

Secondary Classroom Physical Activities

Engaging secondary students in physical activity throughout the school day can be a challenge. Do not be afraid to try new activities to get the students moving. Here are some tips and lesson integration ideas that may be helpful for classroom teachers.

1. Start slowly and have patience. Be persistent about encouraging movement in class
2. Ask for student input on what they would like to do for physical activity (PA) breaks
3. Ask students to lead classroom PA breaks
4. Use appropriate music that appeals to teens to encourage movement
5. Create a voluntary PA programs during lunch periods that could include Dance, Dance Revolution, Wii Fit, Fit for a Healthier Generation video series or other fitness videos
6. Integrate movement into your class content and subject areas

Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up

Strategy Description:

Use to organize students into groups, giving them an opportunity to stretch and move. Also use to review lesson content or to prompt collaboration.

1. Walk 10-15 steps (to get blood out of feet and seat-- this is the number of steps needed to get blood and oxygen to the brain).
2. Head up with a smile (the brain does not know a real smile/laugh from a fake one, this boosts serotonin and mood).
3. Partner shoulder to shoulder (this is less threatening than face-to-face).
4. Pick a characteristic to determine who goes first. Some examples: which person lives closer to ____, which person ate Mexican food most recently, etc.
5. Have them introduce themselves, share lesson content and reflect on what they learned. It is helpful to have a timer. Have each person share for a limited time and then switch to ensure no one is able to dominate the conversation and that all are learning.

NOTE: When you need groups of four have partners pair up. Partners put hands up and find another group of two.

ALTERNATIVE: Have students raise their hand up with a number of fingers and then they have to find a partner who has the same number of fingers up.

Deal or No Deal

Strategy Description:

1. **Equipment:** A minimum of five envelopes with one exercise listed on the outside of each envelope
2. *Suggested exercises for the outside of each envelope:* Seat crunches, pushups, elbow to opposite knee touches, jumping jacks, arm circles, jog in place, forearm jabs, heel raises, toe raises, weight training with textbooks: arm curls, overhead press.
3. Inside each envelope, place repetition variations on separate pieces of paper or cardstock (e.g. One More, 5 more, 10 more, none, times 2, one less, -5, divided by, square root of 36).
4. Teacher chooses an envelope and states a feasible number of repetitions.
5. Teacher makes a deal with one student at a time. All students participate in each deal.

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6. Teacher: "My deal is 20 crunches. Deal or No Deal?" Student: "Deal – the entire class perform the physical activity or exercise." OR "No Deal - the student chooses a card from that exercise envelope and the students perform the new number."
7. Students are challenged to design a movement activity to integrate the concepts or vocabulary of the subject area.

Find Your Partner

Strategy Description:

1. Use to review for a test
2. Come up with 3-5 review questions and answers.
3. On an index card, write the questions.
4. Students are scattered throughout the classroom. The teacher will say start with question number 1 and walk to a partner across the room.
5. Each student will walk briskly to find a partner and identify the answer to that question.
6. The teacher will then say start question number 2. tippy toe to a different partner.
7. This continues for three to five minutes.
8. As a review, the teacher can say find your question number 1 partner and students will find their original partner relative to that question.

Variations: Use different movements to find a partner. Have students create the questions. Use music as students are finding a partner. Time students (e.g., give students ten seconds to find a partner) **Gallery**

Walk

On the walls around the room, post chart paper. Have students use Post-it notes to answer critical thinking questions about the lesson. Allow students to use some time during the lesson to take a gallery walk. Music can be used to begin and end the activity. Students can also use markers to write directly on the chart paper.

Poker Reflection Activity

Strategy Description:

A closure activity used to identify concrete learning concepts. Also use to reflect on feelings.

1. Different colored cards are put on tables for students.
2. Students write down one thing they learned during the lesson on one side of index card.
3. Students draw a face showing how they feel about the class, the concepts introduced or their learning.
4. Students place card, with face showing, on forehead and glance around the room at others. Think humor!
5. Leader initiates movement with music (ex. "I Feel Good") after giving directions to find a partner, and share what is on your card.
6. Students are asked to move around room for duration of song, sharing their key learning with several different partners.

Reflection Walk

Strategy Description:

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Use with students to incorporate movement, socialization and reflection during instruction.

