

# Everyone Has a Story

by Thomas Jenson & Camille Winn and inspired by the “Seen” film

**Grade:** all ages

**Length of Lesson:** 30 minutes

## **Content Objective:**

- Dance Standard 3.D.CR.1: Demonstrate willingness to take turns leading and following when creating dance with others.
- Dance Standard 2.D.R.1: Use basic dance terminology to describe how movement suggests an idea.
- Health Standard 4.MEH.3: Define empathy and practice demonstrating empathy with peers.

**Student Learning Objective:** In a 30 minute class, students will learn to distinguish various movement energy qualities (weighted, collapse, vibratory, explosive, sustained) through movement exploration and simple choreography. Students will experience various movement strategies to help express their life stories as well as listen to other student’s stories and communicate through movement partnership (mirroring).

**Behavior Expectations:** Follow instructions, speak with your body not your voice, listen to signals, and participate with enthusiasm.

**Materials:** speaker, drum

**Music:** “Waterfalls” by Molly McPhaul & G Mills, “Sparse” by Kourosh Dini

## **Lesson:**

### Introduction

- *We all have important experiences to share and important lessons we have learned.* Explain briefly that everyone has a “story.” Ask students to think about who they are and ask them to identify one thing they feel is important for people to understand about them.
- Ask them to be mindful throughout this lesson of which movement quality they feel best represents their story.
- Give an example of how movement can represent a part of someone’s story. For example, someone who has moved homes might stretch their body really wide, to show that they feel split between two different places.

**Identify/Experience:** Energy Qualities

- Warm-up body scan: Ask students to stand up and close their eyes. Invite them to take deep breaths in and out while they get in touch with their bodies and emotions. Ask them how they are feeling.
- Ask for volunteers to share what they think the following energy qualities might look like: sustained, collapse, explosive, weighted, vibratory. After their input, help clarify the definition of each energy quality if needed, inviting all students to practice the energy quality in a seated position.
  - Teach what vibratory energy is by having students follow along with the video “Vibratory Energy.”
  - Ask them in what situations is their movement weighted (lifting something heavy, feeling sadness).
  - Teach what vibratory energy is by having students follow along with the video “Explosive Energy.”
  - Teach what vibratory energy is by having students follow along with the video “Sustained Energy.”
  - Ask them when in life they may collapse (pretending to be dead, sleep, feeling tired).
  - Ask them which movement qualities feel natural or awkward in their bodies this first time experiencing them. Invite them to think back to their body scan. Prompt students with questions like: How do you express your emotions through movement today? How do you express your story through movement today? Which movement best expresses the important thing you’d like others to know about you? Have them answer verbally and through movement.

### **Explore/Investigate: Energy Qualities**

- Invite students to spread out and find an open space to explore these new energy qualities. Play “Waterfalls” by Molly McPhaul & G Mills as they dance.
- Ask questions: How do you move when you’re carrying something heavy? How can you show weight in your body? Try using some vibratory energy to show you’re shaking. Prompt them with other imagery for other energy qualities until they have explored them all.
- Incorporate crossover:
  - Show weighted energy on a medium, low, then high level.
  - Try vibratory energy while skipping, then sliding. Change directions.
  - Move with sustained energy in curved pathways. Try using the low level to travel. Think about fast sustained and slow sustained--change your tempo.
- Ask them to decide definitively in their head which energy quality feels the most natural to their body, which one fits their story.

Gather again into a seated circle

- Instructors demonstrate a “movement conversation” through a mirroring exercise. Who listens? Who speaks? Try to make it as smooth as possible so you are moving together with your partner without one person leading--keeping a constant flow between who is the leader.

**Explore/Investigate:** Movement Qualities through Mirroring

- Ask students to spread out and find a partner (or trio as needed) to mirror with. Play “Sparse” by Kouros Dini as students dance.
- Allow some time for them to get comfortable with the activity.
- When they are ready, cue them to move with a specific energy quality while still mirroring. Explore three qualities.
- Then have them, while still mirroring, use their preferred energy qualities. The trick will be to listen to their partner to some extent and also move with your own energy quality. The accuracy of the mirroring might decrease, but ask them to listen and initiate at the same time the best they can.
- Ask questions: How do you move through your energy qualities while listening and speaking through your movement to your partner? How do you remain open to receiving their movement and sharing yours? Define empathy and apply it to the exercise.
- For an extra challenge, invite students to think about changing their levels and/or traveling through the space with their partner.
- Mini **Connect/Analyze**: Ask students to compare the give-and-take relationship of mirroring to speaking and listening in general. Ask questions: Based on your experiences just now, do you in general have a harder time listening or speaking? How can you do better at that opposite skill? How well did you express your energy quality while listening to other people, too?

Gather again before **Create/Perform**

- Ask students to show which energy quality they like the most by a show of hands.
- Older Students:
  - Give students time to make a piece in small groups (about 4 people). Prompt students to use energy qualities that they most identify with personally. Include mirroring. Start with everyone lying on the floor, include at least two different locomotor steps, and end with everybody touching the floor with just one body part. Watch them perform in groups.
- Younger Students:
  - Invite a small group of students (about 4) to perform while everyone else sits down as the audience. Ask the seated students to be on the lookout

for different energy qualities they can see. Have two students begin by mirroring each other while you prompt the other two to explore different levels, locomotor steps, and tempos. Replace one mirroring student with a non-mirroring one until everyone has had the chance to mirror. At the end of the performance, ask the seated students to share energy qualities they identified while observing.

### **Connect/Analyze**

- Share/Ask: We each have our own story (energy quality), but how have you learned to listen to other people's stories by interacting with them? How can you be yourself and be in relationships with other people?
- Ask again: How can you keep sharing your story with other people even after this lesson? How can you keep listening well, too?