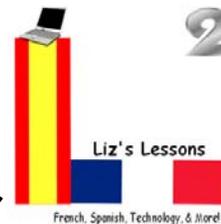


10 Active Games

Incorporate movement into your class to increase learning!



By Liz's Lessons



Advantages of Active Games in the Classroom



- *Movement increases academic performance.*
- *Movement increases long-term memory (Notice” Practice by Doing” at a 75% Learning Retention Rate in this [Learning Pyramid](#)).*
- *Help students’ brains to work and grow.*
- *Help awaken the mind (and your sleepy students ;)*
- *Incorporate student teamwork and collaboration, as well as some competition into your class.*
- *Can benefit learners with special needs.*
- *Good for student health.*
- *Increase student interest and motivation.*
- *Increase student participation.*
- *Fun and Engaging!*

More information on Movement and Learning

- [More Bang for your Buck: Movement and Learning](#)
- [The Importance of Movement and Physical Activity](#)
- [Teaching with the Brain in Mind, 2nd Edition, Chapter 4 Movement and Learning](#)

Active Games for more Movement in the Classroom



1. **Plunger/Flyswatter game**

- Write vocabulary words on the board in all directions to use with the Plunger Game.
- Put words or images on a word document or on overhead and use Flyswatters on the screen.
- Divide the class into two teams.
- Have one student from each team come up to the board and stand a few feet away.
- Call out a definition or synonym for one of the words on the board. Or for Foreign Languages, call out the word in English, or in the target language if you use images.
- The first student to “plunge” the word gets a point for his/her team (I use mini-kitchen plungers that you can find in most hardware stores).
- Continue until you have used all of the words, or you run out of time.
- Rules: no touching another student, no blocking out, no pushing, no plunging each other ;), etc. If a student breaks a rule a point goes to the other team.



2. **Concept Relays**

- This game can be used to list terms, or put them in order. For example, it can be used to put events in order in a History class, or for conjugating verbs in a Foreign Language class.
- Divide the class into two teams.
- Draw a line down the middle of the board.
- Choose a concept.
- Have the teams get in two separate single file lines.
- Give students the concept or category and say “go”.
- The first student in line writes the first term, and then passes the marker to the student behind him/her.
- The second student writes the second term, etc.
- If a student makes an error, the student behind him/her can correct it as his/her turn.
- The first team to finish correctly gets a point.



3. **Paper Basketball**

- Divide class into as many teams as you want.
- Have a list of questions related to the topic students are studying.
- Give students scrap paper to make into balls.
- Put the trash can or recycling bin in the front of the room.
- Alternate asking each team a question.
- If the team gets it right, they get one point.
- The team members can alternate taking a shot with their paper basketball if they get the question correct.
- If they can throw the paper ball into the trash can, they get an extra point for their team.



4. **Catch & Throw**

- List categories on the board related to the concept students are studying.
- Throw the ball to one student in the class. That student will call out a word that corresponds to the first category.
- The first student will throw the ball to a second student who will call out a different term, etc.
- You can decide on a time limit that students get to call out a word. For example, 10 seconds.
- Have the kids set a goal before they begin of how many words they can get total, or if they can get all the way around the room.



5. **Snowball Fight**

- Assign a vocabulary word to two students.
- Give each student a small square of paper.
- One person in the pair writes the vocabulary word, and the other student writes a definition, synonym, translation in a Foreign Language, etc.
- Students then crumple up the papers into “snowballs”.
- You can have students go into the hallway or commons area, or move desks to make room for the snowball fight.
- Designate a neutral zone/line between the two teams (you can use a piece of tape).
- Call out “go” and have the teachers begin throwing their snowballs.
- The winning team has the least number of snowballs on their side of the line when the teacher calls out “stop!”

- Have students count their snowballs.
- Any balls thrown after “stop” count for double points.
- Have each student get one ball, and find their partner. Their partner has the definition, synonym or translation of their word.
- Students get in a circle and stand next to their partner.
- Have partners read their papers out loud to the class.



6. **Hot Potato**

- Move the desks to the side of the room and have students sit on the floor in two circles, or put the desks in two circles and have the students sit on top of the desks.
- Give one circle a set of index cards with the numbers 1-10 on them.
- Give the other circle a ball, or the “hot potato”.
- Have a student in the number circle show a number to their group without the other team seeing it.
- That team begins counting to that number and the other team starts passing the ball around (in World Language classes, students can count in the target language).
- Whoever has the ball when they stop counting answers the teacher’s question as a chance to earn a point for their team.
- If the student is not able to answer correctly, the other team can try to answer the question for a point.
- After each round, alternate which team has the number cards, and which team has the “hot potato”.



7. **Tic-Tic-Boom**

- Give all students a piece of scrap paper with one side blank.
- Have students fold and cut the paper in eight pieces.
- Ask students to write one vocabulary word on each paper (you can do more than 8 if you want), and lay the cards face up on their desk.
- The teacher calls out a definition, synonym, or translation of the word, and then makes ticking noises like a bomb (or you could use a game timer that makes a noise).
- The students must hold up the correct vocabulary word, and stand up by the time the teacher says “Boom!”
- You can have students track their own correct answers if you want. They can track them on a piece of paper, on a small white board, or on their desk if they can use dry-erase markers on their desks.
- You could also choose to have the students play the game in teams or pairs.
- Do all of the cards at least once and then repeat until most students are getting the words correct.



8.

Spelling Race

- Divide the board into three sections with lines.
- Put all the magnetic letters up on the board in the middle section.
- Divide the class into two teams.
- Have one student from each team come up to the board.
- Give a definition, synonym or translation of a vocabulary word.
- The students need to try to find the letters, and spell the vocabulary word first in their section of the board.
- Whoever is first gets a point for their team.
- Have students put the letters back in the middle section of the board and continue.
- This could also be done without the magnetic letters. Simply have students write the word with a white board pen.



9.

The Circle Game

- Have the students move their desks or chairs into one big circle.
- Have one less desk than the total number of students.
- Number off the students 1-4.
- Ask for one student volunteer to be in the center of the circle.
- Choose four main ideas or vocabulary words from the unit being studied.
- Assign all the #1's to the first category, etc. For example when I played this game with my Exploratory French class and we were learning colors the four words could be vert (green), rouge (red), noir (black), and jaune (yellow).
- The teacher calls out one of the categories or words and every student in the group must get up from their desk and find another empty one. They are not allowed to move to the desk directly next to them if it ends up empty.
- The student in the middle of the room must try to find an empty desk as well.
- Whichever student does not end up having the desk is the new student in the middle.
- The teacher rotates calling out different words or categories.
- The advantage of this game is that students become more familiar with hearing the words they are studying, especially for pronunciation in a World Language class.

- To make the game more challenging, the teacher can call out the definition, synonym, or translation of the word and students will know what their word means in order to know when to move.



10.

Magnetic Darts

- This game is similar to the paper basketball game, except it is done with darts.
- You can buy a magnetic dart board at a store like Target or online. Or if your white board is magnetic you can just buy the magnetic darts, and draw the dart board on the white board.
- Divide class into as many teams as you want.
- Have a list of questions related to the topic students are studying.
- Put a dart board up in the front of the room.
- Alternate asking each team a question.
- If the team gets it right, they get one point.
- The team members can alternate throwing darts if they get the question correct. They earn the number of points they hit on the dart board for their team.
- If you draw your own dart board on the board you can create your own categories and write them in the board.
- For example, in my World Language classes I would write subject pronouns in the triangles and give students a verb and a verb tense. They then had to conjugate the verb according to which subject pronoun they hit with their dart.

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