Activity #7: Balancing Act

Activity Overview

In this lesson, students will consider what it means to be physically fit and are introduced to the phrase "screen time." They begin by determining activities that use screens and brainstorm a list of fun, screen free activities that could be used as a replacement. After defining screen time, they begin to estimate the amount of time they spend on screens compared to time spent participating in physical activities. They will log the amount of time they spend daily on screens and physical activities for one week. After collecting and analyzing their data, the students will draw conclusions about how the increased amount of screen time could lead to a lower level of physical fitness, decreased performance in school, and could interfere with relationships with friends and family.

Content Areas

Life Sciences and Health Education

Activity Duration

(2) 45–minute periods

Objectives

Students will:

- Build understanding of what it means to be physically fit
- Estimate the amount of time they participate daily in screen time activities and physical activities
- Gather data on the actual amount of time they participate daily in screen time activities and physical activities
- Create a double bar graph to communicate data
- Analyze data to make decisions to improve or enhance physical fitness
- Brainstorm ways to replace screen time with other fun activities

Materials

- **Screen Time vs. Physical Activity** data collection sheet
- Chart paper
- Graph paper
- Magazines
- Computer (optional)

Activity #7: Balancing Act

Procedure

Part 1

1. Ask, "What does the phrase 'physical fitness' mean to you? What does it mean to be physically fit?" Allow time for students to share their thoughts and ideas.

2. Ask, "What does a physically fit body look like? Do they all look the same?" Allow time for students to share their thoughts and ideas.

3. Say, "People often think that physical fitness means being thin. Do you think that's true?" Allow time for discussion.

4. Explain that physically fit bodies do not all look alike. Sometimes people who are thin do not eat nutritious foods and do not work out. Sometimes people who are heavier eat nutritious foods and work out a lot. Be sure students understand that the purpose of today's activity is to focus on overall physical fitness and being healthy, not on weight, since it is not fair or accurate to say that all thin people are healthy and all heavy people are unhealthy.

5. Say, "Today we're going to talk about something that many of us love to do, but that can have a negative impact on our physical fitness and health. I often hear people use the phrase 'screen time.' What does that phrase mean to you?" *Possible answers: TV, video games, smart phones, computers, tablets*

6. Say, "How can spending too much time looking at screens—watching TV, playing video games, or using your smart phone or tablet—affect your health?" *Possible answers: Decrease in the amount of time playing or being physically active, decreased achievement in school, negative impact on the relationships you have with family and friends, negative side effects related to leading a sedentary lifestyle*

7. Say, "We know that physical activity is important for maintaining our health, but what are some other reasons we should stay active, play sports, or just play with friends every day?" *Possible answers: brain development, have fun, be with other people, use creativity, develop imagination, learn how to process emotions and solve problems, and build confidence*

8. Say, "Together we are going to brainstorm a list of fun things to do that can help us find a healthy balance for the amount of time we spend looking at screens and the amount of time we are physically active. But first we need to know how much time we actually spend doing each of those things every day."

9. Distribute the **Screen Time vs. Physical Activity** data collection sheet. Ask students to estimate and record how many minutes they think they spend each day in front of a screen and doing physical activity.

10. Divide students into small groups and have them create a group bar graph of their estimates.

11. Say, "For the next week, we will be collecting data about the amount of time we spend each day of the week for both screen time and physical activities. Be sure to keep track of your activity and record it on your data collection sheet."

Part 2

1. Say, "Now that we have collected our weekly data, we will organize and communicate our results by adding our second set of data to our group graphs."

2. Have students graph their results next to their estimates.

3. Direct students to work in their groups to analyze their data and answer the following questions:

   • How accurate were your estimates for actual time tracked for screen time activities? Who was the most accurate? By how much?

   • How accurate were your estimates for actual time tracked for screen activities? Who was the least accurate? By how much?

   • Do you notice any difference between your results on the weekend compared to weekdays?

   • How many people in your group engaged in some type of physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day?

   • What was the most surprising result?

   • Were you balanced in the amount of time you spent on screen time vs. the amount of time you spent engaged in physical activity?

4. Have students share their findings and discuss as a class.

5. Ask, "If we wanted to increase the amount of time we spend doing physical activity, what kinds of fun things could we do? For the next ten minutes, you will work with your group to develop a top ten list of activities that you like or would like to try.

When finished, we will make a class list of activities that can replace watching TV, using a tablet, looking at a phone, or playing video games. Everyone will receive a copy of our class list of activities to take home and use as a reminder."

6. Allow time for groups to work and share some of their findings. Encourage students to keep track of their data for one additional week to see if they made improvements in the amount of time they spend on physical activities.

Optional Extension Activity:
Organize a Screen-Free Week for the entire school. The class can share their lists of activities to replace with screen time by creating posters to hang around the school.

Screen Time vs. Physical Activity

Estimated Daily Screen Time: _____   **Estimated Daily Screen Time: _____**

	Screen Time (Type of Activity)	Time Spent (Minutes)	Daily Total (Hours)	Physical Activity (Type of Activity)	Time Spent (Minutes)	Daily Total (Hours)
Monday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					
Tuesday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					
Wednesday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					
Thursday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					
Friday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					
Saturday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					
Sunday	TV					
	Computer, laptop, tablet					
	Smart phone					
	Video games					