

SATIPS

Support and training in Prep, Primary and Senior Schools

Physical
Education

Editorial

Welcome to the spring edition of the SATIPS PE Broadsheet.

We are always on the look out for new contributors, so if you have something you want to publicise or even just to share some of your own or your school's success please get in contact, and we can get your article in our next edition.

Liz Myers
Editor

Please note: If you would like to submit an article/material for this broadsheet, or if you have any questions or comments, please contact the editor via Twitter @LizzyMyers, or visit <http://www.lizmyers.co.uk/>.

21st Century Learning

Len Almond

Young people often learn how to use different forms of electronic media with ease and without the need for an adult. They become competent skateboarders, they can teach themselves to dance, how to play the latest video games and to make music without any adults. We can identify many ways in which young people take responsibility for learning and to manage it effectively. Yet, many schools and teachers of physical education in both primary and secondary education do not appear to recognise this and carry on with out-dated techniques. Just look at the statistics for how many young people love being active and take part regularly in different forms of physical activity: pitifully low. Is it a result of the way they learn in schools, the nature of the experience, the curriculum or is the fault of young people (I cannot believe this)? Yet, I read so many blogs about practical ways of developing new thinking: there are clearly many teachers with good ideas and the willingness to explore. Perhaps the problem is that we need a more coherent vision of what PE can achieve and secondly, we need to communicate this in practical ways.

I would suggest that one aspect of this coherent vision is to make room for self-directed learning in the learning repertoire and to give young people a genuine voice in their own learning and the experience of learning to love being active. There are many ways in which self-directed learning can be implemented in schools (and in

coaching) yet there seems to be a barrier to using this approach. Is it a fear of chaos developing? Does change mean a lot more work? Or, have we bred dependency on certain forms of learning? Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) is a case in point; it appears to be a taken-for-granted assumption that this is the way forward. Yet I see very few cases of self-directed learning in FMS, it appears to be didactic teaching and creating dependency on the teacher for learning.

Going back to notion of a more coherent vision of Physical Education in the context of 21st century learning, perhaps we ought to revisit some of the key features of learning that we need to address. I explored this and it was very rare to find anything associated with Physical Education. So I am outlining some of these key features and I would argue very strongly that the practice of Physical Education could build them into the way that learning is organised.

- Self-directed learning
- Behavioural flexibility
- Imagination to see possibilities and creativity
- Independence
- Responsibility
- Learning to make informed choices
- Giving young people a voice
- Self-confidence
- Enthusiasm
- Optimism
- Perseverance
- Determination
- Patience
- Resilience
- Learning to work productively with others
- Co-operating with others on tasks
- Sharing and taking turns
- Learning with and from others
- Empathy
- A sense of belonging
- Consideration of others and unselfishness
- Trust and respect for others
- Sensitivity to others
- Emotional attachment to purposeful physical pursuits
- Helping a young person to deal with:
- Emotional outbursts, aggressive reactions, anger, anxiety, tension, disappointment, fear, envy
- Helping a young person to experience:
- Joy, satisfaction and contentment
- Self-regulation and self-control 🍌

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This is one of the subject Broadsheets published termly by The Society of Assistants Teaching in Preparatory Schools limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

Reg. no. 890301 England.

Registered Charity
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I would argue that all these characteristics are (or should be) central to Physical Education but they are seen as secondary to content considerations (and a focus on skill) and usually they are taken-for-granted assumptions that are by-products. This position needs to be revised and these key features (see above) need to have a much higher priority because they will reinforce young people's learning and represent the educational validity of Physical Education. I would suggest also that they are key to enabling young people to see Physical Education in a different light – one that can enrich their lives and recognise purposeful physical pursuits as more significant in their lives.

This would require a major rethink on the part of the Physical Education profession and they would need considerable support especially in practical ideas. But, somehow, I feel this may not be enough. Perhaps the problem is too deep-rooted?

PE Pedagogy

We talk the talk but do we walk the walk?

Liz Myers

We as educators often talk a good talk, but do we walk the walk?

When teachers get together it is inevitable that the conversation quickly turns to teaching and how we can put the world to rights, often this happens to the dismay of partners who have to quickly learn how to communicate within the teaching world, jammed packed full of jargon, and emotive adjectives. Alternatively, partners, instead of understanding the jargon, just become adept at looking mildly interested when discussing how the new assessment policy is not conducive to a productive learning environment, impedes on personalisation and will result in an increased impact on teacher workload. My question is... do we actually believe in, or embody, our own rhetoric?

