

The Physical Education Hall of Shame

• NEIL F. WILLIAMS •

At the heart of our physical education curricula is usually a configuration of activities and games that we present to our students for the purpose of achieving the ultimate goals of physical (motor skills and fitness), emotional, cognitive, and affective development of the child. We are, as a profession, attempting to assist our students in the development of the unity of their minds and bodies to enable them to live as healthy and productive adults in our society.

Over my 23 years in the field of physical education, I've observed that several of the most popular and widely used activities and games at the heart of our curricula have many features and traits which are contrary to accepted practices of good physical education teaching—either they are patently dangerous, have minimal participation by the majority of the students (Klesius, 1988), have limited physical activity, require little training or pedagogical skill to teach (Faucette, McKenzie, & Patterson, 1990), barely promote any of our major goals, or single students out for potential embarrassment in front of their classmates. It is in the hope of eliminating these types of activities and games (and the inappropriate and misguided thinking that goes with them) from our curricula, that the Physical Education Hall of Shame (PEHOS) has been established.

After giving the matter and the potential candidates a great deal of

thought, it has been decided that the following games will be declared as "Charter Inductees," with all of the rights and privileges pertaining. They are presented in alphabetical order because it would be impossible to establish a hierarchy of "quality."

Hall of Shame Inductees

■ *Dodgeball.* PEHOS is not the first to decry a game which has as its main focus the attempt to inflict pain, harm, injury, and embarrassment on one's opponents (Zakrajsek, 1986). It is unfortunately a staple, if not the backbone, of many school programs and may have done our profession more harm than any other single factor. Over the years it has been called more descriptive names, such as "Bombardment," "Murderball," "Killerball," or "Poisonball." This is a very popular game which some children (typically the highly skilled) love to play.

Generally speaking, the game is a litigation action waiting to happen. At most, about half of the students really play—the rest hide in the farthest reaches of the gym. There is no denying that the game involves throwing, catching, running, thinking, teamwork, and strategy. However, there has to be a better way to do it than to endanger the health and well-being of our students—not to mention the security of our jobs. This game is usually played until someone gets hit in the head. At

that point, the teacher decides that the game might be dangerous and stops it temporarily. Therefore, it is not surprising that dodgeball is a PEHOS Charter Inductee.

■ *Duck, Duck, Goose.* This circle chase game, usually played with primary grade children, involves one student selecting another to chase him or her. While the "ducker" is making the selection for the "goose," the other children are forced to sit still while having their heads "tapped." Once the goose is picked, he or she is faced with the unlikely prospect of jumping up and trying to catch the duck who has a running head start. The two of them race around the perimeter of the circle, with the duck trying to get back to the goose's original spot before being caught by the goose. The task for the goose is nearly impossible, but usually the goose is encouraged by the incessant high-decibel screaming of the other students, who have little else to do. The failing goose now becomes the ducker, and the game continues in this pattern.

In this game, it is entirely likely that at least half of the students in the class will never be picked (and consequently will never move from their spots on the floor, except to spin in circles on their backsides during the entire game), and generally, about five students do all of the "playing." Friends usually pick friends, but some students are occasionally picked by the duckers just

to see them fail and be ridiculed. With minimal student participation time, an almost impossible task to complete, and minimal activity for those who do participate, Duck, Duck, Goose is a unanimous choice for the PEHOS.

■ *Giants, Elves, and Wizards.* A modern version of the more basic "Crows and Cranes" chase/capture scenario, this game is now quite widely played in physical education classes. The concept is that in every round, each of two teams assumes the role of one of the three title characters (each of whom has "power" over one of the remaining two characters and is also "overpowered" by the remaining one of the other two characters). The more "powerful" group then chases its potential victims back to a safety zone in an attempt to capture them. Captured players become part of their captors' team and successive rounds are played, with players changing groups as they are captured, until one team captures all of the class members and "wins."

The game is supposed to teach students creative movement (in their portrayal of the title characters), develop anaerobic fitness (from the sprinting), improve decision-making skills (in students' choices to chase or be chased), and enhance group cooperation skills (through the groups' cooperative choice of which characters to assume at what time). In fact, most of the time spent on this activity—about 98 percent—is spent explaining all of the confusing rules and in the huddles where students choose their characters. In the course of a typical game of 15 to 20 minutes, students get to play about eight to ten rounds. In each of those rounds, students are anaerobically active for about two seconds for an active participation time factor of less than 2 percent.

Is the game fun? Sure! Do the students enjoy playing it? Yes, they do! Is there a better way we could accomplish all of this? If you think that this kind of game is worth-

while, then at least choose a more basic type of tag or chase activity where the participation time factor is somewhat closer to 50 percent and the students can actually understand all of the rules.

■ *Kickball.* Physical educators often begin to play and teach this soccer/baseball combination in their classes as early as kindergarten. It helps reinforce many aspects of baseball (running to bases, fielding, throwing, batting) and soccer (kicking a moving object strategically), and the students generally seem to enjoy playing. They enjoy the game so much, in fact, that as early as the second grade, we can also observe them playing it by themselves, without any adult supervision, during their recess periods. They seem to be perfectly capable of organizing teams, establishing a field, and working their way through the game without any help at all. Why, then, do we insist on teaching this game in our physical education classes all the way through secondary school?

Wilson (1976) observed that in a typical kickball game, more than one third of the children never caught the ball and more than one half of the children never threw the ball, and a highly disproportionate number of these uninvolved children were females. If we consider additional negative features such as putting the batter on display for embarrassment in front of all of the rest of the class, a participation time factor of 5 percent for most of the players (a few strong players dominate the field and the rest of the players bat about once every 15 minutes), and the opportunity to get players "out" by hitting them as hard as possible with a thrown ball, this game surely qualifies for PEHOS.

■ *Musical chairs.* This is a classic "elimination" game, not unlike Simple Simon in concept, in which students supposedly develop their listening abilities, thinking skills, and quickness. In the gym, musical chairs is often played with hula-hoops (instead of chairs), and the

students also can move in a particular locomotor pattern or practice a sports skill (i.e., soccer dribbling) while the music plays. The last student to find a hoop when the music stops is sent out of the game.

