



CASTA

Communication and Socialization through the Arts:
A Multidisciplinary Approach for Students with Autism

Workshop 1
February 3 and 5, 2009

OPENING RITUAL

Establishing ritual and routine is important in any classroom, and is especially important when working with autistic children.

Recorded or sung music can be an effective part of this ritual. We at MNMP are particularly fond of the following song for our opening ritual:

SONG TITLE: Liloa's Mele
ARTIST: Sonny Chillingworth

The mp3 is currently available for purchase at Amazon.com for 99¢.

We like to use this song in the following manner:

1. **Hands out, swaying:** The teacher or Teaching Artist puts their hands out, palms up, toward a student, remembering to maintain appropriate personal space, and sways back and forth to the music.
2. **Singing:** The teacher or Teaching Artist sings the student's name, and sings asking the student to "look at me."
3. **Each student:** This is repeated with each student.
4. **Response:** Students may or may not take the teacher's hands, and may or may not look up, but the routine is repeated at the beginning of each class.
5. **Student-led:** Eventually, students can lead this activity.

PASS THE OBJECT

This game is intended to increase interaction and eye contact. It helps with taking turns and working together. It is played while sitting or standing in a circle or semi-circle.

1. **Pass an object:** Pass the object around the circle. The object should be something relatively easy to hold and to pass, such as a roll of masking tape, an orange, or a Koosh ball.
2. **Make eye contact:** Each person must make eye contact with their neighbor as they pass the object.
3. **Focus:** The entire group focuses on each person as they pass the object.

VARIATIONS:

- **Names:** As each person passes the object, they say their own name (or the teacher can say it, if the student is non-verbal).
- **Sounds:** As each person passes the object, they make a sound (can be vocalizing or a sound made with the body). Everyone repeats the same sound before the object is passed again. The next person creates a new sound.

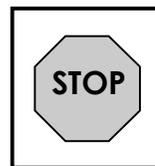
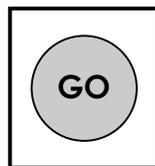
MUSIC ACTIVITIES: GO AND STOP

*In terms of musical performance at its most basic level, and for ease of classroom management in general, a solid base of classroom experience with “go and stop” is essential. It also introduces the rhythmic concepts of **sound** and **silence**.*

• “GO” AND “STOP” LED BY A LEADER

Students play instruments, clap, tap on their desks, or make other sounds. The leader tells them when to “go” and when to “stop,” using any of the following methods:

1. Say the words “go” and “stop.”
2. Hold up, or point to, Mayer-Johnson symbols for “go” and “stop.”
3. Hold up, or point to, a green “go” circle and a red “stop” octagon or circle.



4. Use sign language symbols.
5. Use invented hand signals.
6. Play “follow the leader” – when the leader plays, everyone else plays; when the leader stops, everyone stops.

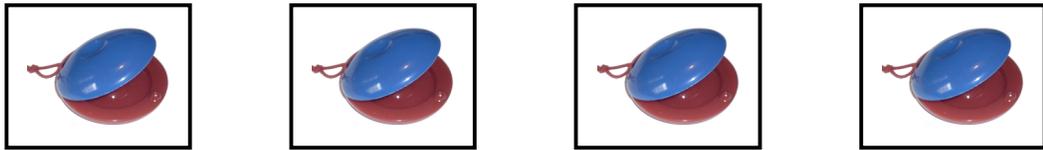
Many students LOVE to be the leader of this activity!

MUSIC ACTIVITIES: GO AND STOP (continued)

• COMPOSING WITH PHOTO CARDS

Take a digital photo of an instrument you use in the classroom. Print multiple copies to make several "instrument cards." In this exercise, you can use either a blank card or a "STOP" card to indicate silence. Cards can be laminated and Velcroed for ease of use.

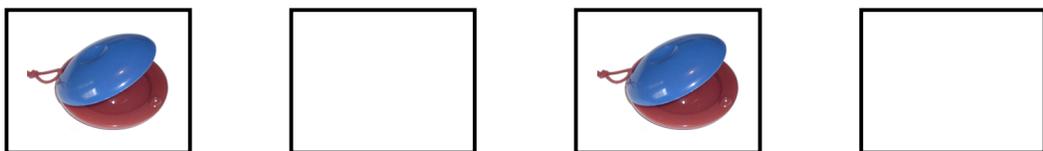
1. Students choose how many cards to post in a row. Then, as a leader points to each card in sequence, the instrument plays, i.e., four cards = four sounds.



