**Brain Breaks:**

**Promoting Physical Activity throughout the School Day**



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**Name of Activity:** Trading Places

**Activity Objective:** The objective for this activity is to get the students up and moving and give their brain a rest from the content area. Getting them up and moving will help them concentrate until the end of the lesson.

**Target Grade Level:** Varies depending upon the questions

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:** Have students stand behind their pushed-in chairs. Call out a trait and everyone who has that trait must change places with someone else (students who do not have the trait stay where they are). Examples: "Everyone with curly hair." "Everyone who ate cereal for breakfast." Everyone who is wearing stripes."

**Extra Questions:**

 Everyone who has a Dog

 Everyone who has a cat

 Everyone who plays a sport

 Everyone who has a sister

 Everyone who is from Kansas

 Everyone who has been on a plane

 Everyone who is wearing shorts

 Everyone whose hair is above his or her shoulders.

**Resources:** Lynette, R. (2012). 20 Three-minute Brain Breaks, *Minds in Bloom*. Retrievedfrom:http://www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/20-three-minute-brain-breaks.html

**Name of Activity:** Mix N’ March- Math Match-Up

**Activity Objective(s):** To get students to move throughout the room during class. This activity also works on math skills and locomotors.

**Target Grade Level(s):** K-2

**Content Area Targeted:** Math

**Equipment Needed**: None

**Description of Activity**: Activity begins with students marching throughout the room. Teacher calls out a number, and students must form groups equaling that number as they march. After groups are formed they continue to march around. If the teacher says, “scatter” the students will then scatter and march on their own again. Depending on grade level could add, or subtract numbers, even multiply.

**Resource:** Pangrazi, R., Beighle, A., & Pangrazi, D. (2009). *Promoting physical activity and health in the classroom*. San Francisco: Pearson Benjamin Cummings.

**Name of Activity:** Name Moves

**Activity Objectives:** Learning Student’s Names

**Target Grade Level:** K-2

**Equipment:** N/A

**Description of Activity:** Students stand behind their chairs. In turn, each student says his or her name accompanied by a special movement. For example a student might say, "Kayla!" while dramatically dropping to one knee and doing Jazz Hands. After the student does his or her move, the rest of the class says the student’s name in unison and imitates the move. Then it is the next student's turn.

**Resources:** Lynette, R. (2012). 20 Three-minute Brain Breaks, *Minds in Bloom*. Retrievedfrom:http://www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/20-three-minute-brain-breaks.html

**Name of Activity:** Moving Hands

**Activity Objective:** Students will practice crossing right and left side of brain

**Target Grade Level:** Junior High (7-8)

**Content Area Targeted:** None

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:**

1.  Stand Up.

2.  Start by waving your right hand in front of you left to right.  Your palm should be facing away from you while keeping your hand with your fingers pointing up.

3.  Now stop that hand and have your left hand in front of you waving it up and down.

4.  Now practice moving them at the SAME TIME.  Do not move your hands going diagonally.

5.  Now switch to have your right hand up and down and your left hand left and right.  Do this faster and switch often to make it more difficult.

6.  Lastly, to increase the difficulty, have your arms crossed while doing this.

**Resource:** Sladkey, D. (17 July 2014).*Energizing Brain Breaks; Brain Break Therapy.*Retrieved fromhttp://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/

**Name of Activity:** Rainstorm

**Activity Objective:** Create an indoor rainstorm

**Content Area Targeted:** Science

**Equipment Needed:** None needed

**Description of Activity:** Have a rainstorm in your classroom. Have students follow your lead; begin by having students very lightly rubbing their hands together, then lightly snap, slap their thighs, slap their thighs and stomp their feet (the rainstorm is at its peak!). Then stop stomping their feet, just slap their thighs, return to lightly snapping, rubbing their hands and stop. Do each action for 20 seconds.

**Cues:** Wind, drizzle, cats and dogs, thunder. (Work back.)

**Resource:** Austin. (2014). AISD brain break activities. *Austin independent school district bureau of curriculum.* Retrieved from http://curriculum.austinisd.org/pe\_health/resources/BrainBreaks/

**Name of Activity:** Say 21

**Activity Objective:** Students will practice counting up to 21 with a partner.

**Target Grade Level:** Primary (K-2)

**Content Area Targeted:** Math (counting)

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:** Here are the rules…

The object is to say 21 and win. You have the option when it is your turn to say the next consecutive number or two. For example…. I go first, I say 1, you can say 2 or 2…3. You say 2, then I can say 3 or 3…4. I say 3 ... 4 and so on until someone says 21 and wins. If I start with 1…2. You can say 3 or 3…4. And so on. The person who says 21 wins. For a change, make the person who says 21 the loser. There is a strategy and some kids get it right away. Can go to a different number.

