



ActiveForge

Meet the Cast

STANDARD EDITION

Spark & Anvil

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This book collects 5 chapter books from the Activeforge cast — each character embodies a different curricular primitive; together they teach the full subject.

Methodology: distributed-narrative learning per Bruner narrative-cognition + Habgood intrinsic-integration + SAMHSA TIP 57 trauma-informed register.

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For everyone who learns by hearing a story first.

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Introduction

The Activeforge cast was authored to embody the curriculum, not decorate around it. Each of the 5 characters you'll meet in this book teaches a specific primitive — a particular tactic, a particular technique, a particular way of seeing. Together they form an ensemble: the cast IS the curriculum.

Read in any order. Each chapter stands alone.

Each character also appears in the matching Spark & Anvil app (free, forever) where you can practice what they teach.

— *The editors at Spark & Anvil*

Cheer

*CHEER — *sportsmanship is a learnable skill, not a personality trait.**

Cheer was a kid who always looked ready to clap. She wore loose, comfy clothes, perfect for any game. Her practice vest was a chunky cartoon style. It was warm coral pink with soft amber stripes. Cheer always carried her small cheer-card. She also had a bystander-tracker. This tracker helped her know who needed a boost. It listed kids who were watching. It also showed players who were having a tough time. Cheer picked who needed encouragement next. She was small and warm. She made sure everyone felt included. Cheer often said, "**Sportsmanship** is a skill you can learn. It's not just how you are born."

Cheer didn't just wait for big moments. She used her cheer-card and bystander-tracker all the time. She watched during recess. She watched during art class. If someone dropped their crayons, Cheer might be there. "Oops! Good catch on that blue one!" she'd say. Or if a drawing didn't turn out right. "That's a really interesting way to draw a cat," she'd tell the artist. "I like how you used so many colors." She always found something good to say first. Then maybe she'd ask, "Want to try drawing a cat with pointy ears next time?" It was her way of helping.

Cheer taught everyone about **sportsmanship**. This was a big idea. It meant working well with others on a team. It was a skill you could learn, just like anything else. Think about any game. Someone might miss a shot. Someone else might score a point. A player might sit on the bench. Another kid might feel left out. **Sportsmanship** is about the small things you do. You can clap for the other team when they play well. You can help a teammate who made a mistake. You can ask the kid standing alone to join in. You never make fun of someone's errors. These actions might seem like part of a person's nature. But they are really habits you practice. It's like learning to throw a ball. Or kick it. Or dodge a tag. Or roll safely. **Sportsmanship** is a shape your body and voice learn. You get better by doing it again and again. Some kids practice these things a lot. They seem "naturally kind." But that's not quite right. They just practiced more.

Cheer showed everyone that social skills could be learned. She taught that kindness was a habit, not just how you were born. Her big rule was simple: "Say the good thing FIRST. Then you can ask your practice question."

Cheer would say, "I am Cheer. I teach you about **sportsmanship**. I also teach you about noticing others. My main idea is this: **sportsmanship** is a skill you can learn. It's not just a part of your personality."

She often added, "Kindness is a habit. Practice cheering like you practice throwing a ball."

Cheer's best moment happened after a tag game. It was in a backyard. Throw had been "it" for ages. He was really frustrated. Dodge was grumpy. Cheer had gotten tagged early too many times. Roll just sat on the mat, looking bored. The whole mood was sour.

Cheer took a deep breath. She walked over to Throw first. "Wow," she said. "You were 'it' for the longest time. That's super hard. You stayed patient way longer than I could have. Good game, Throw."

Throw blinked. His grumpy face softened a little.

Cheer then turned to Dodge. "You figured out what Throw was going to do so fast," she said. "Much faster than me. Can you show me that trick again tomorrow? I really want to learn it."

Dodge puffed out his chest a bit. He looked pleased.

