

by | Judith Snyder ●●●●



KEEP 'EM READING JUST MOVE

GRADES
1-5

When students find it especially difficult to sit still, why not go with flow? Activate learning while activating the body. Let 'em dance to the 700s section to find books that will encourage movement. Read picture books promoting character physical actions, and learn about how to stay active in this new world of technology.

Children benefit from being active. Movement activates endorphins that help to promote an elevated mood, positive attitude, and academic motivation. Physical competence builds self-esteem and develops strong muscles and bones. Integrating movement activities with academic skills will help maintain focus, not only for kinesthetic learners, but for all children.

So how can librarians promote physical activity in the library? What can we do to put the information into action—or better yet, put students into action?

Challenge yourself to create lessons that require physical movement. Think of ways to convert a worksheet to a moving activity, like pretending to bounce a ball and shoot a basket when an answer is shared orally.

This article will challenge librarians to explore a variety of ways to motivate student physical activity while teaching library and literacy skills.

A Moving Symphony

Grades: 2–6

Libraries typically have many books about sports and sports people, games and activities. Lessons involving these books are always of high interest, especially with kinesthetic learners.

Put ten books from the 700s section at each table group. Choose both common and uncommon sports, activities, or games that require body movement. Student groups sort the

books into two piles using their own criteria that identify attributes of the book's activity. Sort the books again using three new attributes. Discuss chosen criteria with each sorting.

In pairs or triads, students choose one of the sport or activity books and browse through it by scanning the pictures and captions to find a movement common to the activity. The group practices the simple movement in unison and includes a sound. (i.e. The group might mime hitting a golf ball and click their tongues.) Groups share the name of the activity, the movement and sound, and explain the purpose of the movement. Repeat with another sport book.

Now give the groups time to blend the two movements together with the sound as the movement is performed. (i.e. Perform the golf swing and click, then move directly into swinging a tennis racket and

saying whoosh.) Position the whole class in an area where everyone is standing and has space to move. Explain that they will be performing their sports movement and sound when the conductor (you) gives them the cue (point your finger). Students move and say their sound only when pointed to. Start by pointing to each group in turn. After this warm-up, point to groups at random, increasing and decreasing speed. As the conductor, you can create a beautiful rhythmic symphony.

Return to the books to locate a different sport/activity. Provide time for students to browse again by using pictures and reading the captions. After five minutes, table groups can share information learned about this new sport/activity.

Choose a Side

Grades: 2–6

To review additional nonfiction text format each student chooses one book from the table. On command, students open the book to any page and point to one of two choices you announce, such as captions and sidebars. If the chosen page doesn't have the format,

students can find another page. Students who picked *captions* move to the right side of the room, those choosing *sidebar* move to the left. Check their work by visually scanning the choices as they stand in line, or students can read aloud the first few words of the formatted text. Resume the game using names of different formats. (e.g. main topic, subtopic, bold face print, diagram/graph.)

Since different publishers and/or series use distinctive ways (color, borders, placement, etc.) to highlight nonfiction text elements, ask students to identify any of these patterns noticed in the books. Share observations and discuss how this awareness might help them use the book for research.

Character Emotions

Muscle Memory

Grades: 2–6

Explore character emotions through movement. As a culminating activity for independent novel studies or after reading several picture books, ask students to list emotions expressed by the main character at important parts in the story. Brainstorm as a class with the younger grades. (forlorn, anxious, frightened, angry, relieved, etc.)

Students choose one of the emotions to act out in a freeze position. Label this emotion number one. Repeat using two different emotion actions, labeling them with numbers two and three. Expand the exercise by requiring each of the emotions to be acted out at a different position. (low: floor level, high: standing level, and mid: inbetween). This may necessitate tweaking the freeze positions to accommodate the body placement. Keep the positions simple because they will be moving between them. Positions must be safe, not touching any one, and allow for easy balance.

Say a number and use a percussion instrument (drum or triangle) to indicate when to move. Students flow through each freeze position. After practicing several cycles, try changing the order and possibly the speed. Talking is not permitted until the end.

Picture Books

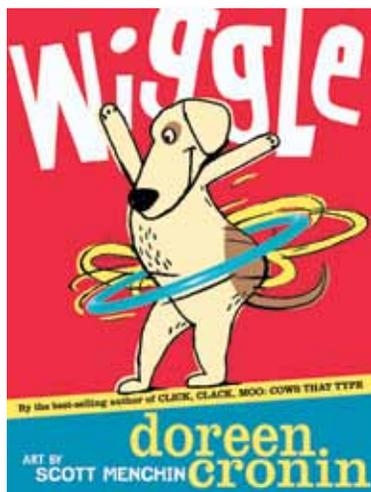
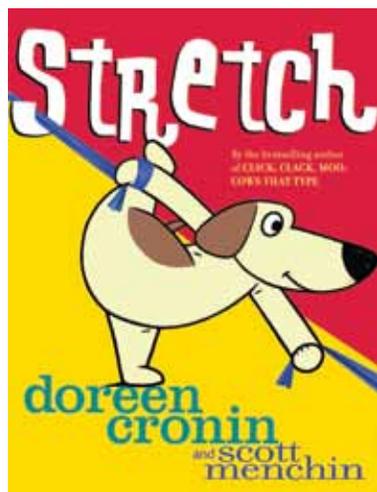
Stretch by Doreen Cronin *Wiggle* by Doreen Cronin

Grades: K–1

The words in these rhyming books invite primary students to get up and move. So try pantomiming the actions in the story. Explain that pantomime involves moving with no sounds. Model and practice several examples.

