



# *Nature Moves*

*exploring movement-based  
resources in nature education*



# ***Nature Moves: A resource bank of movement-based activities in nature education***

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Produced as part of a not-for-profit initiative to introduce children and adults to nature.



This resource  
bank contains:

*Activity plans,  
energisers, and  
ideas and tips for  
nature learning  
through movement*



Who is this for?

*Educators, school  
teachers, dance  
practitioners,  
parents, adult  
learners*

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
About the Resource Bank.....	2
Things to Consider.....	6
Activities.....	9
<i>Nature Mirror</i> .....	9
<i>To be a bird - and more!</i> .....	11
<i>Play, pause, fast forward, repeat</i> .....	12
<i>Where is the wind going?</i> .....	15
<i>All kinds of plants</i> .....	17
<i>Nature Movements Bingo</i> .....	20
<i>Move like the Canopy</i> .....	23
<i>Follow the raindrop</i> .....	24
<i>Seeds travel</i> .....	26
<i>Movement Mapping</i> .....	28
<i>Let's go home!</i> .....	30
Nature Moves in Action.....	33
Moving forward.....	37
Further reading.....	38

# Acknowledgements

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We couldn't have done this without our weekly support system; Aashish Gokhale and Vena Kapoor at Nature Classrooms who patiently listened to our updates, asked pertinent questions and reviewed drafts of this resource bank. Thank you!

The Nature Moves initiative is an attempt to highlight movements in nature and bring elements of the performing arts into nature education.

We hope this resource bank encourages school teachers, nature educators and parents along with their children to learn *about* and *in* nature in many different ways! We look forward to hearing from you as you use, modify and add to the activities and ideas in this resource bank.

Go on a nature walk. Watch nature move. Be inspired. Move!

# Introduction

Posters, activity sheets, and colourful printed material are a few familiar and popular ways of taking nature learning to classroom spaces. With a little deep observation of our natural surroundings, however, we soon realise that nature is so much more than just colours, sights, and words. Something we often overlook is how nature *moves*. From Peepal leaves on a windy day to the shuffle of antennae in an army of weaver ants, and the back bending acrobatics of caterpillars moving along the stem of a plant.

***An exploration of the integration of movement and nature education, Nature Moves is an attempt to diversify nature education resources by creating and documenting movement-based nature learning resources. These are inspired by the various fascinating movements in nature and the performing arts.***

This is an attempt to bring movement, touch, and kinaesthetic experience to the classroom, especially when communicating concepts and processes in nature. Ample evidence in developmental psychology research indicates the importance of movement-based, psychomotor, rhythm-based, and kinaesthetic modes of learning in children (Bloom, 1956; Dunn & Dunn, 1978; Gardner, 1983; etc.). Movement-based resources could also be a unique mode to bridge the learning gap for children with disabilities, for whom visual or auditory media might be inaccessible.

While nature education in general tends to represent most domains, types, and modalities of learning (through intellectual, verbal, visual, auditory, and experiential components), there appears to be a gap in using movement-based and kinaesthetic components to communicate nature-based knowledge and attitudes. At Nature Classrooms, Nature Moves has so far involved designing and trialling movement-based activities with nature-related themes, connecting and collaborating with movement and dance practitioners to aid this process, and reaching out to educators to start a conversation about using dance, drama, music, and movement in the classroom.

# About the Resource Bank

This resource bank of movement-based activities is meant for educators teaching environmental studies and/or facilitating nature-based experiences. It is a collection of activities that have been designed with the performing arts in mind, and include contributions from classical dance practitioners. The nature of the activities is intended to be accessible and friendly for classroom facilitation and are flexible enough for improvisations.

The resource bank has two main kinds of activities:

- activity plans
- warm ups and energisers

**Activity plans** are a detailed set of instructions for longer engagement with movement-based activities, whereas **warm ups / energisers** are short ideas that may be used at any point during the session, or even independently including as ice-breakers during workshops. Each activity is accompanied by a set of suggested recommendations indicating suitable age groups, space, duration, and other requirements. They also begin with certain learning objectives that relate to concepts in the EVS school curriculum and movement-based learning.

This resource bank is open access - free to download and use by facilitators and educators everywhere with acknowledgement to Nature Classrooms where appropriate. This document is envisioned as a living, growing resource and we invite users to share their movement-based nature education resources to be added to this. All contributions will be acknowledged where appropriate.

## **Who can use this resource?**

Although movement-based activities lend themselves well to a wide range of educational settings and learning spaces, this resource would be especially helpful for educators in formal and informal settings who engage with primary school children. These activities may also be used by movement and dance practitioners who wish to explore nature-related themes in their classes or workshops.

The resource bank contains activities that may work best with young, primary school children, but these activities can be categorised according to varying levels of familiarity with movement/dance and/or nature-related concepts, regardless of age. They may also be very engaging for adult learners.

## How to use this resource?

As mentioned earlier, this resource bank contains two types of movement-based resources - activity plans and warm ups or energisers.

**Activity plans** are long and elaborate activities that would take a dedicated space and time, and are usually intended to cover a particular theme. Some themes covered in these activities are: nature, plants, animal homes, water, nature walks, and ecological interactions. Readers can choose from different parameters of these activities: the theme, suitable age group, location, and objectives. None of the activities require a facilitator with advanced or technical experience in movement-based practice; however, it would help to read the "Things to Consider" section for some facilitation-related points to keep in mind. Please note that these activities are guidelines to start from and can (and must!) be enhanced and contextualised with creative and spontaneous improvisations.

Here is an elaboration on each parameter or components of the activities:



*For whom:* Indicates the minimum required age of the participants for them to be able to benefit from the activity and realise the learning objectives. It also indicates the level of familiarity with movement required (as *beginner* or *advanced*).



*Where:* The place or space required to facilitate the activity well.



*Duration:* The estimated time required to conduct the activity from start to finish.

*Requirements:* Any materials, conditions, or resources required to conduct the activity.


*Number of participants:* The minimum to maximum number of participants that the activity can accommodate.

*Tags:* Each activity has two kinds of tags: i) tags related to the nature-based concept or theme that the activity addresses (eg. water, plants) and ii) tags related to the kinds of movement that the activity includes (eg. rhythmic, mirroring).