What usually happens is that the least skilled or least attentive students are the first to be eliminated, and then they spend the rest of the time it takes to produce a "winner" sitting on the floor as "losers" with little to do but watch their classmates. Elimination games are self-defeating, because the students who are in the greatest need of skill development are immediately banished, embarrassed, and punished, and then given no opportunity to improve. The next time they play, those students will be first out again. The average participation time factor for students in this game is about 50 percent (which is not bad), but for some students, participation time is over 90 percent while for the students who need the most practice, participation time is generally less than 10 percent. While some elements of the game have merit, we must find a way to increase the amount of participation for everyone to higher levels.

■ *Relay races.* There are some teachers who believe that relay races are a wise use of physical education time: they enable students to practice skills, promote teamwork, teach students to follow rules, and the students "love" them. The PEHOS Charter Induction Committee sees it differently.

Usually, a relay race takes about six to ten minutes to run when including the time it takes to make fair teams, set up the race and equipment, explain the task and rules, actually do the race itself, calm the students down when it's over, and move on to the next activity. During that time, each student "goes" once with a turn that might last 30 seconds—of the average eight-minute race, a student is likely to be active for, at the most, 6 percent of the time spent on the activity.

If useful sports or motor skills are involved at all, and often they are not, the students are asked to perform them under stress and in front of 80 percent of the class who have little else to do but watch and make fun of their classmates' mistakes. And woe is the student who does make a mistake, because he or she has to go back and do the task over again—the "right" way. Since the teamwork aspect is only centered around who "won" and who "lost," what values are really being taught?

■ *Steal the Bacon (STB)*. STB is a venerable sideline game in which two players at a time (one from each of two teams) compete against each other in the center of the playing area in front of the watchful eyes of all of their screaming teammates (vaguely reminiscent of Roman gladiator contests). The teacher assigns numbers to all players which ensures that everyone will get a fair share of playing time, and the team with the highest number of points "wins." The game purports to enhance competitive strategies—feinting, deception, quickness, and agility—while promoting a team concept.

While the students are concerned with which team has "won" or "lost," how can a physical education activity which has none of its participants active more than approximately 5 percent of the time promote any of its objectives? With such minimal levels of participation time, the great potential for embarrassment (as two students perform under pressure in front of the entire class), and with physical activity almost totally absent, STB in this form easily qualifies for PEHOS.

What emerges from all of this is a picture of what physical education often is, but should not be, and perhaps some indications of factors we must consider when planning games and activities which are at the core of our teaching. Some of the less important characteristics of these Hall of Shame games and activities are:

tasks which are extremely difficult to achieve; directions which are too complex and involved; activities which the students can and will do totally on their own; encouraging and/or ignoring breaking the rules; and an overemphasis on win-

In Duck, Duck, Goose, at least half of the students in the class will never be picked, friends usually pick friends, and generally, about five students do all of the playing.

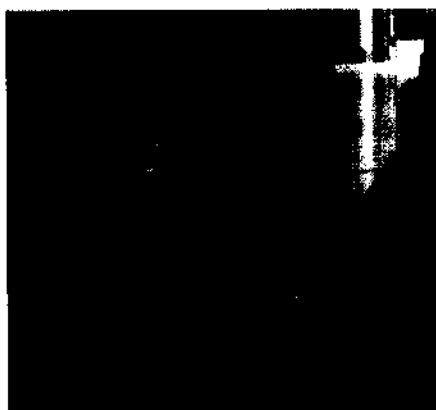


Photo by Faith Ferris

ning and losing. These are bad enough, but they would have to be considered minor when compared with the elements of popular physical education activities and games which have necessitated the establishment of the PEHOS in the first place. Such elements include:

- absence of the purported objectives of the activity or game;
- potential to embarrass a student in front of the rest of the class;
- focus on eliminating students from participation;
- overemphasis on and concern about the students having "fun";
- lack of emphasis on teaching motor skills and lifetime physical fitness skills;
- extremely low participation time factors;
- organizing into large groups

"Fun" is both the boon and the bane of our profession. Gross motor physical activity, in almost any form, is enjoyable for our students, and we do not need to be overly worried that they are or are not enjoying themselves in class. It is fairly certain that fun is not a major consideration when planning classes in other fields of study, and we should not judge or define the value or quality of what we do in physical education classes by whether or not the students have a "good time." If our lessons are well-conceived and planned, and if they reach constructively toward the attainment of our ultimate goals, students will automatically have a "good time," and they will actually derive all those important benefits we claim to promote.

We must eliminate, as much as

where getting a "turn" is based on luck or individual aggressiveness or competitiveness; and

- extremely high likelihood for danger, injury, and harm.

Students' class participation time factors must be maximized, and a minimum of 50 percent for all of the students in every class is suggested as a guideline for acceptable planning and teaching. Furthermore, when there is a high level of participation, there is a much lower chance for student embarrassment because each student is too busy working to be concerned about the performances of others.

possible, the elements of undue danger and harm from our teaching. While many physical education activities and games do and should involve some elements of risk taking, we must also make intelligent decisions and plans, and not teach games or activities which promote and encourage our students to humiliate and injure one another. It is enough dishonor to be in the Hall of Shame, but it is better than the possibility of being in court on the wrong end of a lawsuit.

It is incumbent upon us, as professional physical educators, to structure and teach our classes with the intention and purpose of achieving our ultimate goals. We are not the only discipline in the schools which emphasizes emotional, cognitive, and affective development—all subject areas have these considerations as goals. However, we are the only discipline to include the development of physical fitness and gross motor skills as goals; therefore, these two elements must be present in all of our planning and teaching if we are going to keep ourselves from being enshrined in the Physical Education Hall of Shame.

Author's note: If you know of an activity or game that should be inducted into the Physical Education Hall of Shame, please send a brief description and supporting evidence to the author.

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PROGRAM...from page 35

to promote learning in these domains. Competitive activities are offered to students of similar ability and those interested in measuring their skill level in relation to others.

4. *Ample learning time.* All students have equal opportunities for learning and participating in the program. Learning and participating opportunities are the right of all students.

Developmentally appropriate physical education increases the likelihood of enjoyable, challenging, and successful learning for all students. Teachers need to continue or begin to think in terms of the children they are teaching and not what activity can keep a class of children "busy, happy and good" (Placek, 1982). Our instruction should be geared to meet age group needs while allowing for the individual differences within any group of children.

