

Brain Breaks for 4th Graders

Fargo Public Schools

2007-2008

- FIT TIC-TAC-TOE** Make a large tic-tac-toe grid on the board with exercises in each space. A sample grid follows. Students get into pairs with one being the X and the other the O. The students make a grid on paper at their desk. Each person does an exercise for the corresponding space they want to occupy. They try to get a tic-tac-toe by choosing a space and completing the exercise. You can play as many rounds as you would like. They could also switch partners with those getting a “cat” or those winning their round.
- FRUIT BASKET UPSET** Students’ chairs or desks are arranged in four groups, and each separate group is labeled a fruit. The teacher calls out two fruits, and those two groups switch seats and try to be seated before the other group. When the entire group is seated first, they score one point. Play for a certain point total (e.g. Five for 5-A-Day) or five minutes. Tip: To have the students travel the space safely, if two people bump into each other from opposite groups, they must perform five jumping jacks before moving on.
- HANDJIVE** Cues in italics can be put on the board. The students practice the hand jive actions and then perform it with music. The actual hand jive or fast 50’s or 60’s music will work. The sequence is the following:
 - Both hands hit top of *thighs* twice
 - Clap* twice
 - Make the motion of being *safe* in baseball twice
 - Repeat the *safe* motion with opposite hand on top twice
 - Make two *fists* and hit on top of each other twice with the *right* on top
 - Repeat the *fists* with the *left* on top
 - Right* thumb *hitchhikes* over the right shoulder twice
 - Left* thumb *hitchhikes* over the left shoulder twice
 - Repeat the above sequence
- PHYSICAL MUSICAL CHAIRS** Set up a typical musical chairs game except use polypots or carpet squares (two less than the total number of participants). Place one chair on each side facing inward for the outer boundaries. (Chairs are on the outside and polypots are on the inside in a line in pairs, as if making a line of chairs.) Play upbeat music and have students go one direction around the chairs. When the music stops, students get to a polypot and start to jump up and down. The two students who don’t get a spot can try to get to one next time. No players are ever eliminated. The jumping can also be switched to other exercises (e.g. knee lifts, triceps stretches, toe raises).
- “CORRECTLY STATED”** This activity can be used to reinforce or review concepts (an active way of reviewing for a quiz or test). Students stand beside their desks and start doing side steps in place (step, touch right, step, touch left, repeat). The teacher asks a

question, if a student gets the correct response, the teacher announces, “Correctly stated.” For every correct response, the students perform five jumping jacks. If a response is incorrect, the teacher responds with “Give me ten (squats).” The students perform ten squats. The exercises can be anything you choose, from the standing exercise to the performance ones on correct or incorrect responses (e.g. opposite elbow to opposite knee, opposite hand to opposite foot behind).

- 6. BEACH BALL TOSS** Develop questions or short tasks related to your instructional unit on sticky notes and tape them on an inflated beach ball. Toss the ball out into the class and allow students to volley (soft, two-handed touches) for a predetermined amount of time (e.g. until the music stops, once six people have touched the ball, until the ball touches the floor). At the designated time, one student peels off a sticky note, reads the question, and provides a response.
- 7. CHA-CHA SLIDE** Otherwise known as the “Casper Slide.” The music dictates the actions the students perform. Students are familiar with this from PE class, Skateland, etc. Join in!
- 8. LETTER AEROBICS** Explain that lowercase letters are either tall, medium, or have a tail. Give the students a visual on the board of two lines with a dotted line in the middle. For example, *a* is medium (it stays in between the bottom and dotted line), *d* is tall (it stretches from the bottom to top line), and *g* has a tail (it dips below the bottom line). Have the students sing the alphabet and perform the following actions depending on the letter: reach arms above head for tall letters, place hands on hips for medium letters, and bend knees and touch the floor with both hands for letters with tails. Start singing the song slowly and speed up as the students get the concept.
- 9. PUSH-UP STEAL THE BEANBAG** Students partner up, begin in push-up position facing each other, and have a beanbag on the floor between them. The teacher calls out, “Ready, set, go,” and on “go,” the students try to be the first to grab the beanbag while maintaining the push-up position. You can play up to a certain number of points, play for a certain number of minutes, or increase the difficulty by changing the word “go” to “right” or “left” forcing them to think and react before reaching.
- 10. CLASSROOM HIGHWAY** Give each student a steering wheel (e.g. ring, hoop). On a signal from the music, all drivers start their engines. They respond to your signals and cues. Have students decide what color and type of vehicle they want to drive. When you call out a type of vehicle or color, students respond by performing the appropriate actions. (p. 80)
- 11. LOCOMOTOR SHUFFLE** Provide a deck of playing cards and follow the chart for actions, intensity levels, and directions. (p. 85)
- 12. CRUISE THE AMERICAN BORDER** Students use pedometers to convert steps into mileage awarding one state for every 100 steps they accumulate. Start in Maryland and work your way down and back around the country until you end up in Delaware. You can make the hike more exciting by providing narration about the states, as in the following:

Avoid the crabs in Maryland! (Hop quickly from left to right)
Climb a mountain in Virginia. (Lift your knees high)
Swim down the banks of North Carolina (Lie on your stomachs and swim with arms and kick legs)
Jump for the peaches in the trees in Georgia (Jump)
Hopscotch jump in the Florida Keys (Hopscotch)
Take big, gigantic steps around the room for Texas

(p. 53)

References:

“No Gym? No Problem!” Physical Activities for Tight Spaces Charmain Sutherland Human Kinetics 2006

“Climbing My Pyramid” Marilyn Grechus, Ph.D., University of Central Missouri

“Turning Health Education into Child’s Play: Interactive Games to Enhance Instruction” Karen Berard-Reed, M.Ed., Rhode Island College; 2007 AAHPERD National Convention

“Smart Kids Learning To Think on Their Feet” Carmen J. Bachmeier