



Ideas and Strategies taken directly from the basic Green Light Classrooms workshop

Note: The ideas here are meant as a follow-up for teachers who have participated in one of Rich's workshops. They are only briefly explained, as they are primarily meant to simply remind you of what we discussed.

This is a fairly comprehensive list. However, as workshops will vary according to needs, grade levels, and time, even if you have attended a recent workshop you may not recognize everything listed.

Movement

Don't walk around and 'hand out' supplies or handouts. Instead, make students get things. Set up supplies or handouts on the sides of the room, and invite students to 'go get them.' This is an excuse for them to stand and stretch.

Write an answer on a small whiteboard, then walking around the room balancing the answer on your head.

To respond to a question, invite young students to stand up. If they think the answer is 'Yes' they shake their right leg. If it's 'No' they shake their left leg. If they have no idea, shake their entire body!

Or, for young students again, have them make a funky hat, and a funky pair of glasses in art class. When you ask yes/no— or true/false questions let them use the hat/glasses to respond. "I'm going to read some questions. If it's true, put on your hat! If it's false, put on your glasses!

The huddle: Like there's a huddle in sports, do a classroom huddle. Pick a time during a lesson when they've been seated for a while, and invite them to gather (huddle) around the whiteboard or chalkboard. Teach one key point briefly – maybe 2 minutes at most – then ask them to return to their seat.

For anything sequential, have students make a **card** for each step. Then they work together to place the cards in the order of the steps they would do. They could do this seated together, *or standing*.

Same idea, for teaching **active** versus **passive** sentence construction, have them make up cards for each sentence. They stand in a line that first shows the **passive** construction of the sentence, then change places to show the **active** construction of the same sentence.

Use the sides of the room for movement. Have all students stand. Identify the two sides of the room as 'Side #1' and 'Side #2.' Show to items on the board where one is correct and one is incorrect. If students think the correct one is #1, they move to that side of the room. If it's #2, they move to the opposite side of the room. Could be repeated quite frequently, could be use in multiple content areas to verify understanding.

Use the four corners of the room. Same idea as above, just expanded. Identify the four corners of the room, show four options on the board, and ask students to move to the one they think is correct.

Could also simply be a 'preference' choice – move to the corner you'd 'prefer.' Another way to get them up and moving.

Put the spelling grid on the floor of the classroom. (Download the grid pattern from this website.) Use it to teach spelling at younger levels. Use it to familiarize students with new vocabulary at higher grade levels.

Paint the spelling grid outside, on the playground. Use whenever possible, given the weather.

For younger students, use an old sheet and draw a basic hopscotch pattern. Get small beanbags with the letters of the alphabet on them. Students place the letters (beanbags) on the squares of the hopscotch, then hop from one end to the other, making the sound of the letter, or saying the letter itself. Activity can be expanded if the one side of the beanbag has the lower case of the letter, and the other side has the upper case of the same letter.

100's grid – on the floor. Use it for basic math: "Stand on a number. Add 12, stand on the answer. Subtract 7, stand on the answer."

100's grid, further. Ask students to stand on a number divisible by 3. Once they're all on a number, invite them to 'check their neighbours.' While they're checking, they'll be practicing math – but in a fun way. Option: Secretly invite one student to deliberately stand on a wrong number! See who discovers this!

Small 100's chart. Put one on the edge of a student's desk. Encourage them to tap their fingers on the numbers when working out a problem. This will help some students who like to be physical stay focused.

Use a tarp – for any of the ideas directly above. (Especially if you can't draw on the floor of your classroom.) Put the tarp down when doing the activity, put it away when not in use. Or, take it outside on a good weather day!

Teaching music. young students by having the treble and bass clefs on the floor, perhaps done in masking tape. Make circles out of cardboard, and have students place the circles on the correct notes. Invent further games, such as, 'Walk the line' and call out 'C!' and all students have to walk on 'C'. Or, 'Jump to ...' where students approach the cleft in a line. Call out a note, and have them jump onto it.

Bonus idea: Invite older students to make up 'words' out of the seven letter of the scale, and put the cardboard circles on the floor as the word. Younger students have to figure out what the word is.

Periodic Table of Elements. Have students work together to make a BIG one on the floor of the classroom. Then invent activities for them to do using it to learn the elements. For example, invite a student to, 'Stand on an **alkali** metal.' From there, "Step on one nearby that's **more reactive** than the one you're on."

Or, put students in pairs, and invite them to, "Stand on the two elements in water."