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The Physical Education Hall of Shame, Part II

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Because physical educators are held accountable for providing developmentally appropriate and educationally sound programs (Grineski, 1992; Petersen, 1992; Wikgren, 1992), we should identify practices in physical education which persist but which are not in the students' best interests (Graham, 1992). As professionals, we must reexamine our practices and programs and think critically about what, how, and why we are teaching the children in our care.

The Physical Education Hall of Shame was established (Williams, 1992) to help professionals take a closer look at themselves, to focus on developmentally and programmatically appropriate physical education, and to encourage professionals to strive toward structuring and teaching classes in order to achieve the ultimate goals of physical (motor skills and fitness), cognitive, and affective development of students. Ultimately, students should develop a unity of their minds and bodies to enable them to live as healthy and productive adults in society.

The seven charter inductees from

1992—dodgeball; Duck Duck Goose, Giants, Elves, and Wizards; kickball; Musical Chairs; relay races; Steal the Bacon—are joined in the Hall of Shame by six new, equally deserving members. The major elements of an activity or game which have been identified as criteria for inclusion into the Hall of Shame follow. (To qualify, a game or activity need only possess one of these elements.)

- Absence of the purported objectives of the activity or game.
- Potential to embarrass a student in front of the rest of the class.
- Focus on eliminating students from participation.
- Overemphasis on and concern about the students having "fun."
- Lack of emphasis on teaching motor skills and lifetime physical fitness skills.
- Extremely low participation time factors.
- Extremely high likelihood for danger, injury, and harm.

It is impossible to decide which one of the following activities is the worst, so the new inductees are presented in alphabetical order.

Line Soccer

Enhancing and improving students' soccer skills are objectives frequently cited for playing this game, and Line Soccer (also known as Sideline Soccer) does do this to some extent. In each round, teams line up on opposite ends of a court, and the teacher calls out one or two previously assigned numbers. The corresponding players from two teams dart out, attempt to gain control of the soccer ball in the center of the playing area, and have about one minute to try to score a goal by kicking the ball through the "wall" of players remaining at the opposition's goal line. The game can be fast paced and exciting, and on infrequent occasions, will even feature some elements of "good" soccer.

Line Soccer, however, violates several of the basic principles of good physical education teaching (Petersen, 1992). Participation time is minimal—players on a 12-person team are on the court only about 16 percent of the time in the best of circumstances. Brown and Grineski (1992) observed that only a small number of players ever interacted

with other players or the ball. In one class, three students neither touched the ball nor ran the length of the gymnasium floor. Students are put on display in front of their peers in a pressure situation which also demands highly valued skills and competencies, and this sets them up for potential embarrassment and ridicule. There is also the strong possibility that one of the better players out on the floor will gain control of the ball and kick it toward a student who is ill-equipped to stop it or get out of the way. Line Soccer's siblings, Line (Sideline) Basketball and Line (Sideline) Hockey, also automatically qualify for the Hall of Shame on the basis of close family resemblance.

Messy Back Yard (MBY)

MBY is a misbegotten creation that still seems to show up in variations (most recently in several textbooks and a national physical education publication) in the name of developing teamwork and enhancing throwing and catching skills for primary (K-3) children.

Students are divided into two groups, and each side is assigned to one half of a court (i.e., basketball or volleyball) while separated by a net or barrier at mid-court. Each group has 15 to 50 foam discs, Nerf balls, plastic bowling pins, and assorted other objects. On the teacher's signal, the students begin to throw the objects over the net to the other group's side. Students may catch or pick up any object thrown over to their side and throw it back. The action is fast, furious, and borders on the maniacal. The game consists of several rounds and the object is to clean up your "messy back yard" and to have the fewest objects on your side when the round is ended (usually after about a minute) by the teacher's whistle. When the round ends, each team counts all of the objects on its side and the team with fewer objects gets a point for having the "neater" back yard.

First, can a second grade class accurately count 50 or 60 objects in less than 5 minutes? Actual physical

activity time is absolutely minimal. Second, because the action is so frenzied, objects continue to fly over the net for at least 15 seconds after the whistle has sounded, rendering the first minute absolutely meaningless. Third, this game is almost completely mindless. Students are told to throw all of the objects back over the net as fast as they can, but actually

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the best strategy is to collect everything that is thrown over to you and then to wait until one second before the round ends before bombarding your helpless opponents with 100 assorted balls, discs, and bowling pins. But because the teacher almost always ends the round without any warning or regard to how much time has elapsed, actual thinking does not help the players at all and is usually a hindrance. Combine all of the forementioned with the inevitable 200-decibel screaming that goes on in such a game (twice as loud as a Guns N' Roses rock concert), and you have one of the all-time champion Hall of Shame members.

Red Rover

This game is a relic from a time when physical education classes were not coed and in which football and wrestling coaches tried to determine who were the toughest kids in the school. Red Rover, nominated by several people from around the country, is one of those search, maim, and destroy games where one team wins by "capturing" all of its opponents.

Two evenly matched teams face each other across half of a basketball court and take turns calling players "over" from the opposite side. Team A huddles and decides on the player they want to embarrass from Team B. Then they hold hands to form a long chain and chant, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send Johnny over!"

Johnny sizes up the situation across the court, and he looks for either the weakest spot in the chain (is it where those two girls are?) or the place where he thinks he needs to inflict the greatest pain (should he run over that nerd with the glasses, or into the clown who spilled his milk at lunch yesterday?). At this point Johnny takes off at full throttle and attempts to break through or dive under and past the joined hands at the desired point in Team A's chain. If he is unsuccessful, he becomes a member of Team A (he is captured). But if he does break through the enemies' line, he may return to his own team (Team B) with both players whose link (or arms) he broke. Upon his return (or capture), Team B now gets to call over a player from Team A.

In our considerations for the Hall of Shame, we could totally ignore the fact that Red Rover is astonishingly dangerous because it has so many other inappropriate elements which qualify it for enshrinement. Other than standing for 15 minutes and holding hands with each other, there is virtually no physical activity for anyone (even if Johnny got called over and captured every time, he would only be running and crashing for about 3 out of every 45 seconds of game time), and no motor skills whatsoever are taught or reinforced. Apart from the highly specious claim that the game develops teamwork and sportsmanship, Red Rover also does not seem to incorporate any of the major objectives in physical education. Red Rover should "be eliminated not only from the United States, but its territories, the entire North American Continent, the world and the known galaxies" (Benton, 1992).