*Objectives:* The ideal learning objectives derived from the activity, which may include information-based learning as well as fostering a connection, empathy, and understanding of nature.

*Theme:* Each activity addresses a theme under nature education. This can be related to concepts under the Environmental Studies curriculum.

This is what the structure of an activity plan looks like:

<p><i>Theme</i></p> <p><i>Tags</i></p>    <p><i>Requirements</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p>
<p><i>Notes, tips, and resources</i></p>	<p><b>Activity Plan</b></p> <p><i>(The activity plan includes directions for i) warm up, ii) the main session, and iv) closing)</i></p>

***Warm ups or energisers*** are simple ideas for activities that can be situated between sessions or independent of a dedicated movement-based session. Readers can find these in between the activity plans in boxes similar to this one!



## *Warming up for a movement-based session*

### *Helping yourself move*

Movement-based resources take many forms in the classroom - and are common methods of engagement, especially in primary schools. However, movement-based resources are not very common in conventional nature education or even formal education spaces. It is possible that you might feel reluctant to use these activities because you do not have a “background” or formal training in movement-based practice.

Moving yourself - let alone helping others move - can seem unfamiliar and even uncomfortable. However, there are ways to prepare and help yourself move with confidence - and pass that confidence on to the audience you engage with.

We list below some friendly reminders and notes of encouragement for facilitators - add to this list as you learn from each teaching-learning experience in the classroom.

*Start preparing* well before the day you decide to begin movement sessions in class. It would help to try out the movement involved in the activity on your own in a comfortable space, understand the movement processes and logic involved in the activity. If you are new to detailed activity plans that involve elaborate facilitation, it is useful to rehearse instructions along with the movements you will lead your audience through.

The key is to *get used to moving* - it does not matter how well you think you move, but it matters to move with confidence and fun. *Give yourself time* before trying out these activities with other people or in the classroom. When you know you are *having fun with movement and flow*, you know you are ready to move with others!

### *Helping others move*

Most of the time, you will be faced with the challenge of conducting a movement-based session or activity with a mixed group, with varied interests, abilities and inclinations. To ensure that everybody feels comfortable and confident to move together, it always helps to lead the group by moving yourself. Take things slow - give each person an opportunity to explore movements at their own pace\*.

It is important to understand that if you are working with a group that is new to movement, the initial feedback is likely to be poor or lack enthusiasm. However, remember to measure success through several sessions across days or weeks of your engagement - movement takes time to settle in, but once it does, everyone has lots of fun together!

*\*Read more about scaffolding and safety in movement sessions in the Things to Consider section.*

The key ingredient in facilitating movement-based sessions is *gentle, supportive guidance* and scaffolding for your group of learners. There may be times when you will require lots of hand holding - even literally! If you are a teacher (and have more than a one-time engagement with the group you work with), you can start off with only warm ups for a few days, before bringing the more complex activities into your sessions.

Sometimes, children or adults may not like moving at all. This may not be a sign of failure to engage them on your part, but a strong personal preference against moving and working with the body. Engage in conversations about how the group or individual feels and make space for exploration of nature movements in different ways - for example, by observing, drawing or writing about movements around them.

The main objective of any such initiative is to diversify the resources that we use in nature education. Ultimately, the objective is to integrate as many ways of engagement with nature as we can in the classroom. Feel free to play around with how much movement you wish to integrate in isolation, and how much of it with other ways of teaching and learning - like art, music, games, and more.

## Things to Consider

While planning for and conducting movement-based activities either outdoors or in your classroom some of these considerations are useful to bear in mind.

### **MAKING A PLAN**

Having a plan for your movement-based activity is a good idea - if possible, do a small trial or practice before the class. Saying instructions aloud or trying out the activity yourself will help you notice gaps or identify parts of an activity that may not be clear. But, our group's responses and energy may also determine how your plan unfolds. So, while you're in the class, if you feel moved to try something new or different, be flexible with your plan to accommodate what the group requires!

### **MATCHING OBJECTIVES TO ACTIVITIES**

Another thing to consider while creating your plan is articulating an objective. Think about why you are introducing a certain movement-based activity in your plan and if this is an appropriate tool. What concepts lend themselves well to movement-based activities? What is the larger goal for you as a facilitator in bringing movement into your work?

### **WARM-UP**

Sometimes, the group may require gentle nudges to fully use their bodies. Before diving into an activity it is useful to plan a warm up to go over different parts of the body - like wrists, elbows, armpits, toes, ankles and so on. It helps all of us open up more creatively with our bodies during an activity. This can be facilitated in many ways, either slowly with closed eyes touching different parts of the body or like a body quiz where one quickly uses the body part to strike a pose or just point it or lift it.

## ***SPACE***

Space is an important factor to keep in mind while planning and facilitating a movement-based session. Ensure there is enough space to move freely for all members of the group. If you plan to use a new space or an outdoor setting for your session, doing a recce before, clearing unwanted objects and setting up the space is useful and recommended.

## ***TIME***

The duration of an activity is another factor to consider. Movement and continuous prompts can sometimes be exhausting for children (not just in physical ways) so it may be important to ease them into it or build over time or just keep the activities short and quick. A group's previous experiences with each other and with the facilitator are important factors in deciding on the length and duration of a certain activity or session. A few questions to ask yourself as you plan: How long can I ask them to repeat something? How many layers or challenges and questions can I add to one activity?

## ***RHYTHM, MUSIC, AND VOICE***

Some kind of rhythm or music or voice based recitation (by children or facilitator) helps to hold the energy of the group better. Plan and prepare for this while thinking of an activity. You can count ("One, two, three, four, one, two..."), give a beat with your hands (\*Click\*, \*click\*, \*CLAP\*), or create your own rhythmic patterns with the children!

## ***SCAFFOLDING AND SAFETY***

Not all members of the group will be at the same level of movement proficiency. Make different kinds of scaffolds available for the group during a session - various levels of difficulty in an activity for beginner to advanced learners or physical support in terms of a wall, the floor or a chair as required.

Remind yourself and the group that these activities enable us to appreciate the natural world from a different and new perspective and are not meant to be judged or evaluated as performances.

