

Turner, A., & Martinek, J. (1995). Teaching for understanding: A model for improving decision making during game play. *QUEST*, 47, 44-63.

“Students are doomed to failure if they cannot make proper decisions during game play” (p. 45)

Summary by Carlea Marinucci

Issue

The key problem in the article is that students when taught using a technique approach appear to possess game skills during drills but have little success performing in game situations. Turner and Martinek illustrate this with the example of students confidently practicing the skill of passing in field hockey. The problem is that once the skill is incorporated into game play the students are “doomed to failure if they cannot make proper decisions” such as where and when to execute the appropriate pass.

The purpose of the article is to present the theoretical overview of the development of tactical knowledge and how it can be linked to effective decision making in game play. In conjunction, Turner and Martinek describe an alternative model for teaching effective decision making during game play.

Reasoning

Turner and Martinek argue that a new approach to teaching games is needed because performers do not know “what to do” in the context of game situation. By comparing and contrasting the two methods of teaching: technique vs. tactical the article demonstrates the benefits of the teaching games for understanding approach. The arguments are supported by numerous references to past experiments where the teaching style is manipulated. Turner and Martinek believe that when students acquire knowledge about the game, the games goals and knowledge of actions within the context of game situations (declarative and procedural) they will have success in both their skill and tactics during game play.

Assumption

The most significant assumption made in the article is that in order for the teaching games for understanding method to be successful a unit must last longer than 6 weeks and ideally continue for the entire semester. Therefore it is assumed that physical education teachers will have an entire semester allotted for one unit.

Conclusion

I found out why the teaching games for understanding method is effective and the theory that supports this approach.

Significant Information

- An individual who is more knowledgeable about the sport is better able to select the appropriate response for a situation within the context of a game’s goal structure
- Give learners the opportunities to make tactical decisions
- Student decision making based on tactical awareness should always precede teaching the skill
- Lesson structure for TGFU:
 1. Teacher sets up the game form
 2. Teacher observes play/practice
 3. Teacher and students investigate tactical problems and potential solutions
 4. Teacher observes play
 5. Teacher intervenes to promote skill
 6. Teacher observes the game and intervenes