Finally, Cheer sat down next to Roll. "Hey," she said softly. "Do you want to play another game? Or are you all done for today? Either choice is totally fine."

Roll smiled. "Another round," he said.

Three small cheers. The sour game turned into a game they

Dodge

*DODGE — *read the space and move EARLIER, not faster.**

The best players weren't always the fastest. Sometimes, they were just the smartest. Or the ones who watched the most. That was Dodge.

Dodge was a blur of cool-storm-grey. Amber stripes flashed on their vest. They weren't the biggest kid. They weren't the fastest, either. But Dodge always seemed to know things. Dodge wore a special practice vest. It was a cool grey color. Small amber stripes ran down the sides. A tiny space-tracker blinked on the front. It made a soft, happy *beep* when Dodge saw something important. A read-card clipped to their belt. It was thin and clear. Sometimes it glowed a faint green. These gadgets helped Dodge see the game. The tracker showed where other players were. The card lit up with arrows. It showed where a chaser might go. It showed the best spot to move. Dodge always said, "Read the space. Move **EARLIER**, not faster."

Think about playing tag. Or dodgeball. Or even soccer. The kids who never get caught? They aren't always the fastest. Not really. They are the ones who *see* the game. They watch the person chasing them. They guess where that person will go next. This is called **spatial-perception**. It means seeing the space around you. It means understanding how things move in that space. Then you move. You move *before* the chaser even decides. The chaser runs to where you *were*. You are already somewhere new. Being super fast is great. But it doesn't help if you run the wrong way. Seeing the game first? That beats speed every time. It lets you pick the right spot. It lets you get there first.

Dodge would often say, "I am Dodge. I teach you to *see* the space. My move is simple: read the space and move **EARLIER**, not faster." They'd add, "Earlier beats faster. Always."

The whole group was playing tag in the backyard. Throw was "it." He was a fast runner. Throw loved being "it." He chased Cheer first. Cheer was super fast too. Her legs pumped hard. She ran in big, wide circles. But she kept running in straight lines for too long. Throw was quick. He was getting closer. Cheer looked over her shoulder. Panic flashed in her eyes. Throw lunged. He tagged her arm. "Gotcha!" Throw yelled. Cheer sighed. "You're too fast, Throw!" she said. "I can't get away."

Next, it was Dodge's turn to be chased. Dodge wasn't faster than Throw. Not even close. Dodge knew this. But Dodge also knew something else. Dodge was always watching. Their eyes darted around the yard. They saw every loose rock. They saw the old oak tree. They saw the slight dip in the grass. Most of all, they watched Throw. Dodge kept a steady pace. They didn't sprint. They just flowed.

Throw grinned. He thought he had Dodge. He ran hard, straight at them. Dodge let him get close. Too close, some might think. Then, Throw decided to turn left. He wanted to cut Dodge off. Dodge saw it. They saw Throw's shoulders drop just a tiny bit. They saw his hips start to twist. It was a small shift. It happened before Throw's foot even pushed off the ground. But Dodge noticed.

Dodge didn't wait. They didn't even think. Their body just moved. They cut hard to the right. It was a tiny move. Just a quick step. Throw's feet hadn't even landed yet for his left turn. He was still leaning that way. Now he had to stop. He had to turn his whole body around. He lost precious seconds. Dodge gained space. Dodge kept the same speed. But they read the game differently. Throw chased. Dodge dodged. Dodge wasn't faster. Their legs weren't special. Their eyes were special. Dodge never got caught. Not once.

Coach Echo stood by the fence. She had a small notebook. She watched the game closely. She nodded slowly. "That's **spatial-perception**," Echo said. Her voice was calm. "It's not some magic gift. You don't just 'have' it. Nobody is born with it. It's a skill. You learn it. Like learning to ride a bike."

She looked at the kids. "You practice watching. Really watching. You look for the little clues. You learn to guess what will happen next. You predict the next move. Those predictions? They *are* the dodge. Your body just follows what your eyes already saw. It's like your eyes tell your feet where to go before your feet even know they're moving."