Ask any teacher the value or purpose of their subject area and they will begin to tell you their philosophy and why their subject is invaluable and considered to be a cornerstone of education. But does this passion permeate into their practice within the classroom, sports field or workshop?

I recently conducted some research within a primary school where I asked two teachers what they believed the value of physical education was. I was amazed by the sophistication and complexity of their responses. Having listened, enthused by their understanding of physical education, I could not wait until I could observe their lessons, as they clearly understood the value that physical education could play in developing the lives of young people. However, as you might of guessed, they were masters of the rhetoric but this did not translate fully into their practice. This left me thinking why was this the case?

After some consideration, I think I have reached the answer, and that being... survival! With those two teachers in the research, I wanted to understand what they really thought and not what they thought I wanted to hear. Educators are often told what to do, how to act and even sometimes what to think. Ofsted, organisations, senior leadership team, line managers all have their own agendas that are often interlinked. The message from the top (Ofsted and government) getting filtered down through the education system, often getting distorted as we try to make sense of what it is that we are being asked to do, report on, or create. In this process we naturally adopt and create our own discourse, using this to articulate what we are doing and how this fits in with the bigger picture. This bigger picture or the force from above, makes us look over our shoulder, and try and justify our own practice in their world, using their language. This is done for fear that if not, we will get a poor Ofsted rating, or it will reflect badly in performance management. Therefore, engagement in this discourse is key for survival. Unfortunately, high quality teaching and learning should speak for itself. For example, when did explicitly identifying your 'targeted groups' become more important than knowing the people and the personalities in your class?

When did talking the talk become more important than walking the walk?

Adopting these terms like 'identifying targeted groups' and 'hitting baseline figures for assessment', all serve the purpose of the micro-management of education and student progress from regulatory bodies. This in my opinion although needed, has got out of control. Demonstrating that progress has been made in 20minutes for example is not as important as how that child is being holistically developed over six weeks or a year. Yes every lesson should attempt to promote progress, but if too much pressure is applied, you don't always get more learning taking place. Children are not in an education factory where efficiency can be applied to get more for less.

Children's learning is not linear, and it is our job as educators to respond to the needs of the children at any given time in any given situation. What I guess I am trying to raise is, we should try and focus on talking about what we 'do' on a regular basis rather than talking about what we think we should 'do' that is guided by others. As an educator you are by your very nature a professional, you have the knowledge and skills to seek further understanding, you are the experts within your setting not Ofsted or other organisations. Talk about what you 'do' as this is more powerful than talking about what 'you think you should do' for others benefit. Walk your walk and talk about it!

PE Curriculum

Dance about MATHS

Dance Equation 🍌

counting the beat

Try this dance lesson and teach your class maths skills at the same time!

In the world of cross curricular learning, some combinations are more obvious than others. Subjects like history and literacy, or science and geography, are frequently found canoodling, but part of the fun that comes with a mix and match education is happening upon the more unlikely bedfellows.

A particularly novel hybrid, maths and movement, is currently being explored by Rebecca Hart of Dance Equation (www.dance-equation.co.uk). Skipping her way down this unusual path, she has introduced a healthy and kinaesthetic approach to learning concepts such as fractions, place value, number bonds and even algebra.

The frenetic approach is a hit with kids. But don't just take our word for it. If you'd like to see how your class responds to this lively combination of figures and frolics, we have a complete lesson plan for you to trial!



The warm up

1 Show the children how they can touch the floor with different numbers of body parts. For example, balancing on one foot and two hands equates to three body parts touching the floor. Balancing on one knee, one foot, two elbows and the forehead would be five.

2 Play music and ask the children to walk around the space in any direction. Stop

the music, shout out a number and tell the children they must put this number of body parts in contact with the floor. Ask the children to balance in this shape whilst you go around to check they have succeeded.

Congratulate them for creating such interesting shapes. Start the music again and repeat the exercise (shouting out a different number).

3 Instead of just walking to the music, ask the children to perform different actions, e.g. hop, skip, turn, roll, jump. Try different ways of moving, e.g. like a robot, like jelly, like a frog etc.

4 Ask the children to work with a partner – this time, the number called out is the total number of body parts the pair is allowed to have touching the floor.



The lesson

Part 1 – Digits

(Children learn all the body positions for the digits 0 – 9 – see below)

You may want to work as a whole class to start with, physically demonstrating the body positions for each of the digits whilst the children copy. Alternatively, they could learn some of the positions themselves from a hand out, in groups, or on their own.

