

Scholarly Summary of:

A Dynamic Approach to Teaching Games in Elementary PE

Doolittle, S., & Girard, K. (1991). A Dynamic Approach to Teaching Games in Elementary PE. JOPERD, 62(4), 57-62.

Issue/Focus

The key problem identified in this article revolves around a familiar scenario present in most PE elementary school classes. The PE teacher is trying to teach sport skills to a large class resulting in few children learning anything because the less-skilled are frustrated with failure and the skilled are bored and restless.

The purpose of this article is to present Teaching for Understanding as a method to help solve this problem.

Reasoning

The article explains that Teaching for Understanding which emphasizes the fundamental concepts and game strategies of a game class (eg. target, fielding, invasion games). Playing modified games rather than learning game related motor-skills allows each student to learn general skills and concepts which can be applied to many different sports while at the same time challenging each student both mentally and physically.

To support their argument, the authors present sequence examples of Teaching for Understanding. The fundamental invasion concept (goal play concept) was first introduced by tossing beanbags into a hoop and through gradual progressions the children were able to transfer their knowledge and understanding of this concept to games such as floor hockey, basketball, soccer, etc.

Assumptions

The authors make several assumptions in this article. In terms of games, the authors assume there is transfer between sports skills and concepts (which there is significant evidence supporting this). In terms of the children, the authors assume that they are able and willing to try new activities. In terms of the teacher, the authors presume that PE teachers can:

- Recognize student's limitations and make changes as necessary
- Understand sports well enough to establish game like learning environments
- Manage a class of students
- Ask appropriate questions and adjust games for maximal learning & fun
- Concentrate on verbal and motor solutions to the problems

Conclusions

I found that Teaching for Understanding is a viable and very promising method of instruction for children at the elementary school level. Its simplicity and straightforwardness only makes sense allowing the process of teaching and the process learning easier, more comprehensible, fun, and longer lasting than the alternatives.

Significant Information

A segment of the article was dedicated to *Designing Teaching for Understanding Units*; I found this very important information which will allow for the success of the learning and transfer of knowledge to take place. This includes *Set up 'problems' to teach concepts, Talk about the students' solutions, Introduce motor skills, simplest skills first, and Increase game complexity for some students.*

Personal Comments

From this article I am convinced of its usefulness. I believe that Teaching for Understanding is a great idea and I will definitely add and use this method of teaching to my repertoire and recommend my peers to do the same.