

Scholarly Summary

Darryl Adams

Hopper, T. (2003). *Teaching games for understanding: The importance of student emphasis over content emphasis*. JOPERD, 73(7), 44-48.

“Skill learning is not for playing games; rather, playing games is for skill learning” (48).

Issue:

The rationale behind Hopper’s creating of this article was to address the misconceptions of the teaching games for understanding approach. Hopper identifies a few of these misinterpretations as being teaching tactics and not teaching skills, as well as individuals believing students in a TGFU atmosphere merely play games with guidance from the teacher. However, as Hopper testifies neither of these misconceptions are true.

Rationale:

Hopper asserts that the focus of TGFU is progressing from tactics to skills, not tactics or skills. This means that students will understand the “why” of a game before the “how”, therefore, “students are taught to appreciate the advanced form of the game by participating in a modified game” (44). This quotation leads into Hopper’s denying of the second misconception, in which students play games in order to further understand the importance of skill progression and skill practice.

Assumptions:

This article assumes that through game play students will realize that skill development is necessary for a higher level of game play. As well, it is assumed that teachers will constantly question students on the why and how of game play.

Conclusion:

According to Hopper the most important part of teaching students is to understand the needs and desires of the students. As teachers it is simple to focus on content and evaluate students by ticking completed skill off a checklist. However, based on student’s emphasis, games should be taught and evaluated using the tactic to skill approach, whereas tactical understanding is imperative in allowing students to understand the importance of skill acquisition.

Significant Information

Hopper uses four topics in order to validate his premise of student emphasis over content emphasis. Firstly, teaching using content emphasis results in both a skill nonlearning progression and a tactical nonlearning environment. This approach often results in students being alienated, and games being played that lack purpose. Conversely, teachers who use the student emphasis approach report results of tactical progression and skill progression.