



Teaching Games for Understanding

FROM THE EDITORS

This issue of the *Physical Education and Intramural Clipboard* aims to provide you with some practical ways to teach games to your students. Lately, it seems that teaching games has become more complex than necessary. When kids are required to learn all the skills needed in a game before they actually play, much of the fun is lost. Instead, teaching games through play will provide a more active, interactive way to learn—and kids will have fun while learning.

We are seeing a revitalization of resources that support the Teaching Games for Understanding concept. In this issue of *Clipboard* you will find practical examples from each of the four game categories that can be used as **starting points** to generate ideas. Teachers are encouraged to use the ideas and modify them where necessary in order to suit the needs and abilities of all students. Links to websites with recommended resources and game suggestions are also provided. Hopefully this will help you to generate even more ideas. Like Jamie Mandigo, author of our "Guest Editorial," we want to hear more kids say, "Can we play that game again?" instead of "When do we get to play the game?"

As always, we welcome your feedback and look forward to your contributions for future issues of *The Clipboard*. The next theme will be "Teaching Dance." Contact us via e-mail at h.sawchuk@sympatico.ca to submit ideas or suggestions.

GUEST EDITORIAL

When Can We Play the Game?

Those of you who have spent any time interacting, observing, or even reading about two year-olds will understand why I write this editorial with a certain amount of exhaustion. Like most toddlers, our two-year-old son loves to move. He loves to play little games and to use his body in creative ways. It seems impossible that he has a 50 per cent chance of being inactive when he reaches the age of five and a 64 per cent chance of being inactive when he reaches adolescence.



Studies have suggested that if today's generation of children and youth do not become more physically active, the health consequences will be tremendous. The time has come to take a serious look at effective strategies that will spark the passion children once had while playing games with their bodies, rather than with their hands on a computer mouse or joystick.

The Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) approach was developed by researchers at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom to tap into the inherent desire that humans have to play. Researchers developed TGfU when they found that students leaving PE programs in Britain demonstrated:

- little success in games due to the emphasis on performance,
- very little knowledge about games,
- supposed game skills, but in fact possessed inflexible techniques and poor decision-making capacity,
- a dependence on the coach/teacher to make decisions during games, and
- little development as thinking spectators and knowledgeable administrators within game contexts.

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The basic premise of TGfU is simple: *teach kids games by playing games*. With TGfU, students not only understand what they need to know to be successful in games, but perhaps more importantly, when and why to make certain decisions in dynamic game contexts. The TGfU

model is meant not only to develop better and more knowledgeable game players, but also to motivate students to take part in a variety of games.

Within the TGfU model, there are four categories of games:

- Target (curling, bowling)
- Striking/Fielding (cricket, baseball)
- Net/Wall (volleyball, tennis)
- Invasion/Territorial (soccer, basketball)

Each category covers games that have a similar structure. By exposing students to the primary rules, fundamental skills, and tactical problems associated with the games in each category, students become able to participate in a variety of games, not just the ones chosen by the teacher. For example, if a student understands the basic premise behind maintaining possession of an object in an invasion game, the student will be able to play a variety of similar invasion games. Tactical solutions like use of short passes, shielding the ball, or supporting the player with the ball are transferable between similar invasion games like soccer, field hockey, European handball, or basketball.

Research has suggested that students who are taught using the TGfU model develop a more holistic appreciation for games. By adopting an “I can” approach, students take part in games that are developmentally appropriate for their current skill level. Once they have developed a better understanding of the basic elements of the game, students are better prepared and motivated to invest the time and energy necessary to enhance their technical skills. Students feel rewarded when they discover that their newly acquired skills are transferable, and can be applied and adapted in a variety of games.

Above all, it’s fun to learn games by playing games. Try this approach to help motivate students to get physically active and stay active!

