



2025 member conference



saturday

welcome & share time

9:15am – 10:00am

(play)fully loaded: creativity, play, and
problem-solving

10:00am – 11:00am

finding the balance

11:00am – 12:00pm

----- 45 min lunch break -----

ask Miss Bev anything

12:45pm – 2:00pm

practical: teaching other styles the LNL way

2:00pm – 3:00pm

----- 15 min break -----

encouragement vs. praise workshop

3:15pm – 4:00pm

management: studio spotlight
Tiina Hazelett: Managing a LNL team

**teacher
reflection**

4:00pm – 5:00pm

wrap up & awards

5:00pm – 5:30pm

sunday

welcome & share time

9:15am – 9:30am

collaboration and inclusion: a parents'
perspective

9:30am – 10:30am

----- 15 min break -----

practical: all new Leap 'N Learn 3 year olds

10:45am – 11:45am


management only session


11:45am – 12:45pm



Play-fully loaded teaching


creativity, play, and problem-solving





A wise woman once said...

How can we make sure every exercise is fully loaded, so that every part of their brain is being activated?



In this session

Creativity





- stretch and flex our creative muscles

Play

- types of play
- your brain and body (and soul!) on play



Problem solving

- why it matters
- what prunes and what promotes problem solving skills

When was the last time you:

- ... were creative?**
- ... solved a problem?**
- ...played?**



Activity 1

Read the extract from The Little Prince

Think about themes of creativity, imagination, capability, adult-child relationships...

Pair: discuss with a partner

Share: with the group.

10 minutes





Creativity



the ability to form novel
and valuable ideas or works
using one's imagination.

the use of imagination or
original ideas to create
something; inventiveness.

creativity

the tendency to generate or recognize ideas,
alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in
solving problems, communicating with others, and
entertaining ourselves and others.



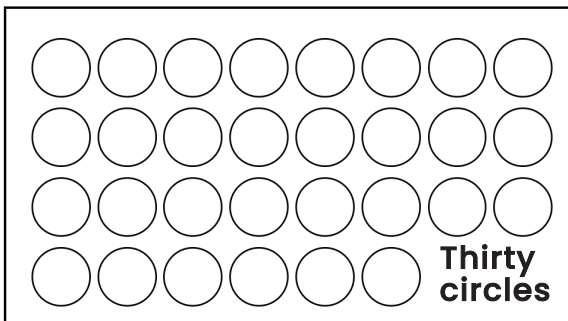
**Creativity embeds knowledge so that it can
become practice. We move what we're learning
from our heads to our hearts through our hands.
We are born makers, and creativity is the
ultimate act of integration—it is how we fold our
experiences into our being.**

Brene Brown, [Braving the Wilderness](#), [The Reckoning](#), [The Surrender](#), [The Revolution](#)



**When was the last time I let myself
create just for the sake of it?**

CopyMasters





Creativity as iterative

- iterative: doing something again and again to improve it
- creativity is an iterative process of experimentation, learning, and refinement
- actively engage with creative challenges, embrace feedback, continually improve through practice
 - not about perfection, it's about practice opportunities

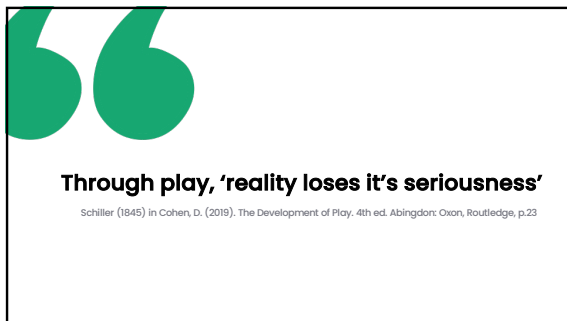


How can I bring more creativity into my teaching?

How can I change my teaching practice to bring more creativity into my student's lives?

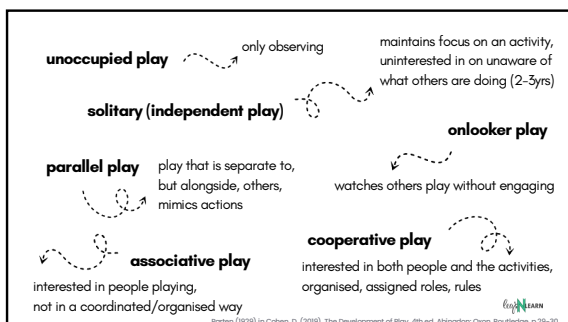




Play and development

- supports whole child development
 - making choices based on make-believe contexts – cognitive and social skill development
 - active
- what happens in the brain
 - develop schemas
 - practice scripts
 - experiment with actions and reactions.





