Time for something new

The physical activities that are taught within schools have received much critical debate over the past fifty years from those involved within the study of physical education (Griggs 2008). The dominance of traditional activities (most notably traditional team games) as the primary focus for the delivery of PE is widely agreed to be of concern (Green 2008). Green further states that ‘PE is nothing more nor less than the recurring practices of physical education teachers’ (2005 p 653) and in fact, the majority of physical education curriculums are nothing more than the PE teacher’s favourite or preferred sports.

Whilst there have been some changes or variations concerning the physical activities that are taught in schools the fact remains that the vast majority of curriculum time is assigned to traditional activities and traditional games. The delivery of these activities, on a year by year basis, is resulting in the young people of today, feeling alienated from physical education where the curriculum shows very little sign of development or progression or innovation or change and simply does not reflect the changing themes and interest of today’s children (Sandford and Rich 2006), who feel that their own interests are not catered for within the PE curriculum. There is considerable research that suggests this key problem lies within the curriculum design and the actual activities that are taught, (Flintoff and Scaton 2006, Griggs 2008) which have showed very little change or variety during the past fifty years.

If change is to occur, to incorporate and reflect an educational curriculum that caters for every child, then change must be viewed as an opportunity to reflect, develop, progress and refine. The current safe, yet restrictive physical education curriculum taught in schools can be challenged, striving for a more diverse approach which focuses beyond what has always occurred. As Locke (1992) noted;

There must be people who are sufficiently dissatisfied with what is to take the risks of exploring what might be (p. 369).

Recent changes to the physical education curriculum.

The arrival of the revised physical education national curriculums in 2008 and in 2014 may have provided opportunities for physical education teachers to reflect upon which activities are taught in schools and what educational value and purpose they provide. The increased flexibility and less prescribed range and content areas, have replaced the traditional six activity areas, such as games and athletics, providing teachers the opportunity to re-address some of the ideological values behind the reasons for physical education, whilst reflecting on what activities are taught in schools. A positive outcome of such actions has seen some schools moving towards a curriculum that focuses on activities that are more suitable and relevant to the youth of today (Binney and Stidder 2011).

Research carried out by Binney and Stidder in 2010, where over 250 pupils were questioned following their experiences with a variety of different activities, found that two activities were regular scored highly with regards to pupil’s satisfaction, with statistics all over 95% satisfaction ratings.

These were Street surfing and Kinball
Street surfing

A combination of snowboarding, skateboarding and surfing, street surfing is a total body workout, developing balance, agility and coordination. The board is composed of two plates connected by a torsion bar and two wheels mounted on pivoting through 360 degrees of motion. The boards of often referred to as wave boards or rip stick and are now affordably available from a variety of retailers.

How to surf?

The movement used to propel the surfer forward is the ‘twist’ which is instigated by the rotation of the board and of the torso through movement of the hips and shoulders. It helps develop a sense of balance and promotes the coordination of movement. For more experienced surfers it is quite possible to do tricks (rear wheel, front wheel, 180 turns and spins, and 360 jumps and tricks).

(Various online video resources are available or please contact the University of Brighton for their coaching and teaching courses).

Lesson progression / Scheme of work

Week 1 – Introduction to the basic movement technique. Work in pairs, one supporting and one on the board.

Week 2 – Continuation of basic movements. Going solo, movement away from partner and off the wall. Move around cones, collect equipment off floor, slalom courses. Opportunity for peer and reciprocal work.

Week 3 – Athletic based events –

Differentiated races – students devise their own start points for the race based on their perceived speed.

Timed laps and paired ‘Pacing’. In pairs, pupils complete two laps of a course and record their times. The winners is the pair who records to two laps that are the closets together and the most consistent (e.g not the quickest)

Limbo loops. Surfers move around the gym, going under poles or Meter rulers, similar to a limbo game. Continue to move the items lower to the ground to challenge the pupils.

Week 4 – Game time

A variety of games can be played – Uni hoc, End ball, American football (flag football – see later)

Week 5 – Formation/ choreography (think red arrows)

Students can design a floor plan, and create a routine that incorporates aspects of dance / gymnastics choreography. Incorporate a variety of pathways, directions, speeds, grouping – pair or trio.

Week 6 – Performance

Pupils devise their own performance based on the skill level they have required.

It could be a Game performance, a group dance routine or performance, an athletics event or race.
Kinball

**Kin-Ball**, is a team sport created in Quebec, Canada in 1986 by Mario Demers, a physical education professor, in which the main distinctive characteristics are the big size of the ball (about 1.5 meters of diameter and comes in a bright, luminous pink colour) and that the matches are played among three teams at the same time instead of traditional one-vs-one like the most of the team games.

Each team has 4 players. When the game starts when one team, who are in contact with the ball, calls a corresponding colour of a team and then serves the ball. The named team must catch the ball before it touches the floor. The catching team must have three players holding the ball. The remaining player may stand, then hit the ball with his/her hands while clearly yelling the colour of another team which will then run and catch the ball. If the named team does not prevent the ball from hitting the floor, the other two teams are each awarded one point.

There are certain fouls that can occur during the game.

1. Yelling the colour of his/her own team when hitting the ball (which is hilarious when it happens)
2. Yelling the colour simultaneously with hitting the ball.
3. Hitting the ball in a downwards direction.
4. The offensive team takes longer than 5 seconds to hit the ball once there are 3 contacts.
5. A player hits twice in a row.
6. The ball is hit less than 6 feet in distance.
7. Hitting the ball when there are less than 3 contacts on the ball.