## **GROUP FACTORS**

Think of the group you are working with while selecting or modifying an activity. Group size; group dynamics and how well do the group members know each other; and past exposure of individuals and the group in working their bodies in learning experiences are important to find out and factor into your session plan.




**Note:** The list of warm-ups, energisers and activities provided in this Nature Moves booklet are meant to serve as a starting point. They are broad guidelines to enthuse facilitators to bring movement-based work into teaching-learning spaces.

We trust and hope that each of you will modify the activities to suit the group and context you are working with and generously share your experiences and feedback with others!

# Activities

## Nature Mirror

Observing and mirroring movements in nature

<p><i>Theme: Introduction to Nature</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Nature, Mirroring, Nature Walk, Behaviour</i></p> <p> Ages 6yrs+ / Beginner</p> <p> Outdoors</p> <p> 30 min +</p> <p><i>Requirements: Comfortable clothes, shoes for walking and moving</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>i) To observe different kinds of movements in the natural environment</p> <p>ii) To mirror movements of various creatures, plants and elements in nature</p> <p>iii) To recall and express nature movements with peers</p>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b></p> <p><i>Try to find a space around the school campus or neighbourhood park/garden where children can explore without too many restrictions or oncoming traffic.</i></p> <p><i>Visit this space a few days before you plan your outdoor walk/session.</i></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Warm Up:</i> Gather children in a circle. For a few minutes, facilitate some basic warm-up exercises and stretches. Ask the children to follow your movements and actions.</p> <p><i>Main Session:</i> Take a walk with your group of students near your school or neighbourhood*.</p> <p>As you walk, draw attention to various movements in nature - a leaf falling, a squirrel scrambling, different kinds of birds flying, an ant scurrying. Encourage students to 'mirror' these movements using their bodies.</p> <p>Next, in small groups, ask children to observe at least 3 different kinds of movements. You can present these sample prompts-notice something moving slow-fast, on the ground, on walls, along tree trunks or in the sky. Ask them to mirror and move like the creatures they observe and pick a favourite movement.</p> <p><i>Closing:</i> Gather the group for a discussion and closing activity.</p>

	<p>Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A new movement they observed</li><li>• Slowest/Fastest movement</li><li>• 2 things moving together</li></ul> <p>To close the session, invite each group to present their favourite movement.</p> <p>The rest of the group acts like a nature mirror and imitates the same movements and actions.</p>
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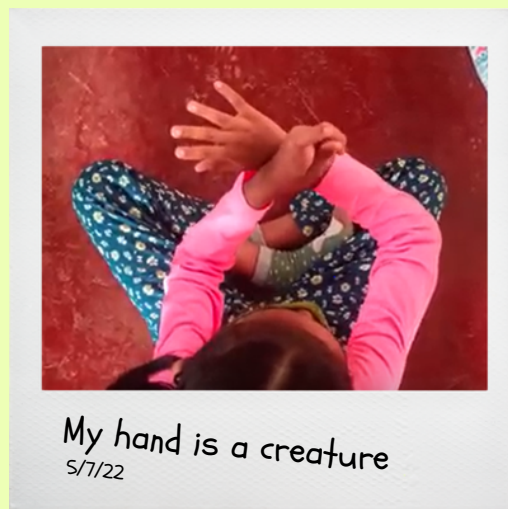
### ***My hand is a creature - hand gestures activity***

A simple activity which involves using our hands and arms to make representations of different creatures and their movements. This can be done through a simple lead-and-follow format, with the facilitator displaying a certain hand gesture for a creature, and encouraging others to follow and copy.

Organically, you might get requests from the children, or some hand gestures that they come up with on their own!




Some creatures you can try representing through hand gestures: spider on a web, octopus, ant, firefly, crab, etc.

*A student of Bidiru Learning Centre, Bengaluru, representing a calling squirrel through her hands.*



## To be a bird - and more!

Nature walk meets drama

<p><i>Theme: Animal behaviour</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Nature Walk, Imitation, Drama, Ecological Interactions, Behaviour</i></p> <p> Ages 7yrs+ / Beginner</p> <p> Natural outdoor space or big indoor space</p> <p> 45 min - 1 hour</p>	<p><b>Objectives</b></p> <p>i) To develop a deeper understanding of ecological concepts and animal behaviour</p> <p>ii) To connect play behaviour to nature learning</p> <p>iii) To encourage the use of dramatic elements to foster empathy and understanding of other creatures</p>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b></p> <p><i>Ideal number of participants preferably a small group of about 15</i></p> <p><i>This activity can be tailored and improvised on as per the observations made, the kind of space the nature walk takes place in, and the number of children in the group.</i></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Warm up:</i> A good way to begin this activity would be either to do it after a regular nature walk, or conduct a short nature walk as a warm up. Just walk around the school space and look for individual beings, interactions, and movements in nature. You can also ask the children to look outside the classroom windows and observe movements around them, if a large outdoor space is not available.</p> <p><i>Main session:</i> After the nature walk, help the children gather and reflect on their observations.</p> <p>Now, collect observations from the children about creatures, interactions, patterns, and movements. Ask individuals or groups of children to enact the same observation. The number of children would depend on the observation mentioned.</p> <p>Let us take for example an observation of a butterfly feeding on nectar from a flower. 5-6 children could “become” the petals of the flower, leaving a gap in between. The “butterfly” would then approach the “flower” and try to “feed” on its nectar.</p> <p>Prompt the children to enact more specific observations by asking questions: eg. “Could you show us how the butterfly sucks the nectar?” The child may respond by</p>

	<p>using their own mouth to “suck” the nectar, and they could be then prompted to recall the proboscis that the butterfly would have used instead.</p> <p>To consider another example, where we go a step ahead and incorporate dramatic elements: Suppose we witness a pair of mynas chirping together. We ask, “What do you think the mynas were talking about, based on their behaviour and movements?”</p> <p><i>Closing:</i> Reflect on the enactments and observations, summarise and recall learnings, repeat movements for the entire group.</p>
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### **Nature Check-In**

This is a warm-up to “check-in” with the group at the beginning of a class. During a check in, everyone in the group expresses how they are feeling in the present moment, one-by-one. This can be expressed through single words, sentences, facial expressions or even actions.

In a circle, ask participants to one-by-one use any action or movement to express how they’re feeling. After one round of checking in with general actions, ask them to “move” like their feelings through a nature movement metaphor.