Contest is part of play, but competition isn't.

A contest consists of a challenge that involves putting people at odds with one another. Competition takes that one step further, requiring a winner and a loser. Competition creates pressure to come out on top and attaches self-worth to victory. For example, a friendly game of Monopoly can be a contest as long as no one really cares who wins or loses. However, the moment that winning becomes everything, it turns into a competition, creating stress and tension.

<https://www.shortform.com/blog/brene-brown-creativity/>

The power of play...



Doug Dietz - medical imaging designer

80% of children scared and required sedation ... to just 10%

<https://www.shortform.com/blog/brene-brown-creativity/>

**Instead of forcing the child
to suit the environment,
make the environment
meet the needs of the child.**

**How have you harnessed the
power of play and imagination
to solve problems?**

**How have you adapted your
class to suit your students?**



leap LEARN

Problem-solving

leap LEARN

What is a problem your students experience in class?



EasyLearn

Problem-solving

- achieving a goal by overcoming obstacles where the solution isn't immediately obvious.

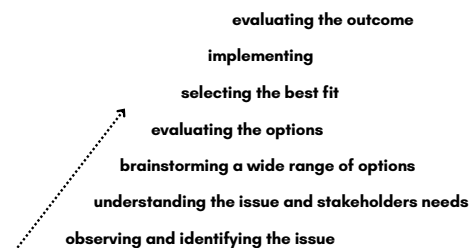


- applying a pre-set solution to a problem
- answers to routine questions
- checking knowledge



- process-driven (how)
- thinking conceptually
- focused on a direction rather than an answer

EasyLearn



Pruning problem-solving skills

Doing it for them

- thinking and planning
- props and formations
- answering questions
- e.g. hand-holding

Preventing failure

- need to experience natural or logical consequences



EasyMaze

Promoting problem-solving skills

Model problem-solving

- think aloud, make your thought processes clear
- don't just tell, show it
- demonstrate how to learn from mistakes to refine solutions

Make it real

- connect to real world, practical situations

Encourage collaboration

- facilitate discussions

Provide opportunities for reflection

- debrief



**Safer dance spaces
make this possible!**

Small changes

Patience

- pause, wait.
- give space and processing time
- silence is ok
- rephrase if needed

Relinquish control

- problem solving requires experimentation - experiments fail.
- let it go, let them try, let them fail, let them learn.
- you don't need to have all the answers, you shouldn't always be providing them
- not having it perfect/right IS the process

EasyMaze

What is the problem?

Have you been pruning problem-solving skills or learning opportunities without realising it?

What could you change to promote problem-solving skills?



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Instead of delivering a class of exercises, what would it look like if we delivered a class filled with little challenges?

