

CHILDREN MOVING:

A REFLECTIVE APPROACH TO TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Credits

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 79-91832 International Standard Book Number: 0-87484-467-3

Manufactured in the United States of America Mayfield Publishing Company 285 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94301 This book was set in Palatino and Helvetica by Computer Typesetting Services and was printed and bound by Von Hoffmann Press. Sponsoring editor was C. Lansing Hays, Maggie Cutler supervised editing, and Carol Talpers was manuscript editor. Art supervision and book and cover design by Nancy Sears. Mary Burkhardt prepared the children's figure drawings, Judi McCarty of Innographics prepared the technical artwork, and David Dwinell was photographer. The book was dummied by Mary Michael McTeague. Michelle Hogan supervised production. Children's artwork was supplied by students in the authors' classes.

PREFACE

We are teachers of children first. And writers second. As teachers we have worked in suburban, small town, private, and inner-city schools. We have taught on playgrounds and fields, in classrooms, gymnasiums and hallways, and in rooms that seemed no larger than closets. We have worked with children from three to twelve, black and white, rich and poor. Some of them loved physical education. Others hated it. A few were ambivalent. We have worked for administrators who were cooperative and helpful, and for some who were indifferent. We have known hostile, apathetic, eager, and supportive parents.

In this text we share information, about children and about teaching physical education, that we believe will be useful to other teachers. Whenever possible we combine discussion of theory with illustrations from our teaching experiences. We avoid discussing the cognitive, affective, and physical dimensions of learning as separate entities, because those dimensions are not separate in teaching situations. Anecdotes are included, to help others learn from our mistakes and to demonstrate that teaching is not an exact science.

The book is divided into five sections. Section One is an overview of the ideas that guide our teaching. Chapter One acquaints the reader with our philosophy of physical education and provides a definition of reflective teaching. Chapter Two describes how we structure the curriculum to present an alternative to teaching based on grade levels.

Teaching skills are the focus of Section Two. This entire section emphasizes the need to know how to teach. The purpose of Section Two is to describe, with examples, the teaching skills that we have found to be prerequisites to successful teaching. Preactive skills (those used prior to

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teaching), active skills (those used while working with children), and postactive skills (those used after the lesson has been concluded) are discussed in these chapters.

This is a book about children and about the teaching process in the real world. It is not about homogeneous classes of children or about perfect or predictable situations—there are none. We stress teaching skills as much as content in an effort to help teachers achieve increased effectiveness. You may find less theory and more application than you expect. For those readers who are particularly interested in theory, we have cited additional sources.

We do not assume that all the children in a class are equally skillful or equally developed physically. They are not. A reflective teacher observes the children as individuals, as well as the class as a whole. And so we have included observation techniques and hundreds of ideas about what to look for when observing. The reflective teacher also takes into consideration such factors as class size and available equipment and facilities. And so we talk about teaching the class as a whole, in groups, and as individuals, and we provide development ideas for each of these. And we include instructions for some easy-to-make and fun-to-use equipment.

The content of teaching is examined in Section Three. The first chapter in this section describes a system for assessing the physical abilities of the children in order to provide tasks that match their skill levels. These assessments are used in the selection of appropriate physical education activities. The remaining chapters in this section discuss the teaching of games, dance, and gymnastics as related to the development of skill themes.

Section Four contains the teaching content of the book. The first three chapters describe how we teach the movement concepts of space awareness, effort, and relationships. The next eleven chapters describe the development of skill themes. In each of the skill theme chapters, numerous tasks—presented under Ideas for Development—are arranged in a sequence based on the children's levels of proficiency. Guides for the observation of each task are also provided.

The ideas for development of each movement skill are divided into four levels: precontrol, control, utilization, and proficiency. The ideas within each level are presented in a progression that is intended to help the children acquire proficiency in each skill. Many of the ideas for development are expandable. They can be used with children who are at various skill levels.

In the final section we talk about the way things would be for students and teachers of physical education, if we could have our way

Topics that are vitally important to teachers—such as ways to meet the needs of individual students, discipline, mainstreaming, safety, and

creating interesting lessons—are discussed in this book. Individual insights, gained during years of teaching experience, and ideas to enhance teacher success are sprinkled throughout the text. We hope these will help the reader feel more comfortable in the struggle to become a successful teacher.

We have tried to write a text that is philosophically consistent. The activities suggested in Section Four are in accordance with the philosophy expressed in the first three sections. Teaching is presented as an ongoing developmental process that can be as exciting as it is challenging. We hope that by sharing our experiences we can help others to enrich the lives of children.

