

2ND EDITION

'Without hesitation I can state that this is the best received resource material in our programme and our physical education students enthuse about their capacity to take the ideas from the resource and transfer them into successful and effective physical education lessons during their school based practicum.'

John Sproule, Head of the Institute of Sport, Physical Education & Health Sciences, University of Edinburgh, UK

Athletics Challenges

A RESOURCE PACK FOR TEACHING ATHLETICS



Kevin Morgan

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Second edition

Kevin Morgan



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Athletics Challenges

★ sprinting ★ sustained running ★ hurdling ★ relay ★ shot put ★ discus ★ javelin ★
hammer ★ long jump ★ triple jump ★ high jump ★

How do you motivate even the most reluctant athlete?
How can you improve the technique of all your students?

Athletics Challenges is a practical resource file designed to ensure that *all* students have a positive learning experience in track and field athletics. It provides a wide range of activities and teaching approaches to enable teachers and coaches to promote a climate of inclusion, enjoyment and challenge for young people up to and beyond the age of 16.

Including straightforward guidance on how to use the resources effectively, *Athletics Challenges* is a compendium of ready-to-use, photocopiable activity sheets to use with your students in a wide range of athletics events.

- An introduction to the theory and research that underpins the activities presented in the file.
- Specific warm-up activities and a range of dynamic mobility exercises for the different athletic activities in the file.

Athletics challenges activity sheets provide a wide range of running, jumping and throwing activities designed to develop physical literacy, fundamental athletic techniques and personal and social skills.

Peer teaching activities for a range of athletics events aim to help improve technical understanding and to enhance social and communication skills through peer teaching.

Technical guidance resource sheets ensure students develop a good understanding of the principles and techniques of running, jumping and throwing through a series of progressive activities and related questions.

Athletics Challenges is a complete kit offering an invaluable source of support and ideas for all student and practising physical education teachers, heads of departments, and training and practising professional sports coaches who want to help learners achieve their full potential and lay the foundation for a healthy and physically active lifestyle.

Dr Kevin Morgan is Senior Lecturer at the School of Sport, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), UK, where he is also Programme Director of the MSc in Coaching Science.

★ sprinting ★ sustained running ★ hurdling ★ relay ★ shot put ★ discus ★ javelin ★
hammer ★ long jump ★ triple jump ★ high jump ★

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*John Sproule, Head of the Institute of Sport, Physical Education & Health Sciences,
University of Edinburgh, UK*

In loving memory of Dad who always believed in me
and to Mam for her continuous love and support.
Together, they created fantastic motivational climate
and gave me a wonderful start in life.

Illustrations reprinted, with permission, from G. Carr, 1999, *Fundamentals of track and field*, 2nd ed. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

Foreword

Athletics Challenges is a joy to read for coaches, teachers, and researchers alike. With this resource pack, Dr Kevin Morgan has elegantly taken complex theoretical constructs and artfully used them to inform readers of effective ways to teach and coach athletics. Rarely do research articles in professional journals or practitioner focused instructional texts explicitly inform readers of the relationship between research and practice as succinctly or clearly as *Athletics Challenges*. Indeed, Dr Morgan has certainly made a significant and positive contribution to both the physical education and coaching world with this resource pack.

Readers will quickly notice that the organization and writing of this resource pack is a departure from many similar texts. The reader is introduced to a research based perspective on developing instructional tools that were written to be immediately used by practitioners who desire to be effective in teaching various track and field skills. Woven throughout the text are concepts related to movement literacy in the context of developing deep learning and understanding as well as the technical skills associated with athletics.

From the beginning of the text, the introductory section of *Athletics Challenges* includes a tutorial on the constructs of Achievement Goal Theory and how these constructs relate to developing motivational climates in the physical education and sport setting which promote both success and learning among students and athletes. Drawing from his own and other research, Dr Morgan clearly describes a research based method of developing a mastery oriented motivational climate using the TARGET (Task, Authority, Grouping, Evaluation, and Time) approach widely accepted by researchers as the optimal learning environment within the physical education or sport setting. This research based perspective is a defining element of this resource packet that differentiates it from other texts which only include drills that may or may not be meaningful to students beyond a mere skill based exercise or drill. The addition of a 'life skills' focus further enhances the learning potential of this section and moves it further beyond the development of athletic techniques.