Simon Says

This elimination game, like other Hall of Shame members Tag and Musical Chairs, has one important element which is missing from the other two: teacher deception. The teacher leads the game by standing and facing all of the students in the class. Ostensibly, the game purports to teach students about their body parts and how to follow directions, but most important, students are taught to listen carefully. Students are to follow the leader's directions at all times, no matter how tricky and deceitful they become. Students are to do whatever movements they are told to do, but only if the command to move is preceded by the key words, "Simon says" (e.g., "Simon says put your hands on your head"). If the teacher does not precede a command to move with "Simon says," then the students are to hold their previous position. Students who are caught moving when they shouldn't, or not moving when or as they should, are eliminated from the game and must sit down until only one student (the "winner") remains in the game.

The problems are obvious with this game: early elimination of unskilled players; singling out students for ridicule; playing until there is a "winner"; low participation time factors; and low amounts of fitness-related activity. But the major problem is that the teacher is doing his or her best to deceive and entrap students—and then punish students when they are caught. Psychologically, this may be the rough equivalent of teaching students about the dangers of electricity by jolting them with an electric current if they touch the wrong button. As teachers, we have so much power—to do both good or harm—that we must always honor the faith and trust the students place in us. A game like Simon Says has the potential to do much more harm than good.

SPUD

This is a bombardment-type game in which the object is similar to dodgeball: try to hit, hurt, and hu-

miliate another classmate with a thrown object. Call me a spoilsport, but I object to a game in which students serve as human targets for their classmates. SPUD goes by different names, but my favorite is, "I Declare War."

In this game, all the students gather at the center of the playing area, and one of them tosses the ball into the air while calling out the name of a classmate. All of the students run for their lives (for about 4 seconds) except the named student who must catch the ball and then yell, "SPUD!" The running students all freeze and the person with the ball gets to throw it at one of them. The various hits and misses generate letter penalties, and the game is played until someone, or everyone, gets SPUD.

The game has always been promoted as one which develops anaerobic fitness, throwing, and listening skills. However, SPUD generally ends up as a contest among the better athletes in the class who play for the "benefit" of the others. The essence of SPUD for most of the students is lots of squealing punctuated

Elimination games like Tag are essentially self-defeating, because the least skilled and fit students are given almost no opportunity to improve.

by 4-second sprints every minute or so (a participation time factor of about 6%). There is limited activity, little running, less throwing, but lots of danger as the stronger students throw the ball at the heads of one another in an attempt to give them "letters." There must be better ways to promote running, throwing, and listening skills.

Tag

Tag games, when structured correctly, can be great additions to a physical education curriculum. They can teach motor skills, locomotor patterns, teamwork, strategy, honesty and sportsmanship, and they can help enhance anaerobic fitness levels. However, all too often, tag games are organized as classic elimination games (like Musical Chairs) in which students supposedly develop their quickness, thinking skills, and fitness.

Under some farfetched apocalyptic premise (e.g., Space Invaders, PAC-man/woman, Mutant Ninja Turtles, Star Wars), one or two students are "it" and run around the playing area trying to capture/mutilate/kill everyone else in the game (the runners). When "it" tags a runner, the runner is now captured/mutilated/killed and out of the game. All of the tagged runners go to a holding area and watch the rest of the game until only one runner remains untagged and becomes the winner. The winner is now the new "it" and the game continues in this fashion for several similar rounds.

What usually happens is that the least skilled or least attentive students are the first to be caught and eliminated, and then they spend the rest of the time it takes to produce a "winner" by sitting on the floor as "losers" with little to do but watch their classmates. Elimination games like Tag or Simon Says are essentially self-defeating, because the students who are least skilled and fit are usually the first to be caught, banished, punished, and embarrassed, and then given almost no opportunity to improve. The next time they play, those students are likely to be the first ones out again.

The average participation time factor for all students in an elimination tag game is about 50 percent (which is not bad), but for some students (the most skilled and fit—and those who need it least of all), participation time is over 90 percent. Meanwhile, for the students who should have the most practice, participation time is probably going to

be less than 10 percent. Although some elements of elimination tag games have merit, we need to focus on and implement ways to structure tag games which provide a much greater amount of participation for everyone.

The activities and games listed in the Hall of Shame are patently dangerous, have limited physical activity time, promote minimal participation by the majority of students, are overly concerned with having fun, barely enhance or promote any of our major goals, or single students out for potential embarrassment in front of their classmates. We must eliminate these types of activities and games (and the inappropriate thinking and teaching practices which seem to be mutually inclusive with them) from our curricula and work harder to implement developmentally appropriate physical education programming—programming which

promotes enjoyable, challenging, and successful learning for all students (Grineski, 1992)—and securely justify our place in the educational process.

Readers who know of inappropriate teaching practices (e.g., a line of 15 students and one basketball to practice lay-ups; naming students as team captains and having them choose sides) that should be inducted into the Physical Education Hall of Shame, should send to the author a brief description and supporting evidence. If enough responses are received, the Physical Education Hall of Shame will be expanded next year to include these inappropriate teaching practices.

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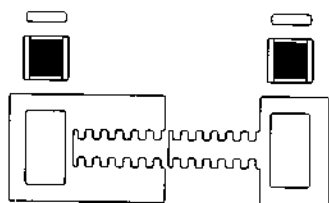
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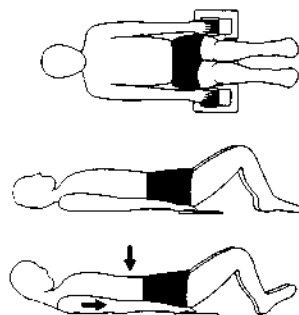
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The Physical Education Hall of Shame

Part III: Inappropriate Teaching Practices

Physical educators' most infamous practices, from using inappropriate equipment to having student captains choose teams, can be eliminated if these suggestions are followed.

NEIL F. WILLIAMS

It is with the idea of enhancing the critical thinking processes of physical education teachers that a new installment of the physical education Hall of Shame series has been written. Previously, two Hall of Shame articles focused on specific games and activities (Williams, 1992, 1994). In this article, poor teaching practices which reflect a lack of critical thinking on the part of their adherents are identified.

