

# Energizing Your Students: Using Responsive Classroom and Orff to Engage and Focus

Workshop Presented by Matthew Stensrud

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## **Energizer Time!**

- Dum Dum Dah Dah<sup>1</sup>
- Flowing Mirroring<sup>2</sup>
- Drum Roll
- Laughing Objects

- **Responsive Classroom (RC)** is an approach to elementary education that engages students in academic and social learning, inspires positive interactions, ensures effective classroom management and safe learning environments, encourages playful activities with students while respecting their own feelings and choices, includes clear teacher language and reinforces direct but respectful action when misbehavior occurs.
- **Orff Schulwerk** is an approach to elementary music and musicianship that includes music, movement, speech and drama. In an Orff inspired classroom, students sing, say, dance and play through imitation, experimentation, improvisation, and composition as they grow into creative, confident musicians and movers.
- An **energizer** is a quick and exciting activity that engages the entire class simultaneously. They allow for fun, build community, and instill safety and comfort in the classroom. Energizers can be used to re-focus and re-engage distracted or bored students, aid transitions to, from or in the classroom, and offer mental and physical breaks for students. In fact, studies show that movement stimulates the brain and can increase student productivity.<sup>3</sup>

**Special Thanks to...**

# Westmusic

**...for sponsoring today's session! Find resources used today at their booth!**

<sup>1</sup> This energizer can also be found in *Energizers! 88 Quick Movement Activities That Refresh and Refocus*, by Susan Lattanzi Roser, #22.

<sup>2</sup> Music used for this activity: *World Journey Flavors, It Moves Me: World Music Warmups for Dance*, Danaï Gagne, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Visit [www.creativitypost.com/education/the\\_benefits\\_of\\_movement\\_in\\_schools](http://www.creativitypost.com/education/the_benefits_of_movement_in_schools) for more information on movement and student learning.

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## ***Energizer Time! Alphabet People***

- Re-focus and energizer a bored or tired class
- When you hear the sound, turn your body into a letter
  - Uppercase
  - Lowercase
- Spelling
  - Name
  - Favorite food
  - Spell to beat, change tempo
- Groups
  - With partner, spell 2 letter word together, mirroring each other
  - Join pairs, spell 4 letter word mirroring (*keeping it appropriate!*)
  - Join groups, spells 8 letter word mirroring
  - Join again, spell 16 letter words, each person a letter (*examples given for assistance!*)

## ***Energizer Time! Yoga Pretzels<sup>4</sup>***

- Calm an overly excited class
- Teacher scatters cards of various shapes and levels around the room
- Find and explore cards individually
  - Metallophone improvisation accompaniment (varying modes)
  - Do you feel a glide? Or a press?
  - How can you move into, hold, and out of each pose in a sustained fashion?
- Instead of simply walking between each card, how can each pose turn into the next?
- Choose two cards to remember
  - How can you grow from Rock → First Card → Second Card → Rock
  - Elemental form: abca
- Partner Composition
  - Discuss card choices with your partner
  - How can you create an elemental form incorporating something from each partner? *abca, abba, aaba, abac*
  - Partner movement sentence could mirror each other or create contrast
  - How do you begin?
  - How does the movement happen? Simultaneously? Opposite?
  - How do you end?
  - How does the music accompaniment change your movement?

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<sup>4</sup> *Yoga Pretzels: 50 Fun Yoga Activities for Kids and Grownups* by Tara Guber and Leah Kalish.

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### ***Energizer Time! Shark Attack*<sup>5</sup>**

- Offer a physical and mental break for students
- Scattered around the room
- Teacher-led text and movement
  - Baby shark (doo doo doo doo da doo)
  - Mama shark
  - Papa shark
  - Surfer dude
  - Saw a shark
  - Shark attack
  - Swam away
  - Where's my board?
  - Surfin' shark
- How could you tell your own story?
- Small group creation of at least four steps of a story with movement

### ***Energizer Time! My Two Hands*<sup>6</sup>**

- Effective transition tool
- Whatever position students are currently in (perhaps scattered standing)
- Teacher-led call and response
  - My one hand goes... (students snap-snap-snap)
  - My one foot goes... (tap-tap-tap)
  - My two hands go... (clap-clap-clap)
  - My two feet go... (jump-jump-jump)
  - My whole body... (turns around)
  - My whole body... (sits right down)

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<sup>5</sup> This energizer can be found in *Energizers! 88 Quick Movement Activities That Refresh and Refocus*, #71.

<sup>6</sup> This energizer can be found in *Energizers! 88 Quick Movement Activities That Refresh and Refocus*, #49.

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### ***Closing Energizer! Soy Una Taza*<sup>7</sup>**

A Spanish kid's song first introduced to me by Sofia Lopez-Ibor, this song is a hit, breaks a sweat, and even allows for some student composition (otherwise known as Academic Choice in the RC world!).

- Motions with teacher-created sound effects (increasing tempo)
- Echo spoken Spanish words with motions
- Adding music
  - During rests, add body percussion: pat, clap, snap, clap
- Discover all the kitchen utensils, and then create!
- Instead of these utensils, can you create new ones?
- Instead of utensils, try animals or even musical instruments!

### ***Additional Materials***

*99 Activities and Greetings* by Melissa Correa-Connolly

A Complementary Combination: Responsive Classroom and Orff Schulwerk, "*The Orff Echo*", Spring 2014, by Matthew Stensrud

"5 Simple Ways to Incorporate Responsive Classroom Ideas into Orff Schulwerk," *Reverberations*, January 2015, by Matthew Stensrud

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<sup>7</sup> Music used for this activity: Soy Una Taza, Grupo Encanto, Cantajuego Vol. 4, 2008.