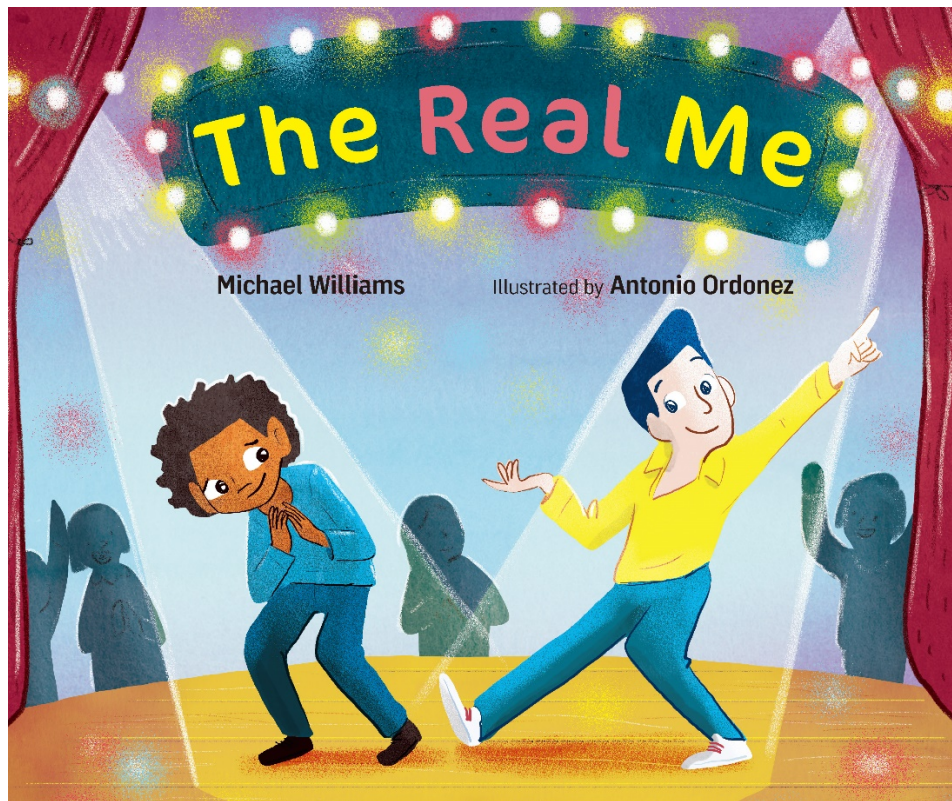


# The Real Me

## Teaching Notes

Author: Michael Williams

Illustrator: Antonio Ordonez



### SYNOPSIS

Max isn't the most confident person in the world—and he certainly doesn't want to embarrass himself by dancing! Practicing his moves, Max just can't get it right—until his best friend Leo steps in. With some new moves and his confidence growing, Max decides it's time to show off at a pool party. But when faced with a crowd, Max freezes and his friend leaves him alone. Will a crestfallen Max ever find his sparkle for dance? An inspiring story—featuring colourful and expressive illustrations—that explores confidence, friendship, and the joys of dance.

## In the Classroom

### **Before Reading:**

#### Discuss what is seen on the cover:

- Introduce the book by looking at the cover:
  - What can children see?
  - What emotions are the characters feeling?
  - Why do children think this?
- What do you think the story is about?
  - Why do children think this?

#### Additional cover discussion:

- Do any children share the same letters from the title in their name?
- What colours can be seen on the cover?

### **During Reading:**

#### What can be seen during the story?

- Why do you think Max feels nervous about dancing at the disco?
  - What might happen if Max tries to dance?
- What is Max practicing in front of the mirror?
  - Do you think practicing will help his confidence?
- Why do you think everyone laughed at Max when he froze?
  - How do you think this made him feel?
- How do you think Max feels when he is inside the flume?
- When does Leo help Max?
  - How do you think this makes Max feel?
  - How do you think this makes Leo feel?
- Why does Max find it difficult to believe in himself?
  - What changes this?
- Leo is not kind to Max at the party but later helps him. Why do you think Leo's behaviour changes?
- What does Max learn at the end of the story?

### **After Reading:**

#### Discussion about what children have learned from the book:

#### **Emotions:**

- Have you ever felt nervous or afraid to do something new like Max did in the story?
  - Why is this?

- How did you overcome this?
- Why is it important to believe in yourself?
- Have you ever helped a friend who is upset?
  - How did this make them/you feel?
- What advice would you give Max?

**Themes:**

- What does this story teach us about trying again after making a mistake?
- How does Leo’s attitude towards Max change?
  - Why is it important to support friends?
- What does the title “The Real Me” mean?
  - Does Max find himself at the end?
  - What do you think he will go on to do next?

**Classroom Activities:**

Responding to the text:

- Write a letter to Max: Encourage children to write or tell a supportive letter to Max.

Creative Activities:

- Dance Crew: Children to pair up and create their own dance routine.
- Design a Dance Costume: Children to draw their own special dance routine. They can even decorate it with different materials such as feathers, bio-glitter, etc.

Personal/Social Activities:

- Friendship role play: Children roleplay scenarios where support can be given, for example, doctors, shopkeepers, home, etc.
- Ask children to write or tell their friends how they make them feel and why.

**About the Author:**

Michael Williams has always been passionate about dance—from jiving in his cosy barn on the south coast of England to grooving on islands in the Arctic Circle. But he also encounters those who don’t share this enthusiasm. Determined to show that everyone has a dancer within, Michael put pen to paper and wrote *The Real Me*, hoping to show that support and friendship can bring out the best in everyone.

**About the Illustrator:**

Antonio Ordonez (known as AtOLONia) was born in Madrid, Spain. Inspired by the birth of his first child, Antonio decided to change careers and move into the world of children's illustration. His work is distinguished by the cute, friendly, and expressive characters he creates. He loves to combine digital drawing with watercolour and give free rein to his imagination.