Before the second reading of the book, students find their personal space. As the book is reread, students act out the actions.

Call attention to the strong rhythm in these books and how it invites the body to move. Read several pages emphasizing the rhythm. Ask students to create a movement to go with the beat as the book is reread. (e.g. feet could march to the beat, arms could wave, head nod, etc.)



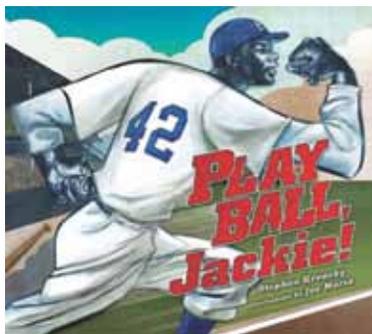
The Fabulous Foskett Family Circus by John Yeoman

Grades: 1–3

Start by reading this book about an extended family that performs circus acts. Brainstorm the circus acts noted in the story and write each of the acts on a set of cards. Distribute one card to each group of students.

Groups demonstrate the assigned circus act (e.g. high wire act, lion tamer) either individually or interacting with a group. After a bit of practice, ask one half of the class to sit as the audience while the other half performs. Switch parts so all have a chance to present.

Ask the groups to line up according to the story sequence. Groups move from freeze positions to action when directed and return to a freeze when a new group is called.



Baseball Themed Picture Books:

Batter Up Wombat by Helen Lester.

Frank and Ernest Play Ball by Alexandra Day

Grades: 2–3

Both books include many idioms associated with baseball. Before reading, distribute *Web Resource #1* (www.librarysparks.com) and

assign one baseball idiom or double meaning word to each pair of students. If the meaning isn't apparent, students can use a dictionary or the internet to find the answer. The team must act out the word (both meanings) or the idiom for the rest of the class. Read one or both books and discuss the possible confusion some people may have because of the words.

Play Ball, Jackie!

Grades: 3–5

This third baseball book discusses Jackie Robinson's first season in the Major Leagues. The racial subject matter included in the book is presented in a straightforward manner and provides opportunities for developing awareness and positive role modeling. Read and also discuss the baseball idioms found in the text.

Teaching Tips

Educators agree that most children learn best when periods of concentration are interspersed with physical activity. Yet the library setting also needs to have a quiet environment conducive to study and reading. It is possible to achieve both, but setting parameters for movement activities is critical and takes some planning. A few basic practices will help maintain order and lower noise level.

Space to Move When planning physical movement activities, create an open space free of furniture and large enough for a whole class.

Personal Space Establish personal space by asking students to spread themselves out where they won't touch anyone or any thing. Then students sit on the floor and draw an imaginary circle around themselves. The goal is to stay in that personal space, unless the activity requires something different.

Percussion Instruments Borrow a few instruments from the music teacher. Chimes are nice for a signal sound for quiet. A hand drum or triangle work well to signal a change in movement or to indicate activity transitions.

Warm-up Activities Freeze—This concept is very important and while it seems simple, it requires practice. Impress on the class, that 'freeze' includes no movement or sound. Freeze positions should be safe and allow for easy balance. Rehearse freezing on demand, using the verbal "freeze" command or the sound of a percussion instrument.

- Additional warm ups can be found online at:
<http://www.weheartdrama.com/428/silent-shapes-silent-tableaus-quiet-drama-warm-up-games/>
<http://www.weheartdrama.com/454/valentines-day-drama-warmup-for-me-a-mime-game/>



Show the illustrations in the book a second time, pointing out the active illustrations of the ball players. Students choose two or three positions and practice each as a freeze before starting the muscle memory activity.

Dance Rhythm Rumpus

***Hilda Must Be Dancing*
by Karma Wilson**

***Penguin Cha-Cha*
by Kristi Valiant**

***Let's Dance, Grandma!*
by Nigel McMullen**

Grades: K-3

Student groups can choose a dance rhythm from one of the books (e.g. Thumpity-bump, Thumpity-bump / tap, flap, cha-cha-cha / Sway, sway) Develop a movement to go with the words and perform it for the class. Then combine the rhythms following the directions for the Sports Symphony to create a special Dance Rhythm Rumpus.

***Ballet for Martha* by
Jan Greenberg and
Sandra Jordan**

Grades: 4-6

Play the music from a video clip of Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTdyDOWtE2Q&list=RDPTdyDOWtE2Q#t=39>. The rhythm and western flavor of the melody are inviting for both boys and girls. Ask groups to compose a few steps to go with the music and perform them for the class.

Watch three or four minutes of the video to illustrate Martha Graham's form of modern dance. Read the book for a deeper appreciation of this art form and the athleticism involved. Martha Graham's dance style evolved from ballet. Interested students can read to discover other American dance styles that have evolved over the years (e.g. jive, square dance, clogging, hip hop).

An active lifestyle is something we want for all children. By involving students in both physical and

mental activities in the library, we demonstrate that the two can be woven together and benefit learning.



Judith Snyder is a seasoned teacher/librarian in Colorado, as well as a professional storyteller and freelance writer. Judith is the author of the *Jump-start Your Library* series, three books featuring hands-on library lessons from *UpstartBooks* (2008), and a picture book, *What Do You See?* (2009), from *Odyssey Books*.