Following the introduction, the four sections found in the packet include a warm-up section, a section on the various athletics challenges, a section describing peer teaching practices, and a final section that includes technical guidance sheets to facilitate deep learning through the discovery process. In the warm-up section, readers learn to engage students in dynamic and continuous movement warm-ups which represent the most current knowledge on effective warm-up routines. The second section is packed with clearly written activities that can be immediately used within the learning setting. The activities were further designed to explicitly foster a mastery-oriented motivational climate to maximize the learning potential of the activity and enhance student learning. It is in the third section where readers learn to use peer teaching in an effective manner to facilitate effective student learning. Finally, the fourth section provides teachers and coaches with technical guidance sheets that facilitate deep student learning through a guided discovery experience.

Teachers and coaches using the information found within *Athletics Challenges* will find the material valuable in developing effective lessons and sport practices that will improve student learning. Because the information draws upon a well-established research base, the outcomes of the learning experiences are likely to produce even greater student learning than drills found in similar texts. In addition, teachers who find themselves working within the constraints of such things as national curricula or mandates to demonstrate student success will be able to use the information in this resource packet to accomplish those objectives. As a result, *Athletics Challenges*, is both a valuable tool for the teacher or coach and it is a noteworthy example of bridging research and practice to improve teacher effectiveness.

Dr John R. Todorovich
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USA

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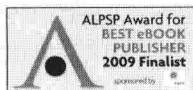
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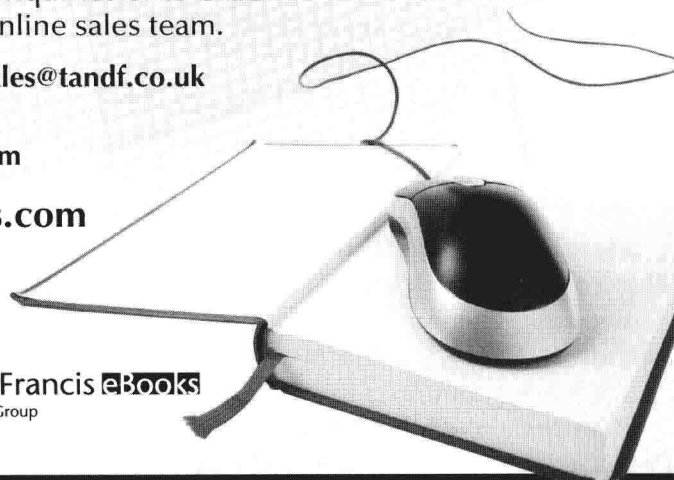
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A flexible and dynamic resource for teaching, learning and research.

Contents

Foreword	ix
Introduction	i
Section 1: Warm-ups	9
Section 2: Athletics challenges sheets	15
<i>Student resource sheets for a variety of running, jumping and throwing activities designed to develop physical literacy, fundamental athletics techniques and personal and social skills</i>	
Sprinting	21
Sustained running	33
Hurdling	45
Relays	57
Long jump	69
Triple jump	81
High jump	93
Shot put	105
Discus	117
Javelin	129
Hammer	141
Section 3: Peer teaching sheets	153
<i>Student resource sheets designed to improve technical understanding in a range of athletics events and to enhance social and communication skills through peer teaching</i>	
Sprint starts	155
Sprinting	156
Sustained running	157
Hurdling	158
Relays: Upsweep exchange	159
Relays: Downsweep exchange	160
Long jump: Stride jump	161
Triple jump	162
High jump: Fosbury flop	163
Shot put: Standing put	164
Discus: Standing throw	165
Javelin: Standing throw	166

Section 4: Technical guidance sheets	167
<i>Student resource sheets for a variety of running, jumping and throwing activities designed to develop physical literacy, fundamental athletics techniques and personal and social skills</i>	
Sprint starts	170
Sprinting	171
Sprint hurdling	172
Sprint relays	173
Long jump	174
Triple jump	175
High jump	176
Shot put	177
Discus	178
Javelin	179
 References	 181

Introduction

The materials presented in this teaching resource pack are a product of the author's doctoral research into motivational climate in physical education (PE) (Morgan, 2000; Morgan, 2003; Morgan and Carpenter, 2002; Morgan *et al.*, 2005) and over 20 years of practical athletics teaching experience in schools and universities. The primary aim is to ensure that all students have a positive learning experience in track and field athletics lessons and equal opportunity to learn and achieve their full potential. In order to achieve this, the motivational climate in athletics lessons needs to foster inclusion, enjoyment and individual challenge. The purpose of this resource pack is to provide a range of athletic activities and teaching approaches that will enable PE teachers to promote such a learning climate.

