

**CONNECTED EDUCATION**  
EVERY LEADER, EVERY  
TEACHER, EVERY LEARNER



Kurt Minnaar

# INTEGRATING MOVEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM



**The following document details 4 innovative ideas shared by Kurt Minnaar, a presenter at the Axis Education Summit 2017. Here you will find some practical tips on how to incorporate movement in your classroom.**

Research indicates that learners have a variety of learning styles. According to Neil Fleming's popular 'VARK Model', there are four types of learning preferences: visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic. Teachers can use the VARK model to identify their learners' preferred learning styles and maximise their learning by focusing on the mode that benefits their learners most. However, despite the diversity of learning preferences, most teaching favours reading and writing learning styles. To foster full classroom engagement and to effectively teach every single learner in the classroom, teachers need to teach in a multitude of ways. This means expanding teaching practice to include more than just 'chalk and talk'. One way to support individualised learning styles is to integrate movement in the classroom. This can be done in a number of ways.

## **1. INTRODUCE MOVEMENT AT THE START OF YOUR LESSON**

When a learner walks into a classroom the teacher does not know what the child may have faced before entering that class. The teacher may not be aware of the problems the learner is facing at home or what the last lesson they attended was like. It's important to ensure that once a learner steps into a classroom they are present in both body and mind. A good way to do this is by integrating movement into the start of every lesson. This may be done by:

- a) Starting your class with a call and responses message that is reaffirming and uplifting.
- b) Creating a short dance sequence that gets the learners up on their feet and moving their bodies. This can be a short routine that may just involve learners using their hands and legs to form a rhythm.
- c) Playing a short motivational dance-themed video.

## **2. INTERGRATE MOVEMENT IN YOUR LESSON**

Movement goes hand in hand with music and rhythm, and rhythm and rhyme are useful memorisation tools. Although understanding is key to teaching and learning, memorisation is occasionally a necessary teaching method. For example, memorisation is useful when teaching the times table. Below is an example of how movement can be used to teach the times table.

- a) First, learn the music track and then create a song or rap using the numbers as lyrics. Write the lyrics on the board.
- b) Ask learners to close their eyes and recite the song/rap (the rhyming will help learners remember).

c) Now add the movements. On an eight count, or on an eight count with an off step (one and two and...), or in accordance with the lyrics. Take chunks of the movements and teach it in bits at a time. The movements do not have to be complex. They can be anything from bobbing from side to side to twisting around.

d) Practice it. Practice it. Practice it.

e) Take the lyrics off the board and then ask learners to recite them.

f) Now your learners know their multiples.

Although these steps are designed to teach the times table, they can be applied to a wide range of topics. One does not need to be an expert rapper or dancer to do this. Involve your learners in the creative process of writing the raps/songs and choreographing the movements. Challenge them to work together to create a rap and dance to a concept you're teaching, and then get them to teach it to the rest of the class. This way not only are you integrating movement in the classroom and supporting individualised learning, you are also getting your learners involved in their own learning.

### **3. USE MOVEMENT TO CLARIFY A CONCEPT**

Occasionally, some learners struggle to understand a concept no matter how many times it is repeated to them. In these situations, a teacher must think creatively about other ways to convey their message. Movement is one such way. This may be done by:

a) Using your body to physically convey something. For example, using your hands to illustrate how waves travel.

b) Asking questions using movement instead of words. For example, you could create a number system based on movements instead of numbers. Instead of the numerical value 'four', you can use the movement of crossing your hands. If done correctly, ensuring all the movements you use to represent numbers can move from one to another seamlessly, you can ask questions and have your learners respond to you without making a sound. This also ensures the utmost concentration and engagement from your learners.

### **4. USE MOVEMENT TO IMPROVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

For novice teachers, and even more veteran teachers, the most difficult thing to master is classroom management. Good classroom management is more than just being strict or authoritarian, and it is more than simply being organised. Movement is a creative classroom management strategy. If a child is busy learning a dance step, they don't have time to fidget or look out the window. The methods outlined below are a template which you can build on to integrate movement in your teaching:

a) After creating the song/rap that you will use to teach your lesson, add dance steps.

b) Practice the dance steps repeatedly without music. If the learners are doing it right the sounds emanated from the steps should be uniform. Challenge your class to do the routine seamlessly so that it sounds perfect.



How do you connect your kids to what you are teaching? Meet them in their contexts, then apply the content. Teach math using dance and Hip Hop, teach DNA structure by braiding hair. Meet kids where they're at, and then add to that."

— **Kurt Minnaar**

If you would like more information to help you support individualised learning styles in your classroom, click [here](#) for BRIDGE's Mail & Guardian article on supplementing classroom communication with visuals and movement.

Click [here](#) for more details on Kurt Minnaar's work.

