

THE BOND STREET DETECTIVES

Lesson Plans and Activity Guide

Activating Student Choice and Voice

Updated March 2026

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Building Inclusivity

My Why

A week after I wrote my first teaching philosophy as an undergraduate studying English Education in 2001, filled with ideals about cultivating community and amplifying student voice, my mother called to tell me that a drawer in her house had become stuck. It was a drawer she opened every day.

With some gentle prying, she discovered the cause: my grandmother's teaching philosophy from 1965. The woman I had never met—my namesake—held strikingly similar beliefs about what it means to educate and inspire.

More than twenty years later, I return to my own commitment to education. This time, I do so with her framed words beside me—not only as an educator of thousands, but as a mother to neurodiverse children and an advocate for inclusive learning.

I have spent years raising a child who exists on the margins—too often treated as the “and also” of an experience, rather than at its center. This work is grounded in a simple truth: no child should ever be an afterthought. When a system does not work for a child, it is the system that must change—not the child.

“Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to align. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize.”
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

How to Approach this Guide

This curriculum is designed to offer practical, accessible tools that move inclusion from intention to action—creating learning environments where all students are meaningfully seen, supported, and challenged.

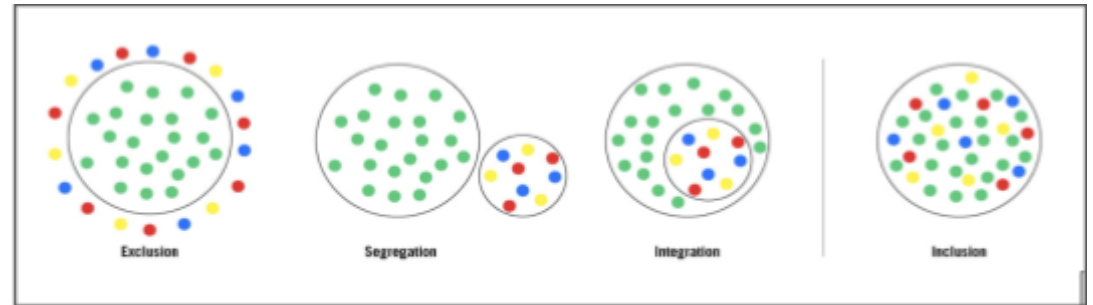
This guide is an invitation to collaborate on various warm-ups, lessons, and assessments. It is inspired by decades of professors, workshops, collaborations, and educators who pass on their favorite activities from one generation to the next. The foundation of this work is credited to Viola Spolin, Dorothy Heathcote, and Anna Deavere Smith. I invite you to make it your own and reach out any time as you create spaces worthy of *all* of our students.

This guide is grounded in the following tenets:

- An inclusive community actively values diversity, equity, & belonging
- Safety—emotional, social, & academic—is essential for student agency
- Curriculum must provide multiple access points to ensure both accessibility and rigor for all learners
- Educators must be reflective practitioners, continuously learning, unlearning, and evolving through storytelling and empathy
- Inclusive and engaging classrooms are built through intellectual curiosity, risk-taking, and collaborative learning

Research and Practitioners

To ensure students are seen, valued, and heard, classrooms must be intentionally designed with **Dr. Shelley Moore's** model of inclusivity in mind. It is not enough to place students with varying readiness levels in the same space and assume inclusion will naturally occur. Inclusion requires deliberate structures, shared beliefs, and ongoing collaboration.



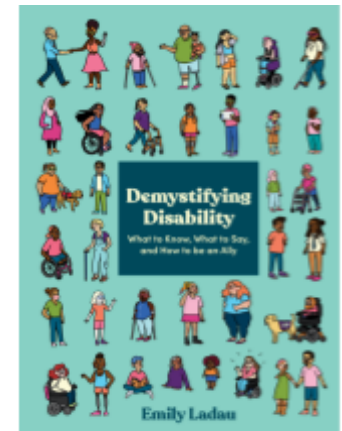
"FIVE MOORE MINUTES | Dr. Shelley Moore.
www.drshelleymoore.com/five-moore-minutes.

