

This school year (2020-2021), due to the pandemic, the staff members at the George L. Catrambone School (GLC) needed to get creative in finding new ways to get the students active. Many teachers found ways to incorporate activities into their learning time, some that not only helped the students review academic skills but that did so in a fun and active way. Many teachers built in time for active brain break and many also jumped at the chance to get the students involved in some mindful yoga. These were all activities that students were able to participate in regardless of whether they were in-person or online. With the school day ending at 12:00 the students faced the loss of their usual recess time and the GLC staff did not hesitate to make up for the lost time of physical activity. Below you will find the description of some of the activities that the teachers at GLC decided to implement in order to get the students moving.

Fluency & Fitness

Fluency and Fitness is an activity that we have easily incorporated into math and ELA class that allows students to get active while still learning. We used it to get the students moving while practicing their math facts and sight word recognition, something they would have otherwise done while sitting down.

How it works: We present a google slide presentation or powerpoint presentation which shows a couple of facts, fluency problems, sight words, missing numbers in the pattern, etc... To begin the students stand up and take a few minutes to warm up with stretches. They remain standing and the teachers begin the slides. On each slide the students shout the answer out. After each set of 5 problems the students are given an exercise to complete such as squats, jumping jacks, hopping on one foot, sit-up etc... The teacher can decide beforehand how long the students will perform each physical activity. This can be done at the beginning of a lesson or as a physical

activity break during the lesson. Students love being able to participate in fluency & fitness and ask for it everyday.

When this is done in math class and ELA class it easily adds an extra 20-30 minutes of physical activity to a students day.

Brain Breaks

The staff at the GLC school incorporated the use of brain breaks this year to allow the students to have breaks that allowed the students to get up and move throughout the academic day. A brain break is a short mental break that is taken at regular intervals throughout the day. Break breaks can be incorporated before, during, and/or after a classroom activity. They allow the students to get up and move, allowing their bodies to better circulate blood flow to the brain and get their heart rate up. Using brain breaks at regular intervals throughout the day helps the students to get in some physical movement during the day. Some examples of brain breaks that were used are dance parties, freeze dance, jumping jacks, follow the leader, active games of simon says, along with an abundance of brain break videos that are available online for teachers to use in the classroom. The students love brain breaks and they really help to get the students refocused on their work after having some time to get up and get moving.

Yoga

This year teachers had the opportunity to sign up for yoga classes in which the Long Branch Public Schools' Yoga Instructor would join the teacher's zoom and host a live yoga class. Each yoga lesson lasts 25 minutes and teachers could sign up for any class they wanted to on Thursdays and Fridays.

This year the teachers at GLC also took the children out for a walk, jog, or run around the school for 10-15 minutes to have mask breaks and have a

chance to move around a bit between classes. The students enjoyed their daily walks and looked forward to them each day that the weather permitted them to.

Another way the students got to be active was during garden prepping time. A schedule was shared with all of the teachers at the GLC school and teachers had the opportunity to sign their class up to help with gardening in the school's courtyard garden. While out there for a minimum of 30 minutes, the students helped to prep the area where they would be planting, and dig holes to plant vegetables plants and/or seeds, They also got to water the plants/seeds once they were done. When a student was waiting for their turn to take part they were able to walk around the garden to observe all the things that had already been planted in the garden. This activity was a great way to teach the students about growing their own fruits and vegetables while also getting them actively involved in the actual process involved in doing so.

The GLC School also offers our students the opportunity to walk or bike safely to school. Our school has a bike rack located in front of the building. Crossing guards are located at the corner so that students can cross the street safely to walk or bike home. On May 24, 2021 our school had a Bicycle Safety Assembly that met on zoom with every grade to discuss safe walking skills. Our school also had two Pedestrian Safety Assemblies hosted live on zoom on May 26, 2021 and June 3, 2021 provided by EZ Ride that also met with every grade to discuss bike safety. These assemblies were all roughly 35-40 minutes long.