

ACTIVATE in the Classroom – 2nd Edition Schemes Age Levels 5, 7, 9 and 11 by VAL SABIN

These are inclusive, level-specific, progressive exercise programmes that improve agility, balance, co-ordination, concentration etc. with the individual 'ACE' online Test and Assessment Service from the DORE organisation

The design aims of Val Sabin when creating 'Activate in the Classroom' was to provide easy to use, age-specific, inclusive, progressively staged, repeated movement with music exercise programmes. The activities are designed to help children become more agile, better balanced, better co-ordinated, better controlled and more precise in their movements and improve their listening and concentration capability as their neurological systems also become better, fitter and faster.

These age level physical fluency programmes are also specifically aimed at improving the development and efficiency of children's cerebellar-vestibular systems. This is basically because of research findings that link a wide variety of dyslexic, dyspraxic, ADHD and other learning dysfunction symptoms to neurological development delay. All children in primary school Activate classes are improving in most aspects of their physical fluency and many other benefits are being reported.

WHAT IS ACTIVATE?

Now in use over 1000 schools, these exercises to music programmes take whole classrooms of children through 3-dimensional repetitive movement activities within their personal stand-up space. Each activity is to music which easily enables the tempo and rhythm in the movements of the children to be varied through changes in the music. The children are also having practice in the conscious active listening skills of 'filtering', 'analysing' and 'responding' as they move to the music. Their attention spans or concentration stamina also gradually increases.

The in-class exercises to music are designed for daily use at 9 am, straight after registration, for approximately 10 minutes and for 5 minutes after lunch at the start of the afternoon. The activities can also be used as energisers at any time during the day.

These movement to music programmes are repeated for 2 weeks, then moved up a step through a progressive and developmental 36 week structure. The activity extensions provided can be introduced at a speed to suit the class. Every 9th week there is provision for the children to create their own programme from their favourite or their own original movement ideas.

The activities in the progressive steps utilise the best movement principles that are possible standing up in the restricted space of a classroom. Moving children to an adjacent hall or playground to enable equipment to be used is not necessary and a change of clothing is not required.

Each age level scheme covers 2 school years, with the Rabbits programme for the younger year and the Kangaroos programme for the older year. The slower Frogs programme being for special needs groups or for slower groups of children. The Frogs, Rabbits and Kangaroos programmes for each age level are integrated to allow movement between them if necessary.

The activities are fun to do and many of the extensions are curriculum-linked, e.g. as the scheme levels progress into combination activities it is possible to include rhythmic recitation of numbers, tables, words, letters, spelling, second languages, poems, historical lists etc. Further combinations and progressions in the later age scheme levels include interaction in pairs and opportunities for individual creativity of movement. Each pack comes with 3 programmes – Frogs, Rabbits and Kangaroos – a DVD for each programme, a complete quick reference DVD and 3 CDs of the music. There are 118 activities, progressions and extensions in each Activate age level pack for 5, 7, 9 or 11.

WHY IS ACTIVATE SO BENEFICIAL?

The Activate exercises are particularly designed to improve the elements of physical fluency, stimulate the cerebellar-vestibular, systems and intensively exercise the neural connections between the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The activity, progression and extension exercises provide a very comprehensive upper and lower body gross-motor exercise range. There are fine motor exercises together with balance moves, hand-eye co-ordination moves, eye exercises and speech patterns, all to sound rhythms.

THE BENEFITS

As children improve their physical fluency, observation assessments show improvements in agility, balance, co-ordination, precision and control of movements, flexibility, fitness, stamina, posture, hand/eye co-ordination, reaction time and rhythmic sense.

Increases in concentration stamina and listening skills transfer across the curriculum. Subsequently, increases in confidence and self-esteem are almost always reported.

A wide range of other and various competence and capability improvements are regularly reported.

The extra 15 minutes a day for 5 days a week add up to an extra 75 minutes a week of quality physical activity.

INFLUENCES

The influences inspiring the development and direction of the Activate schemes: -

- The pioneering research work of **Harold Levinson** who since 1973 has been continually reporting on the significance of deficiencies in the cerebellar-vestibular systems found in a majority of people with dyslexia and various other learning dysfunctions.
- The effectiveness of sound therapies arranged by **Alfred Thomatis** has been kept in mind during the design and selection of our activities to music.
- The pioneering research and therapeutic work carried out by **Peter Blythe and Sally Goddard-Blythe** of the Institute for Neuro-Physiological Psychology on the primitive and postural reflexes, neurological developmental delay and its remediation by movement.
- **Wynford Dore and Dr Roy Rutherford of the Dore Achievement Centres** for widely publicising the benefits of their individually designed repetitive physical movement therapies, particularly in 'helping the systems of Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder, ADHD, learning and behavioural difficulties and under achieving at school'.
- **Elements in the Dennison's 'Brain Gym'** approach, various martial arts training movements and other age-old body improvement approaches have also been found to be useful.
- The extensive experience and talent of Val Sabin revealed in over 30 of her comprehensive teaching and training manuals containing over 5,000 gym, games, dance, patterns of movement and play activities for all ages.

In the Activate second addition there are extra balance and eye exercise activities which have been added as a result of the neuroscience of movement tutorials from Dr Roy Rutherford, the Research Director of the Dore Achievement Centres. This generous co-operation, arranged by Wynford Dore, has inspired Val Sabin to increase the extensions provision. Second edition programmes now contain a total of 118 core activities, progressions and extensions in each Activate 5, 7, 9 and 11 age level scheme.

THE ACTIVATE TEACHING MANUALS

Each activate manual describes in words and shows in figure-diagram forms precisely how each activity needs to be executed for the children to fully benefit. This allows the teacher to be able to stand in front of the class and lead the exercises.

Alternatively, some teachers allow various children to lead the class in the Activate movements.

A simple ten-point physical fluency checklist for visual assessment is now included. Also available from the Dore Achievement Organisation, is the on-line individual test assessment 'ACE' system.

COMMENTS

One Partnership Development Manager describes Activate as "the best thing I arranged for my schools during my 3 year Partnership Development Plan". A head comments "We could not consider not using Activate. The benefits have been so great".

**Activate 5, 7, 9 and 11 manuals and training available from: -
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