Voice register

Careful-roadrunner-tween. Dodge is observant + early-moving; speaks in reading-the-space + earlier-not-faster.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Motor-skill-shame + body-image + Indigenous-lacrosse (kit 9) gates LOAD-BEARING. Story-axis per ADR-016.

Cultural-context note

Spatial-perception-agility pedagogy: SHAPE America FMS + sport-psych literature on "perception-action coupling" (Gibson + Stoffregen). Foundational in court-sport coaching (basketball / soccer / lacrosse / kabaddi / handball / hockey).

Kick

*KICK — *five different parts of the foot, five different kicks. choose the foot-part for the job.**

Kick was a fennec fox kid. She was small and careful. Her fur was warm-sand yellow with soft russet stripes. She wore loose, comfy clothes. Over them, she had a chunky practice vest. On the vest was a small picture of a foot. Little lines showed different spots on the foot. Each spot had a tiny arrow pointing to it. This was Kick's special impact-tracker. It showed where your foot should touch the ball.

Kick watched feet very closely. She always picked the right part of her own foot for every kick. She loved to say, "Five different parts of the foot, five different kicks. Choose the foot-part for the job."

This was super important. Kick taught something called **lower-body projection**. It was all about using your legs and feet. It was the special skill of **foot-language**. Think about soccer, or hacky-sack, or even a game called sepak takraw. In all these games, your foot has five main parts you can use. Each part makes the ball do something different.

Let's break it down:

- The **inside** of your foot is flat. It's great for a gentle pass.
- The **outside** of your foot can make the ball curve.
- The **instep**, or laces part, is for a powerful shot.
- Your **toe** is for a quick poke.
- Your **heel** can send the ball backward.

Lots of kids try to use their toe for every kick. But the toe is not good for most kicks. It often hurts. And the ball usually flies off in the wrong direction. Kick's whole job was to teach this **foot-language**. She showed everyone that their foot was like a toolbox. It had five different tools. You just had to pick the right one.

Kick taught that your foot isn't just one big hammer. It's a tool with many surfaces. She taught the rule: "The right part of the foot for the right kick." This skill helped you be exact, not just strong. It also helped everyone play, no matter their body. And it showed how different countries play games with their feet.

Kick would say, "I am Kick. The skill I teach is **lower-body projection**. The move is *five different parts of the foot, five different kicks. choose the foot-part for the job.*"

She'd add, "Foot-language. Use the inside to pass. Use the laces to shoot."

One sunny afternoon, the whole cast was playing soccer in the backyard. Dodge was trying to pass the ball to Throw. But the ball kept flying wildly.

"It won't go where I want!" Dodge yelled. He kicked the ball again. It bounced off a tree. Then it rolled into the bushes. Dodge threw his hands up. He groaned loudly.

Kick walked over. She had been watching Dodge's feet. Her big fennec ears twitched. "You're using your toe," she said. Her voice was calm and clear. "Toes are for poking things. And the ball squirts wherever your toe points."

Dodge looked at his foot. He hadn't even thought about it. He just kicked.

"Try the **inside** of your foot," Kick told him.

She stepped up to the ball. She showed Dodge how. Kick turned her foot sideways. She made contact with the wide, flat inside part of her foot. It looked so easy. The ball rolled cleanly. It went straight toward the target. It stopped right where she wanted it.

Dodge watched, amazed. He picked up the ball. He put it down. He tried to copy Kick. He focused hard on his foot. He turned it sideways. He hit the ball with the inside. The ball rolled perfectly. It went right to Throw.

Throw caught it easily. Dodge's eyes went wide. He laughed out loud. "I never knew!" he shouted. "It actually worked!"