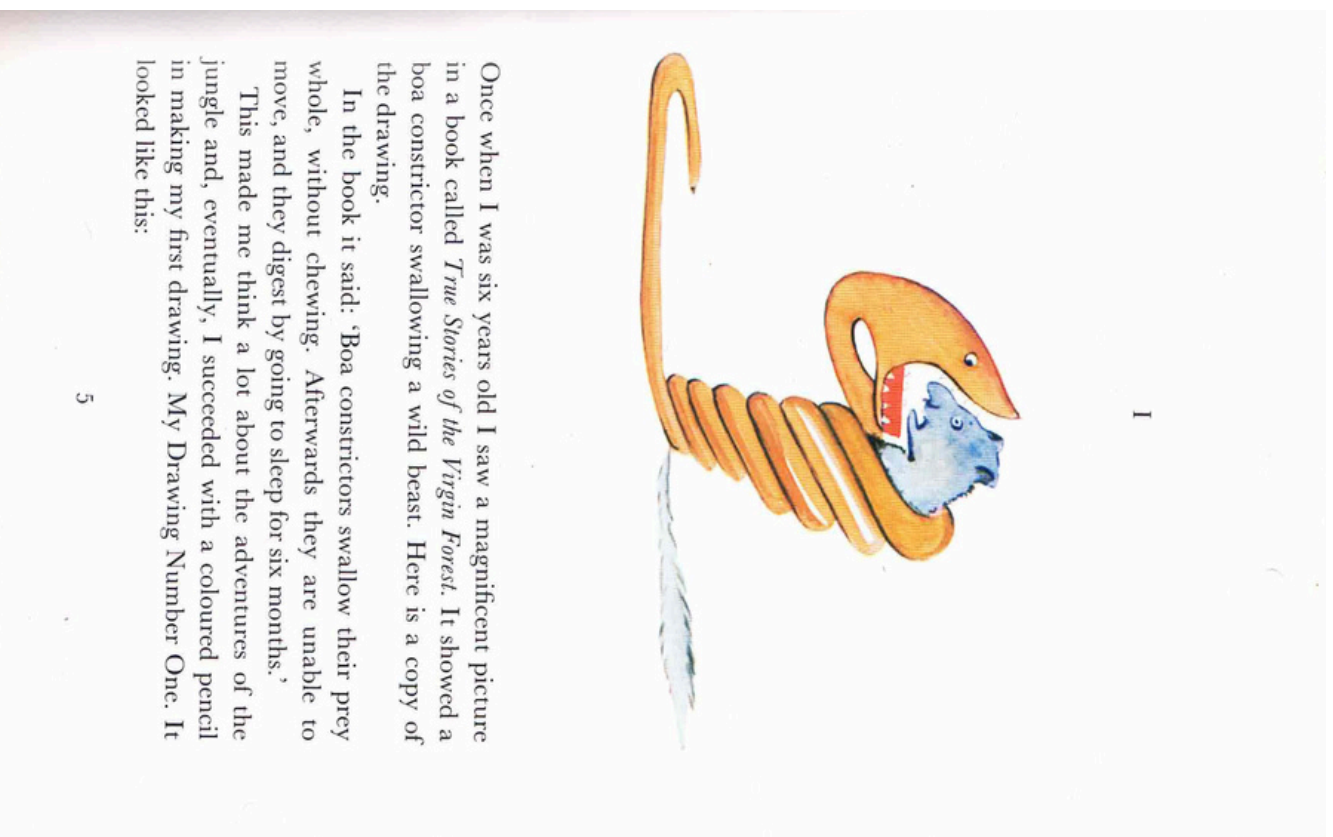
(Play)fully loaded teaching

Read the extract from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's 'The Little Prince' (the last page has a short segment which is optional).

Think about themes of creativity, imagination, capability, adult-child relationships...

Pair up and discuss with a partner

Share with the group.





I showed my masterpiece to the grown-ups, and asked if my drawing frightened them.

'Why would a hat frighten anyone?' they answered. My drawing was not of a hat. It was of a boa constrictor digesting an elephant. So then I drew the inside of the boa constrictor, for the benefit of the grown-ups. (Grown-ups always need explanations.) My Drawing Number Two looked like this:



The grown-ups now advised me to give up drawing boa constrictors altogether, from the inside or the outside, and devote myself instead to geography, history, arithmetic and grammar. So it was that, at the age of six, I gave up a wonderful career as a painter. I had been discouraged by the failure of my Drawing Number One and my Drawing Number Two. Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is exhausting for children always and forever to be giving explanations.

I had to choose a different career, then, so I learned how to fly aeroplanes. I have flown all over the world. And geography, I will admit, has served me very well. At a glance I can distinguish China from Arizona. Which is very useful if you get lost in the night.

In the course of my life I have therefore had many dealings with many important people. I have lived a great deal among grown-ups. I have observed them from close up. This has not greatly improved my opinion of them.

Whenever I came across one who seemed to me at all clear-headed, I would try showing my Drawing Number One, which I always kept by me. I wanted to find out if this was somebody with real understanding. But the answer would always be: 'That is a hat.' In which case I would not talk to that person about boa constrictors, or virgin forests, or stars. I would place myself on their level. I would talk about bridge and golf, about politics and neckties. And the grown-up would be very pleased to have made the acquaintance of such a sensible fellow.

II

So I kept my own company, without anyone whom I could really talk to, until six years ago, when I made a forced landing in the Sahara desert. Something had broken in my engine. And as I had neither mechanic nor passengers with me, I braced myself to attempt a difficult repair job all alone. It was a matter of life or death: I had barely enough drinking water to last a week.

