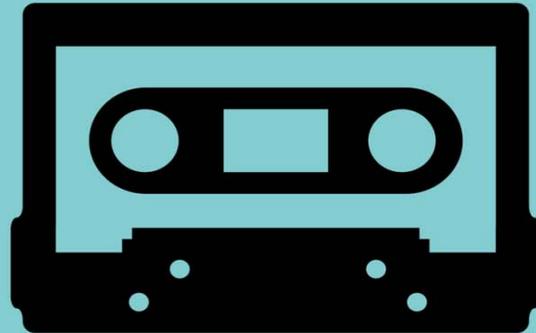


THE  
COMPLETE GUIDE  
TO MUSIC & MOVEMENT:

A RESOURCE for Teachers &  
Homeschool Parents



CREATED BY:

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[www.elementarymusicteacher.com](http://www.elementarymusicteacher.com)

# WHO AM I?

I'm James. Glad you're here.



## What I do:

- Public School music teacher in New York State
- Conductor for public school and select, All-County choruses
- Published composer with Carl Fischer Music
- Clinician presenting on movement, folk dance & storytelling

## What I've studied:

- Master in Music Education, *SUNY Fredonia*
- Bachelor of Music Education, *SUNY College at Buffalo*
- Music Learning Theory Elementary Level 1, *SUNY Buffalo*
- Orff-Schulwerk Level 1, *Anna Maria College*
- Orff-Schulwerk Level 2, *University of St. Thomas*

# WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

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# WHY MOVEMENT?

**People move.** That's what we're supposed to do.

From the time we're born, we explore the world by interacting with the physical space around us. Young children reach for things they want or push away things they don't. These basic expressions of movement soon turn into more artistic expressions as young children naturally respond to music with bouncing and wiggling.

Teachers can harness this innate tendency and use movement to facilitate learning. Doing so promotes a heightened state of awareness and engagement, as students become completely engrossed in what their bodies are doing.

**Get the body going, and the brain will follow.**

Learning kinesthetically (with the body) enables a direct learning experience that does not depend on listening to somebody talking. Children need to gain experiences by doing, and those experiences are the building blocks of learning.

Carl Orff is known to have often quoted the ancient Chinese proverb:

**“Tell me, I forget. Show me, I remember.  
Involve me, I understand.”**

Movement is one great way to “involve me.”

# MOVEMENT AND MUSIC

## Rhythm

Beyond the power of movement to get students involved, the specific elements of movement I'll mention here have direct ties to learning music. (Especially rhythm.)

In fact, **rhythmic accuracy is nearly impossible in stillness.**

Why? Because our ears don't fully understand rhythm without the help of our bodies.

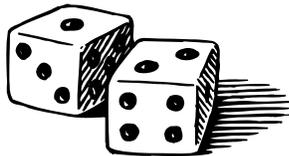
**The beat is not something that you hear;  
it is something that you feel.**

The same applies to all rhythm learning.

## Keep reading!

I'm going to outline some key concepts to help you organize and facilitate musically-meaningful movement experiences!

# YOUR TURN!



**Q: Let's take a minute to reflect. What are some ways that you are already using kinesthetic learning in your classroom?**

A:

**Q: Have any ideas already popped into your head for a new way to get your students moving? Write them down here.**

A:

# LET'S START WITH LABAN

So, where do we start?

## Laban Movement Analysis

Many music teachers, including me, have found it useful to reference the ideas of Rudolf Laban. Laban and his student/collaborator, Irmgard Bartenieff, developed and refined a system of analyzing movement. Their ideas have proven useful in the realms of dance, conducting, theatre, sports, music, etc.

Laban has 4 major concepts:

1. Body
2. Effort (4 Effort Factors: Flow, Weight, Time and Space)
3. Shape, and
4. Space

## Let's get to work!

I want you to be able to start incorporating movement in your classroom right away, so I'm going to focus on numbers 1 & 2 in the next few pages.

Read on!

# 1. LABAN & BODY AWARENESS

## **What is it?**

Body Awareness is understanding how it feels to involve the various parts of our bodies in movement. This could be individual body parts in isolation, combinations, or the whole body.

## **How do we explore it?**

In a music class, I find it useful to begin with body awareness. Students generally are not aware of how it feels to move their various body parts. Draw student attention to the head, back, elbows, arms, or shoulders and encourage them to engage that part in movement.

For example, you could say: “Show me a dance that only moves one finger. Now, show me a hand dance. Now, an elbow dance...”

Body awareness pieces in a music class require little explanation for students or teacher to immediately get involved and explore movement in specific new ways.

## **Why do we teach it?**

Movement is done with the body. Activating and expanding body awareness broadens the scope of student movement. At the same time, it increases the musical benefit to all other movement we’ll do.

