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Physical Education & Activity *for Elementary Classroom Teachers*

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PHYSICAL EDUCATION & ACTIVITY FOR ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TEACHERS

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This book is written in loving honor of my incredible mother, Helene, whose children always came first, and Larry, whose mentorship made my career a possibility.

K.C.G.

This book is lovingly dedicated to my husband, Jeff, and children, Jack and Mary Elizabeth.

A.M.W.

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Preface

Several years ago, when we began searching for a physical education methods textbook written specifically for undergraduate students who intended to become classroom teachers, we were struck by the lack of appropriate books for this target audience. A number of excellent books had been written for physical education majors, but none that we believed adequately addressed the needs of the classroom teacher. Some books were written for an audience that already had advanced knowledge of the subject matter in the areas of motor learning, exercise physiology, physical fitness, anatomy, and professional activity courses (e.g., fitness, dance, gymnastics, racket sports, team sports). Others, since they targeted physical education majors, were written with the assumption that future teachers had advanced skill levels themselves and were eager to teach children about the psychomotor domain. As a result, we were forced to select a textbook that never felt comfortable to us or our students.

We quickly decided that if we were to continue preparing classroom teachers for the exciting opportunity to teach children about physical education and activity, we needed a book dedicated specifically to the needs of the elementary *classroom* teacher. Although we believe that the gymnasium also constitutes a classroom, we recognize that there are significant differences between the physical educator and the elementary-grade-level teacher who is most often referred to as the classroom teacher. First, the classroom teacher often has limited knowledge of the subject matter of physical education. Second, many have little interest or experience in teaching physical education. Third, some classroom teachers themselves have encountered unpleasant physical education experiences that resulted in their lack of desire to teach children about movement.

While we recognized that a lack of relevant resources existed for the classroom teacher, we also acknowledged the need for the classroom teachers to teach children about physical education and activity. Reports from the Surgeon General and Centers for Disease Control, along with recent legislation related to children's wellness, clearly indicate that physical activity is one of the most important components of a child's education. Although we *strongly* encourage all schools throughout the United States to employ a certified physical education specialist, we realize that classroom teachers are increasingly expected to serve as the primary physical education teacher, to supplement physical education on days when children are not exposed to a hired physical education specialist, to supervise students during recess, or to introduce them to physical activity breaks spaced periodically throughout the school day. Therefore, we decided to write a textbook that would sufficiently prepare classroom teachers to successfully and effectively engage students in physical education and physical activity at a basic level and in a safely constructed environment—in the gymnasium, on the playground, and in the classroom.

Since many colleges and universities divide a physical education methods course for classroom teachers into separate lecture and laboratory sections, this text is divided into two primary sections. The first section is written to address topics that are covered during lectures in a university classroom. The second is written to address activities covered during laboratory experiences in a gymnasium. Each section contains 12 relatively brief chapters that cover in adequate detail the most important points of the chapter's focus. The reason for brevity is to avoid inundating future classroom teachers with too much information and to facilitate retention of the most important aspects of the chapter. It is anticipated that this approach will enable future classroom teachers to easily read one chapter per week from each of the two sections (one lecture and one lab).

The thematic element that is woven throughout the text is one that encourages individuals to develop an appreciation for the subject matter of physical education. Regardless of previous experiences in physical education or sport settings, prospective classroom teachers will be exposed to a philosophic orientation that encourages the enjoyment of physical activity and acquisition of skills and knowledge that promote participation throughout the lifespan. The book clearly emphasizes that the purpose of physical education and activity

is to engage children in maximum levels of activity throughout the school day. The instructional strategies and curricula that are presented are prioritized with this goal clearly in mind. Overall, the book is designed to be a primary reference for future classroom teachers and a valuable resource for certified classroom teachers.

The following elements have been incorporated into the book to help readers remember the most important concepts from each chapter and encourage thoughtful reflection about the material in each chapter.