On the first night, then, I went to sleep on the sand a thousand miles from all human habitation. I was more isolated than a shipwrecked man on a raft in mid-ocean. So imagine my surprise to be woken at daybreak by a funny little voice saying:

'If you please – draw me a sheep!'

'What!'

'Draw me a sheep . . .'

I leapt to my feet, completely thunderstruck. I rubbed my eyes slowly. I looked around slowly. And then I saw a most extraordinary little fellow, who stood there solemnly watching me. Here is the best likeness that, later on, I was able to make of him. The drawing is certainly far less delightful than the original. But that is not my fault. I had been discouraged by the grown-ups in my career as a painter, when I was six years old, and had never learned to draw anything – except the insides of boas and the outsides of boas.

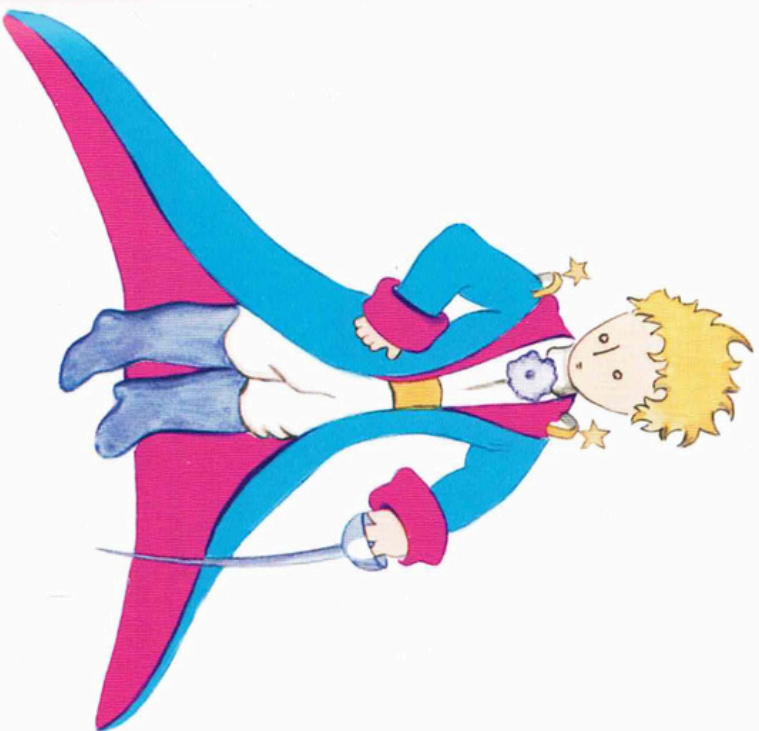
Now I was staring at this apparition before me, my eyes popping out of my head. Remember, I was a thousand miles from all human habitation. Yet this little fellow seemed neither to have lost his way, nor to be dying of exhaustion, or hunger, or thirst, or fright. Nothing about him suggested a child astray in the middle of the desert, a thousand miles from all human habitation. When I finally found my voice, I said:

'But – but what are you doing here?'

To which he merely repeated, very slowly, as though it were a matter of great consequence:

'If you please – draw me a sheep . . .'

When a mystery is too overwhelming, you do not dare to question it. Absurd as it might seem to me, a thousand



Here is the best likeness that, later on, I was able to make of him.



miles from any inhabited place and in danger of death, I took a sheet of paper and a fountain pen out of my pocket. Then I remembered that at school I had only properly studied geography, history, arithmetic and grammar; so I told the little fellow (with a touch of irritation) that I didn't know how to draw. He replied:

'That doesn't matter. Draw me a sheep.'

As I had never drawn a sheep before, I copied out for him one of the two pictures that I did know how to draw: the boa constrictor seen from the outside.

And I was astounded to hear the little fellow say:

'No! no! no! I don't want an elephant inside a boa constrictor. Boas are very dangerous and elephants are very cumbersome. Where I come from everything is tiny. What I need is a sheep. Draw me a sheep.'

So I drew him one.

He studied it carefully. Then he said:

'No! That one is already very sickly. Do me another.'

So I drew another.

My friend smiled gently, even indulgently.

