical disability may be able to paraphrase or interpret a movement but s/he may not be able to imitate it. Thus, we focus here on interpretation.

#### **Turn-taking (whole group to pairs)**

Students are in a whole group on one side of the room. Half of the students go into the middle. Each person makes a repetitive movement. Be sure the movements are fairly simple. Students who are watching go in and stand in front of someone and mirror or interpret the movement.

#### **Following directions**

Students are in groups of 3. Choose one to be the “director.”

The director tells the others how to move, without using words. For instance, if he points down, the other 2 have to move downwards. If she tilts her head to the side, the other 2 move to the side, etc.

#### **Turn- taking**

Students are in groups of 3. Teacher says, “Make a triangle”

Once they are in a triangle shape, direct students to take turns making a movement, one at a time. When the teacher says “Go,” one person begins, and the person to the right makes the next movement, and so on. Each movement does not have to be connected to the movement before, but each must wait till the previous person is finished with before moving. Remind students to make only one movement at a time.

Students are in groups of 4. Teacher says, “Make a rectangle.” ©DanceAbility International – [www.danceability.com](http://www.danceability.com)

Students are in groups of 5. Teacher says, “Make a circle.”  
Once they are in a circle, students face in the same direction. The first person steps outward and makes an arm movement. Then, like dominos, all students copy that movement.

Students are in groups of 6. Teacher says, “Make a line.”  
Once they are in a line, students take turns making a movement, from the front of the line to the back. Students should try to make their actions a response to the movement of the person in front of them.

### **Closure (Link to performance)**

Observe the two performers and identify the emotions they express during the dance. Discuss the ways the emotions are expressed by the dancers.

How do the dancers use music during the performance?

How do the dancers use paraphrasing and turn-taking during the performance?

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### **Lesson 3 (Upper Elementary) Topic: Personal Expression/ creativity**

**Objective:** The learner will understand the value of personal physical expression for all children, including those with disabilities.

**Set:** Teacher leads a discussion about expression. For instance, “How does a dog show that it is happy? Right, wags its tail. How do people show different feelings? All people need to express themselves. Can people with physical disabilities express themselves? Today we’re going to do some activities that are fun ways for you to express yourself. There is no right or wrong way to do these movements. I’m going to call out suggestions, and you move when I say go. When I ring the bell (or any other noise-maker), you stop.”

### **Activities:**

Before we start, we need to understand personal space. [Students should spread out so that they can’t touch anyone else. Explain that these are individual movements, and that they should be careful not to bump into anyone.] Teacher calls out the following suggestions in any order. Give students enough time to explore the movement, then ring the bell for stopping.

Make yourself very, very tiny, as tiny as you can. Make yourself very, very large, as large as you can. Make your body into a straight shape.  
Make your body into a circle.

Move in a zig-zag line, at a medium speed.

Move sideways, quickly.

Move close to someone else, but do not touch anyone, as if you are a car on the highway. Move very slowly, as if you are stuck in quicksand and you want to get to shore.

Move lightly, as if you are on the moon and there is not much gravity.

Move as if your feet are very, very heavy.

Move as quietly as you can. Try not to make any sound at all.

Move like a spider, creeping and crawling.

Move like a monkey who is really happy.

Move like an elephant with a long, heavy trunk.

Move like a break-dancer

Move like a fish, and swim around the room.

Move like a happy puppy who just got let outside into the yard.

Move like you are a leaf blowing around in the wind.

Move like you are a snowflake, coming to earth softly.

### **Closure: (Link to Performance)**

Did you see the dancers express themselves during the performance? What do you think they were feeling while they were dancing?

[adapted from Linda Edwards, The Creative Arts: A Process Approach for Teachers and Children]

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### **Lesson 4 (Upper Elementary) Topic: Inclusion/Exclusion**

**Objective:** Students will be able to apply understanding of inclusion and exclusion by participating in a group problem-solving activity.

**Set:** Discuss their understanding of the meaning of the words inclusion and exclusion

### **Activity**

Students are divided into groups of 6.

Each group gets two, full-length, two-by-fours on the ground, along with 12 pieces of rope, each approximately 5 feet long.

Challenge the students to move the pieces of wood from the starting point to the ending point (approximately 20 feet). The rules are: no one may touch the floor. Anyone may touch the wood and the ropes.

(Note: there are many correct ways to solve this problem, including: (1) picking up one piece of wood and passing it along the line of students who are balanced on the other piece, and (2) standing facing front with one foot on each of the pieces of wood, like skis, with the ropes used to assist in lifting the “skis” off the ground.)

After the students solve the problem once, choose one person in each group to be hearing-impaired, one to be visually-impaired, and one to be orthopedically-impaired (can’t bear weight on one knee). Now they must solve the problem again, ensuring that all students are included, and still following the rules.

**Closure: (Link to performance)**

“If Emery were in this class, how could we make sure that he was included in all of our activities?” List some activities and have children brainstorm about ways to include him.

[Note: If a student in the class uses a wheelchair, change the rules so that all children can participate in some way. For instance, sitting in a wheelchair “counts” as “not touching” the floor. Also, a child in a wheelchair can be the verbal leader (like a coxswain for a crew), calling out when to move in unison.]