The four authors share the teaching philosophy on which this book is based. We all consider ourselves to be reflective teachers. We want physical education to be an enjoyable experience for all youngsters. And we want the children in our classes to learn movement skills that will enhance their lives—as children now, and as adults in the years to come.

Our philosophy has evolved during our teaching careers, as have our teaching skills. And both will continue to develop as long as we teach. We hope that, by sharing with you our beliefs and our ways of teaching, we are encouraging you to think about the teaching process and so to develop your own philosophy and techniques—and as much pleasure in your work as we have in ours.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to express our appreciation to the children of the following elementary schools: Christ the King in Atlanta, Georgia; Codwell in Houston, Texas; Barnett Shoals, Gaines, and Oglethorpe in Athens, Georgia; and Linden in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Not only did these children help us with certain aspects of the book but, more importantly, they also taught us the meaning of reflective teaching.

To those administrators and friends who supported our efforts through their encouragement and cooperation, especially Estelle Farmer, Daphne Hall, Sister Jean Liston, Daisy Mathis, Fran O'Meara, Robert Smallridge and Ida Lou Stephens, we offer special thanks.

L. David Dwinell labored under less than ideal circumstances to provide us with a wealth of perceptive and varied photographs. Mary Burkhardt translated a series of cold, impersonal sketches into the warm reality that represents the world of children. We thank you both for your sensitivity to children as you helped make the book come to life.

We are grateful to the following individuals who reviewed the manuscript in its various stages, providing us with thorough, insightful and useful analyses: Dolly Lambdin, University of Texas; John Fowler, University of Colorado; Betty Keough, Illinois State University; Corlee Munson, University of Oregon; Glenn Norris, Montana State University; Marie Riley, University of North Carolina-Greensboro: Robert Pestolesi, California State University-Long Beach; Anne Scarborough, San Jose State University; and Betty Jane Wilheim, San Diego State University.

A special thank-you is extended to the staff at Mayfield Publishing Company for their humanistic professionalism. C. Lansing Hays, we thank you for your confidence in the project throughout. Carol Talpers, we thank you for your painstaking, exact editing of such a complex manuscript.

Our three typists did excellent work with patience and understanding even under the pressure of deadlines—thanks to Linda Kobel, Beverly Kozlowski, and Judy Mitchell.

Finally, and most especially, we want to express our appreciation to our families, who supplied the hope and support that enabled this dream to come true.

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RHYMES AND REASONS

John Denver

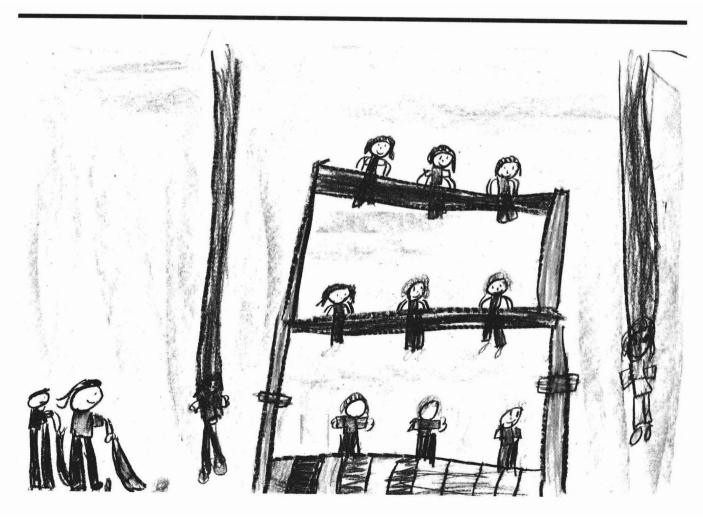
So you speak to me of sadness and the coming of the winter,
Fear that is within you now that seems to never end,
And the dreams that have escaped you
and the hope that you've forgotten,
And you tell me that you need me now,
and you want to be my friend.
And you wonder where we're going,
where's the rhyme and where's the reason,
And it's you cannot accept it is here

For the children and the flowers are my sisters and my brothers, Their laughter and their loveliness would clear a cloudy day Like the music of the mountains and the colors of the rainbow They're a promise of the future and a blessing for today.

We must begin to seek the wisdom of the children And the graceful way of flowers in the wind.

Tho the cities start to crumble and the towers fall around us, The sun is slowly fading and it's colder than the sea. It is written from the desert to the mountains they shall lead us By the hand and by the heart they will comfort you and me. In their innocence and trusting they will teach us to be free.

For the children and the flowers are my sisters and my brothers, Their laughter and their loveliness would clear a cloudy day And the song that I am singing is a prayer to non-believers, Come and stand beside us, we can find a better way.



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