These elements are essential:

- Building a culture of connectedness (e.g., using collective language such as "our students")
- Creating physical space for all educators in the room (desks, seating, and shared ownership of the environment)
- Co-constructing classroom philosophies and revisiting them throughout the year
- Providing common planning time and sustained opportunities for co-teachers to build rapport and alignment

When these elements are in place, the design of the classroom has its greatest impact on students. Such environments support student experiences, validate identities, and cultivate a sense of agency. Students shift from passive recipients of instruction to active participants in their learning through increased engagement, student-centered practices, and project-based experiences.

This approach also significantly impacts educators. It requires adaptability, ongoing professional learning, and a willingness to rethink traditional structures. Teachers must engage in continuous reflection and collaboration to bring these inclusive practices to life, ensuring that the intended outcomes for students are not only envisioned but also realized.



For more support to create accessible and inclusive environments, this is a **MUST** read!

New Generation Learning Standards

- Employ literacy skills individually and collaboratively
- Shared Responsibility for Literacy Development
- Practice with authentic texts and real-life communication, including social, cultural, & academic contexts

Social Emotional Learning Standards


2C: Apply a variety of communication and social skills to interact with individuals across lines of difference

Madame Eleanor's Warm Ups

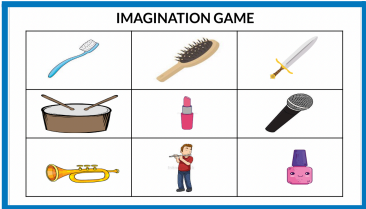
The real Madame Eleanors of the world never met a warm-up (or an accessory) they couldn't use to build community, a safe environment, or some joy. The following activities can be modified based on age, readiness, and the size of the group. Reach out anytime with specific questions for your population... and HAVE FUN!

Whenever possible, consider opportunities to build student leadership, choice, and sensory-based materials to access the activities.

Name of Game	How to Play	What it Works On
<p>Animal Mashup as seen in Chapter 3</p> <p><i>Excellent for warm-ups, breaking comfort zones, and encouraging playful risk-taking</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students stand in an open space. Each student chooses an animal (real or imaginary) and begins moving and making sounds like that animal. On the teacher's or leader's signal, students pair up and combine their two animals into a single new creature, moving and vocalizing together. Pairs can then join another pair to create larger mash-ups, continuing to combine movements and sounds. Encourage creativity: students can exaggerate movements, invent hybrid sounds, or create personalities for their new animals. 	<p>Creativity Imagination Physicality Collaboration Ensemble awareness Improvisation skills Character creation</p>
<p>Boal Drawing Activity</p> <p><i>For more information: Boal, A. (2005). Games for Actors and Non-Actors. Routledge.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Partners (A & B) sit back-to-back. Partner A draws something while Partner B waits a moment. A describes the drawing to B without looking at the paper, touching anything, or turning around. B recreates the picture without seeing it. Then switch roles. <p>Debrief: What worked well? How could instructions be clearer? What specificity would improve success?</p>	<p>Listening Clarity in communication Creativity Perspective-taking</p>

Name of Game	How to Play	What it Works On
Candle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Place an imaginary candle in the center of the circle. Pass it around for participants to put something inside the candle (A worry of the day, an anticipation, etc). This can be repeated at the end of the workshop to take something out of the candle. Blow out with a collective breath. 	Trust Ensemble-building
Hello Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a physical board to greet students with activities they have chosen. Take turns walking around and greeting each student. 	Social-emotional learning Relationship-building Student agency Engagement Choice-based learning Classroom community
<p>Jello Walk as seen in Chapter 10</p> <p><i>Helps loosen tension, expand movement vocabulary, and promote playful risk-taking</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students spread out in an open space. Explain that their bodies are like wobbly jello, and they should move with slow, wobbly, exaggerated motions. Students walk around the room, experimenting with “jello” arms, legs, and torso. Encourage varying speed, levels (high/low), and shapes. <p>Optional: Play music or give prompts like “Make your jello wobbly in the air” or “Move like jello on a hill.”</p> <p>Variations: Have students interact with others while maintaining their jello movement, or freeze in creative shapes at your cue.</p>	Physical awareness Body control Creativity Spatial exploration Ensemble movement Warm-up for improvisation
Lightning Circle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students stand in a circle and pass around a sound and a movement. Pass a sound and movement quickly around the circle. Encourage speed and commitment. 	Energy building Risk-taking Quick thinking Group cohesion

