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## Introduction

All students have had teachers that they loved and whose classes they enjoyed so much that they could hardly wait to get to class. Those meaningful and challenging classes with enthusiastic teachers motivate students by keeping them actively engaged in creative projects and dynamic classroom activities. The goal of the authors of this book is to help teachers FIRE UP their students for school success with interactive classroom activities.

Some teachers are totally committed to avoiding activities perceived as time-wasters; therefore, they often bypass opportunities for excitement and readiness for learning, for learning afforded by valid interactive activities. The activities in *Fire Up! for Learning* are definitely neither mundane nor time-wasters. Each activity is designed to be of high interest to and have meaning for the intermediate and middle years student, and to develop skills essential for student success and well being. Adjectives like *challenging* and *meaningful* do not mean that the activities are devoid of fun. All of the activities are interactive, motivational, skill-based, student-centred and engaging.

Each activity is carefully presented to help teachers and students get the most out of the activities with the least amount of preparation and effort. The direction pages clearly outline how to run and process each activity and help teachers make the activities relevant and meaningful to students in a given setting. Each activity includes a list of materials needed, an explanation of how to set up the activity and tips on how to run and process the activity. The aim of this book is to give teachers some great ideas for their classes with the least amount of hassle on their part.

It is our hope that the activities presented in this book will make a positive impact in every classroom where they are used. Remember, it is permissible to use the words *fun* and *challenging* in the same sentence. Let's FIRE UP FOR LEARNING!

# *Fire Up for Learning!*

## *Motivating classroom activities at a glance*

### 1. **The dream classroom**

In this activity students will create the perfect classroom. Students will list and share what the perfect classroom looks like, sounds like and feels like. Students are challenged to help make their classroom a dream classroom.

### 2. **The talking crocodile**

This is a great activity to teach students how to participate in group discussions appropriately.

### 3. **Super student**

It's a bird, it's a plane, it's SUPER STUDENT! With the ability to leap over tall teachers in a single bound, this new superhero will save your school.

### 4. **Juggling it all**

This activity shows how many things our students have to juggle. A group of students will juggle a number of objects and relate the activity to the real-life juggling they experience. This is a great activity to introduce student planners.

### 5. **Line-ups**

Students line up using different characteristics, such as birthdays. Along the way, they learn about each other.

### 6. **Directions quiz**

How well do students follow directions? This lesson will provide some strategies to promote listening and comprehension.

### 7. **Shh! Quiet line-ups**

Gather around, up or down. Quiet line-ups are similar to line-ups but without the noise. You may decide some days that this is just the activity you need.

### 8. **Round 'em up**

Round 'em up and put 'em together! *Round 'em up* will help teachers with some creative grouping techniques.

### 9. **Who's who?**

Who's who in this zoo? This activity is a great way for students to get to know each other and learn new information about their fellow classmates.

### 10. **Show-me posters**

Students will generate alternative assessments to traditional tests. The activity allows students to get actively involved in finding the best way to display what they know.

### 11. **The ultimate test revision**

The visual learners, the auditory learners and the kinaesthetic learners will all be engaged in this interactive revision process. This is a productive activity that actually makes the revision process fun.

12. **Estimation jar**

Teachers can COUNT on this one! This is a fun weekly activity that allows students to practise their estimating skills.

13. **Test your thinker**

This activity is for teachers who like to challenge their students. These stimulating thinkers add excitement to any day.

14. **Whiteboards**

This is a powerful way to reinforce concepts or to revise for tests. This activity encourages a productive class period with interesting discussion and results.

15. **Like-o**

Do you like what I like? The *Like-o* game allows students an opportunity to know their classmates better.

16. **Brain benders**

Warm-up, extra credit or in-class – use this activity however you desire. Brain benders are a fun way to challenge the mind.

17. **Perplexing people**

Who are you? This activity opens the door for discussion and insight on many important people in the field of education.

18. **A stick-up KWL**

Let's stick to it! This activity helps recall prior knowledge, to link that knowledge to what students would like to know and to list what students have learned.

19. **Check please**

Let's try this together! *Check please* is a method of working together and offering input.

20. **Corner move**

*Corner move* is a way to get moving and learn information. You may use this as a get-to-know-you exercise or with a content focus.

21. **Get in shape**

Hold it right there! *Get in shape* will help reinforce concepts taught in class.

22. **Equation frustration**

*Equation frustration* requires some concentration and mental quickness. Students are asked to solve the equations.

23. **Think – pair – share it**

What do you think? Let's share our ideas! Students are able to share their responses and discuss information.

24. **Run-around**

Run-around and learn today! This is a fantastic game to emphasise concepts, to review topics and to reinforce curriculum.

25. **Outside the box**

Yes, let's think outside that box! *Outside the box* is a wonderful activity that promotes enrichment and challenges the students.

**26. The great Houdini**

The students are connected together in pairs by a couple of ropes and have to try to find a way to get apart. Even Houdini would have had a tough time with this escape!

**27. Untangle the tangle**

Anyone who has ever had to get the knots out of tangled cords or fishing line can relate to the challenge students will face in this activity as they have to remove knots from a piece of rope.

**28. Lend a hand**

Students will create a human knot with a few added twists; then they will untie the knot.

**29. As easy as tying your shoelace!**

Of course you can tie your shoe, but could you tell someone else how to do it? Students learn how difficult the art of communication really is. What we say and what we mean are not always the same.

**30. Square dance**

The task appears simple. All the class has to do is form a square with a 15-metre piece of rope. That is, until they find out they are all to be blindfolded!

**31. The plague**

Students get very involved and have a great time while showing how a plague or a rumour can move through a population quickly.

**32. Fire brigade**

Pass the buckets! Or, in this case, the tablespoons! The students work as a fire brigade team to move water from one cup, using tablespoons, to fill another cup.

**33. Tubular dude**

Students are challenged to work together to move bicycle tyre tubes around the circle.

**34. Read-alouds**

Entertaining stories with great messages to share with middle-years students.

**35. The team puzzle**

In this activity, students become part of a puzzle and begin to see that they can fit in with their peers.

**36. All about me**

Put the spotlight on me! *All about me* focuses on students' thoughts and accomplishments.

**37. Directions game**

Is anyone really listening to me? The *directions game* is a motivating activity that will help students pick up cues in their environment and recognise the importance of paying attention.

**38. Big Foot**

Students stack their feet in this problem-solving and team-building activity!

**39. Land-mine clearing**

Students will become part of a specialised mine removal team, working together as they are challenged to cross a minefield in a simulated training mission. The students really get into this explosive activity.