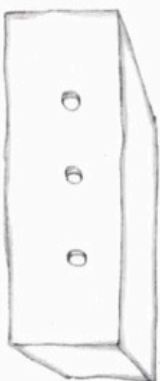
'Surely you can see for yourself – that's not a sheep; it's a ram. Look at his horns . . .'



So I did my drawing once more. But it too was rejected, like the others:

'This one is too old. I want a sheep who will live a long time.'

My patience was by now exhausted – for I was in a hurry to start dismantling my engine – so I rapidly scribbled the drawing you see below.



Then I added, by way of explanation:

'That is his box. The sheep you want is inside.'

And, much to my surprise, I saw the face of my young judge light up.

'That's exactly how I want him! Do you think this sheep will need a lot of grass?'

'Why?'

'Because where I come from everything is tiny.'

'Oh, there's bound to be enough. I have given you a tiny sheep.'

He bent over the drawing:

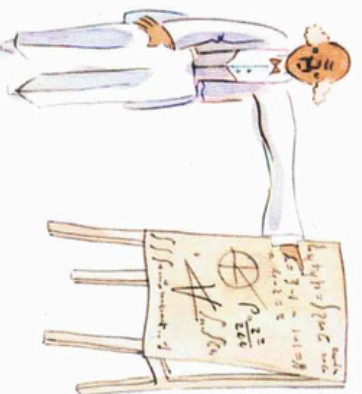
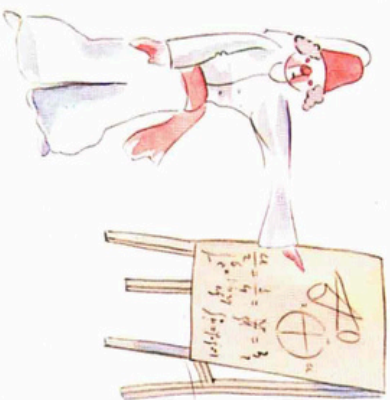
'He's not as small as all that – Look! He's gone to sleep!'

And so it was that I made the acquaintance of the little prince.

B 612, a Turkish dictator ordered his subjects, on pain of death, to convert to European dress. In 1920 our astronomer repeated his demonstration, wearing elegant evening dress. This time everyone accepted his proofs.

The reason I have told you so much about Asteroid B 612,

and let you know its number, is because of grown-ups. Grown-ups love figures. When you describe a new friend to them, they never ask you about the important things. They never say: 'What's his voice like? What are his favourite games? Does he collect butterflies?' Instead they demand: 'How old is he? How many brothers has he? How much



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does he weigh? How much does his father earn?' Only then do they feel they know him. If you say to the grown-ups: 'I've seen a lovely house made of pink brick, with geraniums in the windows and doves on the roof', they are unable to picture such a house. You

must say: 'I saw a house that cost a hundred thousand francs.' Then they cry out: 'Oh, how pretty!'

Again, you might say to them: 'The proof that the little prince existed is that he was enchanting, that he laughed, and that he was looking for a sheep. When someone wants a sheep, it is proof that they exist.' The grown-ups will merely shrug their shoulders, and treat you like a child. But if you tell them: 'The planet he came from is Asteroid B 612', then they will be convinced, and will spare you all their questions. That is how they are. You must not hold it against them. Children have to be very indulgent towards grown-ups.

Of course, for we who understand life, figures are quite unimportant. I would have liked to begin this story in the manner of a fairy tale. I would have liked to write:

