How to Create Engaging Lessons in Physical Education

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Introduction to Curriculum & Lesson Planning

In simple terms, curriculum is basically a long-range plan for what will be taught, when it will be taught, and what will be learned by the students. In other words, curriculum refers to the course of study within a subject. A curriculum usually is based on a specific philosophy, with a very direct purpose or mission in mind. It contains goals, objectives and outcomes that are usually determined for the purpose of meeting pre-established standards. It also contains a description of unit and lesson plans (which determine the scope of the curriculum) and the order (or sequence) in which these plans will be taught, so as to best meet the standards and the outcomes of the curriculum. All of this is organized into specifics based on grade level.

The process of designing programs to accomplish clearly articulated goals is the process of curriculum design. In the very simplest sense, when educators design curriculum they make a decision about what they want students to know and be able to do when they leave their physical education experiences and then they devise a plan that has the potential to get them to those goals through the K-12 program (Rink, 2009).

The focus of this presentation is to help guide you on how to devise a plan for what your students will learn, when they will learn it, and how they will learn it, while participating in your program. This will become your personal curriculum guide for your program.

Curriculum guides are actually created to be used, unfortunately, many school districts create them, give them to the teachers, who then place them on a shelf or in a drawer, never to refer to them again. This is a mistake. If the curriculum guide is created and written correctly, it becomes a very valuable and useful tool for the teacher. The key is in how it is created. It should be a “user-friendly” document that changes and grows with the teacher and his or her knowledge and experience. If it doesn’t, then it becomes a useless document.

In an effective PE program, there is a strong alignment with what is planned, what is taught, what is assessed, and what is learned. This is known as curriculum alignment. All good PE programs start with good plans, so the ability to create a user-friendly curriculum document is essential.

The first two steps to creating an effective curriculum document is to first decide what students should learn in PE throughout each grade level, and second, decide how to organize this information to reach your goals or objectives. Before you can decide what students should learn however, you must first consider the National Standards for PE that were created by SHAPE America. These standards are very general in nature, so most of what you would want to teach in PE will naturally meet the standards. The key, however, is to develop a curriculum plan that contains goals, objectives and outcomes that develop students who eventually meet the standards.

Creating Your Personal Curriculum

All teachers, whether they realize it or not, have their own personal curriculums. It is based on their own personal experiences, knowledge, education, and teaching environment. Effective teachers
continually add to and expand their personal curriculums. They do this to improve their teaching; make their lessons more interesting; and motivate their students to greater success.

Many teachers do not take the time to think about or develop their own personal curriculums. Unfortunately, they seldom expand and improve what they teach. There are many who, after 25 or 30 years, are still teaching the same things, the same way, as when they started their careers.

Every teacher should create their own “personal” curriculum that will grow with them as they go through their teaching career. In developing this curriculum, you want to make sure it addresses everything you want your students to learn, everything you want to teach, and a methodology to make it all work.

This personal curriculum should contain several key items. First, there is a mission statement, which is a brief (1-3 sentence) statement that describes your purpose. Second, is your philosophy of teaching which is based on your beliefs, values and morals. Third, is an outline of all the different categories from which you will teach. These categories are called “Centers.” Centers are not Units, rather they are “categories.” So, simply they are just a simple way to put Units into categories. The idea is to take these centers and create a framework of teaching from them. This becomes your curriculum guide. It should contain goals, objectives, and outcomes for each center. It should also contain unit and lesson plans for each center. The idea is to create a user-friendly curriculum guide that you can actually use and add to as time goes by. By doing this, you grow and expand your curriculum over time, making yourself a much better, more effective teacher, who continually makes learning enjoyable for his or her students.

To get started you first must write your mission statement and your teaching philosophy. The mission statement is really simple. Basically, if someone asked you “What is your ultimate goal as a PE teacher?” and you answered “To help children grow up to be active, healthy adults” then you just wrote your mission statement. Your teaching philosophy may take a bit more thought, but it really is just a description of how you teach based on your beliefs. So, what do you believe in regards to teaching and how do you teach based on these beliefs? If you can answer those two questions, then you have your teaching philosophy.

The next step is to create “Centers”, which as mentioned above, are simply categories that you will put your units into. So, start by listing all of the units you teach (i.e., Tossing & Catching; Soccer; Juggling; etc.). Once you have a list of all of your units, put them in groups (categories). For example, units for soccer, basketball and football could be categorized as “Team Sports”, so Team Sports then becomes one of your Centers.

After you have categorized all of your units into centers you can begin to create lesson plans, or what are called “Activity Cards”. Activity Cards are a description of what is actually being taught to students within a lesson. It includes lesson objectives, the equipment needed, how to actually teach the activity, and more. Basically, the way the entire Curriculum Guide works is Activity Cards become the core of your lesson plans and your lesson plans are organized into units, which are organized into categories called centers. It may seem a bit confusing at first, but once you start creating and organizing Activity Cards, your lesson and unit planning becomes well-organized and easy-to-use.
## Curriculum Block Plan for 1st Marking Period

Grades K-5

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>K - 1</th>
<th>2-3</th>
<th>4-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aerobic Activities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Muscular Strength &amp; Endurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Traveling through Space</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tossing &amp; Catching</td>
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<td>Pathways &amp; Levels</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Rope &amp; Wall Climbing</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Folk Dance</td>
<td>Folk Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Partner Games</td>
<td>Small-group Games</td>
<td>Small-group Games</td>
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</tbody>
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Lesson Plan Activity Card

Center: Manipulative Skills

Unit: Throwing & Catching

Name/Title of Activity: Team Juggle

Grade level(s): 3-5

Equipment needed: Soft objects that can be tossed and caught, such as: foam balls; beanbags, Koosh balls; and/or yarn balls.

Psychomotor Objective(s): Tossing; catching.

Affective Objective(s): Teamwork; communication; cooperation.

Cognitive Objective(s): Strategy; problem-solving; decision making.

Aligned with SHAPE Standards: 1; 4; 5

Set-up: Divide the students into groups of five. If you have extra students, you can make groups of six. Each group stands in a circle, approximately 15 feet in diameter. Each group has one ball to start.

How to play: On the signal to begin, each group passes the ball around their circle in a “star” pattern, with each player always throwing to the same person. A “star” pattern means that players should not pass the ball to a person who is standing directly beside them, but rather to a person who is across the circle. Once this pattern is established, the ball is continually thrown in this pattern, so that each player is always throwing to the same person. After the children have mastered one ball, another ball is added. Then a third ball is added. The challenge is to see how many balls, and for how long, a group can juggle without dropping or missing the balls.

Variation: To make it more challenging the group can juggle balls forwards or backwards. What this means is, one ball will go through the tossing pattern in a forward direction, while at the same time, the group tosses a second ball through the pattern in the opposite (reverse) direction.

Safety: Discuss the types of tosses that are appropriate for a team to be successful in this task (i.e., underhand toss).

Assessment: Observation of the groups to see how many balls they can juggle. Debriefing after the activity is over. Debriefing consist of verbal questioning of each group (e.g., How many balls did you juggle at once? How long were you able to juggle balls without dropping one? What strategies or techniques did your group use to better enable you to juggle the balls?)
SHAPE America Standards

Standard 1: The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.

Standard 2: The physically literate individual applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance.

Standard 3: The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.

Standard 4: The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others.

Standard 5: The physically literate individual recognizes the value of physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and/or social interaction.