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Whole Body Learning in the Classroom

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Whole Body Learning

THE CLOVERLEAF SCHOOL
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
WHY the physical aspect?

- 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)
## Physical in the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside the Lesson</th>
<th>Beside the Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Kinesthetic learning activities</td>
<td>• Fidgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilizing all classroom learning spaces</td>
<td>• Oral motor regulators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Connecting movement to content</td>
<td>• Variety of active seating options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Structured movement during transitions</td>
<td>• Student break opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical in the Classroom
“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
WHY the emotional aspect?

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)
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
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

The Importance of Language in Positive Behavior Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of</th>
<th>Try</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using harsh language and telling kids what they cannot do (no running or 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 (wait 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 (what do I have next? a social skill)</td>
<td>Directing students to use tools to find their own answers (are where could you look to find out? or why don’t you check your folder?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You just lost a point— 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 (you are the only one not listening)</td>
<td>Pointing out good behavior choices others are making (wow look at how ___ and ___ are listening with their whole body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using arbitrary language to correct poor behavior choices (that is so rude or do as I say)</td>
<td>Using concrete language that reflects back to the school rules (these 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 to see you listening with your whole body”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First holding points over student’s head (remember your points)</td>
<td>Linking 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
Emotional in the Classroom

Our Class Bucket
Reward:
Lego Movie & 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 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 want to learn as much as possible!
* We all want to be on the same page
* We're raising our learning community

(xo)
(Cay)
(stock)
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)
Mental

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
Mental in the Classroom

Yearly Goal Setting Form

Student Name: [Blank]  
Year: 2014-15

What are two main goals for your child this year at Cloverleaf?

Goal 1: Improve organizational skills & independence

I will:  
- Make sure to bring my HW and water bottle home

Parent will:  
- Guide (try in using "self-check" regularly
- Try building independence w/ routines

Teacher will:  
- Use agenda for HW

Goal 2: Write with greater detail & length (4 confidence)

I will:  
- Find a good seating option at writing time
- Find the right workspace during writing time
- Play typing games at home

Parent will:  
- Find a good program for practice
- Buy typing games

Teacher will:  
- Practice typing more frequently
- Create self-check for writing
- Send home options

This work was done...

☐ alone  ☐ in a group

I needed...

☐ a lot of help  ☐ a little help
☐ no help (I did it all by myself)

Reflection:

I wanted to show you this work because...
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
In closing...

I KNOW WITH MY ENTIRE BODY: WITH FEELINGS, WITH PASSION, AND ALSO WITH REASON."

-PAULO FREIRE
Sources


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!

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