

Body Activated Learning: Group Lesson Facilitation

Goal: Minimize calling out while improving whole-body listening and facilitate idea-sharing with mutual respect for peers

- Start with a Body Activated Learning Warm-up: 1. Restore 2. Look, Listen, Engage 3. Regroup
- Remind students they have access to tools from the concentration box if needed (once the lesson has been given).
- Acknowledge that some students figure out information more quickly than others but that everyone needs a chance to share their ideas and participate in the discussion.
- Introduce the use of a 4-5# medicine ball that will be rolled to the person who will be allowed to share their opinion/response/etc next. The ball will not be rolled to you next if you call out.
- If the group lesson involves children sitting at their desks, a different ball or sandbell can be substituted as appropriate.
- The student who receives the ball gets to choose the next person to roll it to who is raising their hand. He/She may not roll it to the person who has just answered or someone who is calling out/asking for the ball.
- Say the name of the person you are rolling the ball to as you roll it. The child receiving the ball should respond with “Thank you....”, then share their idea. This facilitates mutual respect and acknowledgement of others in the conversation. They can also say “I agree with.... or I disagree with.... because....” to demonstrate that they have listened to the person who spoke before them.
- Children cannot raise their hands while another peer is talking.
- If you have a really great idea or something important to share but you are not being called on, write it down on a notepad using keywords to help you remember! Tell students this is a common strategy when reporters are asking the president questions or when college students are listening to a lecture because only one person can speak at a time and they don't want to forget what they were thinking. Have students cross off items if someone else shared a similar idea and then raise their hand at the end if there was something on their list that did not get shared yet.
- At the end of the discussion, the teacher should leave time for students to check their lists and contribute any additional thoughts that were not shared by them or another student and ask any additional questions.
- If time does not permit, collect student questions/comments and provide individual feedback as needed or praise as deserved for a thoughtful response at a later point in the day.
- Have students return tools from the concentration box to prepare for the next transition.
- End with a Body Activated Learning Combination: 1. Restore 2. Get Ready, Get Set, Go 3. Regroup with breathing/stretching/pressure as needed before moving on to the next task.

Note: It will take time for students to learn the new format. Be persistent and consistent with the expectations and tool provided for success. Most children will show improvement within 2 weeks in their ability to follow the new expectation combining Body Activated Learning strategies with social expectations.

Building Sensational Self Awareness

Lesson 1: Learning About My Sensational Self

Introduce the concept that all humans are sensory beings and that we each need things to help us get energy, calm down to sleep, focus to get things done, etc. Ask students to share some things they do to give their body energy and then things they do to calm down/relax to create a Sensational Self Profile. Often times things children choose to do for leisure activities/sports are good indicators of the types of sensory inputs they seek. Similarly, what they use to fall asleep or what a parent does to help their child calm down (ex: rocking, hugging, snacks, sucking/water bottles) can also provide insights into support strategies that work for a particular child.

Note: Redirect away from all activities that involve computer/TV/Video Games. While they are fun, they are not activities that help change the way our bodies “feel” to be able to make it through the day and help us feel our best.

Have them notice when they go home after the first lesson, what they do during the week to:

1. Wake up in the morning
2. Get their chores done
3. Fall asleep at night
4. Do their best at an after school activity
5. Other: _____

Tell them to add this information to their Sensational Self Packet using lists and drawings.

Note: Children often do not know right away what their body needs and what works best for them, so it will be important to ask leading questions as needed based on what you know about each child. This lesson can be repeated throughout the school year as children begin to learn about their “Sensational Self” Example: A boy who seeks rough play via games like hockey may be asked how his body feels after hockey compared to how it feels when he has to sit for a long time. Children may be asked to experience different types of music and identify which ones: “give them energy” “help them relax” “make them want to dance” or “don’t make them feel good”

Parent Involvement:

Ask parents to complete the Sensational Self Profile Form and return it to school.

Explain that this is a whole-class experiment and all children are working to build awareness of what sensory strategies are naturally supportive for them to optimize learning, behavior, and task completion.