Name of Game	How to Play	What it Works On
People to People	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students spread out in an open space. The leader calls out a body part (e.g., "elbow to elbow," "knee to knee," "hand to hand"). Students must quickly find a partner & connect the indicated body part with theirs Change body parts frequently, increasing speed as students improve. 	Physical awareness Teamwork Quick thinking
Penguin Song <i>as seen in Chapter 21</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students stand in a circle or are scattered in the space. Choose one student to start as the "leader" who begins a simple rhythmic motion or gesture while singing or vocalizing. (There are many variations of "Have you ever seen a penguin come to tea..." available to listen to) Each student repeats the motion/phrase and adds their own small movement or sound, creating a growing chain. Continue around the circle, building rhythm, repetition, and variation. <p>Variations: Have students move like penguins (waddling, sliding, flapping), or turn the chain into a full group improvisation where everyone interacts as penguins</p>	Rhythm Coordination Group timing Improvisation Creativity Physical storytelling Memory
The Big Wind Blows <i>Great as a warm-up or icebreaker, especially for new groups</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students sit in a circle with one fewer chair than participants. One student stands in the middle and says, "The big wind blows for all students who..." followed by a true statement about classmates (e.g., "are wearing black," "have curly hair," "like pizza"). All students for whom the statement is true must stand and cross the circle to sit in a different chair. The student left standing in the middle becomes the next caller. 	Social awareness Observation skills Inclusivity Quick movement Attention Community-building
The Name Game	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students stand in a circle. One student says their name, then calls another person's name and switches places with them. Progression: switch using only eye contact (no speaking) 	Learning names Focus Ensemble awareness Nonverbal communication

Name of Game	How to Play	What it Works On
Transformational Object "Imagination Game"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pass an object around 2. Each student transforms it into something new through mime. <p style="text-align: center;">This is a modification I use with my students.</p> 	Creativity Imagination Object work
Whatcha Doin'?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students sit or stand in a circle. 2. One student starts by miming an action (e.g., "brushing teeth," "juggling," "walking a dog"). 3. Another student points to them and asks, "Whatcha doin'?" 4. First student responds with a completely different action (e.g., "I'm baking a cake"). 5. The asker must immediately begin miming the new action. 6. Continue around the circle, keeping the pace quick and playful. 	Imagination Improvisational thinking Quick decision-making Adaptability Focus Nonverbal storytelling Ensemble awareness
Who Started the Motion?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One student leaves (detective). 2. A leader is secretly chosen to start subtle movements that others copy. 3. The detective returns and has 3 guesses to identify the leader. 	Observation Teamwork Subtle performance skills Leadership
What I'm Bringing to the Picnic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each student adds an item in sequence ("I'm bringing..."), 2. Repeat previous items based on the first letter of their name. (ex: Ashanti is bringing apples, Benjamin is bringing Bananas) 	Memory Sequencing Listening
Zip Zap Zop <i>This famous game has many variations!</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Zip" passes right, "Zap" reverses direction, "Zop" goes across the circle. 2. Maintain rhythm and eye contact. 	Focus Rhythm Ensemble timing Listening

Class Activity: Student Interviews

Activity

Students are placed in partnerships or small groups to learn more about one another. They can interview their partner based on questions the class previously generated, or ones they have individually selected.

