



Joy to the World: How to Make Learning More Joyful *AND* Productive

Facilitated by Steve Aho and Valerie Ward



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Do Now

Think about your experiences as a student.

- *What were your favorite classes?*
- *Who were your favorite teachers?*
- *What made them your favorites?*

Musical High-5's to Share



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Presenters



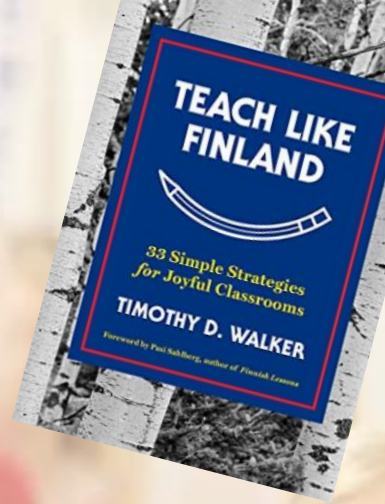
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COPPER ISLAND ACADEMY

[Copper Island Academy \(vimeo.com\)](https://vimeo.com/copperislandacademy)



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IT IS THE
SUPREME ART
OF THE

teacher

TO AWAKEN

JOY

in creative expression
and knowledge.

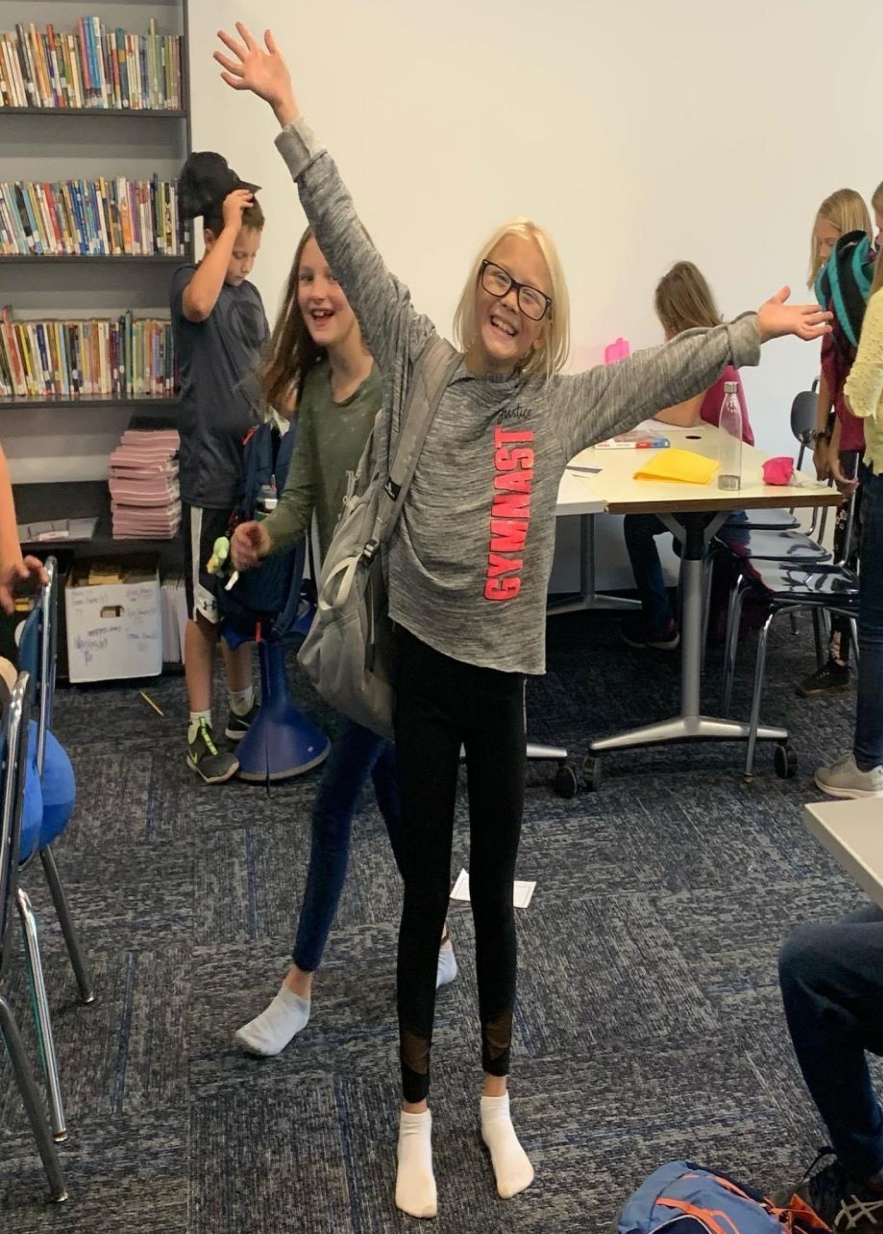
-Albert Einstein



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Joyful Engagement Strategies

- Brain Breaks
- Movement
- Outdoor Learning
- Project-based
(*Studio*)
- Limited Tech



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Brain Break Structure

“Decades of research have shown that happiness is not the *outcome* of success but rather its *precursor*.”

--Emma Seppala, *The Happiness Track*

How does it look?

- 15-minute break every 45-minutes (plus lunch)
- Children go outside to play and socialize
- Unstructured play; student-created games
- Transitions are prompt



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Brain Break Benefits and Ideas

What are the benefits?

- Students are more focused and attentive after the breaks.
- Students are more motivated and efficient during the learning.
- Students can consolidate information learned.
- Brain breaks promote spontaneity and creativity.

What can you try at your school?

Offer a degree of enjoyment, independence and novelty!