James Mandigo, Associate Professor
Department of Physical Education & Kinesiology, Brock University,
St. Catharines, ON, Email: jmandigo@brocku.ca

Learning can only be done by the learner and not by some transmission process from the teacher
- Bugelski

Sequence of Developing a Lesson/Unit

The TGfU Model

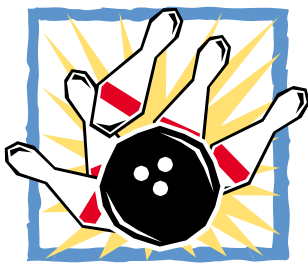
1. Game form
2. Game appreciation
3. Tactical awareness
4. Making decisions: what to do and how to do it
5. Skill execution
6. Performance

Traditional Techniques-Based Model

1. Skill execution
2. Game form
3. Performance
4. Making decisions: what to do and how to do it
5. Tactical awareness

Source: Morris, D., Stiehl, J. (1999). *Changing Kid’s Games*. Human Kinetics.

TARGET GAMES

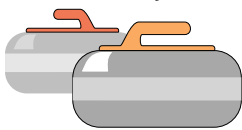


In Target-type games, players score by avoiding obstacles to get their objects closer than their opponent's objects to the target. Some examples are: bowling, golf, curling, and croquet. Tactical solutions learned in one game can be adapted and applied to tactical problems in other target games.

TACTICS IN FLOOR CURLING

Tips for Increasing a Team's Chance of Scoring

- Put up guards to protect the rocks
- To help place rocks, have the skip use his or her stick to show a target
- Players should bump or raise their own rock into the playing area
- Use aim to draw accurately to the button (need proper mechanics in delivery)
- Try to get the last shot (the hammer) in the last end
- Use different angles of approach to hit the rock
- Make controlled use of force
- Put rocks at the front of the house rather than in the back half of the house so that you can bump it back later
- Communicate with the skip

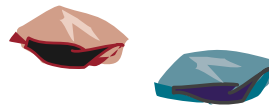


Tips for Decreasing the Other Team's Chances of Scoring

- Knock the other team's rocks out (take-out)
- Place rocks in a position where they guard rocks in scoring position
- Spread rocks to make it difficult for opponents to take out more than one at a time

James Mandigo & Joanna Sheppard
Brock University

Email: jmandigo@brocku.ca, jccsheppard@msn.com



TARGET GAME: BEANBAG GOLF

Object

Players try to get their beanbags into the hoops using the fewest number of throws possible

Number of Participants

About 4 players per hoop

Equipment

9 hula-hoops per game, and 1 beanbag per player



How to Play

- Place nine hula-hoops on the floor around the gym (or outside)
- Label the hoops 1-9
- In groups (up to four/group), players alternate shots and try to get their beanbag in hoop #1 using as few throws as possible. The group then proceeds to hoop #2, and so on.
- Distribute the groups evenly at all the hoops. Groups who start at hoop #2 end at hoop #1, and so on.

Variations

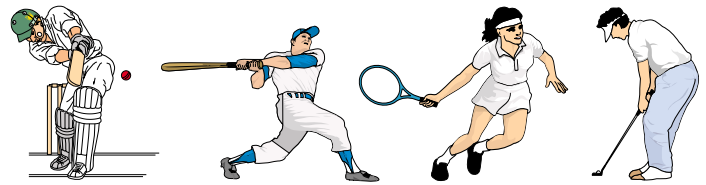
- **Beanbag Basketball Golf**
This game is played like Beanbag Golf, but uses the 4-6 basketball hoops in the gym as the targets. A long stick may be needed to knock down any beanbags that become lodged on the basketball hoop.
- **Disc Golf**
This game is similar to Beanbag Golf, except played outside. Hula-hoops are placed on the ground, and players use plastic discs instead of beanbags.

Think About...

Precision in throwing.