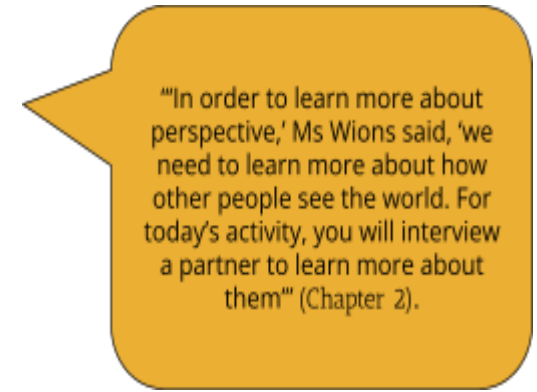
Skill Development

- Emphasizes listening and turn-taking
- Builds empathy and connection among students
- Provides practice with asking questions and notetaking
- Encourages self-expression and reflective thinking

Procedures

- Pair or group students (2–4 students per group).
- Student A asks the first round of questions, and Student B answers. Then switch roles.
- Questions can vary depending on age, readiness, and lesson topic.
- Students record answers if appropriate, using paper, a notebook, or a digital device.

Optional: Groups can share one interesting thing they learned about their partner with the whole class.



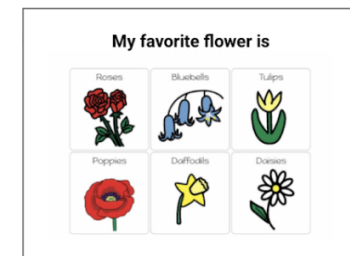
- *What do you do when you get home from school?*
- *Do you have any pets?*
- *If you could have any animal as a pet, what would you choose and why?*

- *Do you have a favorite book, movie, or TV show?*
- *If you could have any superpower, what would it be?*
- *What do you think you will remember most about this year?*

- *If you could visit anywhere in the world, where would it be?*
- *If you could invent a new holiday, what would you celebrate?*
- *Are you a morning or night person? Why?*

Modifications

- ★ Use Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) cards for students who need visual supports or are non-speaking
- ★ Provide sentence starters for students who need support to form questions (My favorite... is...)
- ★ Allow students to draw answers
- ★ Pair students strategically to encourage peer support and confidence building



Class Activity: "Change Three Things" or as Maddie calls it... "The Glasses Game"

Activity

Students are placed in partnerships or small groups to identify changes they have made. The goal is to build observation and social awareness by noticing small changes and guessing what is altered.

Skill Development

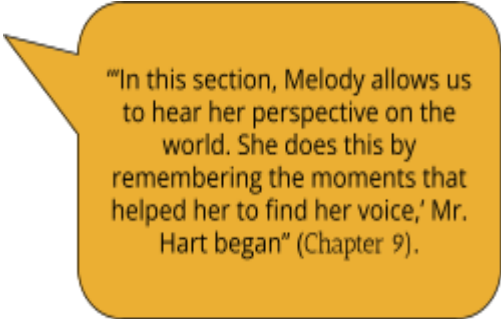
- Encourages observation skills and attention to detail
- Promotes social awareness and memory
- Builds communication and critical thinking
- Supports confidence in peer interactions

Procedures

1. Pair students (Student A and Student B).
2. Student B turns around or closes eyes.
3. Student A makes three changes to their appearance or posture. Examples include:
 - Changing the position of hands, arms, or feet
 - Altering hairstyle
 - Adding/removing an accessory (hat, scarf, jacket)
4. Student B turns back and tries to guess the three changes Student A made
5. Switch roles so Student B makes changes and Student A guesses.

Modifications

- ★ Use picture cards to represent changes (ex: Hat, Bracelet, etc). Students will point to cards rather than speak their guesses
- ★ Limit changes to 1-2 at first
- ★ Create a list of options for students to choose from to help determine what to change
- ★ Model a round with the teacher demonstrating before starting
- ★ One student changes something while the entire class guesses



"In this section, Melody allows us to hear her perspective on the world. She does this by remembering the moments that helped her to find her voice, 'Mr. Hart began' (Chapter 9).