It is useful for the facilitator to start and demonstrate a check-in for the group.




For example: *Today, I feel restless like a peepal leaf in the wind.* OR *This morning, I feel like a closed bud about to bloom.*

## **Play, pause, fast forward, repeat!**

*Nature walk meets drama*

<p><i>Theme: Processes in Nature</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>i) To understand natural processes/phenomena that</p>
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<p><i>Tags: Plants, Natural Processes, Speed, Time, Video play</i></p> <p> Ages 8yrs+ / Advanced</p> <p> Indoors/Outdoors</p> <p> 30-45 min</p> <p><i>Requirements: A big screen or projector to watch a time lapse video together</i></p>	<p>occur across long periods of time</p> <p>ii) To observe slow movements in nature</p>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b>  <i>This can be conducted in a few small groups of 5-7 participants per group</i></p> <p><i>Here are some links to timelapse videos that you can screen for children before this session:</i></p> <p><i>Flowers blooming</i>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzPp-MK48">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjCzPp-MK48</a></p> <p><i>Butterfly lifecycle</i>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVm5k99PnBk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVm5k99PnBk</a></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>The basic idea of the activity is to enact a natural process through our bodies, as a group - much like “playing a video” in a series of movements.</p> <p><i>Warm up:</i> Start off with a warm up that will help children get used to the concept of speed, movement and stillness, and cues and commands. Ask them to tap their feet with you, at a comfortable pace. Now, CLAP and say “Fast forward” and follow by tapping your feet faster, and ask them to follow. Similarly, try other cues like, “Slow motion”, “Pause”, “Play”, and “Rewind”, with different ways of tapping your feet. You can also do this with other, more complex movements if your class is used to movement and dance.</p> <p><i>Main session:</i> Together, watch a video of a natural process together - preferably, a timelapse video of slow movements like a flower blooming, plant growing, etc.</p> <p>Gather the children and divide them into groups of 5-7, based on the number of children present.</p> <p>Tell the children that they will be enacting the video together, by acting as different stages of the flower/plant/insect.</p> <p>Assign a position that corresponds to a stage in the creature’s life to each child in the group.</p> <p>First, ask them to strike the assigned pose individually. Then, ask them to follow the person before them and strike their poses in order, at their own pace.</p> <p>Now, tell them to pretend that they are “playing” a video in the sequence of movements and poses they were assigned. The facilitator is the person “controlling” the</p>

	<p>video, and can use different features like play, pause, fast forward, and slow motion.</p> <p>Once the kids understand the concept, “play” the video, and try “pausing” it. Slowly, progress to more complex features like “fast forward” and “rewind” - where the kids would move like in a timelapse video.</p> <p>Repeat this several times. Try different processes with different groups. To add a layer of challenge, try exchanging places/positions among the kids.</p> <p><i>Closing:</i> End with reflections on the activity and discuss experiences. Some questions you can ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did it feel to enact a natural process in your body and as a group?</li><li>• What was fun?</li><li>• What was challenging?</li><li>• What other natural processes can you enact as a video?</li></ul>
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### ***Ant, Bird, Butterfly***

A fun warm up game that involves listening and some quick reactions. Assign different actions to these creatures: Ant (moving index fingers near your head like antennae), Bird (arms in flapping motion) and Butterfly (thumbs interlocked and palms moving back and forth). In a circle, ask the group to follow your lead-when you call the name of each creature the corresponding action needs to be done.

Start slow and increase the pace.

For the next level of challenge, “confuse” the group; say Ant but do the action for Butterfly. The group has to do the action associated with your but not follow your actions. If someone mixes up the action, they get to lead next!



Iruve, Hakki, Chitte  
Tarabanhalli Govt. School

Playing Iruve, Hakki, Chitte (Kannada for Ant, Bird, Butterfly) at Tarabanhalli Govt. School, Bengaluru




## Where is the wind going?

Learning cardinal directions through the movement of wind

Theme: Maps and directions

Tags: Wind, Cardinal Directions, Mirroring, Imitation

 Ages 8yrs+ / Advanced

 Breezy/windy location

 30 min +

### Objectives:

- i) To learn cardinal directions
- ii) To develop a geo-centric understanding of natural spaces

### Activity

*Warm up:* Ask the children to close their eyes and feel the wind on their bodies. Ask them to sway with the wind, or move the way they wish to in response to the wind.

Now, ask the children to imagine they are something - a living being like a kite, dragonfly, or seed, or any object like a drop of water, a frisbee being flung, or even a building - and move in response to the wind as these things.

*Main session:* Ask them to pretend that they are a palm tree, and move as it would in response to the wind.

### Note for facilitators:

It would be good to conduct this activity after a brief discussion on cardinal directions. Facilitate this discussion by showing maps -

<p><i>digital or printed.</i></p> <p><i>The group can also be asked to explore Google Maps on a digital device if possible.</i></p>	<p>Encourage the use of arms, fingers, and more.</p> <p>Now, everyone must face the north, while continuing to be aware of the wind. Ask the children which direction the wind is blowing in.</p> <p>Next, ask everyone to face a different direction. Repeat the question in the previous step. Play several rounds of this game.</p> <p><i>Closing:</i> You can add layers - like a contest between the students, forming teams, trying eight cardinal directions with older groups, and following this activity with the Movement Mapping game (pg. __).</p> <p>The aim is to understand the sense of using cardinal directions, and hopefully experience a new way of perceiving natural spaces around us. It would be great to try and incorporate the use of cardinal directions in usual nature-related activities like nature trails and birdwatching.</p>
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### ***Tree Spin-A-Yarn***

Played like traditional spin-a-yarn or story building exercise where one person in the group begins a story by sharing one sentence + action related to a tree. End the sentence by passing the turn to someone else in the group who builds the story by contributing another sentence + action to continue the story. Invite the group members to show different actions and take on characters (like a leaf or a squirrel or a bird) as they build and continue the story.

For example:




Person 1 starts: Once upon a time there was a huge Tamarind tree in the village.

Person 2: All the children in the village loved to shake the branches and get to the sour fruit!  
and so on...

*Note for facilitators:* The group can play a few rounds, repeating the sentences and actions to explore the story deeply and with more confidence.

