

The Value of Play

Among other things, play has the power to improve relationships and your connection to others. Sharing laughter and fun can foster empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy.

Dr Brown's book, "[Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul](#)," defines the play state as a "state of mind that one has when absorbed in an activity that provides enjoyment and a suspension of sense of time". I might add to this I experience a suspension of a sense of self or self-consciousness. I often get so absorbed in the activity that I "forget" about being embarrassed!

For adolescents and adults, play is an antidote to stress and a foundation for wellness. When we have playful experiences, we are improving our brains and our lives.

The kind of play exercises we will do today help you be open to new approaches, get better at working with others and build emotional resilience that helps ward off stress.

Resource List:

- Brown S, et al. (2009). Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul.
<https://www.nifplay.org/books/play-how-it-shapes-the-brain-opens-the-imagination-and-invigorates-the-soul/>
- <https://www.nifplay.org/>
- <https://thegeniusofplay.org/genius/expert-advice/articles/top-10-reasons-to-play.aspx>
- <https://www.pa.org>

My training: Adventure Ed - Project Adventure Training in Boston

What are the outcomes of adventure education?

Working as a team, people can learn to resolve disagreements, appreciate differences, develop new friendships, and generally get along with others. Adventure experiences also can offer opportunities to demonstrate leadership and to accept responsibilities unavailable in other settings. Kids often show strengths you didn't know they had!

After the activity it is very important to allow time to debrief.

Potential Debriefing Questions based on the activity (I usually limit it to 4 or 5):

- What did you just do together?
- How did you feel while you did the activity?
- What was one of the challenges of doing this activity?
- What did the group have to do or believe to be successful?
- What was one positive thing that happened during the challenge?
- How can you apply what you just learned to other challenges you face?
- How did this activity mimic the flow of ideas in your school or group?
- How can you apply what you learned in this activity to your life and work?

Consider engaging in athletics with your students

Staff Versus Student Games

Volleyball, Basketball, Softball to name a few my school did annually

Create your own trophies that are plainly displayed in a showcase for all to see

In your students' memories, these games can last long past the event and produce amazing results in your relationships with them, both in the classroom and in the administrator's office!

Let's Play!