Movement literacy is also a key learning focus and, as such, the activities are specifically designed to develop fundamental running, jumping and throwing skills that form the basis of all sports and lay the foundation for a healthy and physically active lifestyle. The development of students' life skills is a further intended learning outcome, with a specific focus on the personal and social skills of communication, interpersonal skills, decision-making, critical thinking and self-management behaviours (Mandigo *et al.*, 2008). Finally, a range of teaching methods and strategies is promoted to develop 'whole learning', which incorporates the physical, cognitive, social and affective learning domains (Kay, 2003).

The intended learning outcomes are to:

- assist PE teachers in fostering a 'mastery' motivational climate in athletics lessons, focused on self-referenced effort and improvement, in order to promote inclusion and enable all students to achieve success;
- promote movement literacy as the foundation for all sports, and a healthy and active lifestyle;
- develop the life skills of communication, interpersonal skills, decision-making, critical thinking and self-management behaviours;
- foster 'whole learning' in the physical, affective, social and cognitive domains through the use of different teaching methods.

This introduction will focus initially and primarily on motivational climate theory and teaching strategies, but will also touch upon the areas of life skills and whole learning, and give some guidance on how to use the resource pack.

Promoting a mastery motivational climate

Creating a motivational climate that encourages all students, regardless of their athletic ability, to exert maximum effort in athletics lessons is a difficult challenge for PE teachers and coaches. This is particularly the case when students are over 11 years old and are able to differentiate between effort and ability (Nicholls, 1978). According to Nicholls, up until the

age of about 11, children conceive of ability in a self-referenced manner as learning through effort. Later, however, they recognise that the outcome depends on both ability and effort, so that when athletics lessons encourage a public display of ability and evaluate students in relation to normative standards, exerting effort that does not result in a successful performance compared to others in the class is often perceived as failure. In order to avoid this situation many students withdraw effort or attempt to devalue the task, particularly when their perceived ability is low (Ames, 1984). One way to avoid this comparative and potentially demotivating situation is to foster a teaching climate that emphasises self-referenced improvement and effort, so that all students can achieve success.

According to Ames (1984), the motivational climate that teachers create influences the thoughts and feelings of the students and the meaning of success and failure. Two climates have been found to be predominant in educational environments: a competitive or ego climate and an individualistic or mastery climate. In an ego climate comparison with others is the primary source of information for self-evaluation. The focus is on winning or losing and improvement is of little or no significance. In lessons, competition is evident through normatively based assessment, grouping by ability, publicly charting pupils' progress and rewarding those individuals who exhibit high ability. A normative assessment of ability is, therefore, prevalent, so that, if an individual tries hard but doesn't succeed in comparison to others in the class, low ability is implied (*ibid.*). This type of ego-oriented motivational climate is frequently evident in 'traditional' athletics lessons, which use normative standards as the basis for student assessment. Research in athletics lessons in schools (Carpenter and Morgan, 1999) has revealed that students' perceptions of an ego climate are related to less enjoyment, greater boredom, the belief that success is due to ability rather than effort and a more negative attitude toward athletic activities.

By contrast, in a mastery motivational climate each individual's attainment of rewards is independent of the attainment of rewards by others and performance is evaluated in terms of personal mastery (Ames, 1984). The focus is on comparing new performances with past performances and on improvement through effort. Learning and mastery of the task are the targets, so that prior performances become salient in setting goals and expectations. The structure is characterised by instructing individuals to try their best and to set goals that exceed their own past performances. Comparison is with the self and not normative, as in the ego climate. Perceptions of a mastery climate in school athletics lessons have been found to be related to high satisfaction and low boredom, high perceived ability and intrinsic motivation, the belief that success is due to effort and a more positive attitude toward the activities (Carpenter and Morgan, 1999). These findings suggest that understanding and promoting a particular motivational climate is central to student learning and motivation in athletics lessons. Furthermore, research has found that a mastery motivational climate is likely to result in improved physical activity levels in young people (Parish *et al.*, 2007).

