

**ACTION BASED LEARNING**

# **Action Based Academics**

**Jean Blaydes Madigan**

*NeuroKIDnesiologist/ Consultant/ M. Ed*

***Action Based Learning***

232 Zachary Walk  
Murphy, TX 75094  
1-866-234-0475

**FAX: 972-424-2280**

jean@actionbasedlearning.com  
[www.actionbasedlearning.com](http://www.actionbasedlearning.com)

Reading is not hard wired into the brain. The brain has to be taught alphabet and number symbols. This form of symbol system learning relies on the recognition of each symbol, its corresponding meaning and sound, and its relationship in a sequence or pattern. The brain relies on its already hard wired motor system of patterns and sequences to process the alphabet and number system. Skipping can be a sign of reading readiness. When the child has mastered the mature skipping pattern, the body and brain have coordinated the physical and mental systems necessary and have set the framework for sequencing and patterning letters and numbers.

### ABC Pathways Mat

The ABC Pathways Mat is a tool used to facilitate the learning of the symbols representing the letters and numbers. The student traverses the pattern on the mat using various locomotor movements to visualize letters and numbers by engaging whole brain learning while practicing the stroke of each letter kinesthetically.

### Action Based Alphabet

The Teacher will hold up an alphabet card and the students will perform a movement or action and sound (when appropriate) that helps recall the letter. Have your students make up their own actions and sounds.

A =AIM (shoot an arrow)	N=NOD your head and say YES
B=BALANCE on one foot, arms out	O=OPEN a door and make squeaky noise
C=CRAWL on hands and knees and cry	P=PUSH a heavy box and grunt
D=DANCE however appropriate	Q=QUIVER and say BRRRRRR
E=EAT a hamburger and say YUM	R=RUN in place
F=FLY Like a bird and tweet	S=SKIP around sing Skip to my Lou
G=GALLOP like a horse and NAY	T=TWIRL in a circle
H=HOP like a bunny	U=UNDULATE make hand like a wave
I=IMAGINE put finger on cheek, say HUM	V=VOLLEY a volleyball
J=JUMP like a frog and RIBBET	W=WALK in place
K=KICK a soccer ball	X= eXercise by doing jumping jacks
L=LEAP like a deer	Y=YAWN out loud and pat mouth
M=MARCH and sing song	Z=ZIG ZAG walk in zig zag pattern

### VARIATIONS:

Have students act out names, spelling words, vocabulary words, etc. by just using actions and sounds for each letter. Example: JEAN = Jump, Eat, Aim, Nod  
Show the alphabet using the Action Based Learning™ Active Academics Sign Language Content Cards.

### Long Vowel Sounds

The Teacher reviews or teaches the vowels in sign language by showing students vowels on the sign language cards and allowing the students to practice the vowel signs. The Teacher sings or plays the song:

*I told the nice doctor I was in love with you. I told the nice doctor you didn't love me too.*

*And then the nice doctor, he told me what to do. He said that*

*Ooo eee, ooo ah ah ting tang*

*Walla walla, bing bang*

*Ooo eee, ooo ah ah ting tang*

*Walla walla, bing bang...*

*Ooo eee, ooo ah ah ting tang*

*Walla walla, bing bang*

*Ooo eee, ooo ah ah ting tang*

*Walla walla, bing bang*

When the students know the tune, the long vowel sounds are substituted to A E I O U for Ting Tang Walla Walla Bing Bang. To add action, the students make the sign language sign for each vowel and then add:

Ting Tang: slap thighs twice

Walla Walla Bing Bang: roll hands around and around 4-5 times.

VARIATION: The consonants fit in the song as well in place of Ting Tang etc.

### Short Vowels (Sung to the tune of BINGO)

The short vowel "a" has a sound and "a" is it's name-o

a-a-alligator (repeat 2 more times) is it's name-o

e= elephant

i=igloo

o=octopus

u=umbrella

### Punctuation in Action

Read a sentence or story. Punctuate using the following body movements and sounds.

Capital letter: jump up and say, "Go"

Period: Put your fist on your nose and say, "Whoa"

Comma: Hands on hips and circle hips around and say, "Slow down"

Question Mark: Shrug shoulders with hands up in air and say, "Huh?"

Exclamation Mark: Grab the air with the right fist and bring down forcefully and say, "Yes"

Quotation Marks: Pretend to make quotation marks in the air with fingers and say, "Ching, ching"

Apostrophe: Use the elbow to make an apostrophe in the air and say, "Not"

### Sparks of Speech:

Make 3 sets of large poster size cards, one with locomotor movements, one with adverbs and one with prepositions. Have students identify and describe the parts of speech of the three categories (verbs show action, etc.). Three students hold the cards while the students scatter and as the music plays follow the directions that the cards create. Example: JOG AROUND HAPPILY, SKIP THROUGH CAREFULLY, LEAP OVER GRACEFULLY, And GALLOP BETWEEN NOISILY. Teacher signals the cardholders to change to the next card simultaneously.