Source: ETC (Nancy Meltzoff, Education and Training Consultants)

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**Lesson 5 (Upper Elementary) Topic: Interdependence**

**Objective:** The learner will apply principles of interdependence through participating in a large group activity.

**Set:** Has anyone ever seen the inside of a watch or a clock? Can you describe it? Can you describe the insides of any machine? In a machine, all of the parts must work together. Today, we’re going to work together to make machines. You have to pay close attention to the other members of your groups so your machines function correctly.

**Activities:**

**The Machine**

First, put children into groups of 4. One student makes one movement in place, and one sound, and then repeats. For instance, the child might lift up her right arm and say “Whoops!” She performs the movement exactly the same way, time after time. The second student finds a way to move in response to the first student, so they appear to work together. The third and fourth students join in. When the whole machine is operating, there are four movements and four sounds.

Once the students can do this, ask 2 groups to get together to form groups of 8.

Repeat in groups of 16, or until everyone is “moving” in one large machine/group.

## **Closure (Link to Performance):**

How did the dancers work together? Think of specific movements they did together and then specific movements they did alone.

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### **Lesson 6 (Upper Elementary)**

**Topic:** Understanding Disability /Is-ability (Labels and Assumptions)

**Objective:** The learner will understand how labels can influence our judgments about people, and will recognize the importance of getting to know people before making judgments about them, by participating in a group game.

**Set:** Show an object, such as a stapler, with a label taped on it. “Can we all agree that this is a stapler?” Can we use labels like this for describing people? Think about this, and write down your ideas. Children write for 5 minutes, or discuss with a partner. We’re going to do an activity and then think about this again.

(Labels are a useful way to organize information about people and events, but they all too often become substitutes for thought and experience. When labels are used as the sole source of information about other people, they limit our understanding and describe only one aspect of a person. This activity illustrates how misleading labels can be when applied to people.)

### **Activities**

1. Prepare the lesson by printing one copy of the "People Tags" page for every four students. Cut up the page so that there are 4 people cards (Uncle Fred, Aunt Jennifer,

etc.), 8

2.

3. \* \* \* \* 4. 5. \*

\* \*

6.

object cards (dictionary, clock, etc.), and 4 fact cards in each set.

Divide students into groups of four. Give each group a set of 4 people cards and 8 object cards. Do not give out the fact cards yet.

Tell students to imagine they are doing holiday shopping for 4 relatives: Uncle Fred, who rides in a motorcycle gang, and is hearing-impaired

Aunt Jennifer, a librarian, who uses a wheelchair  
Cousin George, a Navy recruit  
Great-Aunt Phyllis, a senior citizen

Ask students to choose a gift for each relative from the 8 object cards. Then, after a few minutes, ask students:

Who gave Uncle Fred the leather jacket? Aunt Jennifer the coffee mug? Cousin George the tattoo? Great-Aunt Phyllis the rocking chair?  
How did you decide who would get each gift?  
How did labels like "senior citizen" and "librarian" and "disabled" influence your choices?

Pass out the fact cards and give students time to use this information in making their final gift choices.

After students have finished deciding on gifts, ask the following questions:

1. What were the final gift choices you made, and why?
2. How did the new information change your gift choices?
3. What happens when we rely too much on labels?

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4. If you had to choose a gift for someone you didn't know well, what could you do to make a good choice?
5. If someone new joined our class and we wanted to make that person feel welcome, what could we do?
6. Are there any other times when it would help to learn more about someone before making a judgment?

**Closure: (Link to performance)**

Go back to your ideas about labels. What do you think now? Do you have any assumptions about the dancers? Did your assumptions change after you saw the performance?

This lesson adapted from *Looking at Ourselves and Others*, U.S. Peace Corps. Website:  
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## ***Definitions for Teachers, A Guide***

### **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**

**Autism** means a child who has a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

**Deaf-blindness** means a child who has a combination of hearing and visual impairments that causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or blindness.

**Deafness** means a child who has a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.

**Developmental disability (DD)** means a child between the ages of 3 through 8 years old, who has a developmental delay in physical development, cognitive development, communication, social or emotional development or adaptive development.

**Emotional Disturbance (ED)** means a child who has one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree: inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; and inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

**Hearing Impairment** means a child who has impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating which adversely affects their educational performance.

**Mental Retardation (MR)** means a child who has a significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.

**Multiple Disabilities** means a child who has two or more disabling conditions which in combination causes such severe educational needs that the child requires intensive programming and cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments.

**Orthopedic Impairments** means a child who has an orthopedic impairment due to congenital anomaly, disease or other causes.

**Other Health Impairments (OHI)** means a child who has a chronic or acute health problem that result in limited strength, vitality or alertness including but not limited to: asthma, ADD/ADHD, diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia.

**Specific Learning Disability (SLD/LD)** means a child who has a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations, including such conditions a perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

**Speech or Language Impairment** means a child who has a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, and/or voice impairment.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** means a child who has acquired an injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability and/or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects educational performance. This includes a child who has an open or closed head injury that results in an impairment in one or more of the following areas: cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical function, information processing, and speech.

**Visual Impairment** means a child who has a visual impairment, which even with correction adversely affects the student's educational performance, including children who are partially sighted or blind.

Definitions of IDEA Disability Categories from the Disability Law Center of Alaska:  
<http://www.dlcak.org/publications/specialeducation/08AppA.htm>