

Turner, A. (2005). Teaching and learning games at the secondary level. In L. Griffin & J. Butler (Eds.), Teaching games for understanding: Theory, research, and practice (pp. 71-90). Windsor: Human Kinetics.

Summary completed by Jolaine Derby

Issue:

The purpose of this article is to address the problems with the traditional “skills first, game second” approach and how these problems can be overcome by introducing the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model. The paper looks at the misconceptions teachers have about the TGfU model, how it is beneficial to both the students and the teachers and how it should be implemented at the secondary level.

Reasoning

Turner believes that for students to be able to transfer skills and techniques learned they need to understand the tactical aim of these skills in a game situation. The author uses a table to help present the TGfU components, game form, game related practice, skill practice, and modified game/full game, to the reader. The author also provides a brief description of each of these components which indicates how each component should be carried out. An example for the first component is that the initial game should be a version of the full game however with two essential characteristics: *representation* and *exaggeration*.

The author also provides a proposed structure of a practice for a STXball unit. This structure includes:

1. Game form setup,
2. Observation of play,
3. Investigation of tactical problems and potential solutions in a game related practice (teacher and students),
4. Observation of play,
5. Intervention to promote skill,
6. Observation of the modified game and intervention to teach tactics or skills based on the emerging game problem.

The author also provides for the reader an instructional list of ways in which teachers and coaches can modify their methods to assist them with their classes. These include:

Game Conditions - have students unable to move from the sidelines to emphasize using the width of the field.

Rule and equipment modifications- no walking with the ball, or making the players have to pass three times before they can score

Changing spatial arrangements to vary the difficulty of the game or practice- making the field smaller or bigger

Loading the practice - changing the offense – defense ratio

Developing a questioning protocol -ask the students questions so they can learn about the game

Examining option scenarios -look at different scenarios and the options and decisions that must be made in each scenario.

There is also a list of suggestions on beneficial ways that teachers or coaches can intervene within the game tasks. These include:

Walk-through- a slowed down version of a play.

Situations- teacher stops or freezes the play at a teachable moment and uses the question protocol.

Instant replay - reset the play when a more advantageous play could have occurred.

Player-coach- teacher becomes a participant

Television analysis- class analyzes another team's play

Video analysis - look back on videotapes of a previous game or practice.

Turner also looks at managerial techniques which are beneficial when having smaller games take place all around the field. These techniques include appropriate use of space, supervising multiple games and forming boundaries and spaces for these games to occur.

Significant Information

- Practices designed around the TGfU model recommend that a modified game should be played at the beginning of practice. This way students can understand the purpose of performing the skills while connecting them with the tactics during a game situation.
- Teachers can take solace in the fact that some tactical knowledge of one game in a category can help them immensely teach another game in that same category using the TGfU approach.
- The smallest number of participants is used in the game form or practice to permit maximal practice opportunities for the students while retaining the tactical complexity of the adult game. As student understanding and skill progress closer approximations to the full-sided game or practice can be implemented over time.
- Students should be encouraged to learn to read the game. The use of a questioning protocol (what? Where? When? Why? With whom? How?) is a key pedagogical tool in TGfU
- Teachers must be patient and prepared to stand back and watch for a few minutes, allowing the play to develop. Effective teachers are good observers of the tactical components of game play.
- Only a few players are able to make the transition to skillful game performance after being taught through a practice to game scenario.
- By showing students skills in a game context and by varying the game context teachers can challenge students to find new ways to solve the tactical problems they encountered during game play.

Personal Comments

I highly recommend this article to students going into education or teachers currently involved in teaching Physical Education or coaching. The author provides a detailed description TGfU, a new method of instruction and helps the reader to identify the benefits of using this model in comparison to a practice –game type approach. Turner's use of charts to help simplify these methods components and his use of examples throughout the paper allow the reader to see how this method has been put into practice as well as provide a structure and guidance to new teachers trying to attempt this approach. This article is a quick, easy and informative read and I highly suggest it to anyone interested in knowing more about this model or looking for a more practical way of teaching/ coaching at the secondary level.