Main Skill Focus	Tactical Focus	Level of Complexity
Manipulation (Sending Away)	Aim and Accuracy	Relatively Easy

Adapted from the PlaySport resource.
Available at: www.ophea.net/playsport



STRIKING / FIELDING GAMES




SKILLS INVOLVED IN STRIKING/FIELDING GAMES

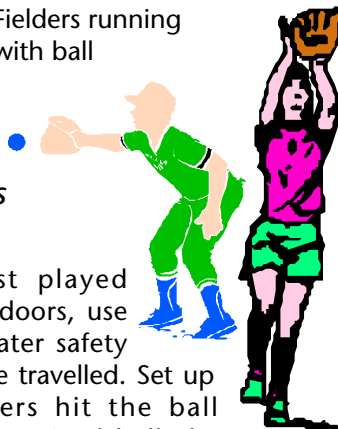
Body Management Skills

Locomotor: running, sliding, jumping, leaping

Non-locomotor: starting, stopping, ready position, bending, reaching

Manipulative Skills:

- a) Sending Skills:  With hands: throwing
- b) Receiving Skills:  Catching
- c) Retaining Skills:  Fielders running with ball



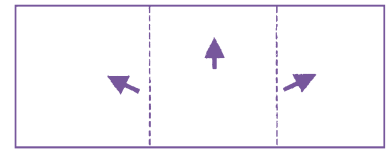
Organizational Aspects of Fielding Games

Fielding Games are best played outdoors. When playing indoors, use light or foam balls for greater safety and to decrease the distance travelled. Set up the games so that batters hit the ball outwards. Use tees and oversized balls for beginner strikers. In games where a pitcher or bowler is used, improvise some sort of a back drop (a folded mat standing up in an inverted “V” works well). Use small groups to increase opportunities for active participation, but keep safety in mind.

When practising skills, have children pair off. One can practice the skill, while the other does a peer assessment. The peer assessment should be completed with an appropriate amount of guidance and structure, and should consider only one element at a time. A skill card, or assessment tool, can be used. This approach can contribute to cognitive learning and will help keep practice situations safe.

Jane Vallentyne, University of Alberta
Email: jane.vallentyne@ualberta.ca

Basic strategies common to all STRIKING/FIELDING GAMES



- Send objects into open spaces
- Position players for best coverage of the playing area
- Players reposition to back up teammates

STRIKING/FIELDING GAME: SPOTLESS

Object

To fill the basket with balls before the leader can empty it

Equipment

Large number of soft balls, basket or tub

How to Play

Begin with a basket full of soft balls in the centre of the playing area. The leader empties the basket as quickly as possible by rolling or throwing the balls around the playing area. “Custodians” bring the balls back *one at a time* to fill the pail. After an appropriate time period, allow “custodians” to claim victory after the leader “collapses.”

Safety

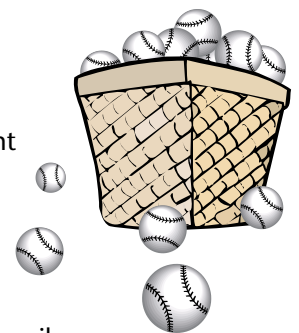
No throwing balls into the basket

Variation

Use various pieces of soft equipment (e.g., rubber chickens, sponges)

Think About...

- Being aware of space
- Teamwork, pass the ball to teammates that are closer to the pail



Main Skill Focus	Tactical Focus	Level of Complexity
Manipulation (Collecting)	Covering Space in the Field	Moderate

Adapted from the PlaySport resource.
Available at: www.ophea.net/playsport

“Putting the Why before the How”

NET/WALL GAMES



Authentic Assessment in Net/Wall Games: Valuing Process in TGfU and the 4Rs

ASSESS PLAYER'S ABILITY IN THE FOUR R'S

READ: Player reads cues in the game situation, makes decisions, and re-locates within the play area.

RESPOND: Player makes appropriate cover movements in the area of play, selecting the appropriate skill for the situation.

REACT: As object enters player's play area, the player makes an adjustment to the object's force, spin and direction, and executes appropriate "on-the-ball" skill.

RECOVER: After skill execution, player makes appropriate recovery movements to set-up for the next READ phase.

HERE ARE SOME DEFINITIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING SKILLS:

Base: Player makes an appropriate return to a home or recovery position between skill attempts.

Decision-making: Player makes appropriate choices about where to place the object or when defending space.

Cover: Player makes defensive movement in relation to object being played by an opponent (cover space) or provides defensive help to a teammate making a play on the ball.

Adjust: Player moves appropriately, (offensively or defensively), as required by the play of the object in the game.

Skill execution: Player executes efficient performance of selected skills.

