
Preface

*Learning doesn't happen from the neck up;
it happens from the feet up.*

—Mike Kuczala

There's a trainer we know, a former member of the United States Marine Corps. Just that information alone should tell you what his workouts are like: tough, inventive, disciplined, challenging, and most of all, exhausting. Continued movement is a cornerstone; rest is rare. These group training sessions are not for the faint of heart. A mix of running, crawling, jumping, lunging, hopping, lifting, swinging, being inside and out, make you crave the comfort of your car ride home. He does not let up on you. He is motivating and encouraging and occasionally will get in your face to make sure you are not letting up on yourself, even for a moment. There is a hum to the class as he moves around the gym barking instructions in his uniquely Marine way that gets you to do just a little more.

Chris Kaag is quite accomplished. After his retirement from the Marine Corps, he earned a business degree from Pennsylvania State University and shortly thereafter started his own business, Corps Fitness—out of the back of his truck. His experience in the Marines and his mental toughness started him down a path that would eventually inspire thousands of people to get in the best shape of their lives. He had no physical gym to bring his participants to when he first started. Chris had members of his class running steps and low crawling through sand pits in various parks in the local area. His business grew and eventually moved indoors. In 2007 he started the IM ABLE Foundation. Today, Chris has built one of the most dominant and popular places of fitness in Berks County, Pennsylvania, where he also enjoys a board room and enough office space to run IM ABLE. He advocates living life to the fullest with no excuses. He inspires others to realize their potential and will do anything to help them reach it. The Corps Fitness community prides itself on respect, accountability, and teamwork. Corps Fitness provides a space where people can push themselves, redefine their fitness limits, and in the process develop a can-do attitude. Chris inspires others to become the best they can be—physically and emotionally.

What is the IM ABLE Foundation? It was created to build and support active lifestyles for individuals with disabilities, currently known as different abilities. Chris Kaag, the inspiration to so many and founder of Corps Fitness, operates from a wheelchair. You read that correctly. This inspirational human being and former Marine gets in your face from his self-propelled moveable chair. He lives with a neurodegenerative condition known as adrenomyeloneuropathy, which started with a concussion during his second tour of duty in Aviano, Italy. In 1999 he was medically retired from the Marine Corps, holding the rank of sergeant. Upon receiving his diagnoses, Chris had a decision to make. He could either give up and let his condition control his life or dig deep and push on. You know what he chose and how the story is currently playing out.

At its very core, Chris understands that a life worth living includes being physical; we are meant and built to move, be physically active, and be physically fit. He sets an example by living his life with a different ability that would stunt many; but he still drives, skis, and krankcycles all over the place! He is in phenomenal shape, and if he can achieve that, anyone can! He is an inspiration and example of a physical life well lived. He is an inspiration to us. *Ready, Set, Go: The Kinesthetic Classroom 2.0* takes from that inspiration and testifies to a physical life in education. No child or young adult should ever have to endure his or her experience of learning and discovery mostly from a seat.

Ready, Set, Go: The Kinesthetic Classroom 2.0 is a resource that provides all teachers, in every content area and grade level, with a quick means to finding information and ideas on how to implement thoughtful and purposeful movement and physical activity in the classroom to enhance the teaching and learning process. It supports the notion of educating the child as a whole. The suggested activities all provide opportunity for students to grow cognitively, socially, mentally, emotionally, and physically. Four distinct purposes for using movement in the classroom will be shared. Although the framework is similar to the one we introduced in *The Kinesthetic Classroom: Teaching and Learning Through Movement*, we've reshaped the flow and sequence as follows:

TAKE YOUR POSITION!

Gain knowledge
Know the research
Recognize the benefits

Ready!

Devise a plan
Create cohesion

Set!

Prepare the brain
Provide brain breaks (or boosts, blasts, etc.)
Fitness challenges

Go!

Review content
Teach content

The sequential steps in this framework are supported by cutting-edge educational research explaining the benefits of using movement as a method in the teaching and learning process. This book will serve as a critical tool for delivering content and curriculum to teachers and students, all while using a brain-friendly approach. We hope that you allow this framework to become the standard for using kinesthetic activities and movement to support and enhance curriculum objectives. These activities should be included in all classrooms that are committed to engaging the learner and differentiation instruction.

Chapter 1 discusses both the modern learner and transforming the learning environment through taking your position and becoming a kinesthetic educator. The four purposes of movement and the research supporting each provide a direct route to combat the current educational and health concerns of children. An extensive graphic organizer explains “Ready, Set, Go: Framework 2.0” including these purposes. The framework allows for teachers to progress in the implementation of movement at their own pace. Teachers’ comfort levels regarding movement in the classroom may vary greatly. In this chapter, guidance is provided at a pace that is individualized.

Classrooms, schools, and school districts have changed with regard to movement, physical activity, and physical education since the publication of the original *Kinesthetic Classroom*. Chapter 2 discusses how classrooms and schools have evolved and includes the research that continues to support the use of classroom physical activity. This chapter also describes some unique success stories around the United States as well as the emergence of Action Based Learning Labs and kinesthetic classroom furniture.

Through nine phrases, or thoughts, Chapter 3 describes how the brain/body connection plays out in the classroom. The relationship between how the brain prefers to learn and the role movement plays in this process is closely examined. Presenting information on the brain/body connection through these statements makes the information more applicable for classroom teachers as they make decisions about how best to approach the teaching and learning process.

One serious concern regarding movement is classroom management. Chapter 4 is dedicated to this concern. It addresses building a kinesthetic classroom environment, safety, ease of movement, introducing movement, the unmotivated student, the hypermotivated student, and transfer time from movement to seat. Tips and strategies will be shared to better manage student behavior during movement activities.

Chapters 5 through 10 are action-packed with hundreds of movement activities that can be implemented in the classroom. Each chapter focuses on the other purposes of movement. Suggestions are easy to follow and practical. Movement activities are appropriate for various grade, fitness, and ability levels. Recommendations are made on how to adapt and customize certain activities. Usually, little or no equipment is needed.

Chapter 5 addresses the importance of building a classroom environment through class cohesion. Although these activities are not intended for daily use, they serve a critical role. Students who feel safe and comfortable in a learning environment are more capable of optimal learning. Therefore, allowing students the opportunity to engage in these activities is advantageous to the learning process.

Chapters 6 through 8 focus on initiating movement in the classroom. These activities can be performed in two minutes or less. In fact, the challenges presented take only 30 or 60 seconds to complete. This is a perfect place for the cautious teacher to begin. Planning is minimal, and little time is taken away from academic content. These activities are great for reenergizing the body and brain while enhancing neural connections. After participating in these activities, the brain refocuses, and learning becomes more efficient.

Chapters 9 and 10 concentrate on curriculum. These activities, which include music, art, and health, are designed to expose teachers to a different way of thinking. To teach and review content through movement, teachers must be willing to stray from traditional teaching techniques. Many of these movement activities are intended to supplement teaching methods already being used. Sometimes, a suggested activity may actually replace a current teaching practice. Either way, students are learning and reviewing academic content through exciting and stimulating means.

For more information on Chris Kaag and Corps Fitness, please visit www.corpsfitness.net.