The teaching structures that underlie a mastery climate were identified by Ames (1992), based on the six areas of task, authority, rewards, grouping, evaluation and timing (TARGET) that were originally introduced by Epstein (1989) (see Table 1). Manipulating the TARGET structures to be more mastery focused has been found to improve students' motivation in athletics lessons (Morgan and Carpenter, 2002), resulting in greater satisfaction with the activities, a more positive attitude towards athletics and a preference for more challenging tasks. Thus, one way to enhance motivation in athletics lessons is to implement the TARGET teaching structures in such a way as to promote a mastery climate. The TARGET structures are, therefore, suggested as the primary underpinning principles in this resource pack. The following research-based practical suggestions are suggested to help foster a mastery motivational climate in athletics lessons. It is acknowledged, however, given the constraints

and often ‘messy’ reality of PE teaching and coaching, that it will not always be possible to adhere to these TARGET guidelines and, as such, they should be viewed as underpinning structures and principles to work towards rather than essential components of every lesson.

Table 1 TARGET structures in athletics lessons

TARGET DESCRIPTION	TEACHING SUGGESTIONS
Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students set self- or group-referenced goals for improvement ● Design tasks for variety, differentiation and inclusion
Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students involved in decision-making and task design
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Private individual recognition and feedback on improvement and effort
Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mixed-ability, co-operative groups
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self-referenced – based on performance, improvement and effort scores ● Students keep personal diaries to record performances
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flexible time to complete tasks ● Promotion of maximum participation within lessons

Applying the TARGET structures

Task

Encourage students to set self-referenced or group-referenced goals for improvement in the various athletic activities. This will emphasise the mastery focus of the lessons and define success as improvement on previous best performances, thus allowing all students to achieve success. That is not to say that competition between students should be eliminated, as this can be a very effective means of motivation for those who are competitively oriented and have high perceived ability, but that competition against others should not be emphasised by the teacher. Instead teachers should encourage all students to strive to improve their personal best achievements and those who want to compete against others should have the opportunity to do so, if the respective individuals are happy to engage. Choice is a key element here, but the underlying message from the teacher to the students should be about personal improvement and not finding out who the best performers are in the class.

The public display of ability, which is evident when the whole class take it in turns to perform the same activity, can be very threatening to students who do not compare favourably with others in the class and have a low perception of their own ability. Think here of the traditional high jump lesson where students attempt the jumps one at a time in front of the whole class and are eliminated on their failures at different heights. In such circumstances, lower-ability students and those who have a competitive orientation are likely to withdraw effort or devalue the task to avoid embarrassment in front of their peers (Ames, 1984).

Reducing the public display of ability by providing a number of activities within each lesson may, therefore, help to improve the students' motivation and effort within lessons and promote a more positive attitude towards the activity. A multi-dimensional lesson design, so that either a number of different athletic events are taking place simultaneously, as in a multi-event (see Figure 1) or multi-station (see Figure 2) lesson design, can help to de-emphasise the comparative element. Alternatively, the same task can be practised by a number of small sub-groups simultaneously in different areas of the working space. This type of lesson design also reduces time waiting for turns and encourages maximum activity in lessons. It is also imperative that tasks should be differentiated, so that they are achievable by all students at their own level. Furthermore, allowing an element of choice in the activities promotes inclusion and decision-making skills.