# All kinds of plants

*Becoming and understanding plants*

<p><i>Theme: Plants</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Plant diversity, Body-freezes, Imitation, Shapes</i></p> <p> Ages 6yrs+ / Beginner</p> <p> Indoor/Outdoor</p> <p> 60 min</p> <p><i>Requirements: Photos/Videos of different plants</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>i) To observe different kinds of plants in our surroundings</p> <p>ii) To spot similarities and differences in plants around us</p>
	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Warm-up Walk: (15 mins)</i></p> <p>Either through a plant walk around the school/neighbourhood or through a set of photos and videos, introduce children to different kinds of plants around them.</p> <p>Draw attention towards different leaf shapes, stems, flowers, fruits and seeds, direction of growth, height of the plants among other things. As different observations are made, encourage the group to mirror and move like the plants and creatures they spot using their hands and bodies.</p> <p><i>Exploring plants through body-freezes: (15 mins)</i></p> <p>Gather the children in a circle. Invite the children to play a game of plant-freezes while standing in their places. Call out different prompts and model a few freezes, "Become a plant that..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Was smaller than you</li><li>-Had a trunk so big, it would take more than 1 of you to hug it!</li><li>-Was growing near a wall or window</li><li>-Was growing near/on other plants</li></ul>

Encourage a few children to call out prompts for the rest of the group. Invite other children to add, modify certain freezes.

*Mixed-plant murals: (10 mins)*

Demarcate a stage area in the classroom.

Invite small groups to create a tableau or mural based on these prompts: *A park with tall grass and flowers; A forest with trees, creepers and climbers; A balcony garden with potted plants; Plants in and around a lake*

Next, call upon different children to come together to create a plant inspired mural with their bodies. Each child can walk in to represent whichever plant or plant part they feel like becoming.

For example, the facilitator could say:

"From my window I see...

A large Banyan tree with its roots coming down  
there is a climber growing on one part of the tree  
under the tree there are some tall grasses

Next to the grass is a creeper with big leaves and yellow flowers"

Once children have taken their positions, add a level of challenge by making the 'still' mural 'move'.

Closing & Discussion: (10 mins)

Ask children to share how it was to become these different plants:

-How many different kinds of plants did they notice?

-Which plants did they enjoy 'becoming'?

-Were some plants difficult to showcase with their bodies?

## ***A Tree and Who?***

A simple game of dumb charades adapted to plant-animal interactions. What you need: chits with pairs of animals and trees/tree parts that need to be acted out and guessed by the audience. Choose examples of interactions that are easily observable in your immediate surroundings. Here are some examples: Plain Tiger Butterfly and Milkweed Plants, Koels and Fig Trees, Bats and Banana Leaves.

Use the time after the guess to share more information about a particular plant-animal interaction.

*Students and teachers at the Bidiru Learning Centre act out an interaction between a bird and a flower.*



*A tree and who?*  
5/7/22

## Nature Movements Bingo

The Nature Movements Bingo is meant as a tool to draw people's attention to different kinds of movements in nature. The bingo sheet is printable and can be used with a pencil to mark observations. The second page of the bingo has an empty grid that can be used to write down any observations of movements apart from the given prompts. It can also be used as a canvas for drawing movements.

The bingo works better with people who are already familiar with the experience of a nature walk. A movement-nature-walk through this bingo can be a slightly unusual and advanced engagement with the natural world, with a closer focus on behaviours, sounds, and movements.

The Nature Movements Bingo is available for downloading on the Nature Classrooms website. Scroll to the next the page to see what it looks like!



# NATURE MOVEMENTS BINGO

Something moving <i>fast</i> or <i>slow</i>	Spot an insect or bird moving on a tree	Two different kinds of flight
Something that makes a sound while moving	Collect a movement memory!*	Trace the path of a creeper or climber
Find a seed that "flies"	Watch an ant - and <i>move</i> like it!	Something falling towards the ground




\*Pick up an object from the ground that moved in a way that fascinated you - a leaf, seed, stone, flower, etc. Keep a collection of movement memories from each nature walk you take!

Now, make your own nature movements bingo!


Add your own observations of nature movements in the blank squares.  
Describe them, make doodles, or move like them yourself!

# Move like the Canopy

*Becoming and understanding plants*

<p><i>Theme: Trees</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Plants, Trees, Canopy, Mirroring, Posing</i></p> <p> Ages 8yrs+ / Advanced</p> <p> Indoors/Outdoors</p> <p> 30-45 min</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) To encourage deeper observation of trees</li><li>ii) To understand the concept of a canopy and different levels of vegetation</li><li>iii) To highlight diversity among trees</li></ul>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b> <i>This activity can be conducted in groups of 6-8 participants per group</i></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p>This activity involves representing a group of trees where each person “becomes” a tree, stands and moves like it.</p> <p><i>Warm up:</i> Ask children to observe a group of trees they can see from their school/homes. This can be a homework activity given to them a few days earlier, or done just before the activity.</p> <p><i>Main session:</i> Ask each kid to pose like a tree. Encourage and help them to choose different kinds of trees. Once the poses have been chosen, huddle them close together.</p> <p>From one side of the group, pretend to blow strong winds their way (or better yet, use a prop like a table fan!). Ask them to respond as trees.</p> <p>Encourage each “tree” to move differently, by imagining how that particular tree would move.</p> <p>Ask other children to observe and judge how well the group represented the trees. You can also make the activity more interactive by asking the non-posing children to “rest” under the “canopy” - or interact with it in any other way. Explore other situational possibilities.</p>




### **Dancing in the rain**

Play a musical track with the sound of rain. Ask the children to move, imagining how they would dance in the rain while the track plays. The idea is to dance when the music plays and stop and freeze when it stops. and then they stop dancing and freeze when the music is paused. Bring in variation in speed, songs, moods, or themes.

You can also try another variation of such a warm up, where you ask children to tap their feet to create the sound of rain: first a drizzle, then a little faster and louder, and finally, really loud and heavy rain.

