Brain-Based Learning: Group Discussion Facilitation

Summary:

The initial learnings from the discussion board emphasize the positive impact of physical activity on academic performance, attendance, and attention. The discussion focused greatly on the relationship between daily movement and learning outcomes, emphasizing that leading a healthy lifestyle impacts various processes and systems within the body. Regular daily movement offers great benefits, such as enhanced blood circulation and oxygen to the brain, neurotransmitter regulation, and improved memory (Jensen & McConchie, 2020). In contrast, sedentary lifestyles are one of the top 10 risk factors for disease and can profoundly impact the overall well-being and the future outcomes for children (Jensen & McConchie, 2020).

Many important questions arose throughout the discussion regarding the incorporation of movement activities in the classroom, increasing student and adult motivation, education for both students and adults, and how to increase advocacy for change in school systems. Motivating various age groups and increasing participation in activities were other concerns mentioned in the discussion. Practical applications for brain-based learning outcomes mentioned throughout the discussion included increasing daily physical activity, brain breaks and brain-boosting activities, and paying attention to other lifestyle factors that impact learning (diet, stress, sleep, social interactions, emotional state, etc.).

Incorporating daily movement into school schedules and educational practice is crucial for enhancing learning outcomes beyond the curriculum. Activities such as Simon says, follow the leader, freeze dance, duck-duck goose, stretching, are great brain breaks that support movement in the classroom. Other outdoor activities could include hopscotch and nature walks. Several examples were also provided in the discussion that implement movement-based

activities to teach core subjects in the curriculum such as spelling, math, and reading. For example, activities such as an alphabet scavenger hunt or math hopscotch. Furthermore, many of my fellow classmates advocated for the importance of keeping recess and physical education in schools.

Their perspectives throughout the discussion emphasized the necessity of physical activity with a balance of unstructured play experiences to combat an overreliance on technology. Encouraging family engagement in children's learning experiences through interactive, technology-free, movement-based activities is crucial for educators. Activities such as bingo cards or choice calendars were mentioned as effective ways to collaborate with families and promote brain-based learning through physical activity.

In summary, the integration of brain-based activities that activate the body and the learning brain require the integration of thoughtful educators who are committed to incorporating strategies that motivate and engage students. Not only do the strategies discussed work to enhance educational outcomes, but they foster healthy lifestyles that support overall functioning as well.

Personal Reflection:

I enjoyed discussing the benefits of increasing daily movement for children's growth and learning, as well as learning practical applications for implementing these methods through active brain-boosting activities. I would be interested in seeing how others in my field would answer the following questions:

- How can holistic learning methods impact outcomes in core subjects (math, reading/language, science)?

- Outline the effective implementation of technology alongside traditional learning, as well as the importance of maintaining a balanced approach between the two.
- Describe how to create a learning environment focused on practical application, retention of knowledge, and the cultivation of lifelong learners.

I utilized these questions in the discussion to guide my conversation, ask follow-up questions, and provide extra resources. I tend to fall back on a holistic perspective because it encapsulates the many aspects that drive learning, growth, and the development of young minds. The discussion did a great job of acknowledging other lifestyle factors that may simultaneously impact developmental outcomes. However, while physical activity is just one factor that shapes learning and development, it remains important. I enjoyed the insight and activity recommendations provided by my peers through this discussion and would love to learn more about the learning brain in relation to curriculum topics in the future.

References

Jensen, E., & McConchie, L. (2020). *Brain-Based Learning: Teaching the way students learn.* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.