In a recent *JOPERD* feature (McBride, 1995), several authors explained how critical thinking can become part of physical education classes for students at every level (Blitzer, 1995), from elementary school (Cleland & Pearse, 1995) to middle school (Woods & Book, 1995) to high school (Greenockle & Purvis, 1995). But critical thinking must become part of the physical educator's teaching processes as well. In order to physically educate our students, we teachers must also become Newman's (1990) "models of thoughtfulness" in the way we plan, organize, and teach. It is only through critical thinking and thoughtfulness that we will be able to implement developmentally appropriate physical education and "increase the likelihood of enjoyable,

challenging, and successful learning for all students" (Grineski, 1992, p. 60).

Students on Display

This teaching technique is often used for gymnastic routines, rope climbs, or skills tests. It occurs when one student performs a routine or skill while everyone else in the entire class gets to sit and watch. Since only one person is active at any given time, class control, teacher evaluation, and performer safety are all greatly enhanced. But at what price?

Only the strong survive while they are on display. And even though this may be fine for the most talented and confident students, it can be devastating to the fragile self-image of many low- and middle-level performers (Bowyer, 1996). It is possible that more students lose sleep over this teaching practice than anything else we do. It is actually an incredible misuse of time for all students, since the total activity time for any one student in a 30-minute class is probably going to be under 60 seconds.

Solutions: Use station work, which allows students to participate in several

familiar, safe activities while the instructor focuses attention on a small group of students. When students are productively busy and active, they don't have the opportunity to watch one another perform, and many potentially embarrassing situations can be avoided.

One Line, One Ball, One Chance

This teaching technique is a close relative of Students on Display. Many of us are saddled with large classes, poor facilities, minimal equipment, and low budgets, and we often use these excuses to justify having a group of 15 or more students line up for a turn at shooting a basketball, climbing a rope, or working on the beam. It's another teaching technique that makes planning, organizing, teaching, and control much easier than it might otherwise be.

But according to the analogy in Henneberger's (1993) discussion of current trends in physical education, "making children wait in line to use one ball is like giving a class one pen...and expecting them to learn to write" (p. 1). All students need to practice, and the more they practice, the more skilled they are likely to be.

come. But that simply can't happen if there aren't enough learning stations and equipment. No classroom teacher would consider the "one pen" idea, and neither should we. Long lines put pressure on each performer to do it right every time because chances are so few and far between. Long lines also waste valuable learning time. There is "little or no opportunity for all students to acquire...psychomotor skills" (Grineski, 1992, p. 35).

Solutions: We need to think creatively and critically in order to devise alternative learning stations and use improvised equipment to maximize class participation and learning. Even if our solutions do not involve "official height, size and weight," the extra practice is worthwhile.

Roll Out the Ball

If there's one phrase in the history of physical education classes that has more negative connotations of inappropriate teaching practices, let me know what it is. "Roll out the ball." Even as we do it, we have pangs of guilt. But the justifications and excuses are plentiful and convincing: "There are too many students," or "That's what the students want," or "The students need to learn how to organize their own games," or "I've already taught them all the skills—it's time to play the game," or "I'm teaching eight classes a day. Don't expect me to plan every one of them."

For our profession, the implications of rolling out the ball are far-reaching: no planning, no organization, no curriculum, no goals, no objectives—no value. We are entrusted with an important position, so the least we can do is plan and implement appropriate lessons. An individual who has no training whatsoever in physical education can organize a class by saying, "Okay, you five students are blue shirts and you five students are red. Here's the basketball. Go play full court over there.

Oh...and call your own fouls." Can anyone remember why we bothered to go to college, anyway?

Solutions: Lessons and classes must be carefully and thoughtfully planned, organized, presented, and evaluated. If they aren't, we just are not doing our jobs.

Many physical educators believe that we have to use regulation equipment and official rules in order for our students to properly acquire any skill or learn any game. Often we have no choice: it seems that every elementary school in the United States has basketball hoops which are 10 feet high.

But why can't we adjust the size of the ball or the playing area? Almost every player's performance in basketball, with perhaps the exception of members of the men's high school varsity team, would be improved by using a smaller sized junior or women's basketball, or even a soccer ball, instead. Why do we insist on teaching volleyball in fifth grade with a regulation volleyball, an eight-foot net, perfect player rotation, and a 30-foot service line (Grineski, 1992)? If only one of our students is the varsity quarterback, why don't we use junior-sized footballs for our football-related activities?

Solutions: Like basketball, volleyball, and football, many of the activities and games we teach are strength-related. Smaller, lighter balls will help eliminate some of the strength factors and improve students' performance. In addition, especially in volleyball and soccer, appropriately sized equipment will reduce the pain inflicted during activities. Smaller equipment not only increases the safety of our classes but also helps students develop correct technique and skill.

Lower nets and rims, smaller courts, closer service and free-throw lines, and modified rules strike fear

into the hearts of the purists, but official regulations are only secondary considerations in our teaching—the welfare and development of our students are foremost. If we eliminate dribbling from basketball, it improves the performance of the least skilled and mitigates the dominance of the most skilled, who then have to pass more.

The real games, the ones played on television and by our varsity teams, are only for a very small percentage of our students. The large majority, the ones in our physical education classes, will do much better with seriously and thoughtfully modified versions of games. We should adjust our games, wherever possible, to make them more inclusive and developmentally appropriate (Helion & Fry, 1995).

If teaching a physical education class with one ball is like teaching a writing class with one pen, using exercise as a form of punishment must be like forcing a student to write, "I promise to be a good writer" 500 times on the blackboard. If one purpose of our physical education programs is to promote positive attitudes toward appropriate lifetime physical activity, exercise as punishment is certainly counterproductive. Short of humiliating a student in front of his or her peers (as in Students on Display), there probably isn't anything we can do that will discourage and alienate students more quickly and thoroughly than having them run laps or telling them to "give me 20..."

Solutions: There are dozens of other discipline-enhancing tactics and strategies we could use if we applied critical thinking to the process. Students who misbehave are likely to already be unhappy with our classes and physical activity. If what we're currently doing is not working, why do we think that punishing students with exercise will improve the situation?

Student Capitain Choose Teams

This affective domain Hall of Shame teaching practice turns our students loose on one another in psychological warfare. Even "Dear Abby" (Van Buren, 1995) and Ann Landers (1991) have received and printed letters about this one. Adjectives such as *humiliating, embarrassing, degrading, emotionally scarring, painful, and damaging* were used by writers to describe this practice, and Landers (1991) wrote, "I don't know how the gym teachers could [be] so insensitive" (p. 18).

