

ACHPER QLD CONFERENCE PRESENTATION 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that primary school-age children should be active for at least 50% of the time devoted to physical education lessons. Researchers from the University of Geneva found that they are active on average only 38% of the time.

A study by Chanal (2019) summarized in the Courier Mail I indicated that; "Our results showed for the first time that there is a sharp drop in positive motivations for physical activity (with good motivational qualities), such as pleasure or health, over a child's time at primary school from age 9 onwards."

Chanal called for an analysis of the way PE is taught at primary school as compulsory education is the only place where every child can be reached. He stated that PE classes had become more academic with students learning about rules, motor functioning and social skills.

In the Swiss context, researchers from UNIGE are working with the Haute École Pédagogique in the canton of Vaud on teaching physical education in primary classes. While WHO recommends 150 minutes of physical education per week, students in Geneva only have 135 minutes available, or three periods of 45 minutes each. To develop positive motivations for participation in physical activity researchers are working with teachers to foster autonomy and cooperation among students and to adapt the curriculum. Chanal believes that teaching physical education has an important role to play in this new global health problem of physical inactivity, which affects children at a younger age.

The intention of this presentation is to offer strategies to increase the amount of time students are active in primary PE lessons. This activity need not be high intensity, rather the time students are not active should be reduced. This includes sitting or standing still listening to instructions, waiting in line or stopping activity for behavior issues to be addressed. To achieve this increase in activity time three approaches are given; Preparation, Engagement and Efficiency. These approaches are outlined below.

Preparation

It is worth investing time at the beginning of the year to establish expectations and routines. This involves liaising with classroom teachers so that they can reinforce behaviours. For example, expectations would be that students follow sun safety procedures and that transition to and from the PE lesson is performed safely and efficiently (this may require practice). An expectation that classroom teachers should be aware of is that students should go to the toilet prior to the lesson so that they do not have to leave the PE lesson (in most schools they need to take another student with them and that means two students are absent from the lesson). An expectation that should be explained to students is that they will be moving for most of the lesson.

Preparation also involves setting out equipment before the lesson so that students are not standing and watching the teacher place markers, organize stations etc. Some age groups are capable of assisting with the setting out of equipment and this can be incorporated in a warm-up.

Engagement

If students find activities interesting and enjoyable they will participate fully. Making activities engaging can involve student choice and relating activities to current events. In this presentation the 50 year celebration of the moon landing will be used as an example of a current event that can be linked to physical activity.

Rocket Launch

Students can work in groups of 3 to 6 to throw a vortex or practice javelin as far as they can. Utilise a countdown (10 back to Blast Off!). Students run and collect vortex/ javelin on a command. While one student is collecting the vortex/javelin other students in their group see how many jumping jacks they can perform.

The Moon Landing Armstrong's words: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

Students perform a series of 1 small step, 1 giant leap.

The three astronauts; Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins.

Students work in groups of 3. In the Early Years this is a Journey to the Moon activity. In older year groups students can work in 3s with a specific sport focus (touch football, soccer, basketball, netball). In Journey to the Moon three students hold a skipping rope (the Lunar Module) and jog/run together to the moon (a large hoop). At the moon 2 students (Armstrong and Aldrin) let go of the rope to land on the moon. While they are on the moon they can jump in the hoop. The student who is Collins orbits the hoop two or three times dragging the rope behind then collects the other two and they return to Earth.

Student autonomy

Students should be given opportunities to select and organise activities. This may require liaison with classroom teachers prior to the PE lesson. To maximise participation it is advisable that students work in groups. One example is to have students in groups of 4 to 6 organise a short obstacle course using skipping ropes, markers and mini hurdles. Students can practice sport specific skills of catching and throwing in small groups and set the parameters for the activity such as achieving a certain number of clean passes or following a pattern.

Efficiency

Efficiency is about maximizing time by using minimal equipment, having clear, brief instructions and transitioning quickly from one activity to another.

Many tagging games require minimum equipment: markers, tagging noodles, hoops.

Efficiency also means providing different activities for differences in ability and confidence. An example is performing the scissor kick in high jump. After preliminary instruction on the technique students can select a level of performance; scissor kick over a line on the ground, over a pole resting on markers or over a foam bar into a pit. There could also be a station with skipping ropes so students can perform single leg skipping activities.

References : Julien Chanal, Boris Cheval, Delphine S. Courvoisier, Delphine Paumier. Developmental relations between motivation types and physical activity in elementary school children. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 2019; 43: 233 DOI: 10.1016/j.psychsport.2019.03.006