**Teaching practical ideas** –

**Team building games**

**Keepy ups** – pupils keep the ball in the air using their hands, feet, knees, and heads. Count the amount.

**Train tracks** – Pupils sit in pairs opposite each other and roll the ball down the class. However, the ‘pupils pairs’ will run out, so the first pairs must stand and run to add to the line to stop the ball from touching the floor. Try to move down the whole of the gym or the sports hall. Vary using different body parts.

**Indiana Jones** – form two circles, a bigger outer circle facing in and a smaller inner circle facing out. Get one pupils to run around the inner circle whilst the remaining pupils push the Kinball after the pupil.

**Layer in the serve and the rules** – In their kinball teams, get one team of four to serve to another team, who in turn serve to another team. Then progress so the defending teams do not know who the ball is going to. Develop tactics – defend all four corners of the gym, hit into space where there are no defenders.
Some more aspirational ideas / popular youth culture / innovation and creativity

All of the activities mentioned previously are still recognised sports, all with national governing bodies and are played regularly in a variety of different countries. However, there is scope within the new PE curriculum to be far more creative and innovative than merely replicating sports and activities that have not been widely taught within schools.

The section that follows highlights a list of innovative activities, approaches and methods that have been used within teaching modules and assessments at the University of Brighton. These have been developed to explore possible methods and approaches that can create positive motivational climates within lessons using original and stimulating activities than can inspire and motivate the pupils.

Circus skills

Using the delivery of Circus Skills can be an inventive and imaginative approach to complement the teaching of gymnastics. Once the core skills have been developed and mastered, a circus context could be an excellent opportunity to deploy these skills, into a new and different context.

Lesson 1 – Beam and balance work – Using wooden beams, benches, upside down benches. This is also an excellent context to introduce ‘slack lining’, an activity becoming more and more popular outside of schools, but not taught at all in schools.

Lesson 2 – Ring of Fire – (rotation, flight, vaulting) to include diving through hoops, dive forwards rolls, vaulting over equipment.

Lesson 3 – Rope work, aerial ropes – Solo, Pair and trio work using ropes.

Lesson 4 – Ball work, to include juggling, walking on large balls (supported), keepy-up group challenges

Lesson 5 – Sports Acrobatics- pair balances, trio balances, small group balances.

Lesson 6 – Class performance. Pupils select their best or favorite discipline from the past five weeks and create a performance to show in a big spectacular event at the end of the unit of work, or even better in an assembly, or evening performance.

Movie themes

Using popular films can be an excellent way to engage and enthuse pupils and excite them about their learning.

Quidditch – From the Harry Potter series, a form of Quidditch can be easily created and adapted into a new and exciting team game. Players on the teams have different roles,

Beater – Their job is to keep the Bludger (a bewitched ball) away from their team mates. This can be adapted so the beaters have a defensive role to stop their opponents from hitting their team mates with soft balls.

Chaser - The Chasers control the Quaffle (the ball) and attempt to get it through the goal hoops past the Keeper. These can be the attacking players who try to score in a variety of different goals (hoops on stoolball posts work well).

Keeper – Attempts to stop the Quaffle from entering the various different goals.
Seeker – The goal of the Seeker is to catch the Golden Snitch (the game does not end until the Seeker catches the Snitch). This can be adapted in schools, giving the seeker a special role or job separate from that of the game. For some pupils this could be the individual attention and focus that they need.

Hunger Games

From the Hunger games book and film series, this can be an excellent way to use some different form of team based games, focusing on tactics, cooperation and strategy. Using the game of capture of the flag, and a variety of different equipment using hoops, benches, boxes, coned safe zones, and pupils must work together to raid zones, and bring equipment back to their own districts or areas. A number of different progressions and rule scan be introduced to develop and advance the game from using safe areas within the sports hall, to equipment to hide behind, to roles within the raiding teams – for example certain pupils cannot be tagged, some however could wear tag belts, some are only allowed in certain sections or districts. This can also be played really well outside, away from the school, in woods or the countryside.

TV ideas - The Cube or I'm a celebrity or X-files - Secret agents

These can be a creative way to teach problem solving and team work principles and ideas. Split the whole class into four teams and each team faces a number of challenges.

Possible problem solving ideas

Order based games – get into age, height, first name alphabet order,

Tank mats – group must move down a space only using two gym mats

Ball in the bucket – all of the group must get their balls into a bucket but differentiate the start positions so the group can choose who has the closer positions and who throws form further way.

Skipping rope knots – Tangle the group holding onto skipping roes and get them to untangle

Spider’s web – Set up a spider’s web in-between the Swedish beams and the group has the get through the gas without touching the ropes.

Blindfolded guided / assault courses – set out an assault course, or equipment out in the gym, and pupils have to guide their partners though, under and over the equipment.

And now for something completely different……

UV / Glo in the dark games – Black out the sports hall or gym and use UV lights to light the space. Then utilizing luminous equipment, set up a number of games or tasks that pupils have to complete but only following or using glow in the dark equipment or teaching resources.

Total wipe out – Utilize the local pools inflatable equipment and set up an assault course in the swimming pool which pupils have to complete as part of a team.
Time for a change or more of the same?

In order for physical education to truly reflect the changing trends within society and within youth culture, there is a need to reflect upon what is currently being taught within secondary physical education. There are so many exciting, different and creative ideas that could be introduced into the curriculum that could inspire, challenge, motivate and enthuse our pupils so let’s all agree…… ‘it’s time for a change’.

Bibliography


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