

Butler, J., & McCahan. (2005). Teaching games for understanding as a curriculum model. In L. Griffin & J. Butler (Eds.), Teaching games for understanding: Theory, research, and practice (pp. 33-54). Windsor: Human Kinetics.

Summary by Larissa de Jong

Issue/Focus

There are two key problems stated in this article, the first being that there is not enough time in PE for students to play, as well as improve in, all the required games if using the Technical model of teaching. The second key problem is being able to include all levels of playing ability into the same drill/game. The purpose of this article is to describe a teaching style that answers both problems and yet still provides an exciting and comfortable learning environment for every student.

Reasoning

The authors address the issues by “using a curriculum model [TGfU] based on a conceptual perspective of games” (p. 33, Butler and McCahan, 2005). They reason that teachers should “address the why (common concepts) and what (skills and strategies for better play)” instead of just the “how to do it (techniques practiced)”. This way, instructors will not have to spend an extensive amount of time on each game but rather just transfer the concepts (Butler and McCahan, 2005).

Assumptions

The authors assume that many students do not enjoy doing drills or that drills are not made to be fun. They also assume that every physical education class includes players of skill levels from both extremes (high skill and no skill).

Conclusion

Through reading this article I found out that the TGfU model allows students more room to learn by discovery and exploration compared to direct instruction presented in the Technical model. TGfU gives students the chance to “problem solve” (in the sports sense) on their own as well as learn to make decisions based on concepts and tactics. (As opposed to the hot potato method where students pass the ball the moment they receive it without thinking).

Significant Information and Personal Comments

I believe that some key concepts in this article that are worth remembering are that TGfU is student centered, concept based and involves multidimensional interaction (Butler and McCahan, 2005). Butler and McCahan also describe the TGfU model as “integration and inclusiveness”, “thinking and decision making” and “active learning” (p. 53, Butler and McCahan, 2005). I think that these points are important because when we become teachers we will need to evaluate our lesson plans and teaching styles with regards to these points so that we become the most effective teachers possible.