Class Activity: Cross the Room

Activity

A movement-based activity that encourages students to express opinions and share perspectives without speaking

Skill Development

- Encourage movement, social engagement, and critical thinking
- Promote self-expression and perspective sharing
- Foster discussion and reflection on ideas or opinions

Procedures

1. Create two lines facing one another (in many classrooms, you have to push back the desks to create space)
2. The facilitator reads a statement aloud. If the statement is true, the student crosses to the other side of the line.

“Ms. Wions smiled. ‘Class, we are continuing our work on perspective. Our opinions can change based on how we see a situation. For this activity, you will cross the room if the sentence we read is true for you’” (Chapter 15).

- Ice cream is your favorite dessert
- You play an instrument
- You have lived in another country or state
- You hit the snooze button this morning

- You know at least 4 digits of PI
- You speak a second language
- You have a step-parent
- You wish Harry Potter was real
- You ate breakfast this morning

- You have been called a cruel or mean name
- You have an unusual phobia
- Someone in your family or friend group has a disability
- People frequently mispronounce your name

Facilitation Notes

- Students do not have to cross the line if they don't want to.
- Other students do not comment on whether or not a student crossed (ex: “You do have a dog, you were supposed to cross!”)
- Build from safer questions to more personal questions based on the topics/goals of the lesson

Modifications

- ★ Use visual signs or symbols for “Agree” or “Disagree.”
- ★ Allow students to point to a side instead of walking, if necessary
- ★ Create a visual of the statements so students can follow along or preview in advance

Variations

- This can turn into a Human Barometer where students show to what extent they agree or disagree
- This inspires small group discussions. After moving, students discuss with a partner the story behind their move.

Class Activity: Pass the Paper

Activity

Each student will write their name on top of a piece of paper. The paper is then passed around a small group, the class, etc., where other students write a word to describe them. **NOTE:** This can only be done in classrooms where there is safety and a community has been built.

Skill Development

- Self awareness and reflection
- Social awareness and empathy
- Positive peer recognition
- Characterization and vocabulary skills

Procedures

1. Students select a piece of paper and write their name on the top
2. The paper is passed around the room while classmates write ONE WORD they would use to describe the person at the top of the paper
3. Continue until every student has added a word to the paper
4. Then return to the original owner to invite the students to read over the words. (If there is ANY concern about the words written, the teacher can collect the papers first before re-distributing)

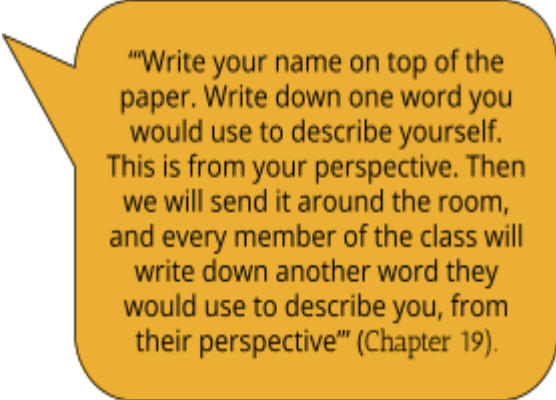
Optional Writing Prompt: Choose one word from your list that surprised you or felt especially meaningful.

Modifications

- ★ Use sentence starters or word banks

Variations

- This can be modified to analyze characters in a text. Ex: Write a word to describe LUCY and then pass it around the group.
- Explain your word and provide 2 pieces of evidence to explain it



“Write your name on top of the paper. Write down one word you would use to describe yourself. This is from your perspective. Then we will send it around the room, and every member of the class will write down another word they would use to describe you, from their perspective” (Chapter 19).

Lesson Plan: Beyond the First Impression

Lesson Goals

To what extent is an individual able to learn more about someone else, rather than just stopping at their first impression?

