Dec 3rd, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Whole Body Learning in the Classroom

Emily Swindall
The Cloverleaf School, emily.swindall@cloverleafschool.org

Katherine McGee
The Cloverleaf School, katherine.mcgee@cloverleafschool.org

Jessie M. Leyden
The Cloverleaf School, morris.jessie@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gapbs

Recommended Citation
Swindall, Emily; McGee, Katherine; and Leyden, Jessie M., "Whole Body Learning in the Classroom" (2014). Georgia Association for Positive Behavior Support Conference. 21.
https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/gapbs/2014/2014/21

This presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences & Events at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Georgia Association for Positive Behavior Support Conference by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
Whole Body Learning

THE CLOVERLEAF SCHOOL
Whole Body Learning

Definition: Whole body learning occurs when teachers and students engage physically, mentally, and emotionally in the learning cycle.
“The importance of the body is indisputable; the body moves, acts, rememorizes...and remakes the world. It’s absurd to separate the rigorous acts of knowing the world from the body.”

- Paulo Freire
Extensive research has been conducted to study the impact of physical activity on both academic performance and student behaviors.

Physical activity has been found to enhance learning as well as improve student behavior. (Fordyce & Wehner, 1993)

Exercise has been found to affect executive functioning by increasing oxygen flow to the brain, increasing brain neurotransmitters, and improving cognitive functioning. (Basch, 2010)
Movement can be an effective cognitive strategy to:

- strengthen learning
- improve memory and retrieval
- enhance learner motivation and morale (Jensen, 2005)
How does physical activity improve academic performance?

- The part of the brain that processes movement is the same part of the brain that processes learning.

- The cerebellum is the area of the brain most associated with motor control as well as memory, attention, and spatial perception. (Jensen, 2005)
How does physical activity improve student behavior?

By learning the rules and guidelines involved in **structured physical fitness** and having **unstructured movement** time to engage with peers, physically active students tend to exhibit more **responsible personal** and **social choices**.  

(Basch, 2010)
## Inside the Lesson

- Kinesthetic learning activities
- Utilizing all classroom learning spaces
- Connecting movement to content
- Structured movement during transitions

## Beside the Lesson

- Fidgets
- Oral motor regulators
- Variety of active seating options
- Student break opportunities
“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

–Maya Angelou
When kids have a greater social connection it fosters a sense of “coherence” or meaning and purpose in life, which, in turn, enhances the whole body (mental, emotional & physical processes).

(Antonovsky, 1987)
Emotional

How does emotional engagement improve student behavior?

• A caring and supportive environment improves student behavior

• Engaging in positive peer interactions is very motivating

• Knowing strategies for emotional regulation and navigating social situations is empowering
Emotional Regulation:
Our goal is for students to self-regulate their emotions within the classroom setting

- teach strategies for different emotions
- teach how to take a successful break
Emotional in the Classroom

My Thoughts When I’m Feeling BLUE

My Strategies When I’m Feeling BLUE

Steve
Cuddles

A.I.M.
Unikitty
Emotional in the Classroom

My Worry Reflection

Name: 

When I’m worried, my strategy is to …

- Be brave and face my worries
- Or I can get my teachers help

What makes me angry?

This is what I look like when I’m angry.
Direct Instruction in Social Skills:

- personal space
- helpful words
- positive self-talk (self-image)
- cooperative play
- winning & losing
- conversation skills
- public and private
Emotional in the Classroom

Social Thinking:
• self-awareness & self-monitoring
• being a part of a group
• recognizing expectations
• discussing how we affect others
• social behavior mapping
• video modeling
• perspective taking
• nonverbal and verbal communication
Emotional in the Classroom

Student Self-Reflection
• social behavior mapping

Self-Advocacy
• students identify the strategies that work for them
• empower them to ask for what they need
• Learner Profiles
Emotional in the Classroom