You can also do any of these exercises using "body percussion" such as clapping, tapping your knees, stomping feet, etc.



2. Add in silence cards (blank, or "STOP"). Students can compose by selecting the sequence of "sound" and "silence" cards. Cards are posted in sequence, and played in order while the leader points at them.



3. Do the exercise using two or more different types of instruments, and their corresponding cards. Students must wait their turn to play their instrument at the appropriate time in the sequence.



MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES: GO AND STOP, "WALK POINT JUMP," FREEZEDANCE

Movement activities can be done with movements both big and small, and "noisy" and silent movements.

- **"GO" AND "STOP" MOVEMENTS – IN DESK**

Students can make the following movements seated at their desks, and can "go" and "stop" when instructed (see Musical "Go" and "Stop" for various modifications).

1. **Sample "sound" movements:** Clapping, tapping desks, stomping feet, rubbing hands together, rubbing hands on knees, tapping knees
2. **Sample quiet movements:** Shaking hands in the air, shrugging shoulders, wiggling fingers, wiggling toes, nodding head, shaking head

- **"WALK-POINT-JUMP" MODIFIED VERSION**

This game can be played with students seated at their desks, and as they gain proficiency, they can progress to out-of-the-seat movements.

Students follow a leader's instructions, repeating each instruction as it is given (as possible).

Instructions can be given verbally, or with Meyer-Johnson symbols, cards with written words, or hand signals.

Eventually, students can be the leaders of this game.

1. **Sample in-the-desk movements:** tap on desk, shoulders up/down, turn your head, turn in your chair, head down/up, hands over (the desk)/under/on/off, point (at various things), finger (touch another person's finger)
2. **Sample getting-out-of-the-desk movements:** Stand up, sit down, stand behind (your chair), beside (your chair), touch the chair, hands off the chair, push chair in, pull chair out
3. **Sample around-the-room movements:** Walk, point (at various things), jump, look (at various things), touch (various objects)

- **FREEZEDANCE**

Kids love playing Freezedance! When the music is on, students move or dance; when it stops, they stop too.

1. **Drum:** Use a drum or another instrument. Students can be the drummer.
2. **CD:** Use a CD player. Teacher starts and stops the player.
3. **CD with "Go" and "Stop" cards:** A student can run the CD player, and can be directed with "STOP" and "GO" cards.

PAINTING WITH WATER

This activity does not result in any tangible product, and is thus ideal for focusing on the process of artmaking, and the ways in which we can use the artistic process to increase communication and socialization.

In this activity, students “paint” on construction paper with water. Put paper towels under the construction paper to absorb water.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Construction paper (blue, red and green work best), assorted paintbrushes, containers for water, paper towels

“PROCESS” GUIDELINES:

1. **Student choice:** When handing out art materials, ALWAYS offer the object (or a choice of two objects) and WAIT until the student takes it from you.
 - If a student does not take an offered object, do not place it on their desk – continue to the next student, and return once you have been around the classroom.
 - Sometimes students will initially reject the materials, but will ask for them later, once they see others involved in the activity.
 - If students need more materials, let them figure out ways to communicate their needs to you rather than anticipating this need and putting them on their desk. This is a great motivation for communication!
2. **Right ways and wrong ways:** Except for issues of safety, there is no right and wrong in art. Remember that the picture you have in your head may not be what's in your students' heads, and this is okay!
 - If a student is using the brush/crayons/markers in the “wrong” way – it's okay!
 - If students are coloring on the “wrong” side of the paper – it's okay!
 - If students' pictures doesn't look like anything recognizable – it's okay!
 - If students want to rip their work into pieces when they've finished – it's okay!
 - These are all ways that students might explore, and they are learning through their explorations.
3. **Students interacting with each other:** Although visual art can often be a solitary process, there are ways in which interaction can be encouraged.
 - Some students are able to hand out materials to their classmates, which is a great way to encourage their interaction.
 - When using crayons, paint, markers, or other materials, place them between pairs of students so they will need to share them.
 - Often one can turn individual projects into a group project, such as a mural.
 - At the end of the class, students can show each other their work.