Goals

Group annotation of a text, discussion of characterization and relevant themes in a text

Materials

1. Class is divided into groups
2. Copy of excerpts to analyze from the text (Examples from Chapter 20: The Missing Piece have been provided)
3. Spinner with whiteboard numbers with designated options for annotation

Procedures

1. Annotation Roles Explained: The students will spin a wheel to determine which role they have for each of the assigned chunks. This is purposefully designed to increase participation and opportunities to interact with the text in new ways.
 - #1 Fact Finder: Find a fact from the passage
 - #2 Character Connector: Choose a character from the text and consider how they are feeling.
 - #3 Curiosity Catalyst: Ask a question about the text (vocabulary, wondering)
 - #4 Tension Teller: Identify a conflict the author is introducing or solving in the text. How do you know?
2. Students will annotate the text in three chunks, spinning the wheel for each chunk.
3. Formative Assessment: Students have the opportunity to interact with the text using creative writing skills. These include:

Rewrite the chapter from a different character's perspective. What is going on underneath the scene that they don't want to say aloud?

Choose an item in the scene that the author includes. What do you think this object represents? How does this item add meaning to the story?

Connect to a time you could relate to the way a character in the story was feeling? What was happening? Who was there? Show the reader how you were feeling rather than tell them.

Modifications

1. Provide Sentence starters
 - “I think this character feels ___ because ___.”
 - “This object might represent ___ because ___.”
 - “I felt like this character when ___ happened.”
2. For students using AAC or PECS, provide symbol cards for Fact, Feeling, Question, and Conflict to support participation.

Wrap Up

1. “How did your understanding of the character change when you looked beyond the first impression?”
2. Exit Ticket: I used to think x, but now I think y.

Excerpt A	Excerpt B	Excerpt C
<p>“You don’t look at her when you talk, you laugh at her, and you don’t believe she can do as much as she can. She isn’t going to change to fit into your idea of the world. You are the one that needs to change” Lucy paused.</p> <p>“Well ... she doesn’t say a lot ... and when she does, I can’t understand her. What am I supposed to do? I just thought...” Coco started to explain herself.</p> <p>“I say it again.” Maddie approached Coco and spoke slowly and clearly.</p> <p>Coco looked at Maddie. She forgot Maddie was listening.</p>	<p>“Are you talking about my sister?” Cal jumped in. “She was born before me, but she can’t write. It’s because she’s missing her number-five thing. I don’t know where it went. She lost it. My monkey got lost, but Dad said he just went on vacation. He even sent me a postcard. Do you want to see it?”</p> <p>Coco shook her head and was about to march to the door, but Maddie did not leave her position.</p> <p>“What color is your dress?” she asked slowly.</p> <p>“What?” Coco was very confused. “I’m not wearing a dress,” she added tiredly.</p> <p>Maddie spoke clearly. “School. My dress was blue.”</p>	<p>Coco looked to the others in the room for help.</p> <p>“Maddie doesn’t always have the words to say exactly what she wants,” Max explained. “She goes back to conversations she’s had before, like following a script. It makes her feel comfortable, and I think she’s trying to make you feel comfortable too.” He glanced at Maddie to see if he got it right.</p> <p>Maddie smiled.</p> <p>“Your dress ... It was a pretty color,” Coco said. Then she added quietly, “Listen, Maddie, I didn’t take the music box. I really don’t want anything to ruin the play.” She paused. She handed the owl back to Maddie. “Thank you for letting me hold this. It’s cute.”</p>

Excerpt from *Loving You Big*

The author, Leah Witman Moore, was inspired to create The Bond Street Detectives based on her own experiences of raising a child with Cri Du Chat. She describes how her life changed when she learned about her daughter's diagnosis in her memoir, Loving You Big.

Chapter 1: Redefining Connection

I am done being quiet.

It's not that I didn't talk when I was younger; in fact, I used thousands of words a day. Most of my family did—my poor father rarely got to speak more than five a night. "How was school today, girls?" Then he would sit back as my mom, my sister, and I took over for the rest of the evening.

It was just safer being nonconfrontational. I was happy to redirect and let what was unsaid linger. I floated through my uneventful childhood, getting lost in the stories of other people. Shakespeare. Angelou. Morrison. I preferred to read the words of others who redefined what it meant to have something to say.

