

# TEACHING TODAY'S LEARNERS #2



## Movement to Enhance Learning

### THE SKINNY ON MOVEMENT:

Each year more and more research confirms the connection between physical activity and learning. Brain researcher David Sousa states that physical movement increases the amount of oxygen in our blood, and this oxygen is related to improved memory and better learning. Some recent studies even suggest that many student behaviors we associate with ADHD may stem from an overall lack of movement, both in and out of school.

### ATTENTION SPAN:

The attention span is approximately equivalent to the age of the person...with a maximum for adult learners of about 20 minutes. Once that time has peaked, the mind wanders, focus is lost, and the body craves movement. Unproductive behaviors can also begin to increase.

### BENEFITS OF MOVEMENT:

Adding movement to lessons increases focus and retention. It also decreases those unproductive or undesirable behaviors. If a learner is able to move, and finds success through movement, he will likely enjoy school more, increasing his desire to learn.

### ADDING MOVEMENT:

Along with what we tried at the faculty meeting, I've included some other strategies that could be used in any content area to integrate movement into lessons. As you are planning, if you have a lesson that looks "sedentary," try integrating one of these strategies to increase student movement and thus engagement and learning.

- ❖ **Gallery Walks:** In some lessons, students need to analyze multiple texts/data sets. Why not post these on the walls, and have students rotate through them in small groups, working to problem solve or accomplish a task together.
- ❖ **Walk and Talk:** "As you walk, discuss with your partner..."
- ❖ **Learning Games** (i.e. Simulations, authentic learning challenges, physical challenges, etc...)
- ❖ **Chair Change-Up:** "When the music starts, move to a different chair and discuss..."

## Movement to Enhance Learning (continued)

- ❖ **White Board Meetings.** Students investigate and make sense of a problem in a group. They display their findings on a mini-whiteboard (tech or no tech using pictures, graphs, writing or mathematics). Once students post their information on whiteboards, they present their findings, then receive feedback and answer questions about their information.
- ❖ **Stations.** Not just for elementary! Rotating stations can be utilized for differentiation. Activities can be on paper, or embedded digitally using QR Codes, for example. Other stations may be rotational, such as short writing prompts, differing math problems, selected texts to analyze, or different activities for new vocabulary or concepts.
- ❖ **4 Corners.** Students show their position on a specific statement (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) by standing in a particular corner of the room. They can defend their answers or work in the group to prepare “evidence.”
- ❖ **North/South Pole Continuum.** Good for formative assessment or assessing background knowledge. One side of the room represents one idea, and the other side represents an opposing idea. You could even use the continuum to measure the effectiveness of a lesson or gauge understanding of a topic (North you’ve got it and are moving on to activity 2, South wants a review of the material with teacher).
- ❖ **Environment.** Give students a choice of learning spaces where they can work and then switch it up!