



APPENDIX: LIZ LERMAN DANCE EXCHANGE CASE STUDY

One To Ten

One to Ten can get a room full of people moving together and experimenting with shapes, range, and basic partnering. It works with experienced movers, people unaccustomed to structured dance experiences, first-time dancers and groups that combine both types.

ACTIVITY

Step 1. Trading Shapes: Ask participants to form pairs. Direct the group through the following activities:

- The first partner makes a shape with his body, then holds perfectly still and says, “One.”
- The second partner looks at the first partner’s shape and then makes a shape that relates to it in some way. She freezes and says, “Two.”
- This process continues between the partners until they reach ten.

In introducing One to Ten, you can demonstrate with a partner and model use of limbs, head, and trunk, show options for levels (positions high or low in space), and show various ways to explore creating a position “in relation to” the partner. Options include: 1) copying the first shape exactly or partially; and 2) fitting into or around the first partner’s shape.

Arriving at ten, the partners have completed their dance. At this point they may stop to talk about what they observed in making the dance.

Step 2. Variations: Now, with participants remaining in the same pairs, repeat the activity a few times, each time introducing a new variation that encourages dancers to experiment in particular ways:

- Vary the distance between yourselves, being at times close and at others distant.
- Create transitions between the still shapes. Try jumping, rolling, gliding and turning while on your way to the next shape.
- When you freeze in your still position, don’t say the number out loud. Just let your partner observe that it’s their time to move.

Step 3. Show and Observe: After participants have practiced these ideas, divide the group in two. Have one half do a round of One to Ten while the other half watches, followed by a discussion of the instant dance, prompted by such questions as: What did you observe? What moments were interesting? How did the dancers create exciting movement and shapes? What do you notice when you see several pairs doing the exercise together?

APPLICATIONS

One to Ten originated as a way to get a group of people with little dance experience to explore space, movement, and physical relationships. As the primary activity in a one-time movement workshop, its variations offer plenty of options for exploration, group reflection and discovery. It is an equally fruitful tool to use when launching a choreographic project with community members, as it establishes a strong foundation for building to sophisticated movement concepts, ensemble work, compositional assignments. Experienced dancers, as well, can get useful insights from One to Ten as a “back to basics” exercise.

One to Ten is a primer for partnering, introducing participants to a range of options for duet work, and offering a chance to reflect on the human and artistic values inherent in dancing with another person. The exercise is especially valuable with groups that combine people of varied abilities, such as experienced and first-time dancers, or younger and older movers. Participants tend to adapt to the abilities their of partners and get inspired by working with someone who has different ways of moving from their own.

FOOTNOTES

Warmup: Before introducing the partnering aspect of One to Ten, it can be helpful to take a few minutes to have participants work on their own to explore some of the basic movement ideas that they will experience later with a partner. Using a series of counts or music, have them improvise a series of shapes. Demonstrate options for positioning various body parts, changing levels, moving quickly or slowly from shape to shape.

Variations: Beyond the basic variations suggested in the activity description above, you can extend One to Ten to introduce an array of concepts.

- *Add rhythm and pacing:* With or without music, establish a count. Have partners take eight counts to arrive at their still positions. After a few rounds, diminish the number of counts between partner turns from 8 to 4 to 2 to 1, by which point partners will be trading shapes with every count.
- *Assign roles:* Ask partners to assume particular qualities within their pairs: One will move slowly, the other quickly; one will use flowing movement, the other percussive movement, etc. Pairs can then switch roles.
- *Expand the ensembles:* Have participants form trios or quartets and do the sequence in these larger groups. You may want to build movements to a higher number than ten. Or have ten or twelve people count off, and each take just one turn forming a shape in relation to that entire group.
- *Floaters:* When you split the group so that half can observe the remainder moving, introduce an additional element: Assign three or four dancers to be “floaters.” Rather than engaging in the One to Ten structure, or initiating movement of their own, they will copy or mirror movement and shapes that others are performing. This provides a unifying choreographic element of which observers will usually take note.