Support (pass used): Player makes off-the-ball movement to a position to receive a pass when the player's team has possession.

Guard or mark: Player defends against an opponent who may or may not have the ball.

Tim Hopper, School of Physical Education
University of Victoria
Email: thopper@uvic.ca

NET/WALL GAME: BALLOONMINTON

Object

Hit a balloon back and forth across the line until one player is unable to reach the balloon in time, and it touches the ground

Equipment

Balloons, or beach balls

How to Play

Players begin by facing each other on opposite sides of the line. One player "serves" the balloon across the line to the other player. When the balloon is served, it must cross the line at waist height or higher; if it does not, player serves the balloon again. The play continues until the balloon touches the ground. This counts as a point for the opposing side.

Variations

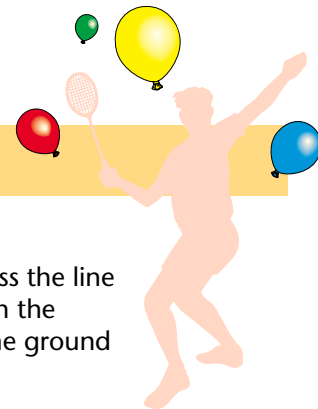
- **Cross-legged Balloonminton**
Begin by defining a small playing surface with ability-appropriate sidelines. Players sit cross-legged on the floor and hit a balloon back and forth over the line. Players must stay seated, and can only move their upper body.
- **Doubles Balloonminton**
 - Two players per side
 - Play with a net at badminton-level height
 - Variations: Increase the number of players per side. Could be done cooperatively with a continuous rally of the balloon.

Think About...

A moving opponent

Main Skill Focus	Tactical Focus	Level of Complexity
Manipulation (Sending Away)	Looking for the Open Space on the Opponent's Side	Moderate

Adapted from the PlaySport resource.
Available at: www.ophea.net/playsport





“Putting the LEARNER before the GAME”

INVASION/ TERRITORIAL GAMES

THE TACTICAL FRAME- WORK FOR TEACHING INVASION/TERRITORIAL GAMES

Object

Score by getting the object into the opponents' goal; opponents try to stop scoring.

Principles of Play

- Score/stop scoring
- Invade/stop invading
- Keep possession/get possession

Tactical Awareness Components

Space:

- Where an object should be placed in the area of play
- Where a player should go in the area of play, based on the placement of the object

Force:

- How much force to apply to an object to control the height, direction and distance it will travel
- Where to apply force on an object to achieve the desired height, direction and distance

Time:

- When to execute a skill within a game
- When to play a shot
- When to reduce opponent's time

Dr. Rick Bell, School of Physical Education,
University of Victoria
Email: fbell@uvic.ca

INVASION GAME: TAIL CHASE

Object

Get your opponent's tail without losing your own

Equipment

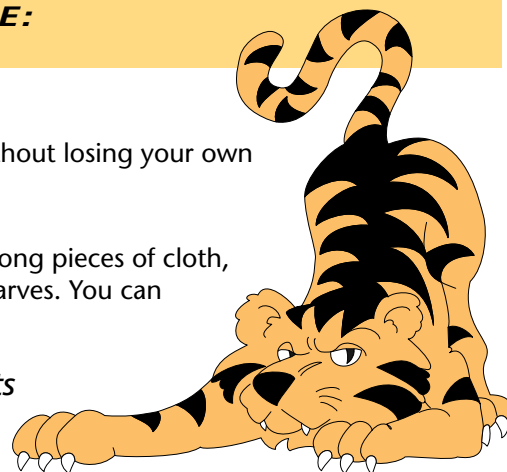
Suggested tails: half-metre long pieces of cloth, ropes, strings, ribbons or scarves. You can also use rubber chickens.

Number of Participants

Partners

How to Play

Players begin by stuffing a small part of their "tail" (cloth or rope) in the back of their shorts. At the teacher's signal, each player tries to grab their partner's tail without losing his/her own. When the tail is removed, the player puts it back and tries again. Count how many times a tail can be removed in a set time. No body contact is allowed.



