

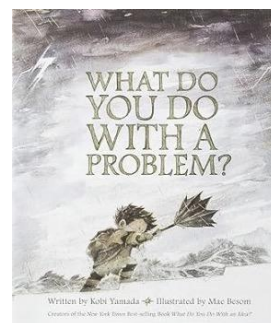
What Do You Do With A Problem?

Study Guide

The purpose of this document's content is to provide classroom activity ideas for pre- and post-show engagement. Presenters may adapt this content as needed for your venues and branding purposes. This document is not for direct public consumption.

Inlet Dance Theatre's *What Do You Do With A Problem?* is a dance theatre adaptation of the New York Times bestselling children's book by Kobi Yamada, illustrated by Mae Besom.

This is the story of a persistent problem and the child who isn't so sure what to make of it. The longer the problem is ignored, the larger it seems to grow. But when the child finally musters up the courage to face it, the problem turns out to be something quite different from what it appeared to be.



What Do You Do With a Problem? is a story for anyone, at any age, who has ever had a problem that they wished would go away. It's a story to inspire you to look closely at the problem and understand why it's here. Because you might discover something amazing about your problem... and yourself.



ABOUT INLET DANCE THEATRE

Founded in 2001 by Executive Artistic Director Bill Wade, Inlet Dance Theatre is one of Northeast Ohio's most dynamic contemporary dance companies. Rooted in American Modern Dance, the organization operates on the belief that the creative process is a powerful tool for personal growth and development. Unlike traditional autocratic structures, Inlet fosters a collaborative, ensemble-based culture in which new works are shaped by the diverse artists in the studio, often resulting in multidisciplinary, highly inclusive performances. Their internationally recognized repertory focuses on craftsmanship and mastery, addressing human life issues with an uplifting, "life-giving" perspective that explores potential rather than just current reality. www.inletdance.org

- **Mission:** To create and perform innovative dance theatre at a high level of artistry, speak creatively about human life issues, and bring about personal development in the lives of individuals through training and mentoring.
- **Motto:** Using dance to further people.

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ABOUT THE SHOW'S CREATIVE TEAM

It takes an entire team of highly skilled artists of various media to create a production like Inlet's *What Do You Do With An Idea?* Here's a list of Inlet's collaborators:

Choreography: Inlet's Founder and Executive Artistic Director Bill Wade and Assistant Artistic Director Joshua Brown, in collaboration with the cast.

Performers: Emma McBride (the Child), Vivian Corey, Joel Linebach, Lauren Satink, and Bird Thurman

Music: Original score by Jeremy Allen

Voice Narration: Dee Perry

Scenic and Puppet Design: Ian Petroni and Sue Berry

Scenic Painting: Jenny Hitmar Shankland and Jill Davis

Costuming: Sue Berry

Lighting Design: Brydon Lidle

Funding: The show is the result of a commission from the Theatre for Young Audiences Tour Development Committee (seven performing arts centers from around the country), including lead co-producer Playhouse Square (CLE), funds from the Ohio Arts Council's ArtsNEXT program, the Banks Baldwin Foundation, and individual donors.

ABOUT THE BOOK'S AUTHOR



Kobi Yamada serves as the President/CEO of Compendium, Incorporated, an inspiring gift and publishing company. He is also a multiple New York Times bestselling author, including the award-winning picture books: "What Do You Do With An Idea?", "What Do You Do With A Problem?", "What Do You Do With A Chance?", "Maybe", "Because I Had A Teacher", "Trying", "Finding Muchness", "Feeling Grateful," "The Candy Dish", "Noticing", "Because of You, Mom", and "Because of You, Dad." The books have sold millions of copies, inspired a dance performance, a symphony performance, musical theater performances, and an animated film. His titles have been

translated into over thirty languages. Yamada and his staff have created numerous critically-acclaimed lines of inspirational books, products, and programs. Compendium has had the honor of collaborating with some of the most recognized brands and retailers, including Target, Starbucks, Amazon, Nordstrom, Costco, and Barnes & Noble. Compendium's products are featured in thousands of stores worldwide.

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MOVEMENT VOCABULARY

Alignment: The relationship of the skeleton to the line of gravity and base of support.

Articulation: Precise and sequential movement of the body or a portion of the body.

Canon: A passage, movement sequence, or piece of music in which the parts are done in succession, overlapping one another.

Choreography: The creation and composition of dances by arranging or inventing steps, movements, and patterns of movements.

Community: A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.

Counterbalance: A weight that balances another weight.

Dynamics: The energy of movement expressed in varying intensity, accent, and quality.

Ensemble: Movement that takes place at the same time in a group; also refers to a group of people who move exactly the same, in sync.

Improvisation: Movement created spontaneously that ranges from free-form to highly structured

environments, always including an element of chance.

Isolation: Movement done with one body part or a small part of the body.

Modern Dance: A style of free and expressive theatrical dancing not bound by the classical rules of ballet; also referred to as contemporary or concert dance.

Musicality: Attention and sensitivity to the musical elements of dance while creating or performing.

Nontraditional Partnering: Partnering between two or more dancers that is not based on the traditional Euro-centric, gender-specific rules of ballet but on principles of sharing weight, counterbalances, fulcrums, centripetal force, etc.

