

Wellness Success Story Summary
Brian Bambenek
2nd Grade – Valentine Hills Elementary

While I'm not ready to call my wellness story a "success" story, I've most certainly noticed a positive correlation between the amount of exercise my students receive before 10:00 am and their production throughout a school day. After watching a short clip on exercise inside the classroom, I wanted to see if these education "gurus" were truly onto something new. Fortunately for our class, moving around (via rapping, dancing, or "high fiving" to celebrate a student's accomplishment) has been a part of classroom structure since September. So after watching this video, implementing these formal exercise ideas seemed both simple and practical.

In our classroom, Monday and Friday mornings have been a challenge since September, so a Monday implementation would be a perfect start to this trial run. Our first few days started with a traditional exercise routine (jumping jacks, toe touchers, and up/downs). Surprisingly, the room sounded like a marathon finish line with a rhythmic pant subduing the room's volume after a few short minutes.

While our first routine only took a few minutes, the results were phenomenal. Students were much more attentive during morning meeting and more engaged during our first lesson. The results were even more noticeable throughout the week when my students went without physical education. On these days, our class was able to remain focused through the afternoon, which was a change from the past. Our morning routine has now evolved into stretching to antonyms or skipping to math facts, all in the attempt to integrate learning and exercise.

While my results won't be measured on an MCA test or an NWEA sheet, the students have proven that five or ten minutes of exercise in the morning can substantially impact twenty or thirty minutes of instruction in the afternoon. An investment? of course, but one that has already proven worthwhile and doesn't require *additional* funding or *additional* lesson planning. Indeed exercise and learning can and will remain a unified concept inside our classroom walls.