Abstract

Research has linked physical activity in children to positive outcomes related to cognition, concentration, behavior, and executive function. Oftentimes teachers are at a loss when it comes to designing and implementing specific movement activities in their classrooms that promote these desirable outcomes. Likewise, research notes that the demands placed upon educators in the 21st century classroom have made meeting content standards essential. The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to bridge the research to practice gap by providing concrete examples of content-based movement activities that teachers can easily implement in their classrooms and (2) to share data from a lesson plan study that targeted the strategic integration of content standards into movement activities to facilitate knowledge acquisition across disciplines.

Why Movement?

- have a positive impact on children’s acquisition of early literacy competencies
- facilitate children’s executive function (i.e., processes required to select, organize, and properly initiate goal-directed actions)
- are a great way to differentiate for diverse learners
- are an effective instructional strategy for promoting content knowledge
- go hand-in-hand with formative assessment
- are FUN!

Purpose

The lesson plan study utilized movement as the framework for teaching, learning and assessment that promoted content knowledge, made learning more accessible, accommodated students with a wide range of intelligences and abilities, and helped teachers move away from classrooms that were heavily print-based which left far too many students without access to the curriculum.

Lesson plans provided developmentally appropriate ways of teaching alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, oral language, letter knowledge, spelling, print awareness, print motivation, and vocabulary.

Research – What Teachers Said