Pathways: A line along which a person or a part of the person, such as an arm or head, moves.

Technique: The physical skills of a dancer that enable him/her to execute the steps and movements required in different dances.

Tempo: The speed of music or a dance.

Transition: The bridging point at which a single movement or end of a phrase progresses into the next movement, phrase, or sequence.

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INLET'S INSPIRATION TO CREATE THE WORK

We live in challenging times. Our children are growing up in a world replete with problems that require them to develop coping skills. The creation of Inlet Dance Theatre's adaptation of *What Do You Do With a Problem?* was born from a realization that today's youth are navigating an unprecedented mental health crisis—one where traditional verbal instruction often fails to reach those overwhelmed by stress, anxiety, or trauma. Inspired by the universal need for resilience, Inlet sought to bridge the gap between abstract Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and a child's lived, physical experience. By transforming Kobi Yamada's bestselling narrative into a three-dimensional dance theatre production, Inlet moves beyond the classroom's limitations to offer an "embodied" learning experience. The choreography serves as a visceral representation of how a problem grows when ignored and transforms when confronted, providing students, including neurodivergent learners and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, a non-verbal pathway to understanding. Ultimately, Inlet was driven by the belief that through the power of dance theatre, children can move from a fixed mindset of fear to a growth mindset of discovery, learning to find the hidden opportunities tucked within their greatest challenges.

MOVEMENT, LITERACY, AND SEL WORKSHOPS

Workshop 1: "Bunnies in Levels" (Ages 3–12 years old)

The Concept: A movement-based exploration of character and levels in space.

- **Video Demonstration:** Teachers can watch the company video demonstrating this workshop in advance, or watch it directly with students. "Bunnies in Levels" video (4.5 mins): <https://vimeo.com/1221157515/0619389f57?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=cj>
- **Movement Activity:** Students move like bunnies who are exploring the low, middle, and high levels of space. After they try each level, they try all the levels in an improvisation, similar to how the bunnies in the beginning of the show play using all three levels. They can improvise along with the video, or watch the video and then explore each level prompted by their teacher.

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Workshop 2: "Moving Through the Problem" (Ages 3–12 years old)

The Concept: A movement-based exploration of anxiety, fear, and courage.

- **Video Demonstration:** Teachers can watch the company video demonstrating this workshop in advance, or watch it directly with students. "Moving Through the Problem" video (5.5 mins): <https://vimeo.com/1221157514/792d277e0c?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>
- **Movement Activity:** First, have the children identify a body part that holds tension when they are worried or have anxiety (e.g., tight shoulders, stomping feet). Next, have them move through the space using that body part and tension, showing their "Worry Movement" (closed, heavy movements, tight and bound). Next, have students explore moving in the opposite manner - movement that is free, open, light, and airy. After moving together, they can talk about what they noticed about "moving through the problem."

Workshop 3: "Clouds!" (Ages 3–12 years old)

The Concept: A movement-based exploration about depicting various types of clouds and how they behave.

- **Video Demonstration:** Teachers can watch the company video demonstrating this workshop in advance, or watch it directly with students. "Clouds" video (4 mins): <https://vimeo.com/1221157516/ddf1a4aabc?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>
- **Movement Activity:** Students bring a fitted sheet from home, or purchase one from a thrift store. They explore how to fill the fitted sheet with air as they move, creating clouds that drift on the high, middle, and low levels, and invent different kinds of movement that make their clouds dance. They can also explore different speeds (fast, medium, and slow) and movement qualities.

Workshop 4: "Breathing Exercise" (All ages)

The Concept: This exercise helps with emotional regulation, getting calm, and becoming more centered.

- **Video Demonstration:** Teachers can watch the company video demonstrating this workshop in advance, or watch it directly with students. "Breathing Exercise" (3 Minutes): <https://vimeo.com/1221157517/8cd1798f04>
- **Movement Activity:** Students and teachers try the 4-7-8 Breathing Exercise together. This is particularly effective when a student is upset and needs to calm down.

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Workshop 5: "The Teacher's Toolbox" (Professional Development)

The Concept: Helping educators use the book and the dance show as a year-long SEL resource.

- **Integration:** Have a conversation about the difference between moving heavily, bound, and at low or middle levels, and moving freely, with abandon and joy, at middle to high levels. What other books lend themselves to movement activities?
- **Movement Activity:** Teachers and staff explore how to use movement to reinforce reading comprehension and emotional regulation in the classroom. How does a problem move? How do you move when you have a problem? How does an opportunity for growth move? How do you move when you're growing?

Additional ideas:

Different types of clouds for children:

<https://www.123homeschool4me.com/type-of-cloud-activities-for-kids-with-free-printable-worksheets/>

Emotional Regulation Activities for children:

<https://resourcefullearners.com/25-emotional-regulation-activities-for-kids/>

Study Guide Examples from other Presenters booking this show:

Charleston Gaillard Center in Charleston, SC

[Education Performances - Charleston Gaillard Center](#)
[What-Do-You-Do-With-a-Problem.pdf](#)

Gogue Performing Arts Center at Auburn University

[Gogue Center Performance Study Guide: "What Do You Do With a Problem?" by Gogue](#)
[Performing Arts Center at Auburn University - Issuu](#)