## **Follow the raindrop**

*The story of raindrops (Conceptualised and designed by Preethi Bharadwaj)*

<p><i>Theme: Rain</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Water, Rain, Hand Gestures</i></p> <p> Ages 6yrs+ / Beginner</p> <p> Indoor and outdoor*</p> <p> 30 min +</p> <p><i>Requirements: (If done outdoors) Comfortable walking clothes, shoes, umbrella, raincoat, etc.</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) To observe a part of the water cycle</li><li>ii) To observe the journey of a raindrop</li></ul>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b> <i>*Take into account the practicality of walking in the rain.</i></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Warm up:</i> Start with a brief introduction on water coming from the sky as rain. You can explain this as a story or discuss points from the chapter you wish to address. This can be preceded by an open discussion with the central question, "Where does water come from?"</p> <p><i>Main session:</i> Now, ask the children to look at the sky (if outdoors) or imagine the roof of an indoor space to be the vast sky. Observe their faces and expressions - How do they feel looking at the sky?</p> <p>Now, ask them to imagine that they are following a raindrop that originates in the sky till it falls on earth, through their eyes - that is, they are watching a raindrop falling towards the ground, without moving anything but</p>

their eyes.

Now, ask them to continue "watching" more raindrops fall towards the ground - but this time, also use a hand gesture to imitate or represent the falling raindrops while they watch.

Next, divide the group into two teams. One team has to follow the rain drop as they did earlier (along with hand gestures), and the other team "collects" them on different parts of the body. You can aid this process by telling them which part of the body to collect the raindrops on, one by one (for example: palms, face, into their mouth, elbow). Swap the teams. The facilitator can provide vocal support by making different sounds of raindrops depending on where they fall.

### ***Walk like a...***

A warm up activity that always works well, this activity involves walking together, as different kinds of things and in different moods. The facilitator leads by giving the prompts, which can be of three kinds:

- i. *Situational*: "Walk like you need to catch a bus", "Walk like you are tired on a hot, sunny day", "You are walking home from school, wearing your white school uniform, and it starts raining!"
- ii. *Imitation of creatures*: "Walk like you are a herd of elephants", "Walk like you are a colony of ants", "Fly like a flock of birds"
- iii. *On surfaces*: "Walk like you are walking on wet mud", "walk like you are on a road full of puddles", "walk like the floor is very slippery"

## Complete the picture

One person is asked to start by assuming the position of any creature or being (eg., tree, rock, river, ant, bird, etc.). Now, the other kids are asked to complete the "picture" of any ecosystem by assuming positions of anything they feel would exist with and around the first being. Encourage scientifically accurate "pictures" and elements.

You can do multiple rounds to represent different types of ecosystems.






*Educators from Care Earth Trust, Chennai, trying the complete the picture activity with us at a Nature Classrooms workshop.*



## Seeds travel

*Moving and dispersing like seeds*

<p><i>Theme: Seeds and Seed Dispersal</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Seeds, Plants, Seed Dispersal, Play, Embodiment</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) To observe different kinds of seeds</li><li>ii) To investigate and explore how and why seeds move from one place to another</li></ul>
<p> Ages 8yrs+ / Advanced</p> <p> Outdoors and indoors</p> <p> 40 min</p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Warm Up: Walk &amp; Observation (20 mins)</i></p> <p>Take a walk in the neighbourhood and gather a few different types of seeds.</p>

<p><i>Requirements:</i> Different types of seeds or photos, videos of seeds dispersing</p>	<p>Encourage children to notice the shape, size, weight, texture and colours of the seeds. Try to guess which plant the seed came from? Is the plant close by or far away? Are there a few or many seeds together? Discuss how and why seeds may need to 'travel'. Use photos, videos and books where necessary.</p>
<p><b>Note for facilitator:</b> It will be useful to do a recce to see what seeds you can find in the season around the neighbourhood. Keep a collection of different types of seeds through the year for children to touch and observe.</p> <p><i>Useful videos:</i> These seeds can walk: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIUparIDfzE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIUparIDfzE</a></p> <p>How seeds travel the world <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqgVks9NViQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqgVks9NViQ</a></p>	<p><i>Seeds Travel</i> (10mins)</p> <p>Ask children to walk around in the classroom/outdoor space. Next, children move about in the space while imagining themselves as different kinds of seeds.</p> <p>For example: "Imagine you are..."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-thin, papery seeds</li> <li>-seeds with many hair-like structures carried easily by the wind</li> <li>-a seed waiting to burst from a tightly closed pod</li> <li>-a seed with spokes and hooks"</li> </ul> <p><i>Closing</i> (10 mins)</p> <p>Discussion prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did it feel to move like a seed?</li> <li>• What seed did you enjoy becoming?</li> <li>• What were some of the ways in which the seeds travelled from one place to another?</li> </ul> <p>In the closing circle ask each child to make a sound/action of a seed they enjoyed learning about.</p>




### **Through the Movement Lens**

Ask children to fold their hand to form a circle, with a little "hole" in between. Their hands are now their "movement lens" and the tiny gap in the centre would be their "viewfinder". You can use this idea on movement walks in nature to add a layer of fun.



## Movement Mapping

*Learning to observe and record nature movements*

<p><i>Theme: Our Surroundings</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Mapping, Nearby Nature, Journaling, Art, Nature Spot</i></p> <p> Ages 8yrs+ / Advanced</p> <p> Outdoors and indoors</p> <p> 45 min +</p> <p><i>Requirements: Chart paper, writing &amp; drawing materials</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>i) To observe different kinds of movements in the natural environment</p> <p>ii) To map (recall, name, draw, document) nature movements</p>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b>  <i>A 'nature spot' can be any comfortable place from where you can watch nature. It can be</i></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Warm Up:</i> Gather children in a circle. For a few minutes, facilitate some basic warm-up exercises and stretches. Include nature-inspired movements (for example: reach the sky like a tree). Ask the children to follow your movements and actions.</p> <p><i>Main Session:</i> Next, with your group of students find a 'nature spot' within your school campus or in a neighbourhood park/garden.</p> <p>Encourage children to spend about 15-20mins around/in this 'nature spot'. Ask them to notice the various levels and spaces in this spot.</p>



<p><i>a window, balcony or a spot on the school ground.</i></p> <p><i>Try to find a space around the school campus or neighbourhood park/garden where children can explore without too many restrictions or oncoming traffic.</i></p> <p><i>Try to visit this space a few days before your outdoor walk/session.</i></p>	<p>Students write/draw in their notebooks movements in nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the ground, in the drain, along the roadside</li> <li>• In the sky</li> <li>• On walls, pavements</li> <li>• On plants and trees - under leaves, on the branches, and tree trunks</li> </ul> <p><i>Closing:</i> Next, on a big chart paper or even on the ground/floor of the classroom using chalk or natural materials like pebbles, leaves, sticks mark the different movement observations noticed from this 'nature spot'. Encourage descriptions, drawings and movements from each child to make a collective map.</p> <p>How many different movements were noticed?          What words were used to describe these movements?          How can this map be made to come 'alive'?</p>
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### ***Make a Movement Collection***

A fun way to observe, recall and express different movements on a nature walk. Ask the group to sit/stand in a circle after the walk. One by one, they share any movement they observed during the walk with words and their bodies. To make it challenging, ask students to repeat what the previous person said and add their own movement observation.