**Resource:** Sladkey, D. (14 November 2008). *Energizing Brain Breaks; Brain Break Therapy.*Retrieved from http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/2008/11/say-21-and-win.html

**Name of Activity:** ABC, 123

**Activity Objective:** Students will practice drawing numbers in the air while saying the alphabet

**Target Grade Level:** Primary (K-2)

**Content Area Targeted:** Spelling and Numbers

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:** Stand Up. Use your index finger and write a large "A" in the air out in front of you and at the same time say out loud the number "1". Now use your index finger and write a large "B" in the air out in front of you and at the same time say out loud the number "2”. Continue writing the letters in the air and saying the numbers out loud as far as you can go or until the end of the alphabet.

**Resource:** Sladkey, D. (17 July 2014).*Energizing Brain Breaks; Brain Break Therapy.*Retrieved fromhttp://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/

**Name of Activity:** Pass It On – UNO style

**Activity Objective:** Learn Colors

**Formation:** Form a circle around perimeter of the room

**Target Grade Level(s):** 3-4

**Content Area Targeted:** Spanish (if necessary)

**Equipment Needed:** UNO cards

**Description of Activity:** Teacher hands out one card to each student.Students identify color on card and perform activity that corresponds to that color for 10-15 seconds:

* Blue: Jump to the sky
* Red: Squats
* Yellow: Twist
* Green: Swim

When teacher says “Pass it on”, students will pass their card to the person on their right and complete the activity that corresponds to their new cards.

**Variation:** Teach colors in Spanish

**Resources:** Leaks, E. (2003, January 1). Energizers Classroom-based Physical Activities 3-4. Retrieved October 3, 2014.

**Name of Activity:** Blink/Snap Brain Break

**Activity Objectives:** SWBAT perform cross brain activity.

**Target Grade Level:** 9-12

**Content Area Targeted:** None

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:**

* Stand Up.
* Blink your left eye and snap your right hand finger and thumb at the same time.
* Now blink your right eye and snap your left hand finger and thumb at the same time.
* Go back and forth as fast as you can

**Resource:** Sladkey, D. (2010, April 20). Energizers: Classroom-Based Physical Activities. Retrieved October 2, 2014, from http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/2010/04/blink-brain-break.html

**Name of Activity:** Rock, Paper, Scissors Jumps

**Activity Objective:** Perform skills to study a topic

**Content Area Targeted:** Any or none

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:** Teachers ask students questions and students respond by jumping into the correct position. Ex: If the answer choice is “A,” students should land with their feet together; if the answer is “B,” students should land with their feet apart in a straddle position; if the answer is “C,” students should land with one foot in front of the other. The teacher asks a question and the students jump three times, on the forth jump they should land in the position that corresponds to the correct answer choice. You could basically use this game to study for any topic.

**Samples:**

When was Pearl Harbor bombed? A. July 4, 1941 B. October 31, 1941 C. December 7, 1941

What president had more than 2 terms? A. Roosevelt B. Lincoln C. Ford

When were the first winter Olympics? A. 1906 B. 1924 C. 1896

**Resource:** Austin. (2014). AISD brain break activities. *Austin independent school district bureau of curriculum.* Retrieved from http://curriculum.austinisd.org/pe\_health/resources/BrainBreaks/

**Name of Activity:** Stop and Scribble

**Activity Objectives:** SWBAT perform movements and spell vocabulary words.

**Target Grade Levels:** 3-4

**Content Area Targeted:** Vocabulary

**Equipment Needed:** 1 Piece of paper and 1 pencil for every 2 students

**Description of Activity:**

* Teacher calls out physical activity:
	+ Jumping
	+ Twisting
	+ Jogging
	+ Jumping jacks
	+ Hopping
	+ Knee lifts
	+ Playing air guitar
	+ Marching
* Students begin activity and continue until the teacher calls out a spelling word.
	+ Browse, Cautious, Inference, Harvest, Ancestors, Synagogues, Replenish
* Students freeze and partners (or they could do this individually) work together to try to spell the word correctly on a piece of paper.
* After 10 to 15 seconds, teacher calls out new activity.
* Continue until all spelling words are used.
* As students cool down, teacher will write correct spelling on board and students will check their work.
* Variation: Same activity using sidewalk chalk instead of paper and pencil (outside).
* Use this activity to review spelling words - it’s great.

