

Learning Students' Names

Purpose of Activity:

To put forth a number of ideas that may be helpful to teachers who need to get to know a lot of students' names.

Suggested Grade Level:

K-12

Description of Idea

Learning names in PE can be a daunting task, especially when physical educators are faced with over 500 names to learn. Hopefully the following activities will help in that endeavor. We encourage you to work hard at this and make it a priority. The best thing to do is understand that is going to be impossible to learn them all in 2 weeks. Give yourself some time and design your early lessons just around leaning names. If you have name learning strategies/activities that you have found to be effective please send them to us at pec@pecentral.org.

1. Name Tags

Hand out blank name tags and have students write and design their own name tags. Just have them write their first name and make sure they write it big enough so you can see it. Have them be creative so you can identify them more easily.

Prior to the class get poster boards and put the homeroom teacher's name on them (or something that identifies them, like period 5, 4th grade). Post these on the walls. As students leave have them put their name tags on the poster boards. This may help you remember them throughout the upcoming weeks.

NOTE: You may want to have them put a name tag on their backs as well especially if they are going to be moving. You will have a better chance at seeing them from there.

2. Hoopin' the Names

After checking the roll and seeing all the students' faces tell them that you are going to give yourself a test. Put out several different colored hoops. You then call out about three letters of the alphabet and tell the kids whose first letter of their first name begins with one of those letters to get in the first hoop. You can call one group at a time or if you feel pretty confident several hoops at a time. I then have to identify everyone in the hoops. If I am unable to do so someone else in the hoop has to help me out.

Example: everyone whose first name begins with a, b, or c get in a blue hoop, everyone whose name begins with e, f, or g gets in a green hoop etc. Once you start getting names down you can use the same activity to learn a little about your students. Example: everyone who likes soccer get in

a blue hoop, everyone who is a twin get in a red hoop, etc. The teacher then has to identify each student in each hoop by name again.

3. Ask and Retreat

Give students a safe cooperative task to complete. A good one would be People Finder which you will find right here on PE Central. Then as they are engaged in that activity your task is to go in and ask 4-5 students what their name is. Then retreat out of the activity and with your back to the wall see if you can recite their name for the next few minutes. Do this with the same students in about 5 minutes. That way you will see them in a different part of the gym. Choose another 2-3 students after that. It is best to choose fewer students because you are overloading your brain with all the previous names.

4. As They Leave

As students leave see if you can say their names as they leave the gym. If you get it wrong or you can't remember then have them tell you their name and give you a high five.

5. Exercising Your Name

Have all students stand in a circle, including the teacher. The first student to the right of the teacher says his/her first name, then does an exercise or a stretch. The next student must say the first person's name, do that person's exercise, then say his/her own name and do his/her own exercise. The third person must say both of the first two persons' names, do their exercises then his/her own etc... Then the last person is the teacher who must go around the circle, starting with the first person, and say each student's name plus do their exercise. The next day, I have always remembered all of the students' names. It's a lot of fun for the teacher and the students.

6. Let's Do It, Too

Have students stand in a circle. Have the first student in the circle (your choice as to who that would be) begin by saying his or her name. After the name is said, the student has to put a movement for every syllable in the name. For example, if the student's name is Jessica...the movement could be clap, stomp, and clap. The first clap is for "Jess", the stomp is for "i", and the third clap is for "ca". Then have all of the students repeat the movement while saying that person's name. The same procedure would be done for the next student in line. After the students have all said the next one, they would then come back and do the one before that. By the time the entire group is done, you will have said and done the movements for every person in the group.

7. Ask Them

During any lesson make sure when you call on students have them say their name before answering. This can also be done while distributing equipment. As they come to get equipment station yourself at the equipment area and tell them to say their name prior to giving out the equipment.

8. Pre-Assessment

On the first few classes give students a written assessment to work on. If you are an elementary teacher please try either of these--Pre Assess K-2 or Pre Assess 3-5. They can do this in class and then you can walk around and see the name they put on the sheet as you walk around checking their work. You could even have this to be a personal sheet where you get them to write down what their favorite physical activities are, what their favorite team and athlete is, favorite subject, write a definition of what PE is and what the purpose of PE class is, etc. As they turn their sheets in you can tell them their name. The advantage is that you can post these or look at them at home. You gather a lot of good info as well.