1. Have students form small groups.
2. Explain that groups will be taking a walk together. On their walk, they should share something with the group about the current class content or review yesterday's content. You may determine the topic depending on the type of session you are leading. Some examples might be:
 - a. Share at least one thing you remember from class.
 - b. Share something new or interesting you learned this morning/afternoon.
 - c. You can also create a specific list of questions you want students to discuss.
3. Send them on a walking course outside (weather permitting) or throughout the building. Be specific about the return time and possibly have a song or signal to guide students back to their seats.
4. Upon returning to the session, allow 2-3 minutes for students to write down items they want to remember from their walk. Depending on your schedule, or the desired outcome, you can extend this by having students share with their table group's items they discussed outside of the group during the walk.

Different Colored Cards

Strategy Description:

Use to encourage movement and allow students to discuss or talk with others outside of their table group.

1. Prior to class, place a stack of index cards in the center of each table. Each table group is given a different color of cards.
2. At the point in the class when you want movement and discussion, pose a question or issue to the group. Ask students to write their thoughts on the index card. Allow 1-2 minutes for writing.
3. When given a signal, students are to stand, pair off with a person with a different colored card and share what they wrote.

Lazy Eights

Strategy Description:

Use these strategies to get students up and out of their seats. Ideal for breaks after intense or mentally challenging activities.

1. Extend one arm in front of you with your thumb pointing upwards.
2. Trace the shape of a figure eight in the air. The eight should be on its side and as you trace it out in large, slow movements focus your eyes on your thumb. Without moving your head trace three eights in successively larger movements.
3. Now do it with your other hand and then clasp them together and do it with both hands

Card Organizing

Strategy Description:

Use to mix students into groups, help stretch and move or prepare for a collaborative effort. Distribute playing cards 2-9 (by suit if possible) to each table. Place them face down.

1. Students each take a card and (without looking at the card) place it on their foreheads.
2. Now students are instructed to organize themselves without talking by number. This is easily accomplished, and the group is ready to hear the next instruction.

Once the group has become a line, it is easy to subdivide the group by number or assign individual numbers with a role: "recorder," "timekeeper," etc.

Continuum

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Strategy Description:

Use to integrate activity while having students process thoughts and level of agreement with various statements.

1. Place a graphic representation of a continuum along the wall of the classroom. Example:
 - a. Place pictorial or graphical representations such as a penguin, emu or roadrunner along the wall such that they correspond to participants' comfort levels with the statements.
 - b. You may also use signs that say, "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree."
2. Explain what the continuum represents.
3. Ask participants to move to the spot on the continuum that best matches their level of agreement.
 - a. Example of lesson content:
 - i. Local waterways need to be protected.
 - ii. A variety of wildlife should be encouraged.
 - iii. People should be involved in local environment care.
 - iv. Only ratepayers should contribute to the cost of caring for the waterways.
 - v. United States citizens care for the environment.
 - vi. It is better to use an unspoiled river for recreation, rather than keep it as a natural habitat.
 - vii. People should be made to spend some of their free time working towards helping the environment
4. Have students discuss why they selected their spots along the continuum.
5. Use this to differentiate a group for pacing on a topic.

Crazy Question

Strategy Description:

1. Students group together into 4 teams (easiest way may be to have them group together by rows).
2. The teacher selects a list of vocabulary words or a set of questions from the end of a chapter.
3. The students must complete a series of movements to receive each question.
4. When each student in a group has completed the assigned movement they must sit down and raise their hands to receive each question.
5. The teacher will then approach the group to give them the next question.
 - a. To receive the first question, each student in the group must jump to the sky and slap the floor with their hand. Repeat 5 times.
 - b. To receive the second question, the students must hop on one foot while turning in a circle 10 times.
 - c. To receive the third question, students must run in place for 30 seconds.
 - d. To receive the fourth question, students must do imaginary jump rope as fast as possible for 10 seconds.
 - e. To receive the fifth question, students must complete all previous movements.

Variation:

*This activity can be used for sequencing, listening skills, auditory procession, and multiple intelligences.

-These ideas have been adapted from brain-based learning strategies and are meant to encourage mild physical activity during core content classes.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services new [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) recommends one hour or more of moderate or vigorous aerobic physical activity a day for teens, including vigorous intensity physical activity at least 3 days a week. Both groups should do muscle-strengthening activities (which might include sit-ups or rope-climbing) 3 days a week, and bone-building exercise (running, jumping) also 3 days a week.