Solutions: Let's keep this one brief. There are many other ways to form teams in physical education class, and all they require is some basic decision making and grouping by the person best qualified to organize the class—the teacher. It's much more time-effective for teachers to assign teams. While it may be interesting to see how our students perceive one another's abilities, there is no need to subject our students to this institutionalized psychological torture. May this practice go the way of dodgeball and duck-duck-goose—far away.

Physical Education Class as Sports Camp

The main focus of physical education over the past century, particularly in the secondary schools, has been sports-oriented athletic team activities such as football, soccer, basketball, softball, gymnastics, wrestling, volleyball, and the like. The rationale driving many schools' curricula today is still rooted in the premise that physical education classes are the place where future varsity athletes are born. However, most adults rarely, if ever, participate in most of these activities after they have left high school. Our educational programs must focus on what our students need to succeed and participate in the real world.

Annual studies by the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA)

have been available for the past several years, and they indicate that physical educators today are largely ignoring the sport-oriented leisure activities that adults pursue. According to the NSGA (1994), the top 14 sport-oriented leisure activities for adults in 1993, in order of popularity, were:

1. Exercise walking
2. Fishing
3. Swimming
4. Bowling
5. Camping
6. Exercising with equipment
7. Bicycle riding
8. Billiards/pool
9. Aerobic exercise
10. Golf
11. Motor boating
12. Dart throwing
13. Hiking
14. Running/jogging

A quick look at the list reveals that very few of the activities that adults

actually participate in are included in our physical education curricula at any level. A closer look further indicates that none of these 14 activities are team sports—they are all activities that a person can do alone, or with someone else if desired.

Solutions: How can we physical educators expect to be taken seriously by school boards, parents, communities, or students, if what we are teaching has no future application for the vast majority of our students? At a time of widespread recognition of the need to develop the long-term values of health, the environment, and fitness, why do we insist on providing curricula based on outdated perceptions of varsity sports? We need to think carefully and critically about our overall curriculum and the individual lessons and teaching practices within that framework.

Let us all, as professional physical educators, try to apply those same

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critical thinking skills—the ones we are trying to develop in our students—to our own teaching. Let us strive to become models of thoughtfulness. It is a challenge for us to “rethink” how physical education might be taught” (McBride, 1995, p. 23), but not much has to change except the thought processes we use to approach our subject matter.

In using critical thinking, we will still be able to achieve our goals of improving motor skills, developing physical fitness, and increasing cognitive and affective learning. But better than that, we will also be able to promote positive attitudes towards appropriate physical activity and fitness, which will help our students lead longer, healthier, more productive lives. Critical thinking may be the key we need to finally lock up the physical education Hall of Shame.

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The Physical Education **HALL OF SHAME, PART IV:** *More INAPPROPRIATE Games, Activities, and Practices*

NEIL F. WILLIAMS

T*he development of positive attitudes* toward physical activity is one of the major objectives of both elementary and secondary school physical education programs (National Association for Sport and Physical Education [NASPE], 2009). As stated by Le Masurier and Corbin (2006), “Quality physical education represents our best opportunity to provide all children with physical activity experiences that promote physical activity now and for a lifetime” (p. 44). Additionally, there is extensive scientific evidence supporting the role of physical activity in preventing disease and promoting a healthy lifestyle, so the concept of instilling positive attitudes toward lifetime physical activity is an important one for this profession (Archer, Paluch, Shook, & Blair, 2013; Lee et al.,

2012; Morris, Gorely, Sedgwick, Nevil, & Nevil, 2013; Tufts University, 2013; Van Horn, 2012). As a summary point, Lavin (2008) emphasized that “PE [plays] a key role in improving the long-term health and well-being of our children” (p. 27).

Physical education programs that instill positive attitudes increase the likelihood that children and adolescents will adopt and maintain an active lifestyle, both in the present as students and in the future as adults (Krouscas, 1999; Luke & Cope, 1994; Pangrazi

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& Beighle, 2012). To that end, one way that the overarching mission of contemporary physical education programs could be stated is, “Teaching children to become physically active for a lifetime.” So one critical question that teachers should be asking themselves is, “What do I do in my program that truly *encourages* youngsters to develop positive attitudes toward physical education and eventually become physically active adults?”

Regrettably, school-based physical education often ends up *discouraging* schoolchildren from becoming active for a lifetime because many of its games, activities, and teaching practices reflect a lack of critical thinking and are exclusionary, counterproductive, or contraindicated (Cale & Harris, 2009; Cardinal, Yan, & Cardinal, 2013). Inappropriately constructed games and activities such as dodgeball, kickball, line soccer, and relay races were discussed in previous “Hall of Shame” articles (Williams, 1992, 1994). And in 1996 inappropriate teaching practices such as putting students on display, having student captains pick teams, rolling out the ball, and exercise as punishment were also presented (Williams, 1996).

As originally set forth (Williams, 1992), the major elements identified as criteria for induction into the Hall of Shame are as follows. A game, activity, or teaching practice need only have one of these elements, but all of the inductees actually possess several of them:

- absence of the purported teaching or learning objectives
- great potential to embarrass a student in front of the rest of the class
- focus on eliminating students from participation
- overemphasis on and concern about the students having “fun”
- lack of emphasis on teaching motor skills and lifetime physical fitness skills
- extremely low participation time factors
- extremely high likelihood for danger, harm, or injury

If physical educators wish to improve their programs (both the content and the teaching process) so that they can truly encourage youngsters to become physically active for a lifetime, they must “acknowledge that they have produced generations of non-participants” (Parr & Oslin, 1998, p. 76) and that many of the practices that have been commonplace in physical education for decades must be questioned.