9. Sit In a Circle

Have the students sit in a circle on the first or second day of class and ask them to tell something they did over the summer. Before they tell they have to say the name of the students prior to them. If this is too hard on the students then you tell them that is what you are going to do. Example: "Jill, please tell us what you did this summer. Before you do that, let me see if I can say the names of all the students that went before you."

NOTE: This is a great activity to videotape because then you can look at it at home and really get to learn the names. You may need permission to do this from your school district.

10. Greet Them at the Door

Make it a point to greet each class at the door with a smile and try to say as many names as possible. Example: "Good morning, Justin. How are you? By the info sheet that you filled out yesterday, I learned that you liked to ride bikes. I do to." Even if you get them incorrect students will appreciate that you are trying because it shows that you care.

11. Characteristics of Students

In your grade book or class roster try to write something next to their name to help you remember who they are. For example, Jessie Smith - red hair; Josh Brown - glasses; Sally Lane - pony tail; Jordan Ford - shoe laces on sneakers different color, etc.

12. Eat Lunch with Them

It is beneficial at the beginning of the year to eat lunch with students during their lunch. What I do is rotate around to a different table and grade each day and learn the names of the students I am sitting with. I test myself by going around and naming each student at the table in order, then I mix them up and try again!

13. Past Yearbooks

Get a copy of the prior year's Yearbook or Annual and look through it. This is especially helpful for new teachers. You can put together names, faces, and maybe see what some students like and enjoy doing.

14. Toilet Paper Go Around

Have students sit in a circle. Pass around a roll of toilet paper and tell students to take as much as they want (you may want to have several rolls on hand since some students will take a lot). Once everyone has their toilet paper, tell them that when it is their turn they must say their name, and for every square of paper, they must give a fact about themselves. The students who took half the roll are quite stunned when you say this!

15. Class Photos

Take a group picture of each class during the first or second week of school. Then, print out a class list with space next to each student's name for recording during each day's lessons, then attach the picture at the bottom. The class list and picture are on construction paper that is the color of their grade level, according to the color coding used on my schedule. This is then laminated. I use these class lists to record daily the students' progress with a china pencil or dry erase marker, which I can easily wipe off when the information is transferred into my grade book. This picture on my class list really makes cross-referencing names and faces much easier, especially with the younger children. You may want to make duplicates for the art and music.

16. Partners Across the Curriculum

You will need 2 envelopes (or boxes), and several slips of paper for this forming partners idea. In my high school dance class, students partner up by matching information given on their slips of paper, which the teacher will have to make before students come to class. (You may also have to go visit some of their classroom teachers to see what they have been studying recently.)

When students come into class the boys go to the marked boys' envelope and the girls go to the girls' envelope. Each student pulls out a piece of paper that has information on it. For example, a slip of paper from the boy's envelope may say "Alexander Hamilton" and the girl's match would say "helped set up the US banking system". The boys and girls are to work their way around their classmates to find the correct match of question and answer. When they find the correct match they become partners. I would not allow them to shout out their answer or question. They need to quietly move around and seek matches. This idea allows history (and any other subject you want) can be incorporated into the class. You could also have students match colors, symbols, pictures, letters, etc.

17. Squad Folders

On the first day of school I assign my students squad places. I use colored masking tape because it will stick to carpet as well as cement. I then make a file folder with a sitting chart glued to each side that maps out their assigned places. I label the folder as to the day of week each class comes to P.E. I can use this folder to hold medical information or worksheets that pertain to that class. I can look down the row and use the folder to call their names so I learn their names faster and they think I know them before I actually do. They are assigned in boy, girl, boy, girl...order unless they prove to be a good class--then I tell them I will change them to all boy and girl groups after the first nine weeks. I use these groups for them to go to stations and any other small group activity.

First, put your students into their squad places, or listening spots, or however you have your kids sit, then using a digital camera take a picture of each squad, each section of listening places, or each student, and print them out and put the student's name at each picture. Then, periodically throughout the days, you can look over the pictures and start to learn the names faster. You then also have

prints of your students which you can place into a sub notebook if you need to leave special instructions for a sub regarding a particular student. This way, the sub can see who you are talking about. Maybe the sub needs to be aware of a student with severe allergies.

Thank yous.

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