For example:

Student 1: "On my walk I saw...an ant running up a tree bark"

Student 2: "On my walk I saw...an ant running up a tree bark and a pigeon flapping its wings."




Student 3: "On my walk I saw...an ant running up a tree bark, a pigeon flapping its wings and a seed spinning."

And so on.

## Let's go home!

Learning about the idea of home and its construction

(Conceptualised and designed by Priyanka Chandrasekhar)

<p><i>Theme: Animal homes</i></p> <p><i>Tags: Animal homes, Shelter, Habitat, Tapping, Rhythmic movement, Creating with body, Group dynamics, Use of different body parts</i></p> <p> Ages 7yrs+ / Advanced</p> <p> Preferably outdoors or semi outdoor places (like balcony or verandah)</p> <p> 60 min +</p> <p><i>Requirements?</i></p> <p><i>i. Instrumental and rhythmic music</i></p> <p><i>ii. Blank papers and stationary</i></p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <p>i) To learn and realize the idea of a home</p> <p>ii) Observe the different kinds of homes around us</p> <p>iii) Participate in the process of construction of a home</p>
<p><b>Note for facilitators:</b></p> <p><i>Depending on the duration of the session and the group, the facilitator can choose to do either all or some of the activities in each sub-theme mentioned here.</i></p> <p><i>*Activities may be eating, playing, sitting,</i></p>	<p><b>Activity</b></p> <p><i>Home in the body (15 minutes):</i></p> <p>Ask the children to close their eyes and think about their homes. Now, ask them to "visit" different parts of their home by giving them cues like "go to a place where you sleep", "a place where you can see plants", "a place where you like to play", etc. Consider playing rhythmic music and encourage them not to stop in between till they have completed the "visits". Depending on the group, the children can be encouraged to map these places first on paper and then walk it too.</p> <p>After the above activity, the children can be asked to reflect on how it made them feel to walk in their home and what is the first thing home reminds them of - children can be asked to strike a pose (like a sculpture) with their bodies to depict what this is.</p> <p>Ask the children for 4 activities that they do inside the house and outside the house (personal space and public space). Depending on the group, this could be their room and also the rest of their house. Tell the children to perform each activity when they are at home and the same activity when they are outside. Facilitate a discussion of the differences, if any.*</p> <p><i>Observing (10 minutes):</i></p>

*speaking, reading, etc.*

*\*\*This activity can be done with music. Each time the music plays children must be instructed to go around and start observing. When the music stops they come back and share their observations.*

*The activity can also be done along with movement. Children can be taught dance a step (preferably using their feet alone). The step should be such that it can be done in the same spot or can be used to move as well. The children must do this step without stopping when they are observing.*

Ask the children to walk around the space and observe homes of animals, birds, insects, micro organisms and so on; also observe animals, birds, insects, micro organisms around them in that space.

Reflect and discuss *where* the animals/birds/insects are going (to their homes) or coming (from their home). Encourage them to guess. Why do they think so? *Why is the squirrel climbing up the tree? Where are the ants disappearing into the soil?\**

The entire activity with music or steps can be repeated about 3- 4 times.

*Construction of homes (20- 25 minutes):*

(i) Construct in the body

Children can be shown pictures or videos of homes of animals, birds and insects. If they have observed many in their space, that should be sufficient and no additional material needs to be shown.

Count from one to 10/15 very slowly. Ask the children to imagine their bodies to be the homes that they observed and how it might have been constructed. All the children start by sitting or lying on the floor, and slowly move to "construct" the home they observed, with their bodies. At the end of the counting the children should have stood up/sat up to create the shape of the home. Count to 10 or 15 again. This time, ask the children to deconstruct the home and lie back or sit back on the floor.

Increase the speed of counting each time or reduce the number of counts to allow children to construct and deconstruct the home through their bodies in varying speeds. The faster/lesser the counting is, the quicker children have to be to stand up and make the shape and break down the shape and lie down again.

(ii) Construct with the body

Children can be divided into groups of 4 or 5 each. Each group must be assigned one animal/bird/insect home they have observed or seen or studied about. Each group of children must be asked to make a sculpture of that home using all their bodies. Encourage children to use levels, the floor, and freely use their bodies collectively to create the shapes that they need to make the home they have been assigned.

As they are doing this,

- Ask them to think about why the animal/bird/insect chose to build their home this particular way and no other way? Do they have suggestions for the animal/bird/insect to build a better home?
- Encourage them to do this within a certain time. Ask them to reflect about how long the animal/bird/insect might actually take to build this.
- Depending on the group, encourage children to also think of the rhythm of building the home and which section of the home (and therefore which child) starts building the shape of the home. Encourage them to choreograph the sequence and pace of the bodies in creating the multiple shapes.
- Depending on the group, once the home is built, encourage children to build a story of one day in the life of the animal/bird/insect. More children can join each group to play the part of the animals/bird/insects.

*Closing:*

Ask the children to draw their dream home. Encourage them to think outside the box and tell them anything is possible.

*What shape would it be? What color would it be and what would it be made of? What materials would they use? What are the considerations for building their home- How comfortable? How beautiful? How safe?*

Discuss this in the contexts of what the animals/birds and insects perhaps think and what their considerations are.