HIGHLIGHTS OF LECTURE CHAPTERS

Key Points	All lecture chapters have key points that emphasize the most important elements of the text that learners should retain.
Thinking Challenge	Each chapter contains a series of thinking challenges that require readers to contemplate what they have read and subsequently complete a learning activity.
Do/Don't List	The Do/Don't checklist at the end of each chapter includes a list of behaviors or attitudes that classroom teachers should strive to implement and achieve and those they should avoid.
Boxes	Most chapters contain one or more boxes with information readers may find particularly interesting or instructive. Some boxes introduce new concepts while others invite readers to complete a specific task or observation.
Chapter Summary	The end of each chapter includes a brief summary to facilitate readers' reflection on the overall content introduced in the chapter.
Review Activities	Every chapter includes review activities that learners can complete independently or during class instruction.
Photos	Interesting photos have been selected to emphasize important points and make the text-book reader-friendly.

HIGHLIGHTS OF LAB CHAPTERS

Developmental Levels	Many chapters include information about the different phases that learners experience while acquiring motor skills.
Learning Cues	Chapters include key teaching points that classroom teachers can utilize when introducing students to different skills and activities.
Common Difficulties	Since learners often experience similar difficulties when learning new skills, a list of common difficulties is included so the classroom teacher knows what he or she might expect to observe.
Activities	All chapters include appropriate, fun, and challenging learning experiences that are designed to positively influence student acquisition of skills while simultaneously keeping children physically engaged throughout the lesson.

Modifications

Since learners acquire new skills and knowledge at different rates, and since some face special challenges, chapters include suggestions for how to modify activities to meet the individual needs of all learners.

Assessments

Suggestions for how teachers can assess student learning are provided at the end of chapters.

RESOURCES

Instructor resources are available on the website at www.mhhe.com/graber. Check it out!



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Brief Contents

About the Authors ix

Preface x

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Developing an Appreciation for Physical Education 1</p> <p>2 Curriculum Planning 12</p> <p>3 Lesson Planning 26</p> <p>4 Using Curriculum to Develop an Inclusive Learning Environment 42</p> <p>5 Curriculum Models and Special Events 59</p> <p>6 Teaching Styles 76</p> <p>7 Establishing an Effective Learning Environment 94</p> <p>8 Effective Teaching 107</p> <p>9 Class Organization and Management 121</p> <p>10 Preventive Class Management and Discipline 136</p> <p>11 Assessment and Evaluation 152</p> <p>12 Integrating Movement Across the Curriculum 167</p> <p>13 Locomotor Skills: Fundamental Patterns 176</p> | <p>14 Manipulative Skills: Throwing and Catching 187</p> <p>15 Manipulative Skills: Volleying and Dribbling 197</p> <p>16 Manipulative Skills: Kicking and Punting 210</p> <p>17 Striking with Hands and Rackets 219</p> <p>18 Striking: Bats, Sticks, & Clubs 228</p> <p>19 Creative Movement: Concepts, Dance and Imagery 239</p> <p>20 Educational Gymnastics: Balancing, Weight Transfer, and Rolling 250</p> <p>21 Health-Related Fitness: Muscular Strength and Endurance and Flexibility 262</p> <p>22 Health-Related Fitness: Cardiovascular Endurance 273</p> <p>23 Educational Games: Cooperative and Student-Designed 294</p> <p>24 Quality Recess 301</p>
<p>CREDITS 308</p> <p>INDEX 309</p> |
|--|--|

Contents

About the Authors ix

Preface x

LECTURE CHAPTERS: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROCESS OF TEACHING

Chapter 1

Developing an Appreciation for Physical Education 1

Process and Content of Teaching Physical Education 2

Prior Experiences in Physical Education 2

Significance of the Subject Matter in

Today's World 6

Standards-based Physical Education 7

Purpose of Physical Education 7

Appropriate and Purposeful Physical Education 8

Developing a Lifelong Commitment to Physical Activity 8

Summary 10

Review Activities 11

Chapter 2

Curriculum Planning 12

Curriculum Defined 13

National Standards for Physical Education 14

Designing a Developmental Curriculum 16

Developmental Stages 17

Developing Realistic Curricular Goals 19

Equipment and Facilities 20

Planning for the Year 21

Determining Time for Individual Activities 22

Developing a Block Calendar 22

Evaluating the Curriculum 23

Summary 24

Review Activities 25

Chapter 3

Lesson Planning 26

Lessons from Research 27

Planning Considerations 27

Domain Specific Objectives 29

Designing Developmentally Appropriate Activities:

Procedures 31

Teaching Points 34

Lesson Plan Format 35

Individualizing the Lesson 36

Refining Performance 37

Extending Performance 38

Demonstrating 38

Safety 39

Reflection 39

Summary 39

Review Activities 40

Chapter 4

Using Curriculum to Develop an Inclusive Learning Environment 42

Four Forms of Curriculum 43

Explicit Curriculum 44

Implicit Curriculum 45

Hidden Curriculum 47

Null Curriculum 49

Promoting an Inclusive Learning Environment 50

Ability 51

Gender 52

Race, Ethnicity, and Culture 53

Socioeconomic Status 54

Size 55

Special Needs 55

Summary 57

Review Activities 57

Chapter 5

Curriculum Models and Special Events 59

Basic Movement Skills 60

Locomotor 60

Nonlocomotor 60

Manipulative 61

Creative Movement 61

Concepts Combined with Basic and Creative Movement Activities 61

Space 62

Effort 62

Relationships 63

Movement Challenges in Lower Elementary Grades 63

Movement Challenges in Upper Elementary Grades 63

Fitness Approach 64

15-Minute Fitness Focus 65

Fitness and Motor Skill Development 65

Fitness and Game Play 66

Traditional Games Approach 66

Tactical Games Approach 67

New and Cooperative Games 67

Teacher-designed Games	68
Child-designed Games	68
Adventure Education and Outdoor Pursuits	68
Sport Education	69
Special Events	70
<i>Olympics</i>	70
<i>Track and Field Day</i>	71
<i>Dance Dance Revolution</i>	71
<i>Jump Rope or Hoops for Heart</i>	72
<i>Fund Raising</i>	72
Summary	73
Review Activities	74

Chapter 6

Teaching Styles 76

Selecting a Style	77
The Continuum of Styles	78
Teaching Style Forms	78
<i>Command</i>	79
<i>Practice</i>	80
<i>Reciprocal</i>	81
<i>Task</i>	83
<i>Cooperative Learning</i>	85
<i>Inclusion</i>	87
<i>Guided Discovery</i>	88
<i>Problem Solving</i>	90
<i>Exploration</i>	91
Summary	92
Review Activities	93

Chapter 7

Establishing an Effective Learning Environment 94

The Physical Education Environment	95
Developing Protocols	97
<i>Entering and Leaving the Physical Activity Area</i>	98
<i>Signaling Students</i>	100
<i>Obtaining and Returning Equipment</i>	102
<i>Personal Needs</i>	103
Structuring the Learning Environment	103
<i>Warm-ups</i>	104
<i>Closure</i>	105
<i>Making Notes</i>	105
Summary	105
Review Activities	106

Chapter 8

Effective Teaching 107

How Does Good Teaching Differ from Effective Teaching?	107
Keeping Students Actively Engaged	108
<i>Equipment Constraints</i>	108
<i>Variation in Skill Level</i>	110

Structuring Available Learning Time	111
<i>Instructional Tasks</i>	111
<i>Managerial Tasks</i>	112
<i>Engagement</i>	113
Appropriate Practice	114
Student Influence on Engagement Time	114
<i>Student Social System</i>	114
<i>Monitoring</i>	115
<i>Negotiation</i>	115
Assuming Effective Personal Behaviors	116
<i>Enthusiasm</i>	116
<i>Positioning</i>	116
<i>With-it-ness</i>	116
Providing Effective Feedback	116
<i>Positive Feedback</i>	117
<i>Negative Feedback</i>	117
<i>General Feedback</i>	117
<i>Specific Feedback</i>	117
<i>Congruent Feedback</i>	118
Summary	119
Review Activities	119

