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In an educational world of high stakes testing and global competition for jobs, it has become the urgent responsibility of every subject teacher to support each other in developing students who not only know standard subject matter but that can do higher level thinking and problem solving.

We already teach a subject that most students enjoy using the modality of movement, one of the most proven ways to learn new things. As a result, by integrating other subjects into our daily lessons, physical educators have the best platform to support the development of the above-described child.

There are some fairly simple, effective ways to achieve this integration. Below, I outline three methods that I have implemented successfully, along with a list of some other possible suggestions.

Integration Strategies Form

This form allows teachers to provide you with information about what they are teaching so you can integrate it into your lessons. You can give this form to teachers on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, or based on their planning schedule. For example, some teachers meet each week to plan, so you would leave the form for them to fill out in their planning meetings and return to you in time for you to use when you plan.

I suggest asking the teachers to fill out the form electronically using Google Forms. This automatically collects the information for you in an organized spreadsheet that is easy to decipher. However, you can choose to use a paper version if you like. You can see the download that form at <http://tinyurl.com/4q8k369>.

Alphabet Workout

Now that you have used the strategies form to learn what your fellow teachers are teaching, you can find small ways to fit that subject into your lessons. For example, I use music and visual aids, such as Alphabet Workout (<http://www.alphabetworkout.com>), to assist primary elementary students in learning sounds. This program teaches letter and word sounds through various motor movements. It also incorporates visuals and comes with a workbook. So, it uses different modalities to meet different learners' needs. I use this as a warm-up to a lesson or as a transition between activities.

Math Tag

In this example, I know, based on my strategies form, that the teachers are teaching addition to second graders. To incorporate addition into my class, I would use a chasing and fleeing math-focused tag game during a warm-up or other part of a lesson. In Math Tag, students pair off and each pair shakes one hand three times. On the third shake, they put out as many fingers on that hand as they want. Both partners add the total number of fingers together. Whoever shouts out the total first flees as the other partner chases. Once the fleeing partner is tagged, the partners repeat the activity several times. To increase the difficulty of the game, you could have partners use both hands or perform multiplication instead of addition. This type of game covers physical educational skills while teaching math.

Other Ideas

Some other ideas for integrating subject areas into your physical education class are listed below. Get creative!

- Play games from different countries and highlight important information about the country (Social Studies).
- Create a map of the school and have students do a scavenger hunt for different plant life (Science).
- Have students do an obstacle course based on a story they have to read (Reading).
- Work with the Music Teacher in your school to put on a rhythm and dance show (Music).
- Have students complete drawings of a skill learned as an assessment (Art).
- Use language that classroom teachers are using so that students hear it in other situations and recognize its importance. For example, ask the students to see how many times in a row they can dribble using skip counting by twos (Math).
- Have the students do a nutrition web quest or take an online quiz on subject matter (Reading and Technology).
- Have students create a cumulative project where they have to inform and persuade other students on a meaningful topic of their choice. (Higher Level Thinking)
- Challenge students to participate in teamwork challenges that involve problem solving (Problem Solving).

In the world for which we are preparing our students, creative problem solving and independent thinking will be required, in addition to having a solid educational foundation. Our call to action is to help our students be ready for the future by integrating other subject material and skills into our classrooms today!

Contributor: Charles Silberman, MS, is a physical education teacher from Maryland who believes in a holistic approach to education that involves the growth of the whole child.

He is passionate about movement and physical activity, and enjoys teaching youth of all ages.

You can learn more about Charles's work at <http://www.charlessilberman.com>, and follow him on twitter: search for @ThePeGuy.