Positive Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>Try</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using “no” language and telling kids what they cannot do (no running, no-stop chewing that pencil)</td>
<td>Using positive language and direct kids to what they can do (use walking feet or pencils are for writing, would you like some gum?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using language that shuts down communication (stool or why are you doing that?)</td>
<td>Using softer language that invites response (want or what’s your idea?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You need to _____</td>
<td>I need you to _____ or It’s time to _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering kids questions directly (is what I have now a social skill?)</td>
<td>Directing students to use tools to find their own answers (is where could you look to find out? or why don’t you check your folder?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You just lost a point—or Do you want to earn your points?</td>
<td>You are showing me you are not earning your point—or You can earn your points by—____—or—This is your chance to earn your points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s none of your business</td>
<td>It’s not your worry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calling out poor behavior choices</td>
<td>Painting out good behavior choices others are making (wow, look at how ______ and ______ are listening with their whole bodies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are the only one not listening</td>
<td>Using concrete language that reflects back to the school rules (those are unfriendly words—or— I need you to follow my directions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did I tell you?</td>
<td>Did you hear my instructions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at me—or—Pay attention!</td>
<td>Show me you’re thinking about me—or I need you to see you listening with your whole body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First holding points over student’s head (remember your points)</td>
<td>Unlinking student behavior to a natural consequence or intrinsic motivator (when you said that, how did it make ______ feel—or—is using those words being your best self?)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our goal is for our students to be a part of a community

Therefore, we want our students to be:

- Capable
- Connected
- Considerate
- Creative

To do this, we:

- engage in community-building as a school
- engage in community-building as a class
Emotional in the Classroom

[Images of children engaged in activities in a classroom setting]

[Images of a museum exhibit with children interacting]

[Images of children playing with wooden tools]
Emotional in the Classroom

Our Class Bucket
Reward:
Lego Movie
3
Donuts

Our Classroom Commitments
We will:
* Give each other friendly reminders
* Try our best not to distract each other
* Listen to each other
* Think about each other
* Be the best version of ourselves

Because:
* We have to learn as much as possible!
* We want to be a good community
* We all have the right to be comfortable
* We want to be nice, show respect, and be the best school ever!
* We all want to be on the same page
* We’re raising our learning community
Emotional in the Classroom
"Students are ENGAGED when they are attracted to their work, PERSIST despite challenges & obstacles, and take visible DELIGHT in accomplishing their work."

-Adam Fletcher
Because students succeed when they are mentally engaged, challenged, and supported:

"Challenging and attainable academic goals, teaching strategies that emphasize student collaboration, and subject matter that is meaningful and connected to students' experiences also contribute to their feelings of academic competence and engagement."

"Once students are confident of their ability to succeed, they become more engaged and learn more. ...The earlier [we] begin to build students' confidence in their ability to do well, the better off they will be. Because students' notions of their capacity to be successful are so important to engagement in school and learning, school contexts should be designed in ways that support feelings of SUCCESS." (Akey, 2006)
How do we mentally engage students?

By partnering with students in an empowering learning experience:

• student-led conferences
• student-created portfolios
• goal-setting and reflection as regular part of learning cycle
• growth-oriented classroom climate
• scaffolding to maximize independence
How do we mentally engage students?

By connecting learning to students' lives and the world around them:

• critical literacy integration
• problem-posing discussions
• taking learning experiences out into the community
• peer-to-peer learning
• building on students' strengths & interests
People feel engaged when they are mentally stimulated and challenged to push themselves.

At Cloverleaf, we balance challenge with support to keep students mentally engaged and invested in their own school experience.
Mental in the Classroom

Do kids have power?
- Yes
- No

Should kids have power?
- Yes
- No

Bulletin board with sticky notes and maps of Europe.
Mental in the Classroom
How does the mental aspect improve student behavior?

When students are engaged in learning, with the right balance of challenge and support, we see a:

- decrease in negative behaviors due to boredom
- decrease in negative behaviors due to frustration
I KNOW WITH MY ENTIRE BODY: WITH FEELINGS, WITH PASSION, AND ALSO WITH REASON."

- PAULO FREIRE


Basch, C. E. (2010). Healthier students are better learners: a missing link in school reforms to close the achievement gap. Equity Matters, 6, 4-45.


Thank you for attending our presentation on Whole Body Learning!

Presented by Emily Swindall & Katherine McGee
emily.swindall@cloverleafschool.org
katherine.mcgee@cloverleafschool.org

Authors
Jessie Leyden, Katherine McGee, Jen Owen, Emily Swindall, Jennifer Selzer, and Jason Teufel

www.cloverleafschool.org