

Teaching Games for Understanding
Reflections and Further Questions Summary

Chandler, T. (1996). Teaching games for understanding: *Reflections and further questions*. OPERD, 67(4), 48-50.

Key Quote: “Skill learning is not for playing games; rather playing games is for skill learning” (Chandler, 1996).

Issues/focus

- The author will outline what he perceives to be the strengths and weaknesses of teaching games for understanding (TGFU). He then speculate on how TGFU might be extended and elaborated in the future
- TGFU framework provides a means to generalize learning across activities based on a deep structure instead of a surface one.
- TGFU’s aim is game form that mirrors the game but in an adapted or mini form
- TGFU is not a fixed system or method

Reasoning

- Even though TGFU may not enhance game execution, it does seem to foster game playing ability more readily than traditional method
- Lead up games do transfer well.
- TGFU offers students an approach which aids in motivation, students start to understand the game and wanting to play it better motivates them to return to the game

Assumptions/Problems

- The greatest strength is that it takes into account both learning and motivation theory.
- Game execution may not be a good measure of what had really been learned.
- Teachers must be knowledgeable in all four categories of activity, must be able to select game forms that are developmentally appropriate.
- TGFU provides little to help teachers do this.
- TGFU has emphasis on doing what works with regard to contextualized or game dependent skills.
- Very few strategies have been outlined for target games.

Conclusion

- More testing needs to occur in the schools to help realize TGFU real potential
- TGFU would be better described as Understanding for learning (UFL), or to be above UFL it must be fostered with teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge

Significant Information

- TGFU is approach is both student centered and game dependent rather than teacher centered and skill centered, this provides self propelling motivation
- Authors do not interpret or apply TGFU in the same way which is a strength because it highlights the fact that sports and games have sociocultural meanings which vary across time, space, culture and country.

Personal comments: This article emphasized that it is essential that we promote an understanding of the purpose of the skills as well as the product of the skills. It also tells us to keep in mind that TGFU is not a fixed system and can be varied.