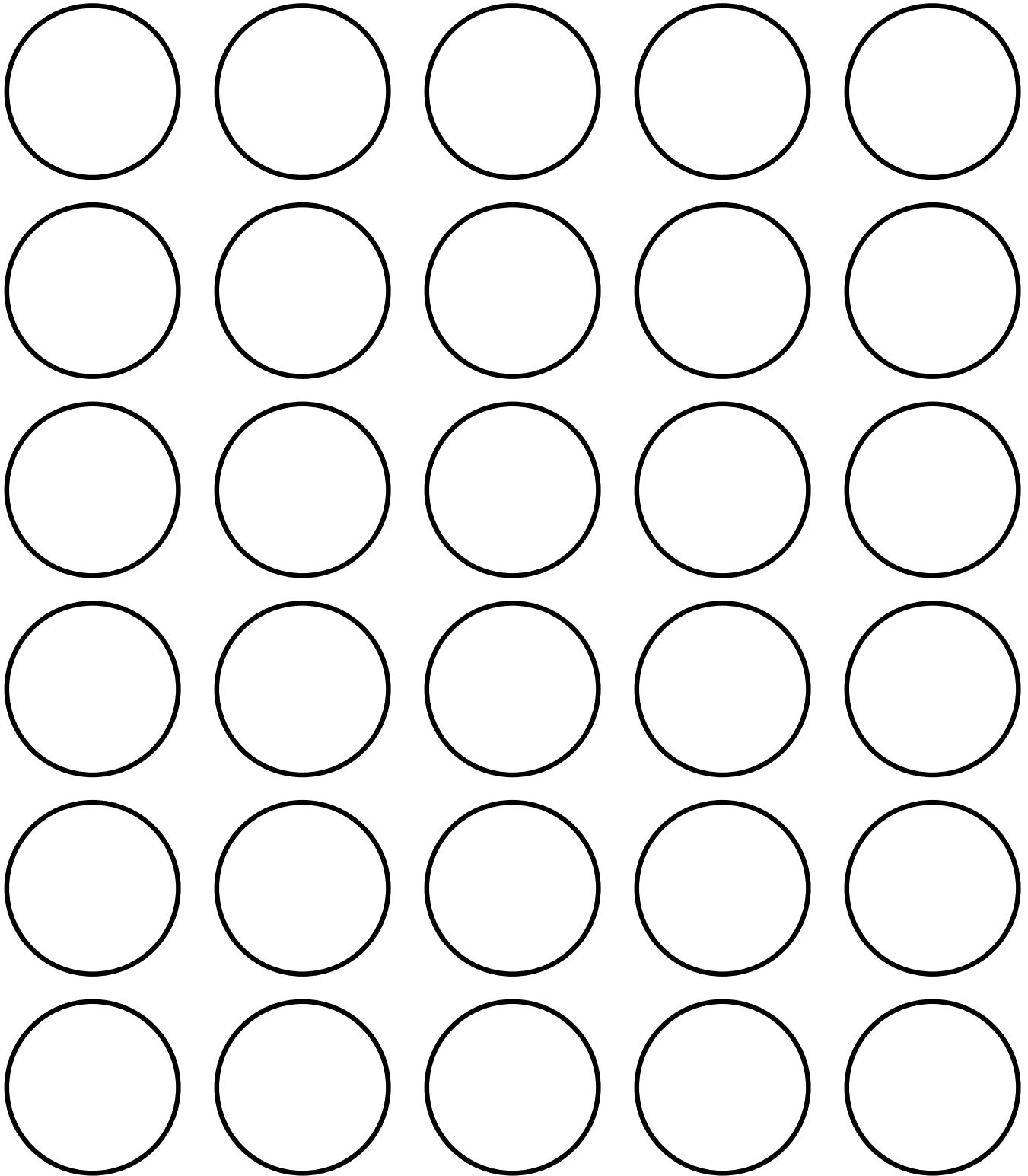
'Once upon a time there was a little prince who lived on a planet scarcely bigger than himself, and who was in need of a friend . . . ' To those who understand life, that would have a much greater air of truth.

You see, I do not want my story to be taken lightly. I have suffered so much grief setting down these memories. Already six years have passed since my friend went away, along with his sheep. If I try to describe him here, it is so as not to forget him. To forget a friend is sad. Not everyone has had a friend. And if I do forget him, I might become like those grown-ups who no longer care for anything except figures.

It is for this reason, too, that I have bought a paintbox and some pencils. It is hard to take up drawing again at my age, when the only attempts you have ever made were of the boa constrictor from the outside and the boa constrictor from the inside, when you were six years old! Of course, I shall try to make my portraits as true to life as I can. But I am not at all sure of succeeding. Some drawings work,

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Thirty circles



Problem-solving with Leap 'N Learn theories, methods and teaching techniques

Physical

- Include cross body tapping in every class
- Limit rotation
- Gradually increase demands of balancing on one foot
- Prioritize harmonious development of balance, coordination, strength & flexibility

Cognitive

- Teach and layer concepts and objectives spatial awareness, formations, relationship to other dancers, objectives
- Teach using patterns and processes (explain the how/why)
- Increase opportunities for verbal responses
- Check for understanding
- Ask questions, encourage curiosity
- Consider processing time
- Keep students thinking and doing