Kick shrugged her shoulders. "Most kids don't know," she said. "The toe is the loudest teacher. It's the one that hurts when you kick wrong." She paused. "The **inside** of your foot is the quietest teacher. It just works. So everybody learns toe-kicking first. Nobody learns inside-passing until someone shows them."

She smiled. "I'm just showing you."

Coach Echo nodded from the sidelines. "Foot-language," Echo said. "It's a whole tool-kit. It's hiding in a body part everyone already has."

Anyone can learn this **foot-language**. Every kid has the same five foot-surfaces. It's not about being a "natural soccer player." It's about practice. It's about learning the right way.

People all over the world use their feet for games. In Southeast Asia, they play sepak takraw. They use the inside of their foot and their instep. In Brazil, capoeira is a dance-fight. It uses lots of sweep-kicks. These are all different ways to use **foot-language**. They are all good ways.

Kick's lessons were like other things they learned. They were like MindForge, which taught being exact, not just strong. They were like InclusionForge, which helped everyone play, no matter their body. And they were like TerraVoyage, which showed how games change in different places. Sport is like a language. It has many different ways to speak it.

Voice register

Careful-fennec-tween. Kick is patient + tool-choosing; speaks in foot-surfaces + tool-for-the-job.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Motor-skill-shame + body-image + cross-cultural movement-tradition gates LOAD-BEARING. Story-axis per ADR-016.

Cultural-context note

Lower-body-projection pedagogy: SHAPE America FMS framework; FIFA youth-development resources (5-foot-surfaces taught in U10 curriculum globally). Cross-cultural movement-tradition framing per InclusionForge Wave 15 + per Olympic-content reviewer-gated kit 9.

Roll

*ROLL — *the fall is part of the move. land soft. get up smiling.**

Roll was an armadillo kid. They wore loose, comfy clothes. A soft helmet sat on their head. It was part of their practice gear. Roll always carried a small landing-marker. They also had a recovery-card. Roll was small and moved carefully. Their fur was warm brown with soft cream stripes. They watched how people fell. They always said, "The fall is part of the move. Land soft. Get up smiling." Roll used their landing-marker. It showed where your body should touch the ground first. Always a round part, never a flat part. Then the recovery-card helped you flow into the next move.

Roll taught about falling. Not just falling down, but falling *well*. Falling happens to everyone. In sports like gymnastics or skateboarding, you will fall. The trick is not to stop falling. It's to change how you fall. Don't slam flat. Roll and flow instead. A shoulder-roll can lead to a hip-roll. Then you are back on your feet. Your body learns the *shape* of the roll. A fall becomes a move, not a stop. Roll wore a soft helmet. It kept them safe during practice. It was just part of their gear. Like special shoes for running. Or gloves for baseball. Everyone has gear. Some gear helps you stay extra safe.

"I am Roll," they would say. "I teach *safe-fall + tumbling*. The move is: *the fall is part of the move. land soft. get up smiling*." They added, "Round surfaces first. Soft and flowing. Get up smiling."

The gym mats were spread out. Kids were playing a wild game of tag. Dodge, a speedy fox kid, zipped around. They were almost to the safe zone. Then, *wham!* Dodge tripped over their own feet. They went down hard. A loud *thud* echoed in the gym. Dodge landed flat on one knee. "Ow!" Dodge cried. They grabbed their knee. It was scraped and red. A tiny tear formed in their eye.

Roll was there in a flash. They knelt beside Dodge. "You went flat," Roll said gently. "Your knee took all the hit. That really stings." Dodge nodded, wincing. "Let me show you a different way to fall."

Roll stood up. They pointed to the mat. "The trick is your chin," Roll explained. "Tuck it in tight. Make your back round. Round things roll. Flat things slam. Same fall, different *shape*."

Roll showed them. They dropped to one knee. Their chin tucked to their chest. Their shoulder touched the mat first. Not their hand. Not their elbow. Just the soft curve of their shoulder. Then they rolled. Across their back. Over their hip. *Whoosh!* Roll was standing again. It looked easy. It looked like magic. The fall turned into a graceful move.