Variations

- **Six Tail Grab**
Six players play in an area approximately 4-metres square. Each player has a tail. At the start signal, players try to snatch each other's tails without losing their own. Players who lose their tail may continue playing, but must try to find another tail to replace the one they lost. Play for two minutes and see who has collected the most tails.

Think About...

- Developing strategies to improve scoring opportunities
- Using the body to shield the tail
- Keeping head up to watch opponent
- Finding open spaces

Main Skill Focus

Locomotor (Dodging)

Tactical Focus

Maintain Possession

Level of Complexity

Relatively Easy

Adapted from the PlaySport resource.
Available at: www.ophea.net/playsport

INTRAMURALS



THE SCOPE OF AN INTRAMURAL PROGRAM

According to the “Intramural Series” developed by the Calgary Board of Education, an effective Intramural program includes a variety of activities. Whether at the elementary, secondary, or post-secondary level, the Intramural program should have four main components:

- Leagues, tournaments, and meets
- Special days
- Clubs
- Self-directed activities

LEAGUES, TOURNAMENTS AND MEETS

Try to program activities with many variations on traditional games. Consider the following when designing activities:

- Vary the size of the court or field to allow for more active movement
- Vary the number of players
- Vary the size of the ball (or target) to increase or decrease difficulty
- Vary the methods of scoring goals



SPECIAL DAYS

Plan some intramural activities that will enable a large number of participants to play (students in different grades, staff members, and parents, etc.) These activities can be scheduled on Special Days, and should be adapted to the needs of the school or grade levels by varying the rules, court sizes, and/or equipment. To stage a successful event, consider the following:

- Obtain administrative support for the initiative
- Secure staff support and/or participation
- Advertise and promote the event in advance
- Determine if extra fundraising is required
- Design the event to ensure maximum active participation
- Emphasize the value of participation, co-operation and fun
- Hold mini-clinics with the students to introduce the activity.
- Ask older students to help run activities for younger students.

CLUBS

As an integral part of a well-balanced intramural program, clubs offer students an opportunity to participate in a long-term program of instruction, recreation, and/or competition in a specific activity. In a long-term program, there is ample opportunity to develop both physical and leadership skills. Additionally, the club program provides students with the opportunity to participate in activities that may not be included in the regular class instruction program or the inter-school program. Consider the following when organizing clubs:

- Obtain administrative support for the initiative
- Secure a staff sponsor for each club
- Advertise and promote the club within the school
- Determine if the school has the necessary equipment to operate the club
- Determine if extra fundraising is required
- Outline a one-year program/schedule
- Meet regularly
- Elect executive members if necessary

SELF-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES

Self-directed activities give students an opportunity to participate in an activity of their choice during free-time periods, before, during and after school, as well as on weekends or holidays. Self-directed activities allow physical educators to develop students’ desire to participate in and enjoy physical activity. Consider the following to support and encourage self-directed activities:

- Establish procedures for checking out equipment
- Mark all equipment
- Schedule the gymnasium to allow for self-directed activities at designated times during the year
- Provide supervision in the gymnasium during designated time periods
- Promote the activities within bulletin board displays and charts

Adapted from Intramural Series –
Calgary Board of Education.



Laughing Tag

Here's a fun twist to almost any tag game. When "It" tags someone, "It" and the tagged person must stop and face each other. "It" now has 15 seconds to make the tagged person smile or laugh (no touching). If the "It" is unsuccessful, the tagged person goes free.

Hot Dog Tag

Here's a variation on "Parallel Tag." When tagged by "It", the tagged person lies down straight and calls out, "I need buns!" Two other people lie down on either side of the tagged person, acting as "the buns." The tagged person is set free to run around again. (What a neat game for Hot Dog Day!)

"We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing."

Never be first to grow old!"

