

Embodied Developmental Activities:

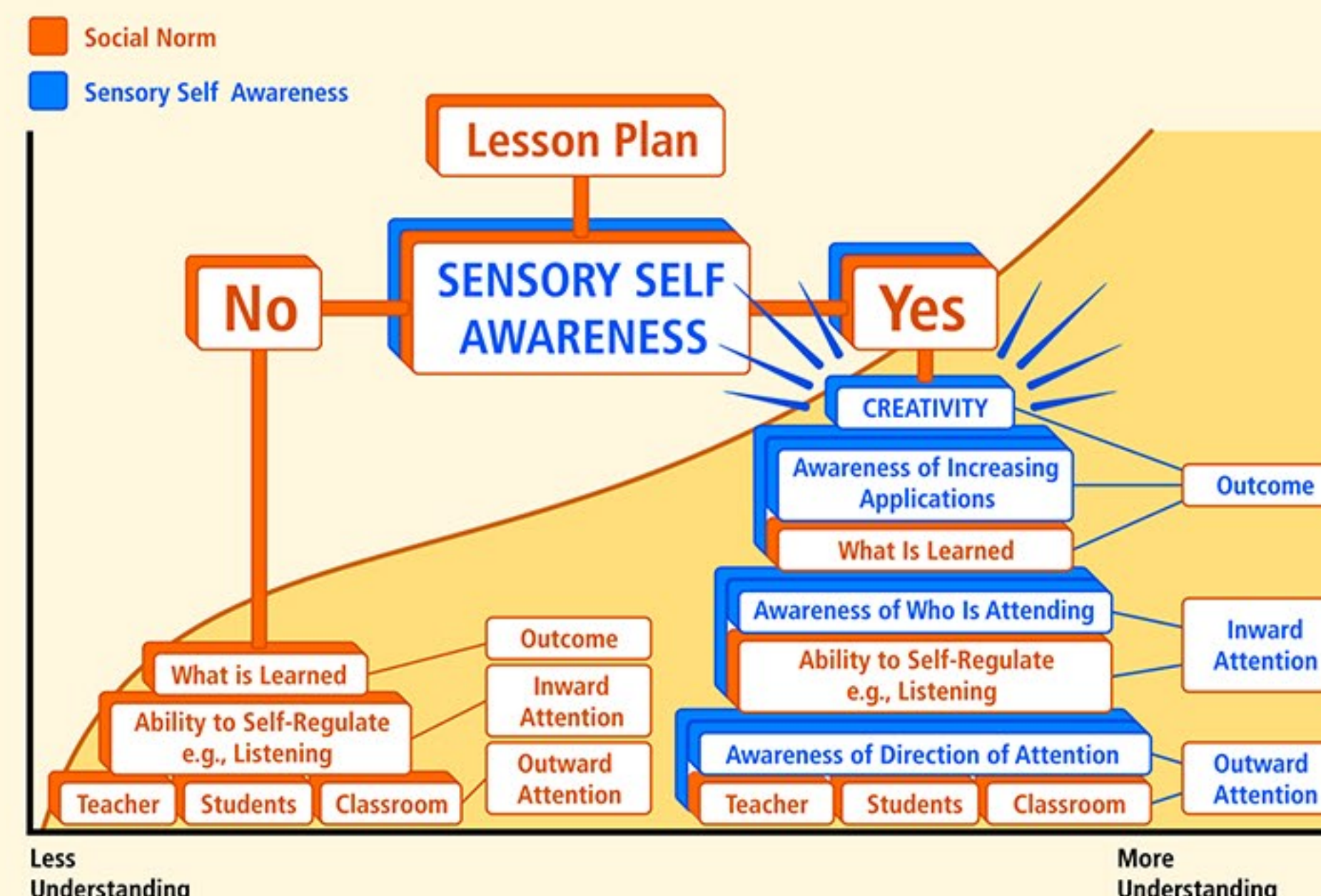
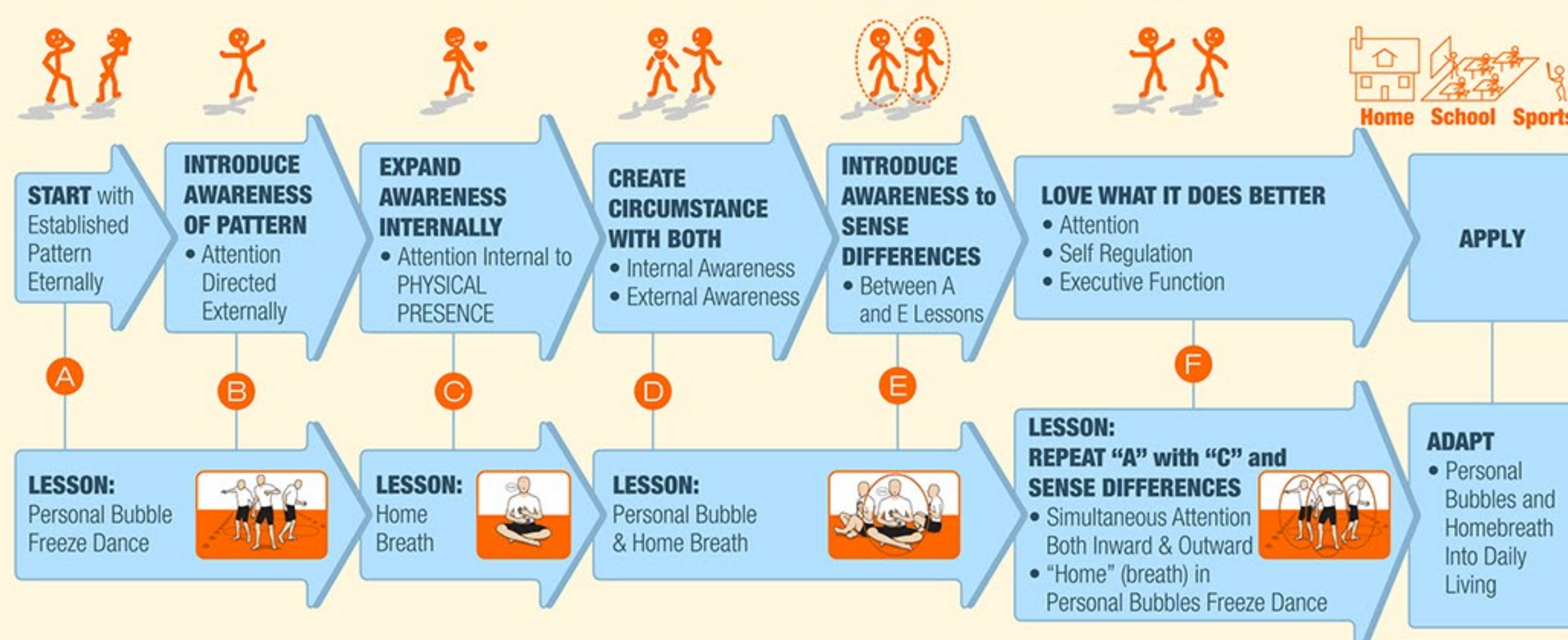
Somatic Attention (Inward and Outward) for Engagement and Self-Regulation