Dodge watched, amazed. "Can I really do that?" they asked. It looked so hard. And their knee still throbbed.

"You can," Roll said. "It takes practice. But your body can learn."

Dodge carefully got up. Their knee still hurt a bit. They stood on the mat. "Okay," they said. "Chin in." Dodge tucked their chin. They tried to fall. *Thump!* They landed a bit flat again. Not as bad, but still a thump. A little sigh escaped them. This was harder than Roll made it look.

"Good try!" Roll cheered. "Remember, shoulder first. Let your body flow. Think of yourself as a round stone rolling down a hill." Dodge imagined being a stone. They took a deeper breath. They tucked their chin even tighter. They aimed for their shoulder. This time, they rolled a little. Not all the way. They ended up in a heap. But it wasn't a slam. It was more like a soft pile of laundry.

"Better!" Coach Echo called from across the gym. "Keep going, Dodge! You're getting the *shape!*"

Dodge took a deep breath. Their muscles felt a bit shaky. But they really wanted to get this. They focused. Chin tucked. Shoulder first. They closed their eyes for just a second. They pictured Roll's smooth move. This time, it felt different. Their body moved. It rolled across the mat. Shoulder, back, hip. Then, with a little wobble, Dodge stood up! A huge grin spread across their face. They felt a rush of triumph. Their knee still had a scrape, but it didn't hurt as much now. Or maybe they just didn't care.

"I did it!" Dodge shouted, bouncing a little on their feet.

Coach Echo clapped loudly. "Fantastic, Dodge! Now you can *recover* from a fall. It doesn't have to stop you. That's the whole game!"

Roll smiled. "*The fall is part of the move,*" they said. "*Land soft. Get up smiling.*" Roll tapped their own soft helmet. "And if you ever need a helmet for some practice, like me, that's totally fine. The helmet doesn't change the *shape* of the roll. It just makes practice safer. Adaptive gear is part of the kit. It helps you learn and play."

Roll watched Dodge. Dodge was already trying another roll. This time, it was even smoother. They weren't afraid anymore. The fall was just another move. And it felt kind of fun.

Voice register

Careful-armadillo-tween. Roll is patient + fall-as-flow; speaks in round-surfaces + adaptive-kit-normal.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Motor-skill-shame + body-image + adaptive-PE-representation (Roll wears visible helmet) + cross-cultural (capoeira / judo / parkour kit 9) gates LOAD-BEARING. Story-axis per ADR-016.

Cultural-context note

Safe-fall pedagogy: foundational in judo (ukemi) + gymnastics (tumbling) + parkour (PK-roll); SHAPE America FMS includes "safe landing" as a foundational pattern. Adaptive-PE normalization per InclusionForge Wave 15 + Special Olympics adaptive-sport curriculum.

Throw

*THROW — *step-rotate-release. the body remembers what the mind teaches.**

Throw was a kid who watched everything. They wore loose, layered clothes. A special practice vest covered their shirt. It had a small screen on the front. This screen showed a tiny moving line. It tracked the *shape* of Throw's arm. It was a target-marker and a form-tracker all in one.

Throw was small and quick to learn. Their skin was like warm sandstone, with soft rust-colored stripes. They paid close attention to how things moved. Throw loved to say, "Step-rotate-release. The body remembers what the mind teaches." Their special vest helped them focus. It showed the *shape* of a throw. The result didn't matter as much. The *right shape* taught your body. The result just happened.

This chapter is important. Throw teaches you about *overhand projection*. That's a fancy way to say throwing things far. It means sending force at a target. Think about throwing a softball. Or a football. Or even a paper airplane. The way your body moves is always the same.

It's a basic body move. First, you step with your opposite foot. If you throw with your right hand, you step with your left foot. Next, you twist your hips. Then your shoulder turns. You release the ball or frisbee at eye-level. Last, you follow through with your arm. This is the *shape*. Your body learns this *shape* by practicing. It's not about being "talented."

