

TEACHING OUTSIDE OF THE GYM

Carrie Flint

MUSICAL PE PLUS

www.musicalpeplus.com

310.702.5648

Quality physical education can be taught in any space.... inside, outside, big room, small classroom, with or without equipment...it just takes a bit of creativity and the ability to adapt. As an itinerant PE teacher in CA, being creative, adapting to multiple environments, teaching with minimal equipment, and teaching extra large classes has been the norm for my 20 years of teaching.

This session is packed with easy to implement activities to do in any space (gym, cafeteria, and classroom.) These activities are my indoor PE activities I have done with all populations and all ages. They require little or no equipment and I use my "Get'em Up, Moving, and Learning" CD. (I had music written to match the activities.)

BONUS to these activities....not only are they PE activities, they are easy activities to share with your classroom teachers. I have presented this session to classroom teachers as well as many PE conferences. For the classroom teachers my activities are "Brain Energizers". Sharing these activities not only is beneficial for the students, but it is a way to be an advocate for our profession and the importance of getting up and moving. These activities are not to replace physical education, but compliment what we do.

"EASY PE ACTIVITIES" can be used as "BRAIN ENERGIZERS"

Every teacher has experienced the blank look, droopy eyes, or fidgeting from their students. What are they trying to tell the teacher? Well, these are clear signs that the students simply need a break and recharge their brains, a "Brain Energizer". When kids get tired or bored, they tend to check out. Once kids begin to check out- they are no longer learning. GET THEM UP! GET THEM MOVING! GET THEM LEARNING! This is all about "Brain

Energizers”, a short physical break that stimulates the brain and gets it ready it for learning.

Brain Energizers are not necessarily new to teaching but they are becoming more accepted due to the fact that there is an abundance of research that identifies how physical activity provides many benefits that can positively affect children’s health, their mental and social well being, as well as their academic performance in the classroom. Numerous studies show that physical activity does not compromise children's academic performance or standardized test scores. In “The Shape of The Nation 2012” report conducted by NASPE (The National Association of Sport and Physical Education), referenced a report from the CDC in 2010 which 11 of 14 studies found one or more positive associations between physical education and indicators of cognitive skills and attitudes, academic behavior and/or academic achievement. Overall, the results were profound; test scores improved or stayed the same.

How Does Physical Activity Positively Affect Student Learning?

- Balance improves reading capacity
- Exercise reduces stress
- Physical activity improves behavior
- Movement reinforces academic skills
- Cross-lateral movements organize brain functions
- Peptides aid procedural memory
- Eye-tracking skills and peripheral vision aid reading

WHAT IS A BRAIN Energizer?

“Brain Energizers” work by getting children moving physically which increases the blood flow by bringing more oxygen to the brain and leads to better concentration. Well developed Energizer can help students stretch, develop flexibility, improve coordination and gain focus for the next lesson,” according to the Action for Healthy Kids Organization.

How and When To Incorporate a Brain Energizer?

There are no set rules to when to incorporate activities however a general rule of thumb is to take the signal from your students. When you have a student that can’t keep still or is falling asleep, get them all up and moving. However, Jean Blaydes Madigan (Action Based Learning) explains that the physiology of the brain and body changes after a human sits in a chair for about 17 minutes plus or minus 2 minutes. The blood leaves the brain and

then the brain sends a signal to the body that the body is at rest rather than awake and engaged in learning. There is also research shows that children's attention span is only 12 minutes or you can calculate about one minute per year.

Tips for Success:.....FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

- Plan for only 3-5 minutes for each activity. Long enough to be effective, short enough to keep students interested and on task. Doing any activity too long results in boredom and often results in negative behavior.
- Utilize Music. Music connects the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain so that they work together and makes learning quick and easy. Brain function is increased when listening to music and studies have shown that music promotes more complex thinking.
- Have structured planned activity breaks; activity song, exercise routine, or game. No matter what activity is selected make sure there is a start and end. It can be as simple as utilizing music to set your time limit. This will keep your schedule on track and quickly return to academics. Students will quickly adapt to this routine.
- Utilize a variety of activity breaks. Just as when you do an activity too long if you do the same thing over and over it will have a negative impact rather than positive.
- Incorporate crossing the midline. The corpus callosum is a relay station that sends electrical signals between the two hemispheres of the brain. Movement, especially cross-lateral movement, creates more healthy connections in this relay. The integration of activity and insight from both hemispheres brings the whole brain to focus more on a particular learning task.
- No person is too young or too old to benefit from activity breaks. They can be academically oriented, focused on fitness, or just fun. They all have a positive effect on learning. However, keep in mind you need to get the heart rate up which gets oxygen to the brain, which is necessary to build brain cells.

EXAMPLES OF BRAIN ENERGIZERS:

There are so many possibilities to incorporate movement into academics. As Dr. Melinda Bossenmeyer (Peaceful Playgrounds) describes a Super-Charged Brain Break is one in which entails a movement activity linked to an academic concept. Adding movement not only helps the kinesthetic learner but all students will benefit with an active approach to learning.

It can be as simple as:

Have the students demonstrate prepositions such as step over, move under, stand next to, jump in, jump out, etc.

Acting words out such as; hot, cold, happy, scary.

Have the students make their bodies tall, small, wide, and thin.

