

Mitchell, S. (2005). Teaching and learning games at the elementary level. In L. Griffin & J. Butler (Eds.), Teaching games for understanding: Theory, research, and practice (pp. 55-70). Windsor: Human Kinetics.

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Issue/focus

The article "Teaching and Learning games at the Elementary Level" poses the problem within elementary school of teachers focusing more on skill practice rather than games because some believe that young children are not yet capable of learning and understand the games. The main purpose of this article is to introduce some strategies and suggestions for implementing Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) within the elementary school level.

Reasoning

Steve Mitchell has much evidence to support that from learning tactical components of one game can help with the tactical components of another similar game creating more proficient and knowledgeable game players. From understanding the concepts of one game, such as soccer, it can aid in the players performance of another net game that is similar. TGfU allows students to see the links and can relate tactical problems between all similar games.

Assumptions

The author assumes PE teachers often have back-to-back classes that are about 30-40 minutes long, which can make it difficult to implement TGfU. Another assumption is that many of the children play other similar games outside of the school setting.

Conclusion

Teachers need to realize that in order for students to learn they need to follow a tactical approach so students are actively engaging in game play independently and in small groups. This provides a more enjoyable and motivational experience for younger learners and a good understanding of the tactical components of one game which will help with the learning of another.

Significant Information

- the implementation of TGfU at the elementary level is best accomplished by taking a thematic approach
- games can and should be played by students as young as the 2nd grade
- novice learners will become more proficient game players and more knowledgeable spectators if they learn to understand the decisions to be made during game play

Personal Comments

I found this article very thorough because it covers all of the aspects having to deal with TGfU including how to successfully implement it, the benefits and possible downfalls.