# Nature Moves in Action

## Glimpses from workshops and classrooms

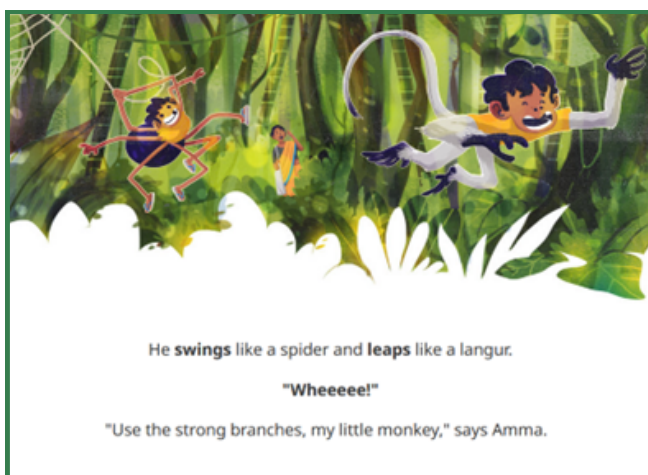
### **Move like Satya!**

*bringing together stories, movement and nature*

Our first formal trial of movement-based resources was in June 2022 with a group of sustainability and nature educators supported by Wipro Earthian. We had a group of 12-15 experienced educators participating in the session.

For us, the objective of this session was to get educators to i) experience movement-based activities for themselves and ii) to think of ways to use the performing arts and movement-based activities to introduce concepts and phenomena in nature learning.

We began with a warm-up exercise where each participant showed through actions their favourite way to learn and teach about the natural world. We had varied responses from photography to nature journaling, storytelling and nature walks.



We then moved on to a read aloud of the book *Satya, Watch Out!* written by Yamini Vijayan, illustrated by Vishnu M Nair and published by Pratham Books\*. The book enabled us to explore different kinds of animal movements and also words used to describe them in various languages. After the reading, the group was divided into pairs where one person received a movement word (for eg: leap) and another received a creature/plant (for eg:

frog). Together, each pair began to explore these movements – *leaping like frogs, crawling like caterpillars, hopping like grasshoppers and swaying like a coconut palm.*



We brought the session to a close with a nature movement walk – directing our attention to movements in nature using a few prompts like: observe something that makes a sound while moving, something moving fast/slow and two different kinds of flight. Participants observed and articulated diverse movements from a Coppersmith Barbet’s throat moving while calling to the movement of various creatures like frogs and fish in water.

We list some questions that arose for us as facilitators and for the participants during this session for further reflection and discussion:

***What does this kind of teaching-learning aim to do? What kinds of concepts/phenomena in nature learning lend themselves well to movement-based learning? Who is our audience – are there some learners who might find these activities relatable and enjoyable? Is there scope for collaboration with other performing arts and perhaps even sports disciplines?***

Many participants noted that the use of a story as a starting point for a movement session has great potential to also address vocabulary building and language learning allowing us to access words to describe and know the natural world better.

*\*You can read and/or download the story for free on the StoryWeaver platform:  
<https://storyweaver.org.in/stories/11243-satya-watch-out>*

## ***Nature-inspired Dumb Charades***

*Enacting ecological interactions*

We conducted another trial at the Bidiru Learning Centre, Bengaluru, with children of a mixed age group. We started off with a nature walk with our Nature Movements Bingo, helping children notice and observe different kinds of movements in nature. We observed scurrying ants, falling flowers, passing clouds, and buzzing carpenter bees. Apart from discussing these observations and ticking the boxes in the bingo, the children also drew small doodles of the movements they observed.



We then went back indoors for a game of dumb charades - with a nature-based twist. For this game, the children were paired and given pairs of chits one by one. These chits contained the names of two beings in nature that interact with each other in some way. For example, caterpillar and leaf, ant and fallen crumbs, rat snake and peacock. The children had to enact each of these interactions, while the others had to guess the creatures involved and the interaction occurring between them. After each enactment, we had brief discussions about the interactions represented.



We concluded the session with a cool down activity involving hand gestures. We sat together in a circle. The facilitator represented different creatures and natural processes through hand gestures, and asked the children to guess the representation and follow by imitating. We represented different things like spiders on a web, a turtle on the beach, a waterfall, a line of ants, and more. The children received this very well and were trying to create their own hand gestures and combinations.





# *Moving forward...*

When we began working on this resource bank, we acknowledged that it would serve well as a beginning to document and communicate ideas for teachers. Therefore, we envisioned it as a living document that invites contributions and feedback from those interested in teaching-learning processes in a continuous manner.

If you are a school teacher, nature educator, parent or facilitator who has created or has ideas for activities, energisers, games or any resource that we can include and feature in this resource bank please write to us at [edu@ncf-india.org](mailto:edu@ncf-india.org).

We would be delighted to feature your contribution with appropriate credit.

We also look forward to your feedback and reflections as you use and try these resources in your teaching-learning contexts. Tell us what worked, what you and your learners enjoyed, what was challenging and how you modified and adapted to your specific contexts.

At Nature Moves and Nature Classrooms, we will continue to brainstorm and create resources that will be available for free download on our website (<https://www.natureclassrooms.org/>). Visit our website and follow us on our social media channels for updates and new material to take to your spaces every few months!

# *Further reading*

Jacobson, S. K., Mallory D. McDuff, & Monroe, M. C. (2007). Promoting Conservation through the Arts: Outreach for Hearts and Minds. *Conservation Biology*, 21(1), 7–10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4124633>

Montserrat Franquesa-Soler, Laura Barraza & Juan Carlos Serio-Silva (2019) Children's learning preferences for the development of conservation education programs in Mexican communities, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 112:1, 28-37, DOI: 10.1080/00220671.2018.1427038

My Body My Wisdom : a handbook of creative dance therapy by Tripura Kashyap

Movement And Mutualism: Modeling Ecosystem Interactions:  
<https://www.sciencefriday.com/educational-resources/movement-modeling-ecosystem-interactions/>

To Boost Learning, Just Add Movement: <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/movement/>

Drama and theatre as an educational tool: <https://www.thehindu.com/education/act-your-facts/article29307566.ece>

Nature Moves by Sparklers, New Zealand: <https://sparklers.org.nz/activities/take-moment-notice-nature-nature-moves/>

**For queries and ideas for contribution, feel free to contact us!**



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