

MY STORY, MY DANCE

Use this activity to transform personal memories into movement!

Materials Needed: Paper, pencils/pens, open space for movement

1. Begin by inviting students to think about a memory. You might use prompts like: *Think of a time when you felt proud of yourself, or a time when you tried something for the first time.* Give students a moment to recall their memory.
2. Ask students to write down their story in three to five sentences and make sure it has a beginning, middle and end. Encourage them to include details about what took place, how they felt and why this moment matters to them. Let them know that this story is just for them, they won't need to share the written version unless they want to.
3. Ask them to think about each section of their story by asking questions like: *What was happening at the start? What happened in the middle? How did it end?* Have them draw three boxes or columns on their paper to organize their thinking.
4. Next, ask students to choose one word that captures the feeling or essence of each part of their story. For example, the beginning might be "nervous," the middle might be "exciting" and the end might be "proud." Or they might choose more unexpected or abstract words like "fuzzy," "sharp" or "banana!" Encourage creativity—there are no wrong answers. Have students write one word in each of their three boxes.
5. For each word, ask students to create a movement or gesture that represents that feeling or idea. Give them three to five minutes to experiment with their bodies and create three distinct movements. Encourage students to think about levels (high, medium, low), speed (fast or slow) and energy (soft or strong). Demonstrate a few examples if needed, like a "nervous" movement with shaky hands or a "proud" movement with arms raised high.
6. Ask students to practice their three movements in sequence: beginning, middle, end. Now their story has become a dance! If students feel comfortable, invite volunteers to perform their dances for the class (without needing to explain their story unless they choose to). Celebrate each performance and remind students that every story—and every dance—is unique!

Reflection Questions:

How did it feel to turn your story into movement?

Was it easier or more difficult than you expected to represent your story through dance? Why?

What did you notice about the way movement can express feelings or memories?

