

10 of Our Favourite Regulating Experiences to Calm and Connect



1. Body percussion

Sitting or standing in a circle, create simple, repetitive rhythmic patterns using a variety of sounds such as clapping hands, slapping legs, patting chest or clicking, and have the students copy each rhythmic pattern. Allow time for most or all of the students to master each pattern and enjoy the sound as a group before you move on to the next rhythm.

2. Two part body percussion

Body percussion as above, but this time divide the class into two groups, teach each group a different rhythmic pattern, and then put the two together.

3. Cross Patterning

Have the students copy you as you perform a variety of cross patterning movements to music.

4. Mirroring

Standing in a circle, perform a series of rhythmic movements to music and have students copy you as if they are your reflection in a mirror. Next, give a number of different students the opportunity to lead the movements. You might also have someone stand in the centre of the circle and close their eyes while a leader is chosen. Once they open their eyes, their job is to try and guess who is initiating the movements while the rest of the group tries to mirror the leader without indicating who it is. It is important the focus here is on the ability of the students in the circle to work well together as a group, not their ability to trick the student in the centre.

5. Back drawing

Sitting in a circle with everyone facing in a clockwise direction, lead the students through a series of rhythmic movements they can create on the back of the person in front of them. It works well to tell a story through your movements, e.g. a storm, making a pizza, or something related to current class activities.

6. Storm

Standing or sitting in a circle, lead the students to create the sound of a storm using only body percussion. Take your time as you move through each stage and narrate what is happening. The progression is as follows: wind (rubbing hands together), drops of rain (slow clicking with fingers or tongues), rain increases (faster clicking), rain increases (clapping), rain increases (slapping thighs), heavy rain and thunder (stomping feet). Reverse the sequence as the storm passes. You can also move through the sounds by having them change one person at a time around the circle.

7. Shake a hand...

A movement sequence is taught by adding to it one movement at a time with the students copying what you say and do. Each time you say and do all of the previous movements then add the new movement. As the sequence progresses, the students must remember the new movement plus the movements that came before it. The sequence can be performed with or without music. For example: Shake a hand (right) - Shake a hand (left); Shake a foot (right) - Shake a foot (left); Stomp; Clap; Pose (e.g. Dab).

8. Progressive Shake and Muscle Relaxation

Work through the body from toes to head shaking out each part in turn. You can also set challenges such as shaking two different body parts together, shaking the whole body, shaking as you reach up high and then down low, shaking as you stretch your arms and legs out wide and then pull your body in tight. Next, have the students tense and relax each part of their body in turn from the toes up to the head, finishing by tensing and relaxing their whole body.

9. Musical Statues

10. Walk/Stop

Decide on six instructions that are introduced two at a time. For example: Walk/Stop; Clap/Jump; Turn around/say your name out loud. Each time two instructions are introduced have the students begin by following them exactly, and then swap them e.g. walk then means stop, and stop means walk. Work towards swapping all six instructions.