### Locomotor Charades

Today we are going to act out the verbs in a guessing game. You will be giving as many action clues as possible to help your guesser to say the verb first. This is an active way to use context clues.

Review and act out the actions on each card as a whole group before starting the activity.

The teacher holds up a card. All of the students act out the word on the card trying to give clues to their guesser with saying words. Sounds are okay. The guesser that says the word first gets a point for his/her team. The Teacher then changes to the next word. The team with the most points wins.

### Parts of Speech

Divide the students into groups of 4 with each student having a card with a noun, verb, adjective, and prepositional phrase. The different colors also help know if you have a complete sentence.

Play a posse tag format tag game. The verbs are wild, so each verb in each group leaves the group. The other three parts of speech stack hands in the middle of their

small circle and say, "I love to read" three items. The three of them then split and all 3 begin to chase their verb until one of them tags the verb. When the verb is tagged the part of speech that tagged him/her goes away and the remaining three stack hands in the middle and repeat the procedure. Play until all have had a chance to be chased.

### Silly Sentences

Have each student think of a word that is their part of speech and, when they find their group, have them arrange themselves in sentence order and read the silly sentence. Punctuate the sentence by having the first person in the line hold up his/her hand to represent a capital letter and the last person point to their nose to represent a period. Make up other punctuation marks.

### SLAP COUNT

Students face a partner with hands extended palms up about waist high to form "drums" to slap out a beat. Partner #1 starts by gently slapping his/her right hand into the right hand of partner #2. And then the left hand into the partner #2's left hand, keeping a steady beat. Then partner #2 slaps the right then left hands of partner #1. Say "1-2-3-4, etc." Count out loud in rhythm 1-25. Now skip count using the same right- left- right- left slap pattern counting by 3's, then 6's, 9's, etc. (Multiplication tables). Challenge yourself by skip counting any number.

Variation: SPELLING: Partner #1 slaps his/her name 2 letters at a time into the palms of partner #2 and partner #2 spells hi/her name 2 letters at a time into the palms of partner #1 using the same slapping pattern as before. Notice how much harder your brain has to work to not think about what your partner is spelling. Variation: Each partner thinks of a spelling word but doesn't tell his/her partner what it is. Using the same slap pattern, each partner slaps out his/her word. When finished, partner #1 has to try to tell partner #2 his/her word, and vice versa

### Artist and the Canvas:

The brain is divided into 4 regions separated by the corpus callosum and the motor cortex. Learning comes into the brain from the back to the front and from side to side. Some learning blocks happen when the flow is erratic. Concentrating on the midline while practicing envisioning symbols enables the brain to better organize itself and strengthen neural connections.

Students work with a partner. Partner #1 becomes the artist and partner #2 becomes the canvas.

Step 1: #1 begins by drawing the lazy 8 on the canvas' back using the spinal column as the midline. The canvas tries to mimic the design by drawing the Lazy 8 in front of them at the same size and speed that the artist is using. Artist and canvas switch to non-dominant hand. Switch roles. Repeat.

Step #2: Mystery letter

Artist thinks of s letter and draws it on the back of the canvas. Canvas tries to guess the letter by drawing it in the air while the artist watches. When the canvas guesses correctly, the canvas tries to copy the letter as the artist draws it on his back. Switch roles. Repeat.

Step #3 Mystery Word (can be done as partnerships or a relay)

Divide into groups of 4 or more standing in a line facing the same direction. The artist at the end of the line writes a word on the back of the person (canvas) in front of them. That canvas draws the word they think they felt drawn onto the back of the person in front of them. The word is passed along to the person in the front on

the line that goes to the back and writes the mystery word on the back of the original artist. Was that the correct word?

### Chart Paper Handwriting

Pretend that you are printing letters on the heavy blue line on the chart paper. If the letter fits on the line and up to the dotted blue line like "a", "c", "e", twist. If the letter goes above the dotted line like "h", "k", "l", jump up. If the letter goes below the heavy blue line like "g", "p", "q", squat. The exceptions are "I". Twist and tap head. "J", squat and tap head. "T" Jump up and cross the hands. "F" Raise the hands and hook to resemble an "F".

The Teacher challenges the students to use the actions to spell their name; spell Happy Birthday, spell a vocabulary word. What word would fit into this format: clap, clap T? Can you spell your hardest spelling word?

