Session 2 Transcript: Jamie Hipp

- Welcome to arts integrated Brain Breaks Theater and Dance. I'm Jamie Hipp, your facilitator for this session. I will be tweeting in real time throughout the session and responding to any questions you may have through my twitter handle, @ArtsAreHipp. Why are brain breaks important? Simple. Our brains are wired for novel experiences. In fact, according to the latest research, novel, different and unusual experiences actually increase motivation and potential for learning new concepts. I can't think of a single teacher who doesn't want to increase student motivation and learning potential. The very active art forms of theater and dance are natural brain break pairings. Movement based brain breaks increase oxygen to the brain, which increases energy and focus. This is particularly crucial for today's learners, who according to research, have shorter attention spans than learners last decade. Now that we've identified the what and why behind brain breaks, we are going to look at the how. By the end of this session, you will be able to apply theater and dance strategies, and vocabulary to brain breaks. You will also have all the tools you need to create your own developmentally appropriate theater and dance brain breaks for your class. For our first brain break, line aerobics, we will use some dance choreography to get the blood pumping. I'm going to crank up some music with a steady beat and review the types of lines and angles students are learning in their math unit, using my body. Stand up and dance along at home.

- Y'all with me? Horizontal. Y'all got it! Vertical, vertical, vertical, vertical. Y'all know what's coming. Diagonal. Here we go. Parallel. Any parallel. Your choice. Oh, I like it! And perpendicular. Acute right, acute right. I love it. So now that y'all know it, we're gonna scoot this way a little bit. And we're gonna do all of them in order. Here we go. Get into it! Sometimes, I do not lead a brain break in front of the class and simply project the prompts out of order. This serves as a quick formative assessment of which students might need more practice with the math concept. Aerobic dance doesn't have to be paired solely with a math standard, like types of lines or angles. Encourage students to create their own aerobic dance brain break about their own learning. I've seen some great examples with positional words in ELA like below, above, beside, in front, next to, behind. I've also seen steps of the scientific method aerobic

choreography. Our second brain break, shape shifter tableau, is one of my favorites for its collaborative and fast paced nature. Tableau vivante is french for living picture. It's a theater and dance strategy, wherein participants create a frozen, silent picture comprised of their bodies. An important characteristic of tableau is the aspect of levels, which provide visual interest for the audience and help tell the story. Let's watch three shape shifter tableau being created and deconstructed.

- And we're gonna transform that camping tent into a washing machine. And we can even activate our washing machine through pantomime. You're creating a car. Finally, you're creating a giraffe. Although the video featured the strategy paired with vocabulary words in language arts, shape shifter is great for vocabulary words in social studies, like covered wagon when discussing westward expansion, or even mammals when learning them in science. Speaking of science, our third brain break deals with the scientific concepts of force and motion paired with the theater strategy of pantomime. Pantomime is silent detailed movement, where both the movement and the actor's facial expression help tell the audience a story. We are already pantomime experts with detailed movements we use every day, such as "Hello!" at the beginning of the day to "goodbye," to "can you speak up?" to We communicate non verbally all day long. That's what pantomime is. Nonverbal communication, through movement without sound or sound effects. Did you see my facial expression difference between my pantomimes of "hello" and "goodbye?" Facial expression helps convey the actor's emotion in a pantomime. After teaching specific science content related to force and motion, make a quick slideshow of vocabulary prompts to prepare for this brain break. Explain to students that they will be reacting to the prompt with silent, detailed movement called pantomime. Here's an example. The possible scenarios are endless. You could even ask questions after this brain break to check for understanding. For example, you could ask students to identify simple machines they pantomimed. You could also ask which scenario required more force or less energy. Pantomime is useful for any standard which implies movement. Like action verbs in ELA, decimal movement in math, or movement of peoples in social studies. Our fourth and final brain break featured today is also versatile across the curriculum. It features the theater strategy of

improvisation, where a scene is created spontaneously and is unscripted and unrehearsed. We will be using the improv idea of "yes, and." The basic premise of "yes, and" is you that accept what was said before and expound upon that line of thinking. I also think it's a great relationship skill builder because the game helps develop positive peer interactions and acceptance. Since we're already familiar with pantomime from our last brain break, we're going to add in some pantomime as well. This brain break is called shared story, and I typically utilize it at the end of a class, week, or unit. Using "yes, and" and pantomime students will sequence and retell a story or event. Check out this example and try to determine the overarching story or event featured.

- The king of England was King George.

- Yes, and there were colonists that were very angry at King George.

- Yes, and he taxed our tea.

- Yes, and we dumped it in the Boston Harbor.

- Yes, and the fishies were swimming all in the tea water.

- Yes, and a war broke out.

- What's your guess on the story, topic, or event featured in the shared story improv you just watched? If you thought the Boston Tea Party, you were listening and watching closely. I've used shared story pantomimes with novel retell in ELA and numerous

cycles in science. Even though the four brain breaks featured in this session were paired with elementary standards, they can easily be adapted to middle and high school classrooms. Teaching the carbon cycle or photosynthesis in your middle school classroom soon? Pantomime can be really valuable. How about middle school teachers covering ancient history? I can hear a shared story improv about Alexander the Great's spread of Greek culture in my mind right now. High school algebra teachers. You could positively have your students use their bodies to dance the graphs of rational functions using graph aerobics. I'm also picturing ecosystem shape shifter tableau in high school biology. Each brain break we covered today featured an academic standard paired with a theater or dance standard, making the brain breaks truly arts integrated. Be sure to download the handout which accompanies this session. It includes an overview of all four brain break strategies. It's my hope that you will adapt and adopt these brain break as an engaging and motivating part of your instructional repertoire for small moments. Enjoy the rest of Connectivity 2020.