Examples of Sensory Supportive Activities

Examples of Energizing Strategies (Speed, Movement, Unpredictability):

1. Putting on dance music to clean your room because it helps you move
2. Exercise/run around before work or school (otherwise they have trouble sitting)
3. Heavy lifting/Carrying Heavy things
4. Rough Housing
5. Trampoline Jumping/Bouncy Houses
6. Swimming
7. Rough sports (hockey, football, lacrosse)
8. Bike Riding
9. Other Leisure Activities?
10. Chores: Laundry basket carrying, mopping, cleaning large windows, bathtub squeegee

Examples of Restoring/Calming Strategies (Rhythm, Pressure, Respiration):

Pressure/Deep Touch:

- Heavy blankets and squishy animals to fall asleep
- Taking a bath with warm water in a quiet bathroom
- Getting Hugs
- Chewing on something (shirt, gum, finger, gummies)
- Sucking on something (candy, water bottle)
- Squeezing/Holding objects
- Rubbing blankets/certain textures on your skin
- Yoga

Rhythm/Repetition (Body or Music)

- Calming music to focus (lullabies, rhythmic songs, classical music)
- Rocking in a rocking chair or in your seat
- White noise (waterfall, static, waves)

Respiration:

- Deep Breathing
- Blowing bubbles
- Blowing dandelions
- Yoga Breathing
- Blow toys (www.pfot.com)

Calming Spaces to decrease stimulation and regroup from skill demands:

- Tents
- Hiding under Blankets
- Playing in a quiet room alone (reading, legos, etc)
- Snuggling with a parent or stuffed animals
- Going to Small rooms/spaces/corners of the house, classroom or school

Lesson 2: Using the Thinking Box for Concentration

1. Introduce items from the Thinking Box for Concentration
2. Explain that these items all give your body senses something different that may/may not help you concentrate to get your work done.
3. Pass around weighted and squishy objects and get students to comment on how each one makes them feel using a check-off sheet (see template).
4. Have them select one item to try with each work task they complete (using Task sheet template).
5. Have them record if it was helpful or not helpful to improve their focus. If it was not helpful, they can cross it off their list of items from the toolbox that work for them until reaching a “short list”

As children go through the week, have them practice using the **Sensational Task List** and strategies they have identified. These lists should be returned at the end of the day for review and to give specific guidance/feedback to individual students. Teachers may write a brief note of encouragement at the bottom of the task sheet for the next day to assist in goal setting and give positive support to students who need more reminders.

- a. Ex: Looks like thereally worked for you, try using this strategy during....today.
- b. You did great with your morning work yesterday, try...(strategy, workspace set up, using breaks) in the afternoon to make the second half of the day great too!

Using Sensational Self Profiles:

1. Complete a Sensational Self Profile of each student.
2. Combine this with information from the Parent Completed Sensory Profile and student feedback.
3. Refer to this information as a way of providing increased sensory supports, empowering children to help themselves. and identifying specific strategies that are useful for a given student.

Parent Involvement

Provide a list for parents at home of suggested items (ex: water bottle, chewy snack) that you would like a student to bring from home to try in order to support concentration and task completion.

Thinking Box Materials

Suggested Materials for Elementary-age Thinking Box

- Noise Cancellation headphones and/or disposable ear plugs
- Weighted snake socks (for laps or to put around your neck for pressure)
- Sandbell
- Stress balls, Squishy Balls and Gaim resistance balls
- Move-N-Sit cushion
- Foam cushion or small pillow to sit on/lean on
- Elastic resistance band to put around chair legs for fidgeting
- Vibration animal/pillow
- Disposable blow toys (Milkshake Straws/cotton balls/ping pong balls/pom poms)
- Music: Slow classical/no words, rhythmic drums, rhythmic guitar
 - Recommended: Sound Health CDs from Advanced Brain Technologies, Sacred Earth Drums, Spirit of the Forest

Possible Sensory Tools from Home:

- Ipod/MP3 Player with calming music
- Water bottle
- Compression garments (under armor)
- Blow toys specified by OT
- Chewy snacks/Crunchy Snacks
- Chewy Products specified by OT
- Fidgets or squishy balls