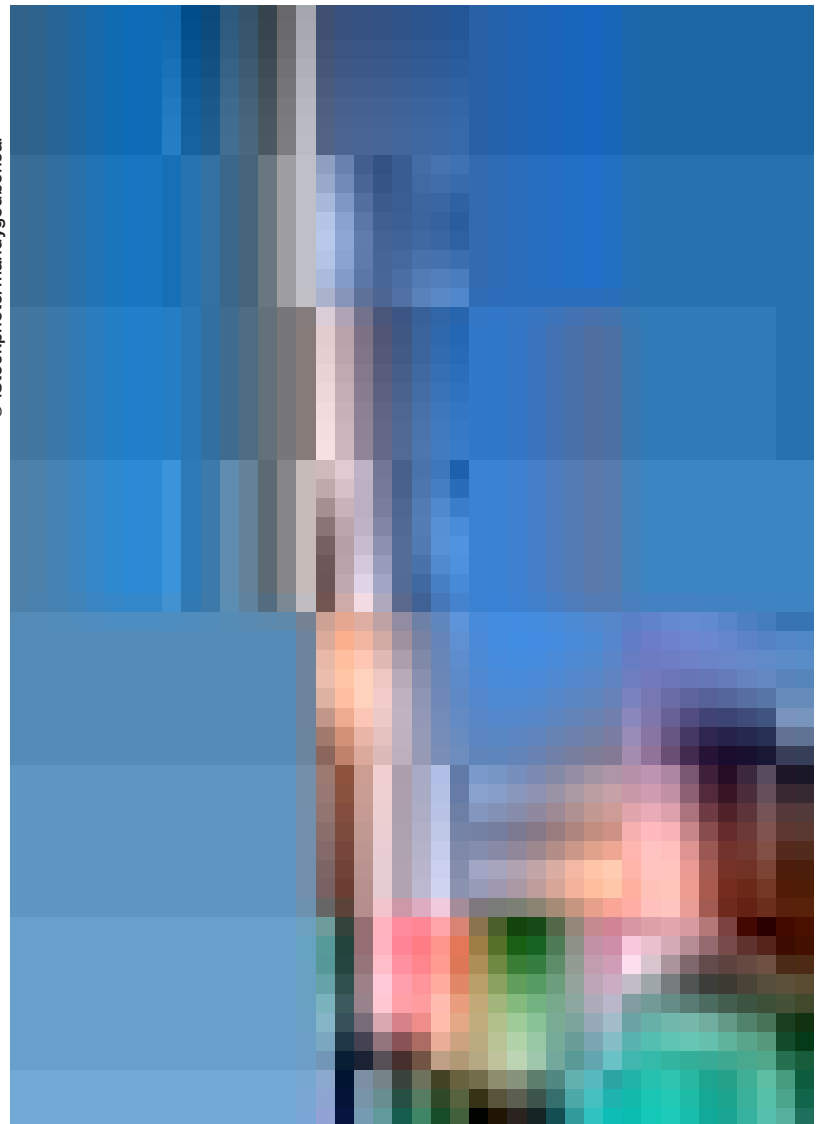
Unfortunately, in recent years even more inappropriate physical education games and practices have had to be inducted into the Physical Education Hall of Shame (PEHOS), so that physical educators can understand why such activities are to be avoided and so they can become more reflective and thoughtful practitioners of their profession. To aid in that process PEHOS now has a virtual home in cyberspace at PE Central (<http://www.pecentral.com/professional/hos/index.html>), in direct contrast to the web site’s hundreds of developmentally appropriate physical education activities, games, and practices.

This article analyzes seven physical education games, activities, and teaching practices that are new Hall of Shame inductees. As noted after each entry, they have been suggested by professionals from across the country and then debated and approved by a PEHOS advisory board consisting of public school teachers and university professors (the reader should refer to the “acknowledgments” at the end of the article).

Inappropriate Games and Activities

Tug of War (D. K. McCrumb, personal communication, November 11, 2011). Tug of war is a throwback to the military roots of

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so many physical education activities (Maker, 2009). It involves two large groups, each grabbing opposite ends of a rope, waiting for the signal to start pulling, and then attempting to drag the other group over a center demarcation line. Even if the pointless isometric straining for a few seconds or perhaps a minute is somehow considered useful, is there any other real benefit? Does tug of war actually satisfy any of the criteria for appropriate physical education teaching practices? No. And not just that, it is dangerous! Children can get very serious rope burns on their hands, be dragged along the ground, and be trampled on by their teammates. Tug of war could be modified to a two-rope, four-way activity for increased strategizing and participation, but in view of the high risk of danger and injury, this activity should just be eliminated from the curriculum.

Capture the Flag (G. Bass, personal communication, October 11, 2012). The way it is usually done, capture the flag is another quasi-military dinosaur: it is a large-sided, low-participation activity where the slowest and least skilled movers are quickly captured and excluded while they wait for the fastest and best players to rescue them, chase one another, or finish the game. Like standard versions of tag or musical chairs, when the next round of the game is played, those very same slow and unskilled players will quickly be captured and/or rendered inactive again. Perhaps capture the flag can become a developmentally appropriate game with certain modifications (e.g., using more flags or random teacher-controlled “jailbreaks”),

but at its heart it is a large-sided game with not enough participation opportunities for slower or less skilled students.

