



## 500 Minutes for Parkinson's Lesson 9 : Dance (Flocking)

### Parkinson's Points:

Recent studies indicate that dance may be an effective alternative to traditional exercise for addressing these areas of concern to individuals with PD. The benefits of dance include improved balance and gait function, as well as improved quality of life.

### Lesson Objectives:

- Explore movement and locomotion with different types of music
- Allow students to create movement patterns based on specific criteria
- Provide students with a fun activity that meets the requirements for a DPA program

### Materials/Equipment:

Music and AV technology  
Large Space  
Pylons to designate areas for groups if class is large

### References/Resources:

Schools Come Alive – Activity Ideas for Large Groups of High School Students, 2006  
[www.schoolscomealive.org](http://www.schoolscomealive.org)

### Activity Description:

*Flocking Equipment:* Themed music with a strong consistent beat, e.g., The Lion Sleeps Tonight (The Tokens), Stayin Alive (Bee Gees), Holiday (Madonna).

*Organization:* Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5. Each group will find a space and start in a diamond shape (5th person in the middle). All group members will stand facing the same direction, the person at the front of the group is the first leader. When the music starts, the leader will choose a way of moving and the rest of the group will follow. After 8 or more repetitions of the movement, the leader will jump and rotate to face a new direction – this identifies a new leader who will choose a new movement and continue. The beauty of flocking is that one group may transition and pass through another group while following their leader. Challenge students to incorporate movements at high, medium and low levels.

*Variation:* Challenge groups to repeat the movements of previous leaders before choosing their own movement. This will challenge groups to create one large sequence with each leader adding a new movement. Try establishing a criteria for the movement of each leader – they must each create a sequence that includes two levels, two pathways and one unique step for a total of 16 beats. Each leader will repeat their sequence twice before choosing a new leader.

### Discussion questions:

What did you enjoy about this activity? (group, everyone got to lead, simple)

What considerations would the instructor of a dance program for individuals with PD make in order to make this an appropriate activity? (Discuss speed and rhythm of music, space, number of people in a group, severity of condition, adjustments to how to signal a change of leader, etc.)

### Ontario Ministry Curriculum Links:

Daily Physical Activity  
Health and Physical Education  
Music