I thought words were the best way to make connections with people, so I started to practice them. On paper. In short stories. On the stage. I spent hours playing Word Munchers on the computer so my typing could keep up with my thinking. I was comforted being near words, even if I was just writing love stories about Mickey Mouse.

I knew telling stories was in my future, or at least learning how to help other people unlock theirs. I was always interested in what stories were told and who had the opportunity to tell them. I knew I wanted to teach; it was a medium for storytelling. I also knew I wanted to act.

At eighteen, I decided I could combine these interests to become a sign language teacher. This plan was diverted when I realized my college did not have a sign language program. That information would have been helpful to learn from my high school guidance counselor, but he was too busy telling me that Jewish girls should learn to cook, take their "pretty pills," and not worry so much about a job because the focus should be on finding a husband. And instead of replying with what I really thought, I just ignored his terrible advice, applied to college without knowing the nuances, and accidentally ended up in a great school, without my major.

It wasn't the last time I missed the opportunity to say what I was thinking, but as my responsibilities grew, so did my voice. I did become a teacher of both English and theater, and spent my days doing exactly what I had hoped to do—helping people use words to communicate. I met with administrators to fight for more inclusive texts to be read. I started clubs to allow students new

opportunities to write and perform. I partnered with colleagues to update the curriculum so it was more student-centered. Every decision I made was around empowering people to tell their stories—to speak their truths.

After thirty years of relying on words, teaching them every day, I learned my firstborn might never use them. In fact, my daughter changed my entire life with just three words. Cri du chat. In French, it means “cry of the cat.” In medical school, it means a genetic disorder caused by a chromosomal deletion. In the doctor’s office, it means tests and therapies. But at the kitchen table, it means my daughter. Our Jordan.

When you are told your child may never walk or talk, you need to redefine everything you know about communication. You search for new ways to describe despair. You find experts to help you expand possibilities. You become trained to find words in new places. You unearth that sign language pamphlet from the nineties to access a starting point. And your ways to communicate expand. You find new meaning behind her smiles, her dance moves, and her kisses. You see joy with her pointing and her body language. And you revel in her hand signs for Mama and more.

As Jordan’s communication grows, so does mine. I learn to speak up where I never previously did. I weave through implicit biases to advocate for my child. I fight to understand what ableism is and how to eradicate it. I learn how to use my spoken words to amplify the other ways there are to communicate. And my words form questions: Does she understand us? What will her future look like? Will she grow up in a more tolerant society? Will my words make a difference? The answer is: I don’t know.

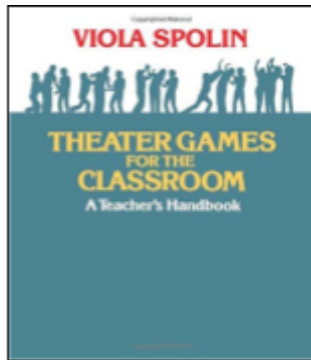
And for the woman who whispered her words, who was afraid to confront, who was worried she would appear combative if she really spoke ... she has found something more powerful. Something that encapsulates pride and fear, strength and temerity, sadness and joy, love and comfort: to be a mother and learn there are ways to listen to your child who might not speak.

And when they create the word for that, let me know.

Questions

1. How did Leah’s experiences with her daughter Jordan change the way she thought about communication?
2. Why did Leah enjoy being around words when she was young?
3. Leah learned that communication can happen in many ways, not just with words. Can you think of times you understood someone without them speaking?
4. Leah loved reading stories by Shakespeare, Angelou, and Morrison. Which stories or books have helped you understand yourself or others?
5. What do you think Leah means when she talks about “finding words in new places”?
6. Imagine you are a detective like the ones in *The Bond Street Detectives*. How could you solve a mystery by noticing nonverbal clues?
7. Create your own short story inspired by Leah’s idea that communication can happen in many ways. Include a character who finds a new way to share their thoughts or feelings.

Further Resources



TIP: HERE'S A GREAT RESOURCE TO LEARN MORE!



LOVING YOU BIG