A kid who throws awkwardly just hasn't practiced the *shape* yet. They don't lack a special gift. They are not "bad at sports." They are simply learning.

Throw teaches that body moves are learnable *shapes*. They teach "form before force." This means getting the *shape* right first. You don't fix a bad throw by trying harder. You fix it by changing the *shape*. This idea works with other lessons too. It helps you grow your mindset. It also shows that all bodies can learn new moves.

Throw says: *"I am Throw. The primitive I teach is *overhand projection*. The move is *step-rotate-release*. *the body remembers what the mind teaches*."*

"Form before force. Practice the shape. Talent is a story; shape is the truth."

Throw's special scene happened in the backyard. The sun was bright. The grass was green. All the friends were there. Cheer was trying to throw a frisbee. They wound up their arm. They threw it with all their might. The frisbee wobbled all over. It spun sideways. It flew into a rose bush.

Cheer groaned. They stomped their foot. "I can't throw!" Cheer yelled. "I just can't do it!"

Throw walked over. Their vest screen glowed softly. "You're not stepping," Throw said. Their voice was calm. "Watch me."

Throw picked up another frisbee. They stood sideways to the bush. First, Throw stepped forward. Their left foot moved out. Then, they twisted their hips. It was like a corkscrew turning. Next, their shoulder turned. Their arm came back. Finally, they snapped their wrist flat. The frisbee flew. It sailed straight and smooth. It landed far away. It landed right by the fence.

"See?" Throw asked. "It's a *shape*."

Cheer looked at the frisbee. Their eyes were wide. "My turn?" they asked. Cheer looked unsure.

"Yes," Throw said. "Remember: step with your left foot. If you throw with your right hand."

Cheer picked up the frisbee. They stood sideways. They took a deep breath. Cheer tried to copy Throw. They stepped. They twisted. They threw. The frisbee wobbled. But it didn't wobble as much. It went a little straighter. It landed closer to the fence.

"Better!" Throw cheered. "That was much better! Try again."

Cheer threw. Wobble.

Cheer threw again. Less wobble.

Cheer threw one more time. WHOOSH! The frisbee flew. It sailed through the air. It went high and far. It landed near the fence. It wasn't as far as Throw's. But it was close!

Cheer's jaw dropped. "I did it!" they shouted. "I actually threw it!"

Throw smiled. "You always could," they said. "You just needed to learn the *shape*."

"There's no such thing as 'can't throw'," Throw added. "Only 'haven't practiced yet'."

Coach Echo watched from the porch. They nodded slowly. A quiet smile spread across their face. "That's the big secret," Echo whispered. "It's all about learning the *shape*. Not about being 'talented'."

Voice register

Careful-bobcat-tween. Throw is patient + form-focused; speaks in SHAPE-not-RESULT.

Cultural-sensitivity gate

Motor-skill-shame gate LOAD-BEARING (UNIQUE to ActiveForge). Body-image gate inherits FitQuest. Story-axis per ADR-016. **No talent-framing, no varsity-coding, no lean-body-coding.**

Cultural-context note

Overhand-throwing pedagogy: SHAPE America Fundamental Motor Skills (FMS) framework; canonical first-grade-onward PE curriculum. The "step-rotate-release" cue is universal across baseball, softball, football, frisbee, javelin teaching.

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- **QuillSpell** — spelling craft through the Word Wizard cast
- **SynaForge** — sensory-affirming creative tools through Lull, Soften, and the Quiet that is Also Creating

Methodology

Distributed-narrative pedagogy per Jerome Bruner (narrative-cognition) + Sebastian Habgood (intrinsic-integration in educational games) + SAMHSA TIP 57 (trauma-informed register).

Trauma-informed-design framework per Eggleston et al. (2025) and Stoltenburg et al. (2024).

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