English – teaching ‘story arc.’ Take a popular story, such as Star Wars, and break it into 20 or 25 ‘episodes.’ Explain what a story arc is, including the exposition, rising action, etc. Have students use tape to create a huge story arc on the floor of the classroom, then place the various episodes in the correct order.

Math with their bodies. Take students outside and have them lie in the shape of **acute** angles. Then **obtuse** angles. Then **right** angles. This physical approach could be used to learn any shape in math, at any level.

Put foreign language word on a tarp. Invent varieties of the game ‘Twister’ to help them learn the words.

Page protectors. On a tarp, or shower curtain, tape down clear ‘page protectors.’ Create large cards to match the content they are learning. Slide these cards into the page protectors, then invent a game using them. For example, they could toss out a beanbag – whatever it lands on they have to give a 20 second explanation. Or, for more competitive groups, have one student throw out the beanbag from 20 feet back, and a different student has to provide the explanation.

Page protectors, expanded, math. Put out two types of cards – shapes and definitions. Put students in pairs. One partner has to stand on a shape or definition. Their partner then has to stand on the match.

Students talking to other students

Stop approximately every 10 minutes and let students talk to each other about what they’re learning. Say it helps them understand – and remember.

Their discussions should be brief, perhaps 2-3 minutes at most. That’s enough.

Sometimes give them specific questions to discuss. Sometimes give them more general. Variety helps maintain interest.

Use a 10-minute hard-boiled egg sand timer while you are talking. Stop when the sand runs out, and have them turn to one or two other students and talk. If students get restless, they’ll often sneak a peek at the sand timer, realize they only have a minute or 2 to wait, and keep focused. Gives them hope!

Add a 3-minute soft-egg timer for their conversations. Use it like the 10 minute one – when the sand runs out, ask them to thank their partners and face you again so the lesson may continue.

Use a microphone for younger students, put them in pairs and let them ‘interview’ each other about the lesson. Use fake plastic microphones if you have them. If not, and pencil or pen will do. Then switch and let the other person be interviewed.

For older students, same idea, just skip the ‘fake microphone’ and let them interview each other. See if they can get creative and ask tough – be still answerable – questions.

Download the TNT file from this website. Use it for students of all ages to get them talking and working together to problem solve.

Put up a slide near the end of class that says, “Lock It In.” Let this be a signal that for the last few minutes of the class they are to turn and talk to someone near them about the key points from the lesson – to ‘lock it in.’ Once they’ve done it several times, simply put up the slide, and let them start. There’s no need to say anything.

Novelty

Plastic eggs. (Or any type of container.) Make a basket of eggs, each one holding something for students to work on. Could be 4 or 5 historical events they need to set out in chronological order. Could be review questions for science. Could be Scrabble tiles, and young students work together to form words.

Use food. Students could use Jello and jelly beans to make cells. Older students might use marshmallows and sticks to form DNA molecules.

Editing Doctors. (Download from this site.)

Alphabet macaroni. Have students work together and practice spelling or vocabulary using macaroni.

Spelling cards. Make cards with the alphabet on them – one letter per card. When it’s time for spelling, students form groups. The teacher calls out a word, and they have to work together to spell the word using the cards.

Artefacts. Bring in things for students to touch and hold – it brings learning alive.

Wordtoons. Check out wordtoons.com. This is a drawing strategy to get all students more confident about their drawing. Then let them draw to help trigger memories of key content.

Music

Play music as students arrive for class.

Play up-beat music whenever students are moving.

Play quiet music when students are discussing, working quietly, or reading.

Play music as students leave class.

Play thematic music – where something in the lyrics of the song matches something in the lesson.

Older music is usually better – everyone has heard it on the radio, from their parents, or at the movies.

Avoid newer songs – especially popular ones. These usually become a point of distraction.



Use a small speaker that you can easily lock up. (Do not attempt to use music through your whiteboard or smartboard. It will become confusing and you'll stop using music entirely.)

Download 'Rich's Playlists' for some suggested songs.

Memory

Memory pegs. Teach the pegs to your students. Then use the pegs to help students remember key points of your content. You don't have to use all 20, just as many as you need.

Memory stories. Create a story that links key content. Or, write the key ideas on the board, and let students create a story.

Make one key point memorable. Almost every lesson has one key point, perhaps two or three. Somehow, anyhow, make these points stand out. Attach them to a motion students make. Have students say them slowly and distinctly, or in an accent. Draw a picture.

Use acrostics or acronyms. Make material memorable by making up a simply memory device.