Physical Education Professional Development Videotape and Critical Analysis Grade 7/8

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**Description of Lesson**

This Physical Education lesson for Grade 7/8 focuses on strategies of offence and defense, taught through soccer. The lesson started with a dynamic stretch warm up lead by the students, followed by a warm-up activity of soccer tag, with the focus of offense. Next, was an activity that focused on offensive *and* defensive skills/strategies. Once the students had practiced their skills and strategies throughout these brief partner/small group activities, students worked together in a team activity, Four Corner Soccer. Throughout the lesson, students were to focus on the strategies used for offense and defense in a variety of activities.

Professionally my goal was to ensure my instructions are clear to increase students’ success and engagement. This is attached on a PDP sheet.

**Areas of Strength**

*Instructional/teaching strategies*

Throughout the lesson, I felt that I did well with instructional/teaching strategies. To begin, I helped prepare all of the materials so that the students were ready to go at the beginning of the lesson. This minimized taking away from students’ learning time because the equipment was nearby and ready to be used, when needed.

A teaching strategy that I have had lots of practice with during my pre-internship experience, including during this PE lesson, was practicing wait time. This was challenging but the students usually respond well to it. My wait time was appropriate for students to reset from the activity and get ready to listen again as a whole group. Although this sometimes took a while, students still responded fairly well. I think to make my wait time strategy even more successful is to have students come together into the middle of the gymnasium to give instructions instead of giving instructions to students as they are scattered around the gymnasium. Regardless, practicing wait time minimized taking away from students’ learning time because theoretically it allowed me to give instructions once to the entire class instead of several times if select students were not listening.

I also liked that I participated with the students during the lesson as much as possible; this increased student engagement and participation when they saw that I was excited and ready to participate. By participating, I found “ways to promote interest and enthusiasm” (Mitchell, 2003, p. 36-37). Even when students saw that I was changed for physical education, it got the students attention as Mitchell (2003) suggested as the ‘Getting the students’ attention’ in the ABC’s of Teaching in Physical Education (p. 36). When I was not directly participating in the activities, I was circulating and observing groups. This ensured that all students were on task and getting the most out of the lesson as possible. By circulating and observing I was able to see when students were injured and attend to them to ensure that they were not hurt. By circulating I was also able to encourage students to keep practicing the skills, even when they were struggling.

Overall, the nature of the lesson was enjoyable for the students and myself. In the lesson, I enjoyed that the entire gym space was being used as there was a lot of opportunity for students to participate in all of the activities with the amount of balls provided, and students were not singled out. Students were also given a choice to be goalie. This was all due to the detailed planning of the lesson prior to teaching it; I had purposefully planned for these inclusive aspects. In the ABC’s of Teaching in Physical Education, Mitchell (2003) writes that “the lesson plan is like a restaurant menu – it’s a useful planning tool” (p. 37). For me, my lesson plan included what I needed to account for to ensure the lesson was enjoyable for all students.

*Use of Students*

I think that I used the number of students in a purposeful way. Students were in a variety of groups (partners, small groups, and a team setting). I believe that this use of students ensured not to single students out and allowed a lot of opportunity for participation by discussing strategies and actively practicing strategies. The only time where I feel that I could have utilized the number of students in a better way was when I chose only two people to be “it” for soccer tag (3:50). Regardless, I used the number of students in a purposeful way, which lead to engagement and participation.

*Appropriate for Skill Level - Content, Activity and Instruction Time*

The content, activities and instruction time are appropriate for the skill level of the students. The activities done in this lesson directly related to outcomes from the Saskatchewan curriculum (PE7.8, PE8.7). As well, the lesson built upon prior knowledge. For example, I had pretended that the lesson prior to this one was about the handling of a soccer ball (00:05 first video). The first activity, soccer tag, related to the content of the lesson regarding offensive strategies and utilized students’ prior knowledge of tag-like games. This meant that little instruction was required and the activity was appropriate for the students’ skill level. Also, for the second activity, I had a video in case students required further explanation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-Mbr3Rr1Qc> (Watch 1:15 to 2:30). However, the video was not required because the students understood the instructions. This partner activity was appropriate for the students’ skill level, because it required specific roles of each student involved (offense or defense), it built off prior knowledge and skills, and the instructions were short and simple. This follows Mitchell’s (2003) suggestion of the “K.I.S.S. principle” (p. 37). Furthermore, some students play soccer and were even more familiar with soccer than others, therefore, their skill level was higher, and I think that the activities chosen for the lesson gave even the best soccer players a challenge. Students had to work in a variety of group settings (partner/ small group and team) with a variety of skill levels of peers. This may be a challenge for students that play soccer as they may not be familiar with the unpredictability and strategies of players who do not. The third activity was the least appropriate regarding instruction time (2:20-4:37 third video), which will be discussed later. However, Four Corner Soccer catered to the Teaching Games for Understanding approach which is an appropriate approach to use territory sport-like games for instructional purposes, as this lesson provided. Overall, the time for students to be physically active was appropriate for their high level of energy and the content, activities and instruction time are appropriate for the students’ skill level.

