Name: Date: Date of Absence:

BRAIN DANCE MAKEUP

Read the handout to help you with the assignment below!

The brain is an important part of our physical body, it helps us think, move, feel, remember, and learn. Our brain and physical body grew together since we were babies. After we were born our mind and body learned together how to breathe, stretch, explore, crawl, walk, and run. Each time our physical body explored a new movement it also created important pathways in our brains. Like a person creating a pathway in a forest, the more these pathways in the brain are explored, the clearer the pathway, the quicker one can travel that path.

Anne Green Gilbert, a dance teacher in Seattle, Washington, recognized eight basic movement patterns that reflect physical and neurological (brain) development. Doing these eight movement patterns not only bring oxygen to the brain, but help us organize our thoughts and control our bodies. It improves the mind and body connection.

1. **Breath**: Just breathing helps the body and mind by increasing the flow of oxygen to the brain and muscles. It also helps the body relax.
2. **Tactile:** One of the five senses, touch is an important part of making connections in our brain and body.
3. **Core-Distal:** From a very small shape to a large outstretched shape this activity helps to find the connections that our body makes between ourselves and our environment.
4. **Head-Tail**: This movement focuses from the top of the head to the tail bone. It increases spine strength and flexibility and creates a clear path for the brain an spinal cord to function.
5. **Upper-Lower**: Exploring the possible movement in the upper half (above your belly button) and lower half (below your belly button) of the body helps your body to be stable and strong while other body parts are moving.
6. **Body-Half**: This movement involves making an imaginary line down the center of your body and dividing your body into right and left sides. Exploring this type of movement helps us find strength and balance between two sides of the body, and helps our eyes with reading.
7. **Cross-Lateral:** This movement focuses on the diagonals in the body from the right arm to the left leg, and the left arm to the right leg. Moving in this way helps us connect both sides of the brain, walk, skip, and many other ways of moving.
8. **Vestibular**: Making yourself dizzy can make you smarter. Doing turns, spins and other movements off-balanced will help your spatial awareness, balance, and coordination.

There are lots of ways we can do the brain dance, but all of them help our minds and bodies stay focused and ready to learn.

Resources: Anne Green Gilbert “Brain Dance” Creative Dance Center Website http://creativedance.org/about/brain-dance/

BrainDance-McKay School of Education handout

Brain Dance Assignment:

Find a picture that represents each of the 8 Brain Dance patterns after reading the definitions above. You can find a picture on the internet or draw a picture. After you find the pictures, explain your choice in complete sentences. You may do this assignment on the computer, or on a piece of paper if you are drawing.