Play background music whilst the children are learning the number positions. Try testing the class altogether by asking them to perform the numbers whilst counting out loud. Try counting forwards, backwards, odds, evens, etc.

Part 2 – Tens

(Children learn how to transform the digits into tens)

10s are demonstrated by adding a jump. So for 10, you perform the jump and then hold the body position for the digit 1. 20 would be a jump followed by holding the body position for the digit 2. Explain that the jump is like adding a zero.

Having covered this, ask the children to try performing 10, 20, 30...90. This can be done as one big group or in smaller groups and to music.

THE PERFORMANCE

When they perform their numbers to the rest of the class, ask the audience to guess the number. Talk about the performance elements – did they perform the dance well, were their heads up, were they in time with their partner?

Part 3 – Teens

(Children learn how to use the above information to perform all the numbers 10 – 9)

An 11 is represented by first performing a 10 (jump, then hold the body position for 1) and then the unit (body position for the digit 1). Make sure that there is a gap in between the 10 and the 1 – it's best to come out of the position and then back into it again to show the different sections. In the same way, a 12 would be a 10 followed by a 2.

Ask the children to dance 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. They could try this to music with a partner.

Part 4 – Up to 99

(Children dance the numbers 0 – 99)

Remind the children how to perform a 20 (a jump, then hold the body position for the digit 2). See if they know how to perform 21, 22, etc without prompting (They will probably get very excited and find it easy to work these out).

Try other numbers up to 99 – 53, 76, 34, 88...etc. Ask the children to work with a partner and play a 'guess the number' game. For this, partner 1 performs a number and partner 2 has to guess what it is – and visa versa.

THE COOL DOWN

Sitting on the floor in pairs, ask partner 1 to trace a number on the back of partner 2. Partner 2 has to guess the number. Swap over.

This needs to be done slowly and calmly. Play relaxing music to create the right mood.

Part 5 – Hundreds

(Children transform the digits into hundreds)

100s are represented by a 360 degree turn. Explain that performing a turn is like adding two zeros. So for 100 you would complete a turn and then hold the body position for the digit 1. 200 is a turn followed by the digit 2, etc.

Ask the children to try performing 100, 200, 300, 400...900. This can be done altogether, individually or in groups.

Part 6 – Up to 999

(Children dance numbers up to 999)

Now the children have the tools to make any number up to 999. E.g. 347 would be a turn into the body position for digit 3 (300), a jump into the body position for digit 4 (40) and then hold the final body position for digit 7. For 508 you would do the turn and digit 5 (500), miss out the tens section and go straight into the digit 8.

Ask the children to work in pairs and play the 'guess the number' game. Ask them to pick a number to practise, ready to perform to the rest of the class. Explain that they need to perform the whole number with their partner in unison.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Try performing the numbers with different dynamics – sharp, gentle, smooth, etc.
- Invent an action for thousands and try out different numbers up to 9,999

Find out more

Rebecca Hart, director of Dance Equation, explains why she thinks music and maths make the perfect partners...



As a choreographer, I love experimenting with pattern, space, structure and time and find similar satisfaction when investigating a mathematical concept. I have found this work especially useful in schools, as a way of making maths creative, fun and physical.

Using bodies to explore mathematical concepts helps children learn in various ways. They:

- experience concepts with their whole bodies and imaginations, without language, which develops another level of understanding
- experiment and play with concepts which helps to fix them
- work together in the dance session, allowing them to collaboratively learn concepts and contribute to problem solving and creativity

Dance Equation has extensive experience of leading dance workshops for Primary and Secondary schools that relate to specific areas of the Numeracy Curriculum. These workshops are a great way of introducing a physical, healthy and creative approach to learning.

Other themes we cover include: counting, fractions, place-value, partitioning, greater than and less than, multiply and divide, number bonds, shape, inverse, coordinates, transformations, loci, straight line graphs, algebra and many more.

Visit: www.dance-equation.co.uk for more information



Next Edition

Summer 2016

If you would like to contribute to the broadsheet by sharing your ideas or best practice please feel free to submit an article by sending it to the editor's email address at liz.myers@scholarly.com. We would welcome any article contributions that pertains to the topic areas listed above. If you require more information on how to write an article or for guidance please feel free to contact the editor via email.

We look forward to sending out our Summer edition later on in the year.

Liz Myers
Editor

For hundreds of free, high quality Physical Education teaching resources (lesson plans, schemes of work, worksheets, activities, ideas, videos & blogs) please visit our friends at <http://www.pescholar.com>