*Closure*

I also think that the closure of the lesson was strong for the amount of time given. Mitchell (2003) suggests that the closure is a “quick review of the purpose of the day’s lesson and a preview of what is to come in the next lesson” (p. 38). The students reviewed the strategies that were used in the lesson and specifically strategies with the focus of offense and defense as a final check for understanding. However, if more time was available for this lesson, I would have had students do a verbal (whole group) and written (individual) reflection of the lesson regarding how students felt about the lesson, their understanding of offensive and defensive strategies with an example of each, and why strategies are important to utilize. This would ensure that all students knew the purpose of the lesson and learned something and made a connection of how it can be applied in their own lives.

**Areas to Grow and Practical Solutions**

*Setting the Tone*

I think that the lesson was chaotic due to not appropriately setting the tone of the lesson. Although I participated and laid out the expectations, the tone of the lesson was not the best that it could have been. The lack of my own whistle and the miscommunication during peer teaching (discussed later on) really contributed to a chaotic tone of the lesson that carried on throughout. Setting the tone for the lesson was a downfall and it did not allow for the lesson to run smoothly.

*Safety Considerations*

I did not address safety considerations during the lesson even though I had them written on my lesson plan. “Safety is the ‘overriding umbrella’ during all aspects of a physical education lesson. Safety features, such as … anticipating what might happen in order to avoid a mishap, are part of a teacher’s legal and moral responsibility” (Mitchell, 2003, p. 38). Forgetting to address safety considerations was a professional challenge. I anticipated that students may be focused on their ball and handling skills, while participating in the activities, so I wanted students to be aware of their surroundings. This may have prevented potential injuries later on (10:15-10:45 in third video and 11:07-12:07). Furthermore, I realized after the lesson that I did not anticipate or think about students kicking the ball as hard as they could as a strategy. I am surprised that I did not foresee this happening, but now I know I need to address this for the next time I teach Physical Education.

A practical solution to predicting and addressing safety issues of Physical Education would be to watch videos of similar activities and look for safety issues that occur or may occur. Also, I should know my students well so that I can anticipate what some students may do to get attention from peers or their comfortability level with the skill that may lead to trying dangerous tasks. I can also ask students what dangers they foresee in the lesson after explaining the task. This will hold students even more accountable to practice safety of oneself and others while participating in the lesson.

I should have also made students aware of their surroundings in the gymnasium, as it became a safety issue, such as the metal rod that fell down in the corner of the gymnasium (16:10 second video). In the future, I should visit the gymnasium before teaching to analyze the surroundings to see what may be potential dangers. I could also ask students what they foresee as safety concerns within the space.

*Expanding/Addressing Students’ Answers*

I felt that this was not one of my best executed lessons, so I recognized many things that I can improve on professionally and personally. Firstly, I think that I should have expanded on students’ answers throughout the lesson. At the beginning I asked what a tactic and strategy are, and accepted the answers given; however, I should have expanded on this and perhaps explained the difference between these terms or given examples of each. Furthermore, I could have asked students as a review of what a dynamic stretch is. I know most of the students knew this because they do it every day in their Physical Education class and participate in sports, but it is always helpful to review. Later in the lesson I asked students what strategies they used in Four Corner Soccer and a few students responded with kicking the ball as hard as they could (8:50 in third video). I should have responded that this is not the best strategy to use and could cause injuries. I would not have allowed an inappropriate answer similar to this one in a regular classroom setting so I should not have done so in the gymnasium. I also could have prepared students for discussions by telling them what to specifically look for during each activity because we will be debriefing afterwards. This may have minimized the responses with strategies that may not be the best.