### Jump Frog Jump book

Green Poly spots to represent the lily pads and blue poly spots to represent the pond are scattered throughout the area. Students begin scattered throughout the learning area. Five students are designated as taggers to correspond to the creatures in the story: fly, spider, turtle, fish, and snake. Taggers are changed frequently during the game. After reading the story, the students will play a tag game to re-create the story. On signal, students become frogs and jump throughout the area. Meanwhile, creature taggers try to tag the frogs. To be safe, the frogs must stand on a lily pad and say, "I love to move" three times and then move off the pad. When tagged, the frogs stand on the blue spot pond and "Ribbet" for help. A fellow frog will rescue the tagged frog that will then get back into the game. Play continues until the stop signal from the teacher. Taggers change.

### I Like Me by Nancy Carlson

(I Like Me song on Jump Start Action Songs available at [actionbasedlearning.com](http://actionbasedlearning.com)) Students start by facing a partner. In the song, I Like Me, it says things like "I like my nose". The partner who thinks of a movement first and the other partner follows the lead. When the chorus says, "I like me! I'm the best me I can be!" the partners will say, "Good-bye!" and gallop or skip to find a new partner. Repeat by following the instructions in the verse. At the end of the song, the chorus repeats twice. The partners think of silly movements to have the partner follow.

### Giant Letters

Students "draw" large letters in the air in the visual fields: front, sides, above, down.

### Seatwork

Thanks to Billy Gober from Sportime for the idea  
Jive Bunny and the Master Mixers CD the Album #5

Students are sitting in a chair with enough room to lean forward and sideways  
Some suggested patterns:

Bounce feet on the floor while clapping hands and crossing hands up in the air to the right and left

Celebrate and hug: While bouncing feet, shake hands in the air and then hug self

Twist shoulders while leaning side to side and forward and backward

Hold on to chair and walk feet along the floor side to side and forward and backward

Chair push-ups

Clap hands and lean to touch chair leg on the left. Clap and touch chair leg on right

Touch shoulders, knees, toes, knees, shoulders, arms up in air

Twist

Tai Bo: Pretend to box with fists, right arm then left

Rockettes: Kick right leg into air the left while clapping in rhythm

### Brain Regions

After reviewing the regions of the brain, sing the names while pointing to each region with both hands.

Sung to the tune of Ten Little Indians:

Frontal, Temporal, Occipital, Parietal (Repeat 3 times)

Cerebellum, Brain Stem

(Thanks to the kindergarten teachers in Marion County, Florida)

### Continents/ Latitude Attitude

This activity uses the body as a mental map to anchor spatial connections.

Use a map of the world to transfer the learning.

Use the body as a model of the globe to show:

North America = left hand

Europe = nose

Asia = right hand

Africa = waist (equator)

South America = left knee

Australia = right knee

Antarctica = feet

North Pole: touch head

South Pole: touch toes

Equator: hands around waist

Latitude Attitude: Circle body around

Multitude of Longitude; Jump up and down

Tropic of Cancer = shoulders (lungs that smoke can get cancer)

Tropic of Capricorn = knee caps

After identifying the seven continents on the body, sing their names and show their location to the tune of "Are You Sleeping?"

### Quick Math

Face your partner. Pretend to put your water gun in your holsters. For one-hand addition, on the signal "Draw" each partner shows any number of fingers and thumbs on one hand. The first partner who adds the fingers and thumbs of both partners wins the draw. For two-hand addition, add partner #1 and partner #2 fingers and thumbs together for the sum. For one-hand multiplication, multiply partner #1 times partner #2 for the product. For two-hand multiplication, multiply the sum of Partner #1's hands times the sum of partner #2's hands for the product.

### Number ball:

Students practice throwing and catching skills with equipment designed to practice number concepts. Work with a partner. First person throws the partner a ball marked with numbers. The partner catches the ball and looks at the number under the right thumb. Add that score to the running sum. The goal is to add up to a designated sum. To practice subtraction skills, give each set of partners 50 points and as the ball is caught subtract that number from the running sum and the first person to reach zero or beyond wins. To practice multiplication skills, the partner who catches the ball multiply the 2 numbers under each thumb. A variation is look at the numbers under the thumbs, multiply them together. Tell the partner that the product is 24 and the number under the left thumb is 8. Ask the partner to guess the

number under the right thumb.

Variation: Write numbers on the football, soccer ball or volleyball. Divide the class into two teams arranged in circle formation. The ball is kicked or passed from one person to another in the circle. The first circle to add to 50, wins. Each time a partner catches or traps the number ball, he adds (or subtracts or multiplies as explained above) that score to the running sum.

#### Teamwork sparks Positive Thinkers: Energy Ball

One person holds the ball and touches the two metal strips. The ball lights up to show that one person has enough electricity to light the ball. Have two students demonstrate how two people working together make connections positively. Person #1 touches one metal strip and person #2 touches the other metal strip. Then person #1 touches person #2's hand and the connection is complete. All the students hold hands in a circle. Connect and the energy ball lights up. Disconnect and it stops.