

## FOR THE CLASSROOM

# Spring Cleaning Outside and Inside

### I. Outside: Go outside and play Turn your playground into a classroom

Spring has sprung and students' minds want to wander. Here are some activities that get your students outside to exercise both their bodies and minds.

**"Vocab Tag":** Select one or two students as "it". When a student is tagged they must remain frozen until they correctly answer a question posed by the teacher who is circulating around the playing area.

**"Reading" Red Rover:** Tape onto each student a sign with a different vocabulary word. Divide students into two facing parallel lines with ten yards between the two lines. The first team yells out the traditional red rover chant but replaces the student's name with a vocabulary word worn by a student on the other team.



The student wearing the sign with the word called out runs to the other line and tries to break through the wall of joined hands. If they make it through, they get to take a member of the other team back to their original line. If the student doesn't make it through the wall, they stay in the opposing team's line.

**Vocabulary scavenger hunt:** Before class begins, hide vocabulary words written on signs in different locations on the playground. Divide students into teams and instruct them to find vocabulary words hidden on the playground.

Then ask the students to use a dictionary or their textbooks to define all of the vocabulary words they find. Don't forget to tell them how many vocabulary words are hidden on the playground. The team that finds and defines the most vocabulary words is the winner.

**A "Hands On" Idea:** Research shows that hands on learning can improve the average percentage of retention of material after 24 hours to 75%.\* Improve student retention by having your students sculpt their way to understanding with children's clay in one of the lesson ideas listed below:

- Social Studies: Students assemble parts for a product to learn the economic value of an assembly line.
- Geography: Help students learn the name, shape, and location of states, countries or continents by creating a globe or map.
- Math: Students explore 3-D geometric shapes or make models used in problem solving, counting and regrouping.
- Science: Students create models of atoms, cells, organelles, organisms or ecosystems.

### II. Inside: Refresh the classroom setting Create a Classroom Corner

Change the focus of your classroom by creating a special place in your classroom that features an object that represents a central concept of the curriculum you are currently covering. This item will be the centerpiece of the class and inspire learning among your students:

Examples could be:

- Language Arts, an unabridged dictionary
- History, A visual timeline
- Geography, an atlas
- Science, the periodic table
- Math, an abacus.

Start with a small side table or extra desk and cover it with a table cloth or tapestry. Add a lamp that can be adjusted so it spotlights the central object of your classroom corner. Hold a ceremony with a ribbon cutting and a short speech that celebrates the significance of the featured classroom corner item.

\*Source: How The Brain Learns by David Sousa (1995).

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### III. Dust off some old teaching tools Rediscover the overhead projector:

Dust off your old overhead projector and rescue it from extinction by integrating some of these ideas into your lessons:

- **Guess the shape:** Place a variety of different shaped objects in a paper bag. Place an object on the overhead so the shape of the object is projected. Students use their problem solving skills to make guesses on what each object is.
- **Overhead review games:** Make your own "quiz show" overhead game for use as a review prop in

class. Create categories with point values for different difficulty levels and write corresponding questions on a separate sheet of paper. Call on different teams to choose a category and point value for the question they want to answer.

- **Shadow puppets:** Hang a white sheet from the ceiling, place a projector behind it, and introduce students to the lost art of shadow puppets. Divide students into groups and instruct them to create a play that communicates a concept from the curriculum. Alternative idea: Students create paper shadow puppets using construction paper. Use straws for handles.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

# BIC® Great Erase® Grip Dry Erase Markers

BIC® Great Erase® Grip Dry Erase Markers are an excellent way to create temporary teaching templates for your whiteboard. It is an inexpensive, colorful way to make the classroom come alive.

**Two or three circle Venn diagram:** Perhaps the most powerful graphic organizer for showing students connections between different concepts. Tip: Venn squares are easier to create and work just as well as circles.

**Language arts:** Create a blank plot chart so you can track classroom comprehension after they read a story. Then create two or three permanent plot charts and divide the students into teams so that you can write their answers on the board to see which team created the most accurate plot chart. Some other graphic organizers to consider adding: concept wheel, main idea and supporting details web, or vocabulary web.

**Math:** Dedicate a section of the board with multiplication or division lines so that you can organize student responses. Some other graphic organizers to consider adding: Hundreds, Tens, and ones mat, bar graph, or number line.

**History:** Create a historical timeline and chart the events as they are studied. Some other graphic organizers to consider adding: Event Concept Map (where, when, who, how, and why) or a causal events chain.

**Science:** Create a chart where you can organize whole class observations and data tallies. Some other graphic organizers to consider adding: Life cycle chart, compari-

son chart, or cause and effect organizer.

BIC® Great Erase® Grip Dry Erase markers are perfect for use on dry erase boards, glass and most non-porous surfaces and are available in a variety of colors. BIC® Great Erase® Grip is a low odor dry erase marker with a rubber grip for comfort and control. BIC® Great Erase® Grip Dry Erase markers are available in fine point and chisel tips.



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\*Teacher Times articles are written by Junius and Tracy Wright. Articles are based on their experiences as teachers for a combined 20 years and should not be held as fact unless otherwise cited. About Junius and Tracy Wright: Junius Wright is a Language Arts teacher at the Academic Magnet High School in Charleston, SC. Tracy Wright holds a Masters of Arts in Teaching Biology and has taught at schools in Africa and Charleston, SC.