Chapter 9

Class Organization and Management 121

Time Management	121
Organizing Class by Grouping Students	122
<i>Partners</i>	123
<i>Small Groups</i>	123
<i>Teams</i>	124
Selecting Captains	125
Organizing Equipment	126
<i>Advance Preparation</i>	126
<i>Dissemination</i>	126
<i>Maintenance</i>	128
Lesson Transitions	128
Safety and Liability	129
<i>Establishing a Safe Learning Environment</i>	129
<i>Avoid Litigation</i>	132
<i>Responding to an Injury</i>	133
Summary	134
Review Activities	135

Chapter 10

Preventive Class Management and Discipline 136

Preventive Class Management	137
<i>Establishing Routines</i>	138
<i>Setting and Enforcing Rules</i>	138
<i>Expectations for a Positive Class Climate</i>	141
<i>Positive Reinforcement</i>	142
Discipline	145
<i>Establishing Consequences</i>	145
<i>Implementing Consequences</i>	147
Summary	149
Review Activities	151

Chapter 11

Assessment and Evaluation 152

- Purposes of Assessment 152
- Traditional Assessment and Evaluation 154
 - Psychomotor Domain* 156
 - Cognitive Domain* 157
 - Affective Domain* 158
- Alternative Assessment 159
- Assessment Guidelines 161
 - Increasing the Success of the Assessment Process* 161
 - Increasing Positive Student Feelings Toward Assessments* 163
- Teacher Assessment 164
- Summary 165
- Review Activities 166

Chapter 12

Integrating Movement Across the Curriculum 167

- Brain-based Learning 167
- Benefits of Integrating Movement 169
- Ideas for Integration of Movement 171
 - Imbedding Process* 171
 - National Standards* 171
 - Models of Integration* 171
 - Individual Initiative* 172
 - Collaborative Initiative* 172
 - Use of Surprise* 173
 - Providing Transitions* 173
 - Additional Resources* 173
 - Whole School Involvement* 174
- Summary 174
- Review Activities 175

LAB CHAPTERS: CONTENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Chapter 13

Locomotor Skills: Fundamental Patterns 176

- Fundamental Locomotor Patterns 176
 - Walking* 176
 - Running* 177
 - Jumping* 178
 - Hopping* 180
 - Leaping* 180
 - Galloping and Sliding* 181
 - Skipping* 181
- Movement Experiences 181

Chapter 14

Manipulative Skills: Throwing and Catching 187

- Fundamentals of Throwing 188
 - Underhand Throwing* 188
 - Overhand Throwing* 188
- Fundamentals of Catching 190
- Movement Experiences 192

Chapter 15

Manipulative Skills: Volleying and Dribbling 197

- Fundamentals of Volleying 198
 - Forearm Volleying* 198
 - Overhand Volleying* 199
- Fundamentals of Dribbling 200
- Movement Experiences 202

Chapter 16

Manipulative Skills: Kicking and Punting 210

- Fundamentals of Kicking 210
- Fundamentals of Punting 212
- Movement Experiences 213

Chapter 17

Striking with Hands and Rackets 219

- Fundamentals of Underhand Striking with Hands 220
- Fundamentals of Striking with Rackets 221
- Movement Experiences 222

Chapter 18

Striking: Bats, Sticks, & Clubs 228

- Striking with Bats 228
- Striking with Hockey Sticks 231
- Passing with a Hockey Stick 233
- Dribbling with a Hockey Stick 234
- Striking with a Putter 234
- Movement Experiences 236

Chapter 19

Creative Movement: Concepts, Dance, and Imagery 239

- Benefits of Dance 239
- Fundamentals of Traditional Dance 240
- Fundamentals of Creative Dance 240
- Elements of Creative Dance Movement 241
 - The Body* 242
 - Space Awareness* 243
 - Effort Awareness* 244
 - Relationship Awareness* 245
- Movement Experiences 246

Chapter 20

Educational Gymnastics: Balancing, Weight Transfer, and Rolling 250

- Defining Space 250
- Fundamentals of Balancing 251
- Developing Balancing Skills 251
- Mechanical Principles of Balance 251
- Fundamentals of Weight Transfer 252
- Fundamentals of Rolling 253
- Movement Experiences 256

