Cognitive Candy:
How to create a sweet tooth for learning

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What children learn is not as important as HOW they learn it.

What are your beliefs in regards to teaching?

How do we learn?
- Old vs. New
- Neural connections
- Active vs. Interactive learning

What affects learning?
- Stress
- Emotions
- Environment

Why is movement critical to learning?
- Increases oxygen to the brain
- Creates neural connections
- Increases blood capillaries in the brain
- Regulates neural transmitters
- Reduces stress

Cognitive Candy Philosophy

Principle 1: Teaching Self-responsibility
- The ultimate goal of education should be to teach children to be self-responsible for their own learning; their own behavior; and taking care of themselves.
- It is often assumed that children come to school with a sense of self-responsibility already in place, but this is not always true.
- Children learn self-responsibility when they are given choices and are allowed to make decisions.
- Part of being self-responsible is having control of oneself.

Principle 2: Increasing Intrinsic Motivation
- Intrinsic motivation comes from within a person. You do things because they have meaning to you and you value them.
- The opposite of intrinsic motivation is extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation typically comes in the form of bribes, threats, punishments, and rewards.
- Intrinsic motivation and self-responsibility are linked together. You can’t have one without the other.
- Intrinsic motivation is accomplished through the 5 C’s: Control, Challenge, Curiosity, Creativity & Constant Feedback.

Principle 3: Using the Inclusion-style of Teaching
- The Inclusion-style of Teaching is based on the premise that 100% of the children are participating 100% of the time at a level that meets their individual needs and abilities.
- Excluding children from activities is detrimental to their self-esteem and their success.
- Non-inclusion teaching activities do not promote success for all students. They are actually set up for the majority of the children to fail.
- Inclusion-style activities are for everyone. Exclusion-style activities are only for the highly-skilled or elite performers.

The Cognitive Candy Environment
- Developmentally Appropriate
- Increasing challenge & complexity
- Intrinsic motivation
- Movement & physical activity
- Meta-cognition
- Opportunities for success

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• Feedback
• Social-Emotional intelligence

Social-Emotional Intelligence
• Group dynamics
• Conflict resolution
• Communication
• Cooperation
• Empathy
• Self-control
• Self-awareness
• Stress management
• Self-responsibility

Good Candy
• Creativity
• Challenge
• Self-responsibility
• Success for all
• Intrinsic motivation
• Exploration

Bad Candy
• Conformity
• Control
• Obedience
• Recognition of an elite few
• Extrinsic motivation

The Candy You Should Give to Your Students
• Shorten attention span time
• Increase choices
• Boost relevance
• Allow for variety
• Use cross-lateral to wake up the brain

Cognitive Candy: Games & Activities for Learning

Cross-Lateral Learning
Hand & Elbow; Elbow to knee; Nose & Ear; 1 & 2; 2 & 5; Finger & Thumb; Arm Up, Out & Down

Cooperative Shapes
Objective: Problem-solving; cooperation; creativity.
Equipment: Chinese jump ropes.
How to play: The players form groups of four or five. Each group receives a Chinese jump rope and stands inside of it with the rope pulled up around their waists. The teacher calls out different shapes (e.g., boat; tree; star; the letter R; circle; square; shark; the state of Texas; etc.) and the players attempt to turn their rope into the shape of the object called out.
Flash Tag
Objective: Math computation; cooperation; agility.
Equipment: None
How to play: The players form pairs and stand facing each other. Each player makes a fist and shakes it three times (palm facing down) with their partner. On the third shake each partner sticks out any number of fingers (1-5). The object is to add your number of fingers with your partner’s number of fingers and call out the answer first. The person who correctly calls out the answer first wins and a one-on-one tag game begins with the winner trying to get away from the other player. The other player must catch and tag the winner to end the tag game. The pair then starts over with a new math problem and a second tag game. After the second turn, each player raises his/her hand and looks for a new partner to play with. The players can be allowed to run during the tag game if space permits. If space is limited, the tag game can be played as a “walking” tag game.

