

SIZE AND LEVELS FOR SENIORS

Ages: 65 and over

Music suggestions are from *Music for Creative Dance (MCD)* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and *BrainDance Music* by Eric Chappelle.

Length

45 to 60 minutes

Warming Up

For more information, refer to Warming Up in chapter 4.

BrainDance: Lead seniors, seated in chairs, through the eight BrainDance patterns. Explain the mind-body connections inherent in the patterns. *Suggested music:* BrainDance Music, #8.

Introducing the Concept: *Size*—big (far reach), medium (mid-reach), small (near reach); *Level*—high, middle, low. Dancers read and say the words as they physically demonstrate the concepts of *size* and *level*. Discuss the differences between the two concepts.

Exploring the Concept

Seniors may choose to remain seated in a chair or stand up.

Exploring the Concept

“Using stretchy spandex streamers, move with far-reach (big) movements. When the music falls (changes pitch from high to low), shrink into a near-reach (small) shape and dance small. When the music falls again, grow into a high shape (or stretch arms high) and dance with high movements. When the music falls, move into a low level (*arms could be low*) and dance with low movements. Continue exploring changes in size and level each time the music changes.” *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 2, #7.

Reflection

“Discuss with the person next to you what type of movement was most challenging for you and why.”

Instruments (Optional)

“When the music is high pitched, reach your rhythm instrument up high and play and move at a high level (as high as you can go). When the music is lower pitched, play and move lower. When the music is pitched between high and low, play in front of your chest.” *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 1, #11.

Developing Skills

Choose one of these activities.

Circle Dance

All dancers may remain seated, or some may choose to stand. Less mobile dancers may stand between more mobile dancers, supported by holding onto hands or arms. Share a simple circle dance that you know, or create one of your own. For this lesson, think of movements that rise and sink and grow and shrink. For example, *reach the arms up 8 counts, arms down 8 counts, open arms 8 counts, and clap 8 counts*. Simple walking steps may be added to arm movements or, if dancers are all seated, add lower-body movements after arm movements. For example, *tap thighs, march in place, kick feet*, and so on. Repeat set movements until music ends. *Suggested music:* MCD Vol. 3, #17. Instructions for circle dances and folk dances are in *Brain-Compatible Dance Education* (Gilbert, 2006).

Swing Dance or Waltz

All dancers may remain seated, some may choose to stand, or less mobile dancers can partner with more mobile dancers, supported by holding hands or arms. Play swing or waltz music while you suggest various movements that rise and sink and grow and shrink. Start dancers with a hand dance (solo or connected hand to hand with someone nearby), then have them add more parts until the movements are bigger. *Suggested music:* any 3/4 metered music listed in appendix D or a favorite waltz suggested by the dancers.

Creating

Choreographing

Photocopy pages from Thomas Locker's book *Water Dance* (2002). This is a beautifully illustrated children's book with short sections of text describing all forms of water. Instead of the book as inspiration, dancers could create movement to a haiku poem. Search online for an appropriate haiku. If using the book, give trios a page, and have them choreograph or improvise a short phrase inspired by words from the book. Read the text as each group performs their phrase.

Cooling Down

For more information, refer to Cooling Down in chapter 4.

Groups perform for each other and discuss *size*, *level*, and other concepts observed.