

Should Schools Place More Educational Value on P.E.?

In 110 A.D., the Greek philosopher Plutarch [waxed eloquent](#) on how to raise virtuous, well-mannered, and thoroughly educated children. But Plutarch's educational regimen was not limited to books. In line with previous Greek educational philosophy, he also heartily advised parents and teachers to give children plenty of time for exercise:

"In the next place, the exercise of the body must not be neglected; but children must be sent to schools of gymnastics, where they may have sufficient employment that way also. This will conduce partly to a more handsome carriage, and partly to the improvement of their strength. For the foundation of a vigorous old age is a good constitution of the body in childhood... Yet must they husband their strength, so as not to become dried up (as it were) and destitute of strength to follow their studies. For, according to Plato, sleep and weariness are enemies to the arts."

It seems that many Americans have forgotten Plutarch's words of wisdom, particularly given the decline of [recess](#) and [P.E.](#) in many schools.

However, several schools in South Carolina, under the guidance of athletic coach David Spurlock, are leading the charge to reverse this trend.

According to [The Guardian](#), Spurlock is establishing "brain rooms" at various schools around the state. These rooms are equipped with exercise and physical movement equipment such as kinesthetic desks, which children use while their teachers instruct them. Rather than act as a distraction, the exercise which the rooms promote "improves alertness and attention, sparks motivation, encourages nerve cells to bind together,

and boosts the development of new nerve cells,” not to mention acting as a guard against unhealthy weight gain.

And as *The Guardian* reports, teachers, students, and parents give this new education technique high ratings:

“[Stacey Shoecraft teaches] the first classroom in the country to feature entirely kinaesthetic desks. This is her third year using all of the equipment, and any sceptics long ago disappeared. There’s now a waiting list every year, with dozens of parents and students trying to get in her class.

‘It works because kids sit too much. They’re dying to move,’ she said.”

Is it time to once again heed Plutarch’s advice and ensure that bodily exercise is not a neglected subject in today’s schools?