Hand Off
Objective: Problem-solving; cooperation; creative thinking.
Equipment: Any object that can be handed back and forth between two people (e.g., lummi stick, beanbag, yarn ball, etc.)
How to play: The players form pairs. The pair stands facing each other with one partner holding the object. The players take turns handing the object back and forth to each other. The object is to hand the object back and forth as many times as possible in the allotted time without repeating any of the handing methods that was previously used. Encourage the players to be creative and come up with new ways to hand the object to their partner. The object cannot be tossed or thrown.

Math Toss
Objective: Tossing; catching; cooperation; thinking; problem-solving; communication; addition; subtraction; multiplication.
Equipment: One soft (foam) ball or bean bag for every two players.
How to play: The players form pairs. Each pair has a ball. The player with the ball calls out a number (i.e., 17) and tosses the ball to the other player. The player catches the ball and must call out a math problem that equals the number called (i.e., 14 + 3; 10 + 7; 20 - 3; etc.). Once the problem is called out, the player with the ball calls out a new number and tosses the ball back. The object is to see how many problems can be correctly solved in a certain amount of time.

Mirroring
Objective: Cross-lateral movements; cooperation.
Equipment: None
How to play: The players form pairs and stand facing each other. One partner is the leader and begins moving her arms and legs in slow motion. The other partner attempts to mirror the movements of the leader. After one minute, the partners switch roles.

Team Juggle
Objective: Tossing; catching; teamwork; problem-solving; group dynamics.
Equipment: Foam balls or other soft objects.
How to play: The players form groups of five and stand in a circle. Each group is given one ball to start. The group passes the ball around the circle in a “star” pattern (don’t throw to the person right next to you), with each player always throwing to the same person. After the players have mastered one ball, another ball is added. The challenge is to see how many balls or objects each group can juggle at one time without dropping or missing the balls. To make it more challenging the group can juggle balls forwards, backwards, and while standing inside another group.
True or False
Objective: Chasing; fleeing; quick thinking; cooperation.
Equipment: Cones or markers.
How to play: Players form pairs. Each pair stands side-by-side approximately 1 foot apart so that the group forms two parallel lines. Players on one side are designated to be the “true” team and the other group is the “false” team. A safety line is marked on the floor or ground approximately 15-20 feet behind each group. The teacher asks a question or gives a statement that is either true or false (e.g., the capital of California is Sacramento). If the statement or question is true, the true team runs to their safety line while the false team attempts to tag them. If the statement was false, the roles of the teams are reversed. A player gets a point for tagging the other player or for making it across the line without being tagged. Each player keeps his/her own score. Switch partners often.

West African Jumping
Objective: Leg strength/endurance; problem-solving; cooperation.
Equipment: None
How to play: The players form pairs and stand facing each other. One player is designated to be the winner when their feet are on the “same” side and the other player is designated to be the winner when their feet are on “opposite” sides. The game begins with the players jumping in place six times. On the sixth jump, both players randomly stick one foot forward when they land. If the feet match on the same side, the “same” player wins, if the feet are on opposite sides, the “different” player wins. The game continues with the players jumping six times again. Once one player has three points the game is over and the players switch to a new partner.

About Curt Hinson
Curt Hinson, Ph.D., has been teaching for 37 years. He taught at the elementary school level for 16 years and part-time at the college level for the past 21 years. He currently works as an educational consultant for PlayFit Education. In addition, Curt teaches in the on-line graduate program at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY. He holds a Ph.D. in Kinesiology from Temple University; a Masters of Education degree from Widener University; and a BS degree in Health & Physical Education from West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Curt is the author of three books, Fitness for Children; Games Kids Should Play at Recess; and 6-Steps to a Trouble-free Playground. He has also published over 50 articles related to teaching and learning. In addition, Curt is the creator of the “Trouble-free Playground” recess program and the “Dr. Recess” assembly program. He has made presentations in all 50 states, as well as in Washington DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Mexico. Curt was the 1992 National Association for Sport and Physical Education Eastern District Teacher of the Year and the 1991 Delaware PE Teacher of the Year. He is a member of SHAPE America; the National Association for Sport and Physical Education; and the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation. Curt has been featured in the Wall Street Journal; Disney’s Family Fun magazine; and on the Fox News Network. You can reach Curt via email at dcurthinson@comcast.net or by phone at 302-438-3257.