Carolyn F. Palmer and Catherine Rosasco-Mitchell
Vassar College and Feldenkrais® Practitioners

You can apply somatic self-awareness activities in your courses to:

- Provide direct experience with a course topic (e.g., self-regulation, executive function, sense of self)
- Show what teachers can do with children in school to promote engagement and development
- Enhance your own agency and connection with class
- Enhance student agency and engagement with course material

How To Learn Sensory Self Awareness



Teaching Development

1. Does Embodiment (Somatics) play a role in Development ?
Attention ?
Self Regulation ?
Executive Function ?
2. How ?
Patterns of Habitual Behavior
3. Character of Embodiment
The "Who" - Identity, Agency ?
Lace Fingers: Familiar & Unfamiliar

Teaching embodiment is crucial:

- Embodied cognition research shows that our physical body grounds perception, learning, speaking and thinking (e.g., Gallese, 2007; Barsalou, 2008; Broaders et al., 2007).
- Progressive curricular plans are now designed to teach emotional intelligence and executive function, encouraging children (and teachers) to attend to their bodies and feelings (e.g., Shonkoff & Phillips, 2008; Diamond & Lee, 2011; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).
- Teaching somatic awareness promotes direct experience with developmental concepts; activities for teachers-in-training in their classrooms; and self-regulation and engagement by professor and students.
- School and life train people to attend outside themselves. It is vital to learn to attend to events, including other people's responses to events (as in social referencing and joint attention). However, when this outward-focused attention comes at the expense of understanding one's own needs and perspective, inattention to one's sensations can lead to reactivity, poor motivation, and lack of self-direction.

References

- Barsalou, L. W. (2008). Grounded cognition. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59, 617-645.
- Broaders, S. C. et al. (2007). Making children gesture brings out implicit knowledge and leads to learning. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 136, 439-550.
- Diamond, A., and Lee, K. (2011). Interventions shown to aid executive function development in children 4 to 8 years old. *Science*, 333, 959-964.
- Feldenkrais, M. (2009). *Awareness through movement*. New York: Harper.
- Gallese, V. & Sinagaglia, C. (2010). The bodily self as power for action. *Neuropsychologia*, 48, 746-755.
- Gallese, V. (2007). Before and below theory of mind: Embodied simulation and neural correlates of social cognition. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London Series B: Biological Science*, 362, 659-669.
- Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 491-525.
- Rosasco-Mitchell, C. (2013). *A New SENSORY Self-Awareness*. Kamuela, HI: Feldenkrais Interest.
- Rosasco-Mitchell, C. (2015). *Wellness Through Movement*. Retrieved from <http://wellnessthroughmovement.com/blog/>
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.) (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Acknowledgements:**
Illustrations drawn by Andriy Yankovskyy.
Funding for this collaboration came in part from the Elinor Nims Brink Fund, Vassar College.
For more information, contact Carolyn Palmer at capalmer@vassar.edu or Catherine Rosasco-Mitchell at info@wellnessthroughmovement.com