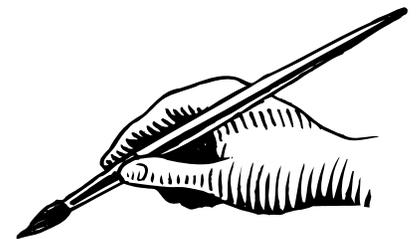
## 2. LABAN & EFFORT FACTORS

### A. FLOW

#### WHAT IT IS

**Flow** is the element of music that connects all other movements and it is always present. It is described as **bound** or **free**. It means a continuous, **free**, uninterrupted movement. **Bound flow** is continuous as well, but it is more limited in scope.

#### HOW TO DO IT



Think about puffy clouds rolling through the sky. Or think about what happens inside a lava lamp. Imagine drawing meandering lines on a giant wall with the pencil continuously moving to make the lines wherever your whim takes them. That is **Free Flow**.

On the other hand, imagine tracing a picture that is already on the wall. The pencil will still be moving continuously, but it is **bound** to the path it is tracing. This is **Bound Flow**.

#### WHY WE TEACH IT

Moving with **free flow** is an important way for people to understand rhythm; the passing of time; and to perceive the space around us. It enables our perception of the beat. If children can't perform movement on the beat, the precursor foundational step is to move with **free flow**.

## B. WEIGHT

### WHAT IT IS

**Weight** is the degree to which a movement resists gravity or polarity. **Weight** can be **Light** or **Strong**.

### HOW TO DO IT

Imagine a giant magnet is pulling you, and you are resisting against it. Your muscles will be active and tensed. This is the quality of **Strong Weight**.

Now imagine you are floating like a feather in the wind or you are carefully keeping a bubble afloat. This is **Light Weight**.

I can always tell when I'm using **Strong Weight** if I feel my muscles engaging. When I feel effortless and less tense, I know I'm using **Light Weight**.

### WHY WE TEACH IT

**Weight is what makes the beat happen.**



At regular intervals of time, we feel more weight. We might name some instances in the music the “strong beat” or the “down beat.” Those names describe a sensation of weight.

Feeling the extremes of **Strong** and **Light Weight** allow students to become more accurate in the finer perceptions of the beat in music.

## C. TIME



### WHAT IT IS

**Time** is the duration of a movement. Laban describes time in movement as **Sudden** or **Sustained**. **Sudden** movements cover more physical space sooner than **Sustained** movements.

### HOW TO DO IT

Imagine that you are a bubble inflating. While you are steadily getting bigger, you are moving with **Sustained** Time. When you burst, you are moving with **Sudden** Time.

Other examples of **Sustained** movements include: a sailboat gliding across a calm lake or honey pouring from a jar.

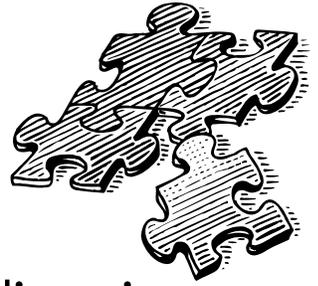
**Sudden** movements might look like: pulling your hand back from a hot stove or splashing in a puddle of water.

### WHY WE TEACH IT

There cannot be rhythm without time. The beat and meter both exist because of the interaction between **Weight** and **Time**. Demonstrating a steady beat through movement is the foundation of all rhythm learning.

The more experience students have in the extremes of **Sustained** and **Sudden** movement, the clearer their sense of tempo, beat and meter will be.

## D. SPACE



### WHAT IT IS

There are 2 kinds of space we can talk about when discussing movement and music. The first space is one of Laban's 4 major concepts. The second, that we'll talk about now, is an Effort Factor and involves **Direct** vs. **Indirect** movement.

### HOW TO DO IT

Imagine that your hand is an arrow shooting through the air, or that you are traveling along a straight road. That is **Direct** movement.

Now imagine that your hand is a bee buzzing around or that you are traveling along a curved road. That is **Indirect** movement.

### WHY WE TEACH IT

Demonstrating a steady beat with accuracy involves the coordination of **Weight, Time and Space**. For example, in order for students to stomp "on the beat," they must move their feet through **space** so that their strongest **weight** lands on the ground at the same **time** as the strongest **weight** in the music (the beat).

Rhythmic understanding is a function of our bodies. Exploring these extremes of **Space** helps students gain the coordination necessary to demonstrate and experience rhythmic accuracy through movement.

# YOUR TURN!



**Q: Reflect on which of these 4 Effort Factors are the easiest, and also most challenging, for you.**

**If you aren't already using these in your classroom, explore your initial reactions. Which of these do you expect will come most easily to you?**

A:

## High Five!

OK, you're done with the "technical" stuff.

Let's get into some practical advice.

# MY TOP 5 TIPS FOR THE MOVEMENT TEACHER

## 1. DO DRESS TO MOVE

You should think about what you're going to wear so you can be a good model for your students. You don't want any undue restrictions. Make sure you can breathe and that you're comfortable. Make sure your feet can move comfortably. (Or, don't wear any shoes at all!)

## 2. DO STRETCH & WARM UP

It's a big mistake to jump into active movement without some stretching! The last thing you want is a pulled muscle halfway through your lesson! If you're able, you can try a few of my favorite stretches:

- Put one foot slightly in front of the other & lean forward, bending the front leg. You should feel a stretch in the front of your rear leg.
- Put your right heel slightly forward & raise your right toes. Lean forward. You should feel stretching in the back of your front leg.

