
Preface

From your genes to your emotions, your body and brain are dying to embrace the physical life. You are built to move. When you do, you'll be on fire.

—Dr. John Ratey (2008)

The *Kinesthetic Classroom: Teaching and Learning Through Movement* 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 movement 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. Six distinct purposes for using movement in the classroom will be shared. The sequential steps in this framework known as *movement with purpose* are listed next:

1. Preparing the brain
2. Providing brain breaks
3. Supporting exercise and fitness
4. Developing class cohesion
5. Reviewing content
6. Teaching content

These are supported by cutting-edge educational research explaining the benefits of using movement as a method in the teaching and learning process. Never before has education been so focused on standards, curriculum, and content. This book will serve as a critical tool for delivering those very components in a teacher, student, and brain-friendly manner. 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 committed to engaging the learner and differentiating through learning style, interest, and/or readiness.

Chapter 1 discusses both the modern student and transforming the learning environment. The six purposes of movement and the research supporting each provide a direct route to combating the current educational and health concerns of children. An extensive graphic organizer explains this six-step framework allowing 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.

Chapter 2 focuses on important, easy-to-understand information describing the brain-body connection. The relationship between how the brain learns and the role movement plays in this process is closely examined. Success stories are shared to highlight that combining physical activity, movement, and academics leads to educational growth and success. Ten critical reasons for implementing the six purposes of movement are carefully described.

One serious concern regarding movement is classroom management. Chapter 3 is dedicated to this concern. It addresses the unmotivated and hypermotivated student, safety concerns, and transfer time from movement to seat. Tips and strategies will be shared to better manage student behavior during movement activities.

Chapters 4 through 9 are action packed with 170 movement activities that can be implemented in the classroom. Each chapter focuses on one of the six 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. A particular emphasis is placed on the capability of transferring movement activities from one subject to another.

Chapters 4 through 6 focus on initiating movement in the classroom. Ninety-four movement activities that can be performed in two minutes or less are described. 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. After participating in these activities, the brain refocuses and learning becomes more efficient.

Chapter 7 addresses the importance of building a classroom environment through class cohesion. Although these 14 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 8 and 9 concentrate on curriculum. The 62 activities contained in these chapters 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.

Chapter 10 serves as a cornerstone for creating an environment that truly educates the whole child. By adopting this philosophy, students' cognitive, social, and physical well-beings are enhanced. Learning through movement and/or participating in physical activities will occur on a daily basis. The message that good health and active living are essential and fundamental will be clearly received. We hope that learning will become more efficient, student test scores will improve, and behavior challenges will decrease. Most important, a new joy of learning will emerge.