Chapter 21

Health-Related Fitness: Muscular Strength and Endurance and Flexibility 262

- Muscular Strength and Endurance 263
- Flexibility 264
- Types of Stretching 265
- Movement Experiences 266

Chapter 22

Health-Related Fitness: Cardiovascular Endurance 273

- Health-Related Physical Fitness 274
- Principles of Physical Fitness 275

- Establishing a Positive Fitness Learning Environment 276
- Activities to Promote Cardiovascular Endurance 279
- Movement Experiences 279

Chapter 23

Educational Games: Cooperative and Student-Designed 294

- Games 294
 - Cooperative Games* 295
 - Types of Games* 295
 - Student-Designed Games* 296
- Movement Experiences 296

Chapter 24

Quality Recess 301


- Benefits of Recess 302
- Quality Recess Time 305

Credits 308

Index 309

Chapter One

Developing an Appreciation for Physical Education



Once you become employed as an elementary classroom teacher you will likely be required to undertake many more tasks than you currently imagine. In addition to teaching children how to read, write, spell, and master simple arithmetic, you also may be asked to supervise students at recess, in the lunchroom, or boarding the school bus. You will be faced with responsibilities such as constructing bulletin boards, designing homework assignments, planning special class events, and creating a lively classroom atmosphere. Some classroom teachers also will be asked to assume the unexpected task of planning and conducting daily physical education classes for children.

Many school districts throughout the nation either do not have adequate financial resources or have decided not to employ a trained physical education specialist for their elementary schools. This is unfortunate because trained physical education teachers have received specialized preparation that enables them to design appropriate curriculum, diagnose and assess incorrect movement patterns, provide proper feedback to learners, and teach motor activities that are appropriate for a child's level of development.

If you are employed in a school without a physical education specialist, it will most likely be your responsibility to provide the children in your classes with instruction in the subject matter. You are currently enrolled in an exciting course where you will have an opportunity to learn how to competently teach a variety of physical education activities. You will also learn how to integrate physical activity into other lessons that you teach such as reading and social studies. Although one course or textbook cannot provide all of the information about the field, if you are committed to learning about the subject matter, you can acquire a sufficient degree of knowledge that will enable you to provide competent physical education lessons to your students. Complete Thinking Challenge 1.1.

THINKING CHALLENGE 1.1

As a classroom teacher you will be asked to juggle multiple responsibilities. In many cases you will be required to complete tasks that you never anticipated and teach subjects for which you have had minimal preparation. How will you respond to these different challenges?

There are a few terms that you should be familiar with as you proceed through this textbook. Each emphasizes movement, but each has a different meaning in relation to how children participate in movement:

- *Physical education* includes structured movement experiences that are taught by a knowledgeable instructor. Activities are progressive, developmentally appropriate, and facilitated by a formal curriculum. When a physical education teacher shows children a series of dance sequences that are accompanied by music, they are participating in physical education.

- *Physical activity* refers to exercises and activities that children engage in independently or during physical education class. These activities, however, can be spontaneous and unstructured. Playing tag with friends during recess is one example of physical activity.
- *Recess* is a period of time in which children can engage in adult-supervised activities that occur primarily on a playground, playing field, or gymnasium. This period is designed to give children a break during the school day. Although most recess is unstructured, some schools are progressing toward more structured recess activities in order to engage students in physical activity. Talking with classmates (sedentary) and playing soccer with a group of friends (active) are examples of two types of activities in which children might participate during recess.