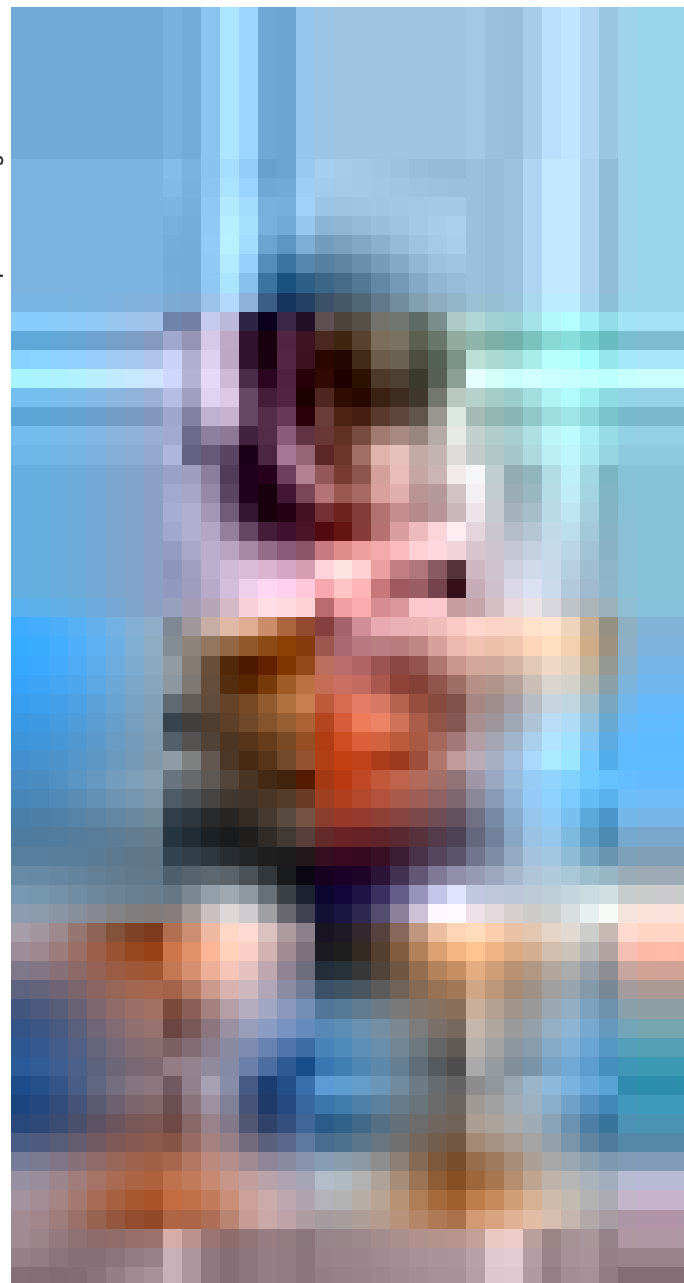
Climb the Rope (K. Wack, personal communication, October 13, 2013). The negative aspects of yet another military vestige have already been addressed in several PEHOS entries, particularly under the category of “putting students on display” (Williams, 1996) — one student performs a routine, skill, or test while everyone else gets to sit and watch. This is just fine for the most confident and talented students, but devastating to the fragile self-image of low- and middle-level performers. And it is an incredible waste of valuable class time, even for the best students who also spend a lot of time as spectators. Low participation and marginal success rates, the gap between the skill and students’ real-life needs, the element of danger, the usually inadequate tumbling mat under the rope, the inattentive spotters, the rope burns on the hands and legs, and the unfortunate spectacle of several students’ failed attempts to climb while the rest of the class sits and watches together create the “perfect storm” for another all-time PEHOS classic. Whittle equipment, multiple ropes of varying lengths, climbing nets, and climbing walls are much better ways to encourage, challenge, and help students develop muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility. These are also more anonymous settings where large numbers of students are participating simultaneously and therefore are not focused on anyone but themselves or the small group they are working with.

Inappropriate Teaching Practices

All-star Lines (B. Lewis, personal communication, October 17, 2011). In a full-class sport game (perhaps volleyball or basketball) with two teams, each team consists of two “lines” or subgroups, and those groups alternate off and on the court at regular intervals. This is a standard way of mitigating many of the negative aspects of large-sided games and allowing less skilled students to actively participate and contribute to the action. But with only a few minutes remaining in the class period, excitement high, and the outcome in doubt, the teacher announces that it is time for each team to put out its “All-star Line.” In a nasty twist on the practice of “student captains choose teams” and “PE class as sports camp,” each team is told to determine which “all-stars” get to play and which students get to sit and watch. It is the reincarnation of the varsity team-sport model in physical education class. The best players are, of course, very pleased with this practice, but the average and below-average students can only be discouraged as they are relegated to the background as spectators once again.

Athletes Sit Out on Game Days (C. Schutrum, personal communication, November 1, 2011). In this teaching practice students on any varsity team are excused from participation in physical education class on a game day. This might seem reasonable if the physical education class is running four miles and the athlete has a soccer game or track meet later in the day with high aerobic demands, but this is not usually the case. These varsity athletes should certainly be fit enough to participate in school-day physical education activities with low-energy demands and still play a match in the afternoon without undue fatigue. If one of physical education’s goals is to develop competent movers for a wide variety of lifetime sport activities, what sense does it make for a football lineman to be excused from tennis on game day? At the very least, the physical education class activity will serve as a warm-up for the afternoon or evening contest, and in the best-case scenario that football player will benefit from enhanced coordination, balance, and agility.

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Shirts vs. Skins (J. Crutchfield, personal communication, February 21, 2012). This inappropriate teaching practice for boys’ classes is a variation of “students on display” (Williams, 1996). Teams are identified by whether or not players are wearing a shirt — one team keeps their shirts on, while the other team plays shirtless. It is a longstanding and simple means of team identification in informal sport games, but it has no place in school-based physical education classes. Not only does this teaching practice suggest the use of large-sided games teachers should be trying to avoid, but the prospect of going shirtless can be absolutely horrifying for those students who suffer from severe acne, who are underweight or overweight, or who have poor body-image and low self-esteem issues. Furthermore, this teaching practice is one that is almost certain to bring unhappy parents to the principal’s office. No matter how tight the budget might be, low-cost mesh scrimmage vests will be both an easy solution and a wise investment!

Attendance Taken while Students Sit in Squad Lines (C. Ellis, personal communication, September 10, 2013). Students in academic classrooms almost always take their seat at the start of a



class. Sometimes they talk, sometimes they read, sometimes they study, and sometimes they are on their cell phone. That is how the classroom teachers take attendance and then begin their academic work. But in physical education, where the currency is motor skills, movement, and activity, precious time at the start of class is often wasted or not used efficiently. Several minutes of the already limited and valuable class time are squandered as students essentially sit motionless in squad spots and lines. Perhaps a better strategy for that start-of-the-class segment would be to organize pre-established structured tasks such as partnered throwing and catching skills, instant activities, self-directed warm-ups, or appropriate dynamic stretching while attendance is taken, instead of having students do nothing as they wait for something educational and worthwhile to begin.

Conclusion

SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators asserts that “quality physical education programs help all students develop: health-related fitness; physical competence; cognitive understanding; [and] positive attitudes about physical activity so that they can adopt healthy and physically active lifestyles” (NASPE, 2013, p. 1). At the center of the issue is the careful selection of activities, games, and teaching practices that will help both teachers and students to meet the discipline’s learning objectives.

If physical educators want to *encourage* students to become physically active for a lifetime through physical education, they must become more insightful, reflective, thoughtful, and considerate practitioners. If physical educators take the time to stop and reflect about what they do, why they do it, and, how they do it, they can be successful in making changes to their classroom practices (Tsangouridou & O’Sullivan, 1997).

Only then will physical educators be better able to achieve their goals of improving motor skills, physical fitness, and the cognitive and affective domains. But beyond that, they will also be able to better promote and impart *positive attitudes* toward a lifetime of appropriate adult physical activity and fitness so that all students can experience the joy of movement, the treasure of enhanced health, and the satisfaction of increased quality, longevity, and productivity of life in the global society.

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