### **3. DO BE CONFIDENT**

Explore these movements yourself before teaching them so you can be a clear model of the movement concepts. Also, practice will eliminate the tendency to become self-conscious. (If you're self-conscious, your students will be, too!)

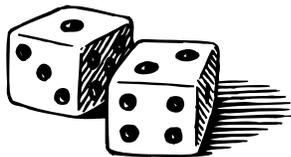
### **4. DO KEEP A LONG BACK**

Your spine is your center. It impacts the movement of your entire body. Consciously elongating the spine opens up your body to expressive movement. My tip: experiment with a curved spine and then a long spine. On the long spine, think of a string pulling from the top of your head.

### **5. DON'T WEAR YOURSELF OUT**

Rest assured, your students have more energy than you! You will want to be sure to take some calculated breaks during the course of the class. (Pacing yourself will ensure that you don't expend all of your energy in the first 10 minutes of the day!) You can conserve energy by releasing tension in your movements. Once you've done some modeling, you can also take a moment to just watch the students move. This has an added benefit of giving you a chance to assess their progress.

# YOUR TURN!



So far you've learned the *why* and *what* of movement in the classroom, and also - what makes for a great teacher!

Let's focus on that for a minute. Take some time to think about your own skills and record your thoughts below:

**Q: What do you think is your greatest strength as a teacher of music & movement? What do you already bring to the table?**

A:

**Q: Do you have a skill in mind that you would like improved? Where are your opportunities for growth?**

A:

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

**Here we go!**

Let me show you step-by-step how I incorporate movement in my classroom. (You'll find the notations for my original pieces in the next few pages!)

## **Definition: A and B sections**

You'll notice, on the next page, I refer to the A and B sections.

In case you're unfamiliar, **A Section** refers to a unit of music - much like a stanza in a poem. The **B section** is the part that will come next. You will see this specifically in the song, **Turn Yourself Around**.

## **Why we will alternate between 2 pieces**

Juxtaposing two pieces allows students to experience a ton of musical and movement contrast.

## **We learn what something is by learning what it isn't.**

Musically, the pieces we will use in this activity represent Duple/Minor in "Turn Yourself Around" and Triple/Major in "Gentle Breeze."

They allow the movement contrast of Sustained, Light, Indirect movements in "Gentle Breeze" & Sudden, Strong, Direct movements in "Turn Yourself Around." Additionally, "Turn Yourself Around" gives students the opportunity for Body Awareness exploration.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## 1. “Turn Yourself Around” A Section

Teacher demonstrates the actions for students, who will quickly be able to participate. Put hands high in the air on the word “UP” (the down-beat) and down on the word “DOWN.” If you feel the beat with a movement in your back, that is a good thing to model.

## 2. B Section

Perform the action (clapping) on the beat (quarter-note pulse). Change “Let me see that Clap” to a variety of actions that take place on the microbeat or macrobeat (i.e. “let me see that stomp,” “hop,” “jump,” “slide”). The piece can be used for Body Awareness by changing “Hands up” to “Elbows up,” “Head up,” etc.

## 3. Gentle Breeze

Interject “Gentle Breeze,” and demonstrate a smooth, free flow movement, like a leaf or snowflake blowing in the breeze.

## 4. Alternating and Ending

Pause for a moment before going back into “Turn Yourself Around.” Go back and forth between “Turn Yourself Around” and “Gentle Breeze”.

Consider ending A section with “Then you sit right down” instead of “turn yourself around”.

# TURN YOURSELF AROUND

## Turn Yourself Around

James M DesJardins



Hands up, hands down, and turn your-self a-round. Hands up, hands down, and



turn your-self a-round. Hands up, hands down, and turn your-self a-round. Hands



up, hands down, and turn your-self a-round. Let me see that clap. (oo, oo) — Let me see that



clap. (mm hm) — Let me see that clap. (yeah, yeah) and stop. Let me see that



stomp. (oo, oo) Let me see that stomp. (mm hm) Let me see that stomp. (yeah, yeah) and stop.

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**P.S.**

[Visit my shop](#) if you're interested in a 3-min. recording of this song!

# GENTLE BREEZE

## Gentle Breeze

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# FURTHER READING

- First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children  
Mary Joyce, 1993
- Laban/Batenieff Institute of Movement Studies  
[www.limsonline.org](http://www.limsonline.org)
- Laban for All  
Jean Newlove, 2003
- The Book of Movement Exploration: Can you move like this?  
John Feierabend and Jane Kahan, 2004

# WHAT NOW?

## LET'S CONNECT!

I would love to chat more with you about movement in the classroom! You can find me here:

### FACEBOOK

[www.facebook.com/elementarymusicteacher](http://www.facebook.com/elementarymusicteacher)

### TWITTER

[@jm\\_des](https://twitter.com/jm_des)

### PINTEREST

[www.pinterest.com/jamestheemt](http://www.pinterest.com/jamestheemt)

### BLOG

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