Authority

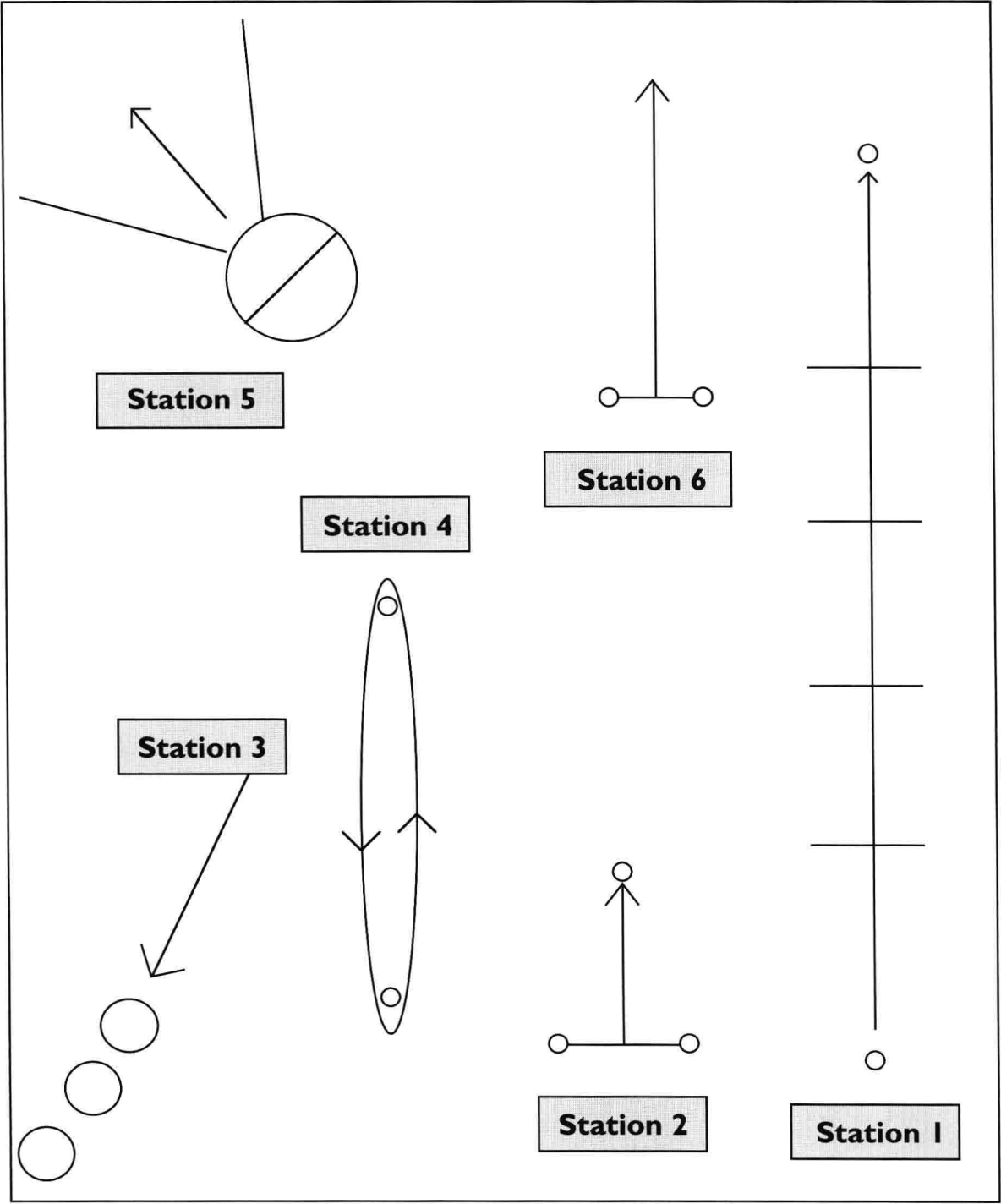
Involve students in decision-making within lessons as this is another important aspect in creating a mastery climate and one that helps to promote the life skills of communication and interpersonal skills. This focus on allowing students to make choices within lessons also promotes the planning and decision-making aspects of PE, which are often neglected in athletics lessons. Thus, for example, based on 'pacing' progressions, students could work out the pace at which they should run each 100m of an 800m time trial or the method of relay baton exchange that best suits their team. Student involvement in their own learning has been shown to be an effective motivational strategy within athletics lessons (Morgan and Carpenter, 2002).

Recognition and evaluation

Recognise and evaluate students on individual improvement and effort within lessons so that everyone has equal opportunity to be successful, regardless of their athletic ability. Consistent with the task structure, all students should strive to improve their personal best achievements. In order to enhance this focus on improvement and effort, personal diaries or score sheets (see Figure 3) can be used for recording performances, as well as self-rated effort and improvement within lessons. This type of approach can help students to develop self-management behaviours and a sense of responsibility, which can help future lifestyle decisions (Fox and Harris, 2003).

Grouping

Ames (1992) recommends the use of mixed ability co-operative groups and frequent changes of groups as this allows students to work with a variety of others to set and meet personal and group targets. This type of grouping structure can also involve the students in a number of roles including performer, coach, official and leader, thus broadening the learning outcomes and developing more holistic learning (Kay, 2003). However, research (Morgan and Carpenter, 2002; Morgan *et al.*, 2005) hasn't always supported mixed-ability groups in athletics and has suggested that, for activities such as sustained running, it is less comparative for students to be in self-chosen ability based groups than mixed-ability groups where the differences in ability are immediately evident for all to see.



Station 1 Hurdling challenge 4
Station 2 Long jump challenge 1
Station 3 Javelin challenge 3

Station 4 Sprinting challenge 1
Station 5 Shot put challenge 2
Station 6 Triple jump challenge 1

Figure 1 Multi-event lesson