Author Unknown

John Byl

Email: byl@redeemer.on.ca

Try THIS for a NEW Intramural Game

FOUR CORNER SOCCER

Object

To prevent goal scoring by opposing teams

Equipment

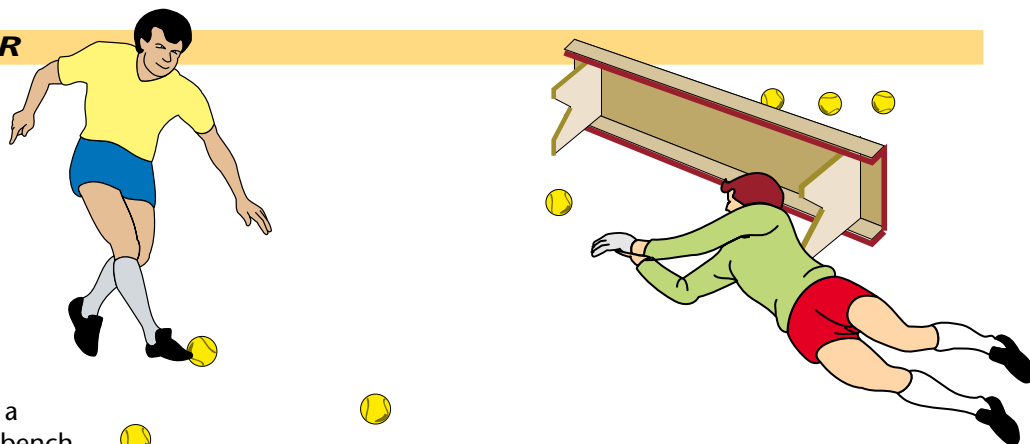
50 or more tennis balls, 4 benches (as goals)

How to Play

Create four teams. Each team defends a corner goal, which is identified with a bench turned on its side and a taped goal crease for the goalie (ends of the goal are approximately five paces out). Only the goalie is permitted in this area.

Throw out all the tennis balls. Players kick the balls trying to score on any goal except their own. If a player kicks a ball that hits a bench, the player may take that ball and put it behind that bench.

Play until a designated time is reached or until all the balls are gone. The team with the LEAST amount of balls behind its bench is the winner.



From the resource 50 Games With 50 Tennis Balls, CIRA Ontario.

Available at www.excelway.ca

John Byl

Email: ciraously@redeemer.on.ca



“Well done is better than well said.”

Pat Doyle



TGfU Resources

Compiled by: Joanna Sheppard, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University, jcssheppard@msn.com

Books

Butler, J., Griffin, L., Lombardo, B., & Nastasi, R. (2003). *Teaching Games for Understanding in Physical Education and Sport*. Reston, VA: AAHPERD Publications.

Journal Articles

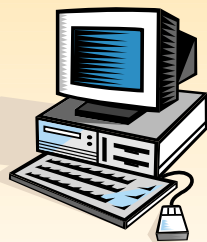
Bell, R., & Hopper, T. (2003). Space the first frontier: tactical awareness in teaching games for understanding. *Physical and Health Education Journal*, 69(2), 4 – 10.

Bunker, D., & Thorpe, R. (1982). A model for the teaching of games in secondary schools. *British Journal of Physical Education*, 18(1), 5 - 8.

Griffin, L.L., & Richard, J.F. (2003). Using authentic assessment to improve students’ net/wall game play. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, March, 23-27.

Mandigo, J. L., & Holt, N. L. (2000). The inclusion of optimal challenge in teaching games for understanding. *Physical and Health Education Journal*, 66(3), 14-19.

Mitchell, S. (2000). A framework and sample games for go-through, go-to games. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 11(3), 8-11.



Websites

The following websites will provide additional TGfU resources and games:

www.educ.uvic.ca/Faculty/thopper/

<http://resources.emb.gov.hk/phyedu/> (Contains video clips)

<http://www.mpeta.ca/> (see speaker notes from MPETA/CAHPERD Conference)

www.ophea.net/playsport

www.tgfu.org

www.pec.brocku.ca/~jmandigo/gameliteracy/home.htm

Physical Education & Intramural and the Quality School Health Clipboards are available to all CAHPERD members!

Developed with the practitioner in mind, these easy-to-read publications include three yearly issues with a themed approach. Games, tips, lesson plans, and other useful tidbits are designed to help you integrate health and physical education activities into your classroom schedules and routines – easily! CAHPERD members receive three new issues each year and access to all previous Clipboards. Visit the membership portal at: www.cahperd.ca.