**Resource:** Energizers: Classroom-Based Physical Activities. (2006, July 1). Retrieved October 2, 2014, from <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Energizers/Texts/K-5-Energizers.pdf>

**Name of Activity:** Frozen Vocabulary

**Activity Objective:** Get students up and active and using vocabulary while having fun.

**Grade Level:** 3rd-4th

**Content Area Targeted:** English and Physical Education

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** Begin by having students do an activity standing at their desks for at least 30 seconds each: Jumping, Twisting, Jogging, Jumping jacks, Hopping, Knee lifts, Playing air guitar. Students continue activity until teacher calls out a vocabulary word at which point the students freeze. Teacher calls on volunteer to use the vocabulary word properly in a sentence. Resume activity or begin a new activity when a student uses the vocabulary word properly in a sentence.

**Variations:** 1. Students can define vocabulary word. 2. Students can spell the word. 3. Students can name a synonym or antonym. 4. For math, students can give the sum, difference, or quotient of 2 numbers.

**Resource:** Mahar, M. T., Kenny, R. K., Shields, A. T., Scales, D. P., & Collins, G. (n.d.). *Energizers: Classroom based physical activities K-5.* Retrieved October 5, 2014 from http://eatbettermovemore.org/sa/enact/school/documents/afterschool.pa.programs.K-5-Energizers.pdf

**Name of Activity:** 5-4-3-2-1

**Activity Objective:** Regain student attention by releasing energy through physical activity.

**Target Grade Level:** 3-4

**Content Area Targeted:** Math and physical education

**Equipment Needed:** None but could use dice

**Description of Activity:** Students all stand up from their desks. Teacher gives the students an activity to do for each number. For example, one could say

* 5 star jumps
* Touch all 4 walls
* Spin in a circle 3 times
* Give 2 friends high fives
* Do one squat

Students then return to desk to resume their lesson.

**Resource:** Lynette, R. (2012, April 8). 20 Three-Minute Brain Breaks. Retrieved September 17, 2014, from <http://www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/20-three-minute-brain-breaks.html?m=1>

**Name of Activity:** Rock, Paper, Scissors, MATH

**Activity Objectives:** SWBAT perform math skills at a quick pace.

**Target Grade Levels:** 7-8

**Content Area Targeted:** Math

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:**

•You can only use the numbers 1,2,3 or 4
•You can’t use your thumb as a number
•You must hold your hand flat
•The first person to add the numbers together wins that round.
•Have students play the best of 5 rounds.

**Variations:** One person is negative, both are negative, or multiply the numbers.

**Resource:** Sladkey, D. (2008, January 11). Energizers: Classroom-Based Physical Activities. Retrieved October 2, 2014, from http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/2008/09/rocks-paper-scissors-math.html

**Name of Activity:** Partner Write

**Activity Objective:** The objective of this activity is to get the brain to work in a different way. Instead of reading through seeing, we are now reading through feel.

**Target Grade Level:** 5th

**Content Area Targeted:** Spelling

**Equipment Needed:** Spelling List

**Description of Activity:** The students will get in pairs. One of the students will be given a vocabulary word silently. The student who gets the word will have to write that word on the back of their partner’s back with their finger. The partner will try and guess the word. Once both students have guessed the word they will switch roles.

**Resource:** (2012). *Brain Breaks, Refocus the Brain*. Retrieved from http://ntprs.org/2013/brain-breaks.pdf

**Name of Activity:** Silent Signs

**Activity Objective-** Get students up and active and integrates geography into physical activity.

**Grade Level-** 5th

**Content Area Targeted-** Geography

**Equipment-** Map

**Description of Activity:** Teacher chooses 1 student to go to the map.Teacher chooses location (state or country) and tells everyone in the class except the student at the map (can write location on board or piece of paper). Class uses movement without talking to guide the student to the correct location - East: knee lifts; West: jumping jacks; North: raise the roof; South: squats

\*Repeat with new location and new student.

**Variation**: Post the direction that corresponds to each movement on the board.

**Resource:** Mahar, M. T., Kenny, R. K., Shields, A. T., Scales, D. P., & Collins, G. (n.d.). *Energizers: Classroom based physical activities K-5.* Retrieved October 5, 2014 from http://eatbettermovemore.org/sa/enact/school/documents/afterschool.pa.programs.K-5-Energizers.pdf

**Name of Activity:** As If

**Activity Objectives:** SWBAT perform actions to get their heart rates up.

**Target Grade Levels:** K-2

**Content Area Targeted:** None

**Equipment:** None

**Description of Activity:**

* Teacher reads sentence to class. Have students act out each sentence for 30 seconds.
	+ Jog in place as if a big scary bear is chasing you
	+ Walk forwards as if you’re walking through chocolate pudding
	+ Jump in place as if you are popcorn popping
	+ Reach up as if grabbing balloons out of the air
	+ March in place and play the drums as if you are in a marching band
	+ Paint as if the paint brush is attached to your head
	+ Swim as if you are in a giant pool of Jell-O
	+ Move your feet on the floor as if you are ice skating
	+ Shake your body as if you are a wet dog
	+ Walk in place as if you are in slow motion
	+ Walk around as if you have a balloon in between your legs
	+ Shiver as if you just got out of freezing cold water
	+ If you read a Clifford Book, you could have something like act as if you just got licked by Clifford!
* Students act out each sentence for 20-30 seconds.
* Students may create their own sentences for additional activities.