- Mindfulness, Guided Meditation or Yoga videos
- Singing and Dancing videos—for fun or for subject area reinforcement
- Offer “choice time” such as free reading, free writing, playing a math game



Movement

With approximately 24% of children 6 to 17 years of age participating in the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity every day, the United States earned a D- in Overall Physical Activity the newly released 2018 U.S. Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth.

How does it look?

- Teachers playing with kids and “recess activators” encouraging activity during breaks and lunch
- Movement activities in class—e.g., energizers, clipboards while standing and gallery walks
- Creative seating and frequent transitions—e.g., standing desks and exercise balls



Movement Benefits and Ideas

What are the benefits?

- Fend off obesity
- Reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease
- Improve cognitive functions such as memory and attention
- Improve mental health (e.g., happiness/joy)

What can you try at your school?

- ***Scholarly Stroll to Discuss!***
- Vote with Feet/Four Corners
- Gallery Walk
- Musical High-5
- Inside/Outside Circle
- Stand-up/Hand-up/Pair-up



Teaching children about the
natural world should
be seen as one
of the most important
events in their lives.

-Thomas Berry



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Outdoor Learning



“Nature provides countless opportunities for discovery, creativity, problem-solving, and STEM education. Interacting with natural environments allows children to learn by doing and experiment with ideas. In nature, children think, question, and make hypotheses — thereby developing inquisitive minds.”

--Bright Horizons Education Team

What does it look like?

- Using outdoor space as often as possible for learning and free play
- Trails in the woods
- Bringing nature into the classroom (growing plants; class pets)



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Outdoor Learning Benefits and Ideas

What are the benefits?

- Reduces anxiety and calms students
- Enhances physical health
- Improves cognitive functioning

What can you try at your school?

- Nature-based Field Trips/Local Parks
- Day or Overnight Camping
- Teach outside on the grass
- Bring nature into the class
- Create a school garden or pond or hang bird feeders
- Use visual aides such as videos and hands-on materials
- Enhance your playground with natural items



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TELL ME AND I
FORGET.

TEACH ME AND I
REMEMBER.

INVOLVE ME AND I
LEARN.

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Project-Based (Studio)

“The Academy provides students opportunities in a Studio program, which develops students’ technical, textile, and culinary skills. These age-appropriate programs are designed to expand students’ technical and life skills, while simultaneously building 21st century competencies by promoting student independence, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. Studio experiences culminate in a student-developed school improvement project each year.”

--Copper Island Academy Educational Program

What does it look like?

- All students have Studio as a class
- Each grade band has a project
- Life skills taught



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PBL (Studio) Benefits and Ideas

What are the benefits?

- Highly motivating for students
- Provides hands-on, real-world skills
- Interdisciplinary



What can you try at your school?

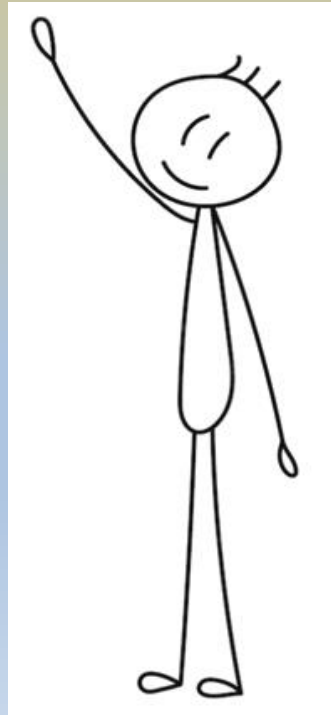
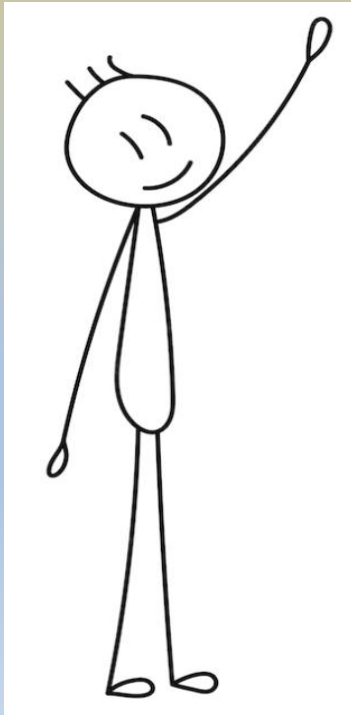
- Offer electives based on life skills
- Provide opportunities for project-based and/or inquiry-based learning
- Involve students in real-world activities and create meaningful products



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Stand-up/Hand-up/Pair-Up

If you could add one unique extra-curricular class to your schedule, what would it be? Why? What is stopping you?



Limited Technology

“Overall, students who use computers moderately at school tend to have somewhat better learning outcomes than students who use computers rarely. Students who use computers very frequently at school do much worse, even after accounting for social background and student demographics.”

-OECD PISA assessment results, 2015

What does it look like?

- Minimal and purposeful
- Classrooms have internet, access to Chromebooks, document cameras, interactive smart boards.
- Some software programs are used to support learning.
- Computers are mainly used for research, simulations and testing.



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Limited Technology Benefits and Ideas

What are the benefits?

- Highly motivating for students
- Provides hands-on, real-world skills
- Interdisciplinary

What can you try at your school?

- Revisit the types of technology used at your school and how they are being used.
- Find ways to "up the ante" that are not just "adding technology to learning."
- Find ways to make the "ordinary" with technology vs. the "extraordinary" such as connecting students with people from all over the world, publish work to a global audience, make programs/artifacts/inventions that can't be made otherwise.

Share your technology innovations!



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Questions?



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“THE LOVE AND JOY
BEHIND YOUR TEACHING
IS PERHAPS THE
STRONGEST IMPRESSION
YOU WILL LEAVE
WITH YOUR STUDENTS.

Meena Srinivasan
AUTHOR & EDUCATOR



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