Socio-emotional

- Introduce vocabulary of emotions
- Practice labelling and identifying emotions in self and others
- Practice associating emotions with movement
- Teach emotional regulation and coping skills
- Teach social and interpersonal skills
- Partner and group work

Cultural

- Integrate student ideas and understandings
- Consider students' cultural and family background, language and beliefs
- Know your students' special interests, needs, and preferences
- Provide accommodations and adaptations

Scaffolding

- Use scaffolding to gradually introduce new information
- Gradually decrease scaffold to decrease zone of proximal development until you reach desired end point
- Modelling

Pretend play

- Use play-based scenarios and settings
- Encourage imagination

Multiple modalities

- Use a range of different modes

Classroom management

- Follow consistent routines, class structure & format
- Teach routine and expectations of behavior
- Make transitions active and explicit
- Consistent and positive discipline
- Be genuine and enthusiastic
- Believe in what your students can do
- Use your assistant teacher
- Reduce waiting time, keep the class moving
- Be responsive – consider the needs of your class and students on that day
- Be prepared to teach

Skill-building techniques

- Start with simple movements performed repeatedly
- Gradually layer more complexity and details
- Link to other steps, concepts, and skills

Communication

- Maintain neutral tone
- Feedback should be specific, relevant and accurate
- Be mindful of how many corrections are given
- Allow time for dancers to process and practice corrections and new information
- Give explicit instructions, explain the how/why
- Increase opportunities for verbal responses
- Facial expressions and body language of teacher/assistant

Outside of the box

Activity Directions

Working in small groups, choose two problem scenarios from the list on the following page, and create a third scenario of your choice. Apply strategies from the categories above to solve these problems. The strategies in each category are suggestions to get you started. Add your own strategies to the relevant categories and use the 'out of the box' category for solutions that fall outside of these categories. Share your strategic solutions and the reason why you chose these strategies with the group.

You can:

- use more than one category or strategy to solve the problem.
- add more background information or context to the scenarios

Problem Scenarios

Choose two from the options below as well as a third problem of your own (3 total).

1. It's week 25, you're teaching a 4 year old class and you get a new student that has never participated in an activity or been away from their parents before.
2. You have a 3 year old in your class who loves being there but runs around the room and seems not to be listening.
3. A child in your class is constantly interrupting, correcting other students, and consistently says "I know this!" and "We've done this before!"
4. It's the start of the year and you teach a LNL 7 class with 8 students who have all taken LNL classes from 3yrs, and 2 students who have never danced.
5. You teach a 5 year old LNL class. One of the parents who danced when they were younger is questioning why her daughter isn't using the barre, is doing tendu parallel, and not using full rotation.
6. One of your 6-8 year old students is practicing 'pirouettes' before class that they learned from their friends on the school playground, and they ask you, "Why don't we learn pirouettes?"
7. A parent of a 'talented 4 year old' asks for their child to be moved up a level so they are challenged.
8. You can see your students looking bored and disengaged at the barre.
9. You're using ribbon rings in partners or groups and one or more students are pulling and being rough.
10. It's 4 weeks till recital and your students don't know or remember the dance.
11. You have a student who refuses to participate.
12. You have a student in class who doesn't observe a particular holiday or seasonal event (e.g. Halloween, Christmas, etc.)
13. You teach a LNL 7 class and one student is struggling to skip.
14. You have an assistant teacher and it feels like they're just another student in the room.

Encouragement vs. praise



Optimal feedback for student learning and wellbeing



Put on your student hat (or shoes) 🧢

What phrases did you hear over and over during dance class?

When you think about praise and dance classes, what comes to mind?






What is praise?

- an evaluation or judgment of something or someone
- Carol Dweck, **process-praise** vs. **person-praise**

behaviour, effort,
action taken towards a goal


stable characteristics
(personality, appearance)






Process praise is informational, giving children feedback on their efforts and strategies in achieving an outcome (“I can see by your puffing how hard you ran in that race”).
Person praise tends to be evaluative, often where there is little possibility for change, or only after success (“What a winner!”)

