Innovative Ways to Engage Students in Handball as part of Physical education and school sport.

By Andres Olascoaga.

Physical education teachers need to inspire their students to be healthy and active while at the same time overcoming the technology barriers that are affecting day-by-day teaching. The increased use of social media and internet services affects how students communicate with each other in games and sport because they have become reliant on communicating via computers, email and mobile phones. The problems that physical education teachers face is that many students in Years 8, 9 and 10 cannot match their motor ability to what is expected at their age. Sometimes their fundamental skills are much lower, in some cases matching students in Years 5 or 6. This is the result of them being less physically active in their daily lives. Teachers have to rebuild their fundamental motor skills in secondary school, which is something that is supposed to have been learnt in primary school. This means that many secondary school teachers face the task of inspiring their students to enjoy playing sport again.

Barriers To Re-Engaging Students In PE

The major problem that many teachers face is that in a class of 30 students, it is likely that a few students are playing invasion games after school (such as handball, soccer, basketball, AFL, rugby or netball) or in a club environment, while the other group of students are engaged in individual sports (such as tennis, swimming, athletics or cycling). It is also likely that there is a group within the class that does not do any sport or physical activity, making it critically important to find a solution for the group of students that are disengaged. As a direct result of students using email, text messages and an increased amount of time communicating through the screen, students lose their basic human communication skills, which affects their ability to communicate effectively during physical education classes. Students will often need to re-learn the body language needed on court in regards to calling another student to pass the ball over or extending their hand to receive the ball.

There are a number of common problems that physical education teachers face around the world, and some of these include:

- Lack of communication in games. Students often feel uncomfortable calling out each other’s names which contributes to their lack of spatial awareness.
- Students are using less court space effectively, which means they overcrowd the ball and move less throughout the game.
- Students are standing in the court and watching the game as spectators instead of being engaged in the game.
- Students lack confidence in decision-making because they find the new situations they face in the game challenging. For instance, they see a few students running
towards them and they don’t know what to do with the ball or what kind of pass to make. They have become too reliant on the electronic world where they just have to touch a button to solve their problem immediately.

The SCT handball Teaching Model For Physical Education And Sport

As the electronic whiteboard and the internet revolutionises the way students learn in the classroom, the SCT handball (Space, Communication, Team Work) teaching model for physical education and sport will provide an innovation in education that will engage the disengaged and provide them with opportunities to play invasion games, and more importantly, to have fun playing with their peers in class.

The Method

Physical education should be the entry level for students at school; it is about having a go and trying new sports and games with your classmates. It is not about winning or loosing; it is about growing the opportunities students have to have fun and be active. The SCT teaching model for physical education and sport is based on the invasion games that are played in Australia. The intention of the model is to transfer the skills learnt in one sport to another, from one semester to another to the great game of handball.

It is very important that schools with a primary and secondary campus coordinate their physical education curriculum and strategic planning to allow students to develop their skills in a positive way. It is recommended that government secondary schools will meet with the primary school physical education teachers in their area to coordinate what they will teach each term to ensure better planning and cooperation that will deliver better outcomes for all students throughout their schooling life. The SCT teaching method is a solution for teaching better invasion games and solving game problems such as overcrowding the ball, inefficient use of space, and lack of team work.

In regards to use of space, the game is played using zones as the Australian game of netball. Every eight minutes the students change the zones as well as the roles of defender, midfielder, forward and goalkeeper. The game is non-contact but it allows for defending because while there cannot be contact on the players, there can be contact on the ball. Overcrowding the ball happens when games are played with one ball in a big space. By playing the game with six soft balls in a smaller space, everyone is engaged and has multiple opportunities to pass the ball, intercept and score. The ball always has to go from zone one to zone two and zone three to teach students the importance of passing the ball through the defence lines.

Use Of Space In Invasion Games

In each physical education lesson, teachers should promote games that encourage the proper use of space. This involves students understanding how to use the court efficiently, how to spread out and play as a team, and how to play different roles in the game. You should teach games that encourage students to pass the ball in different ways and match their passes to the different defender’s position. You should also encourage games that promote the idea of team work. This could be achieved by encouraging them to pass the ball a certain number of times before scoring and passing the ball to different students rather than the same student each time.
An example of such a session is handball/netball. In this game students are divided into netball zones, with defenders, midfielders and forwards in each zone. Instead of using netball poles, use handball goals and have a goalkeeper for each team on opposite sides behind the D line (semicircle line).

The game is a non-contact game and defenders use a combination of basketball rules and netball rules to defend. This means there is no contact with the body but contact with the ball is allowed. The game is played with five balls at once, progressing from one ball to two, then three, then four and then five. Each time that you add another soft handball to the game, more students will become engaged and more opportunities to pass the ball and intercept are provided. By adding more balls to each game, smaller groups within the larger class will begin to interact with each other on court, as opposed to a few students controlling the game and all the others overcrowding the ball. By using five balls at once, students will get used to passing the ball forward and then turning back to the other zone as the balls go from zone to zone. With five balls in play, there is an increased opportunity for students to score.

The SCT teaching model will provide more opportunities for students to engage in physical education, develop their self-esteem and feel that they are contributing to each lesson. You will also find that every class has a different dynamic, which is a result of different students mixing with one another. The model will also assist teachers to overcome barriers such as motivation and participation, and also contribute to skill development and a better understanding of the games played.

Physical education and sport in school is a fantastic opportunity for students to be active, and for some students it is their only opportunity to exercise. These days, less and less students are engaging in after-school activities due to higher registration fees and working parents who are not able to drive them to the activities.

As educators, it is our responsibility to put the fun back into physical education and sport by changing the way that we teach, creating better team work and engagement, and encouraging students to be more resilient when they participate in sport. It is our duty to create fun, safe and enjoyable environments so that children enjoy the feeling of physical activity, which they will do when they are both challenged and having fun,and handball is the best game to achieve all that.

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