



THUMB PINKY SWITCH

CALMING & REFOCUSING STRATEGIES

LESSON PLAN

Purpose

Calming and Refocusing activities help students regain calm after exercise or high energy transitions and bring their attention back to their body by focusing on breathing and slow purposeful movement. The use of these strategies can aid in self-management, stress reduction, and attention refocus.

Materials

- Thumb Pinky Switch instructional video: [Elementary](#), [Middle](#), [High](#)

Procedure: *Instruct students to*

- Bend their arms at the elbows with their fists pointed forward
- Start with their thumb up on one hand and their pinky out on the other hand
- Now switch – thumb switches to pinky and pinky switches to thumb
- Start slow and concentrate until they get the hang of it
- See if they can go faster, switching their thumb and pinky at the same time
- When finished, take a deep breath, hold for 5-10 seconds, and then release

Modifications: *Students can*

- Sit comfortably in a chair, on the floor, or stand



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CLASSROOM APPLICATION

Recommendations

- Gauge student response as this is a more challenging activity. Some students will find this engaging, therefore enhancing the calming and refocusing effect; others will find it frustrating and become less calm as a result.
- Overall, the added concentration required for this strategy was very well received.
- The accompanying video was found to be especially helpful for demonstrating the technique.
- Allow students to practice/play around with this strategy first to get the hang of it. Once students are more comfortable, transition the strategy into a calming/refocusing activity.
- Try counting backwards (3, 2, 1) and then switch the fingers to help with pacing.



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