Niland, A. (2024). 'Parents say 'good girl' and 'good boy' all the time. Here's why you should try to say something else', The Conversation 30 September 2024. <https://theconversation.com/parents-say-good-girl-and-good-boy-all-the-time-heres-why-you-should-try-to-say-something-else-238893>



Praise is linked to

dependence on external validation approval-seeking
 self-worth tied to achievement and meeting adult expectations
 people-pleasing less motivated to confront challenges
 feeling helplessness if they fail low self-esteem





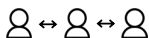
As **ballet behaviours** are enactments of the social world of ballet, it is unsurprising that student behaviour is often evaluated or judged as part of their inculcation into the ballet world. This appears as positive evaluation through acknowledgement and praise, such as “Very good girl, Clara. Looking like a statue over there”.

Elena Lambirnas (forthcoming, 2025). Developing behaviours and beliefs in ballet.



Adlerian perspective

- reward-and-punishment education is manipulative
 - "You're such a good helper"
 - impacts sense of self and behaviour
- vertical and horizontal hierarchies



mutual respect, cooperation, belonging



power imbalance, control, recognition, striving for superiority

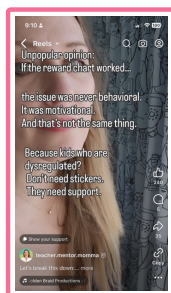
The reason I do something is because I am going to get something for doing it

Reward

If I'm not being punished for something, I can continue with that behaviour and it isn't a problem because it isn't being noticed

Punishment

Stickers...





What is encouragement?

- highlights students' effort, their contributions to class, and the process of learning.
- focuses on **objective descriptions** of actions and efforts, rather than your opinion or evaluation.



Encouragement is linked to


increased confidence resilience intrinsic motivation
stronger sense of self self esteem



Encouragement is...

helping children to develop the "courage to grow and develop into the people they want to be. Courage to feel capable, to be resilient, to enjoy life, to be happy, contributing members of society, and, as Dreikurs said, "To have the courage to be imperfect," to feel free to make mistakes and to learn from them"

Encouragement



"A child needs encouragement like a plant needs water." - Rudolf Dreikurs

- 1) A misbehaving child is a discouraged child. When children feel encouraged, misbehavior disappears.
- 2) Encourage by creating a connection before correction.

<https://www.postivebehavior.com/articles/encouragement-what-does-it-mean-and-how-it-does>

"Encouragement is not rescuing, fixing, over-protecting..."

How well do our children survive when they don't develop their disappointment muscles, their resiliency muscles, their delayed gratification muscles, and their courage to be imperfect muscles? When parents rescue, fix, and overprotect, they rob their children of the opportunity to learn that they can survive disappointment; that they can survive the ups and downs of life and learn many life skills in the process."

<https://www.postivebehavior.com/articles/encouragement-what-does-it-mean-and-how-it-does>

Curiosity questions

What were you trying to accomplish?

What did you notice?

How do you feel about what happened?

What ideas for solutions do you have now?

What did you learn from this?

<https://www.postivebehavior.com/articles/curiosity-questions>

Analyse how you give feedback

Research shows that some people "receive high rates of praise simply because they project social traits such as sociability, confidence and extraversion, which make them attractive as individuals and effective at 'pulling' praise from adults, including teachers" (Brophy, 1981: 271)

- ☛ bring more awareness to the types of feedback you give
- ☛ after each class, reflect on the who, what, when, where, why, how of feedback.



Encourage effort rather than praising the result

Instead of saying "Your balance is so good!", say "I can see how much you have been working on your balance. How does it feel?"

- ☛ this valorises their effort, not their ability or the result
- ☛ it invites reflection on the process, and places more weight on their own perceptions and beliefs, rather than yours.



Give realistic feedback

Feedback should be accurate and intentional. Early teachers often give feedback for the sake of saying something.

- ☛ does it accurately describe or relate to the situation?
- ☛ what is the purpose of the feedback?
To acknowledge, highlight growth/progress, celebrate a win, identify an area for further development, provide support at a challenging time?



Normalise mistakes and failure 🧑

The best thing we can do to disrupt the pursuit of perfection in ballet and dance, is to teach students how to fail.

👉 Reframing failure as a mistake that leads to growth and achievement. Shifting from short-term wins to long-term mastery and fullfilment.

👉 'growing another neural pathway'. Growing another leaf 🌱

👉 fail hard, fail fast, fail often.

... but not at the expense of intentional attempts and student wellbeing. Do they have the tools?



What are common types of feedback you say or have heard in a dance class?

How could you phrase it differently?



Feedback phrasebank



Notes