**Resource:** Energizers: Classroom-Based Physical Activities. (2006, July 1). Retrieved October 2, 2014, from http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Energizers/Texts/K-5-Energizers.pdf

**Name of Activity:** Line Up

**Activity Objective:** This activity will get the students up and moving while also practicing their knowledge of alphabetical or numerical order.

**Target Grade Level:**

**Content Area Targeted:** Math and Language Arts

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:** Students will line up in alphabetical order depending on their last name. While doing this they will not be able to talk and only use non-verbal communication.

**Variations:** Month of their birthday (Numerical), Month of their birthday (Alphabetical), Shortest to tallest, who woke up earliest (time), who traveled farthest (distance)?

**Resource:** 1 February 2012. *The Teacher Garden.* Retrieved from http://theteachergarden.blogspot.com/2012/02/brain-breaks.html

**Name of Activity:** Phalange Fun

**Activity Objective(s):** Works with students balance and core strengthening.

**Target Grade Level(s):** 3-4

**Content Area Targeted:** Physical Education

**Equipment Needed:** None

**Description of Activity:** Students find a partner; with this partner they stand toe to toe facing each other. Each partner then balances on one foot and hook their index fingers. The object of this game is to knock partner off balance. If a person puts their foot down that is a point for the other person.

**Resource:** Pangrazi, R., Beighle, A., & Pangrazi, D. (2009). *Promoting physical activity and health in the classroom*. San Francisco: Pearson Benjamin Cummings.

**Name of Activity:** Jump Skip Counting

**Activity Objective:** Perform counted locomotor activities

**Content Area Targeted:** Math

**Equipment Needed:** None needed

**Description of Activity:** Have students count by twos, fives, tens etc. while jumping with each count. You could also practice spelling words this way. You could perform this activity and use all of the different locomotors.

**Resource:** Lynette, R. (2012). 20 three minute brain breaks. *Mind in bloom strategies and activities to promote creative and critical thinking.* Retrieved from http://www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/20-three-minute-brain-breaks.html

**Name of Activity:** Roll the Dice

**Activity Objective:** Students will practice adding, subtracting and multiplying numbers together and engage in physical activity

**Target Grade Level:** Intermediate (3-4)

**Content Area Targeted:** Math and Physical Education

**Equipment Needed:** 2 big foam diceor any dice

**Description of Activity:** Students will take turns rolling the foam dice. Students will then add, subtract or multiply (teacher will pick) the foam dice together. After students do this teacher will pick an exercise (push-ups, tucks jumps, jumping jacks, crunches, etc.) that students will perform. After students add, subtract or multiply the dice together, students will do the exercise for the amount that the dice equals.

**Name of Activity:** Charades

**Activity Objective:** Act out vocabulary terms.

**Target Grade Level:** 7-8

**Content Area Targeted:** Any content area.

**Equipment Needed:** List of vocabulary or terminology for the content area that students will be able to act out, bowl.

**Description of Activity:** Can play with individuals, pairs, or groups. Whoever goes first draws a term out of the bowl. This is the term to be acted out. Everyone else stays seated and tries to guess the term that is being acted out. Switch roles.

**Resource:** (2012) Brain breaks: Refocus the brain. *Teach for June.* Retrieved from http://ntprs.org/2013/brain-breaks.pdf

**Name of Activity:** I Bet You Can’t Do This

**Activity Objective:** Challenge students to cross the midline of the body and engage both sides of the brain

**Grade Level:** 7th-8th

**Content Area Targeted:** N/A

**Equipment:** none

**Description:** Put your arm out in front of you with your index finger extended. Try to spin your wrist slowly in one direction and your index finger in the opposite direction. Roll your neck in one direction while at the same time moving your tongue around the inside of your lips in the other direction. While spinning your right toe in a clockwise direction take your right hand index finger and draw the outline of a 6 in the air.

**Resource:** Austin Independent School District-Bureau of Curriculum. (2008). *Brain Breaks*: *Middle/high school focus 6-12.* Retrieved October 5, 2014 from http://curriculum.austinisd.org/pe\_health/resources/BrainBreaks/