PROCESS AND CONTENT OF TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The purpose of this text is twofold. First, you will be introduced to strategies that will teach you about the *process of teaching physical education*, or what is sometimes referred to as the *pedagogy* of teaching physical education. This is the information that is necessary to help you learn how to develop curriculum and teach the subject. In other words, process refers to the behaviors a teacher employs in order to help children learn about physical education. It encompasses such acts as establishing an effective learning environment, designing lessons, managing students, and providing instruction. If you are currently enrolled in a physical education methods class designed for the classroom teacher, these responsibilities will be discussed by the instructor during lectures and perhaps be modeled for you in the gymnasium. Although you also will learn how to teach from methods courses and textbooks that are specific to your home classroom, the physical activity setting (gymnasium, playing field, multipurpose area) is also a classroom that requires a special set of skills. Some instructional strategies that are effective in the students' home classroom can be transferred to and employed in the physical activity classroom. Some instructional strategies that are effective in the physical activity setting also can be applied in the home classroom. The intent of this text is not to duplicate information that you may acquire from other methods courses, but to provide you with the specific skills that will enable you to confidently teach the subject matter of physical education.

The second purpose of this text is to help you become familiar with the *content of physical education*. This includes learning about: (a) the basic content of the field, (b) the instructional activities that are appropriate for teaching basic content, and (c) the curriculum that organizes the instructional activities in developmentally appropriate ways. While physical education majors take individual courses to learn how to teach fitness, dance, gymnastics, outdoor education, team sports, and individual sports, you will not have adequate time in your undergraduate curriculum to learn about all of the activities that you might like to teach (see Box 1.1). Although this is unfortunate, it does not mean that you cannot provide competent instruction.

This text is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of the most important components of the subject matter. Hopefully, you will have had other physical activity experiences that will enable you to supplement the information you acquire here. Regardless of your experience, however, after reading this text you should have acquired sufficient knowledge about the process of teaching and content of physical education to enable you to enter a physical activity setting with some degree of confidence.

Prior Experiences in Physical Education

Physical education is often referred to by elementary students as their favorite subject in the overall school curriculum. Students enter the physical activity setting with a natural desire to be active and a tremendous enthusiasm for learning new skills and activities. That may be surprising if your most recent memory of physical education consists of less than appealing experiences in high school. Fortunately, teachers at the elementary level typically have the advantage of eager clientele.

Box 1.1

A certified physical education teacher has some knowledge of most of the content areas listed below and is proficient in several of them. Which of the following activities would you feel most comfortable teaching to elementary-aged students? How might you acquire additional knowledge that would enable you to teach in those areas in which you feel unprepared?

TEAM SPORTS

Basketball
Field Hockey
Floor Hockey
Football
Soccer
Softball
Tennis
Volleyball

INDIVIDUAL SPORTS

Badminton
Gymnastics
Martial Arts
Pickle Ball
Racquet Ball
Track and Field

FITNESS

Aerobics
Circuit Training
Cycling
Jogging
Rollerblading
Weight Training

OTHER

Adventure Education
Aquatics
Basic Motor Skills
Bowling
Ballroom Dance
Creative Dance
Folk/Square Dance
Hiking
Locomotor Skills
Non-locomotor Skills
Modern Dance
Outdoor Pursuits
Rhythms

Try to recall experiences from physical education that you encountered at the elementary level by completing Thinking Challenge 1.2. Perhaps you remember physical education as an enjoyable subject in which you received an adequate number of learning trials, were exposed to an interesting curriculum, and had ample opportunities to be successful. These positive experiences may have enhanced your enthusiasm for the subject matter. You may, of course, have entered elementary school physical education with a positive attitude for the subject because your parents had already exposed you to physical activities at a young age. They may have enrolled you in t-ball or youth soccer, or invited you to accompany them during activities such as bike riding, jogging, swimming, or throwing and catching a ball. If you had that kind of opportune background, you may be excited by the possibility of being able to teach physical education.

**THINKING
CHALLENGE 1.2**

When you recall your elementary physical education experiences, what are the first five things that you remember?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Fortunately, many school programs at the elementary level are regarded as effective, that is, children acquire motor skills and enjoy the subject. There are, however, elementary physical education programs, taught either by physical education specialists or classroom teachers, that are less than ideal. These can be characterized as classes in which students are allowed to choose teams (stigmatizing those who are last to be selected) and to ridicule others who have less ability, and in which teachers engage students in inappropriate activities. If you encountered such a program, it is probable that you have negative feelings about the