Have the students bend their bodies into the letters of the alphabet.

Have the students measure the room to determine area.

Have students jump forward and measure how far they jump.

Have students act out the life cycle of a butterfly.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

FUN WITH BALLOONS

Balloons can be used with students of all ages. Not only are they a great "Brain Break" that requires students to track the floating balloon which helps with reading; they also address PE Standards. Balloons are required for many of the standards working on hand eye coordination.

Balloon Activity:

Toss out a few balloons to the class and the object of the game is to see how long the balloons can stay afloat. The students must stay in their seats. Once a balloon falls to the ground it is "dead" and the activity ends when all the balloons have fallen to the ground.

Individual & Partner Challenges:

- Give a balloon to each student or pair and challenge your students to keep the balloon afloat but they can only use their thumb, pointer finger, head, knee, elbow, etc.
- Instruct your students to keep the ball afloat while sitting down and standing up.
- If you have space, challenge your students to move around the room and keep the balloon in the air.

Helpful Tip: Balloons last if stored properly and I have discovered they will last for a few weeks in a large black trash bag. Blow up a few balloons, store them in the bag and hang them up out of the way until you are ready for play.

EXERCISE CDs & DVDs

There are many resources available that are easy to implement and kids enjoy. The best thing about using songs and exercise/dance routines on DVDs is that they require almost no prep from the teacher and they have a definite start and finish.

Favorite CDs & DVDs

(These songs were used for the presentation.)....but I also use many of the other songs on each of these CDs....(just ran out of time!)

Musical PE Plus' "Get'em Up! Get'em Moving! Get'em Learning!"

Criss Cross Celebration (Warm-Up ...Started the presentation)

Slide & Glide Waltz (Paper Plate Ice Skating)

Balloons to the Moon (Sitting Down)

Juggling Jive (Tossing the sock balls or bean bags...3 per group)

The Learning Station's "Physical Ed"

Run Walk

Jumping Jacks

Can You Keep Your Balance

The Learning Station's "Brain Boogie Boosters"

Move & Freeze

Brain Breaks

The Learning Station's "You Can Dance"

Rock Paper Scissors (High & Low Fives)

Christy Lane's "Sports & Novelty"

Tea For Two (Mirroring & Add One Activity)

Huey Lewis "Hip to Be Square"

Exercise Die....as a class do exercises for 10/15/20/30/45/60 seconds only

Beach Boys "I Get Around"

Walk in a circle to pass out sock balls/bean bags etc.

Mickey's Sports Songs "Pump Up the Jam"

Everyone needs to have something in his or her hands...bean bag/sock ball/medicine ball/water bottle/soup can/paper ball...anything Do various arm exercises and on the count of 8 "pass" to the person on the left and do another exercise etc. (song is only 2:30 minutes)

The Jackson 5 "ABC"

Have students form their bodies into letters, individually or with a partner. Have students draw letters in the air with ribbons or use their finger/arm/elbow/foot etc.

Brenda Colgate "Silly Willy Moves through the ABCs"
CD & DVD (DVD has both English & Spanish)

The Buddy Balance
The Flamingo Freeze

Musical PE Plus "Get'em Up Moving & Learning"

Cool It Down (Last song of the presentation...sitting down)

CDS & DVDs I also recommend....but didn't have time to fit in

*Greg & Steve's "Kids in Action" (K-2nd)

*Wacky Workout (pre-K-2nd)

*Hap Palmer's Can a Cherry Pie Say Goodbye? (Pre-K-2nd)

*The Learning Station's "La Di Da, La Di Di" CD (Elementary)

*The Learning Station's "Tony Chestnut" CD (Elementary)

*The Learning Station's "Get Funky Musical Fun" CD (Elementary)

*Christy Lane's "PE Adventures DVD Lost Jungle" (Elementary)

*Christy Lane's "PE Adventures DVD Unknown Planet" (Elementary)

*Christy Lane's "Steppin & Stoppin DVD" (Elementary & Middle)

GREAT FREE RESOURCES:

This free downloadable book offers many activities and ideas for elementary and various subjects in addition to more helpful resources.

ABC for Fitness by David Katz MD

www.davidkatzmd.com/docs/ABCManual.pdf

•**Go Noodle**

<https://www.gonoodle.com>

•**Support Real Teachers**

<http://www.supportrealteachers.org/brain-breaks-recess--classroom-based-activities.html>

NEWSIES Get Up and Go

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LSEUR2gZUFc>

References:

National Association for Sport and Physical Education & American Heart Association. (2012). 2012 Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the USA. Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

ABC for Fitness™ Teacher Manual

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Run, Jump, Learn! How Exercise can Transform our Schools:

John J. Ratey MD at TEDxManhattanBeach YouTube Nov. 18, 2012:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBSVZdTQmDs>)

Peaceful Playgrounds Brain Breaks – Dr. Melinda Bossenmeyer

<http://www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/brain-breaks-basic-supercharged/>

Spark PE

<http://www.sparkpe.org/?gclid=CJqrhvDOP8ICFRJcfcgodvaMAEw>

The Learning Station Brain Breaks and Activities Handouts

<http://www.learningstationmusic.com/printablehandouts.html>

Jean Blaydes Madigan's Action Based Learning

<http://abllab.com>

Cathie Summerford – author of Action Packed Classrooms

