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### **Dance activities workshop (Primary)**

These activities use dance to help students focus and reflect on themes linked with the **Legacy of Hope** and the experiences of Holocaust survivors but without going into horrific detail. You know your own students, their age, interests and abilities and it is therefore important for you to decide how much detail you would like to give. You should find the stories of Ben Helfgott (<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/ben-helfgott/read>) and Hugo Gryn (<http://education.hmd.org.uk/case-studies/hugo-gryn/read>) helpful and you may want to share part of them before the lesson or you could show the short film for HMD 2010 (<http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/films/hmd-2010-the-legacy-of-hope>). The themes of this workshop are LOSS (of freedom), HOPE, EQUALITY and finally STRENGTH and SURVIVAL.

This is a practical movement session and you will need to work in a large space, with everyone wearing appropriate clothing and footwear.

### **Warm Up**

**Ask** the students to travel through the space – weaving between each other. **Tell** everyone to begin slowly but then **ask** them to increase the speed to increase the heart rate. **Introduce** the following words one at a time with the corresponding action and then, as the students travel, **call out** the words in a random order:

LOSS - **Ask** the students to crouch to the floor. When you **introduce** the word – **ask** them to think about loss of freedom – the feeling of being trapped. Not being allowed to go beyond the walls of a ghetto, a camp or a prison.

HOPE – **Instruct** everyone to make a deep lunge, as though they are reaching for something far away.

EQUALITY or FAIRNESS – **Challenge** everyone to find a partner, in super quick time, then stand side by side and interlink inside arms, with feet strong position hip width distance apart and with outside arms stretched to outside at shoulder height making a symmetrical (equal) shape.

STRENGTH AND SURVIVAL – **Encourage** everyone to get together into groups of 6 as quickly as possible and make a shape of different levels, some people high, some medium and some low.

### **Development**

#### **LOSS**

**Ask** everyone to work in groups of 4 and think about the one thing / activity that they most like doing – playing football, dancing, swimming, walking the dog etc. Working alone initially, **invite** the

students to think of an action for their favourite thing to do. **Encourage** individuals to abstract the movement away from mime by doing an action in slow motion, doing it at a different level, exaggerating the size of the action. Now **tell** everyone to learn each other's movements and link the four actions together. Spread out into a space and perform in unison.

Now **suggest** that students imagine that, for some reason, they no longer have the freedom or space to do what they wish, when they wish. These activities may stay alive in their dreams but they won't physically be allowed to do these things. Or if they do and they get caught, they could get into serious trouble. Challenge everyone to repeat their movements but make them smaller, restricting the size of the movement as if trying to do the dance on a really packed bus. Tell the students they are trying to still get a feel for the activity but without being noticed by other people.

**Share** performances of both versions of the dance sequence – large and small.

## **HOPE**

**Talk** about the word 'hope' and **suggest** that it can be linked with thoughts of reaching for, dreaming of, wishing for something ...

**Tell** everyone to start on one side of the room and working alone initially, imagine what they 'hope for' is on the other side of the room. Changing levels, individuals must travel across the room doing a series of improvised stretching, reaching, rolling, sliding, lunging, turning, leaping etc. **Ask** the students to imagine that just as they get close, they feel as if what they are longing for is being moved further away – **discuss** how this might feel – does this make everyone more determined, frustrated, sad, angry, despairing and might some people feel like giving up?

Now **encourage** everyone to work with a partner – they must help each other across the space. They are both longing for the same thing and must support each other to reach the shared goal. If one person said that they would experience a sense of giving up, how could the other carry or support them? When the students are half way across the space, **ask** them to do a counterbalance – a shape showing that they are supporting one another on their long journey of **HOPE**. After the students have improvised, **ask** them to set the movements so that their travelling phrase is the same each time they do it. This development of the **Hope** activity will also represent **Strength and Survival**.

## **FAIRNESS / EQUALITY**

Working in pairs, **challenge** everyone to create symmetrical shapes – where both sides of the shape are even / the same.

Shape A - One mirroring (face to face)

Shape B - One mirroring (back to back)

Shape C - One mirroring (side to side with a point of contact at the side shoulder to shoulder)

Then **instruct** the students to link the shapes together with the following actions performed in unison:

Shape A – STRETCH HIGH – Shape B – TURN – Shape C – JUMP

### **STRENGTH AND SURVIVAL**

**Arrange** everyone into teams of 6 with each person queued up one behind the other in their teams on one side of the room. Teams must work together to get to the other side. The first student makes a shape (which must be high, medium or low in level), the person at the back of the queue must overtake the first student and make a shape in contact with this student that is a different level (so if the first student makes a high shape, the next shape made by the overtaking person can be either medium or low). The student at the back of the queue comes to the front and makes a shape connected onto the group shape that is forming, once again at a different level. Continue, until all the members of the team have reached the other side. By working together and sticking together everyone will make it to the other side. **Point out** that this activity also demonstrates that despite being different (represented in this activity as difference in levels), we should celebrate and respect the differences between us.

### **Cool Down**

**Ask** everyone to walk through the space at a fast pace, repeating the warm up activity responding to the teacher calling out the different words LOSS (of freedom), HOPE, EQUALITY and STRENGTH and SURVIVAL.

Slow the pace down so everyone performs the actions slowly.

Finally, **bring the class together** into a circle. Encourage everyone to stretch high and then roll down through the spine vertebrae at a time until the body is hanging over the legs, softly bend the knees and then roll up through the spine vertebrae at a time until standing. Repeat.

Lunge forward into a lunge to stretch the calves.

**Tell the group that they have worked hard and that through thinking about LOSS (of freedom), HOPE, EQUALITY and STRENGTH and SURVIVAL, in their dance activities, they have been part of the Legacy of Hope for HMD 2010.**