The practical solutions for the next time I teach Physical Education is that I want to ensure that I have a purpose for the questions I ask students and respond accordingly. If I have a better understanding of what I want the students to know and how to arrive at the understanding, I may feel better prepared to expand on and address students’ answers. Expanding on students’ answers may involve asking more verbal questions or giving the class something to think about during the activities or after the lesson. Also, giving examples of what tactics and strategies are used in sports that students are familiar with may help connect the content to real life experiences, which would help them to understand the concept more. This would mean that I must prepare more for the lesson beforehand, which I know will be beneficial for the students’ understanding and will pay off. I think that these are practical solutions that I can put into place when I teach Physical Education again.

*Giving Instructions*

My instructions during the activities could be improved upon, which is a personal challenge I believe. I was too quick to have students get into groups and asking who wants to be ‘it’ for soccer tag before the rules of the games were explained (3:20-5:30 second video). The instructions also took far too long to explain. This would have been another opportunity to use the K.I.S.S. principle (Mitchell, 2003, p.37). I did not explain all of the rules for soccer tag, such as what to do with the balls when students are tagged, so Raegyn interrupted the activity later (7:30 second video). This was inconvenient to stop the lesson and was a safety concern with balls laying around. Also, I did not give students a time limit for activities, and this may have been due to the new environment of the gymnasium, because usually I set time limits within the classroom for activities. By providing a time limit, which I would do next time, it gives students an opportunity to gauge how much effort to put into the activity.

I think my difficulties with classroom management and instructional strategies could have been solved by practicing giving instructions for the activities before the lesson so that I could do so in short and simple sentences. Also, I should use my own whistle as a professional; this would have ensured I had all students’ attention and not rely on my teaching partner or co-operating teacher to call the students’ attention.

I also have difficulty with verbal communication in the gymnasium setting because my voice is soft. Within this lesson I felt that the students were not listening, or even hearing, my instructions. A practical solution for this is to use a microphone, which I have done in the classroom and it works phenomenally well. As well, I should have had students come into the middle or corner of the gymnasium so that my voice could be projected and concentrated in one area.

*Adjust Instructions*

Another professional area to improve on is adjusting my instructions according to students’ interest and/or fatigue. First, I could have given students a water break after any of the activities, this may have helped students catch their breath after running and show the importance of staying hydrated. I could have even modelled this for students. I noticed that some students were perspiring a lot and others were not at all, so this could have been a time to give students an extra challenge and put in more effort. However, this may have become too confusing if students are doing too many different tasks. Perhaps, I could tell students who are exerting a lot of energy to skip instead of run during activities, this may take longer but use less energy. And for students that appear to not exert as much energy, I may have them shuffle low sideways. I may be able to adjust instruction by providing students with options to modify the activities (Bernard handout, Strategies to Modify Games/Activities). As we have learned in class, this may include the size of the playing area, size and distance of targets, change the equipment used, slow game and objects down, pause more/less often to discuss strategies or modify the rules of the game. I have not yet found a solution that will work according to student interest and/or fatigue, but I think that I will continue to brainstorm professional solutions to this.

*Peer Teaching*

*Utilizing Space*

I found it a professional challenge to peer teach, but this challenge has practical solutions to become better at it. I think that I could have utilized the space better during dynamic stretches. Instead of being right beside my teaching partner, I should have moved to the opposite end of the gymnasium. This would have led to better classroom management due to proximity as well. I should have moved around the space while teaching too. Furthermore, I disliked that I did not require all students to be together on the middle circle, as this made teaching difficult. There was a group of boys on the middle circle who were out of place from the rest of the class (3:10 second video). They seemed distracted and off task during instructions and I had to turn around to make sure they heard my voice. By having all of the students together and not having my back to students some of the time, this would have ensured that all students heard the instructions. Practical solutions to this would be to practice peer teaching more and remind myself and my teaching partner to disperse during the lesson.

*Appropriate for Skill Level - Content, Activity and Instruction Time*

I think overall the lesson was appropriate for the students. However, the third activity was the least appropriate regarding instruction time (2:20-4:37 third video). The personal and professional difficulty of peer teaching took away from the instructions for Four Corner Soccer. I did not agree with my partner in regards to of how the game was supposed to look; this miscommunication was evident and took away some time from students’ opportunity to participate, specifically (3:50-4:15). These instructions could have taken about one minute, and students would have fully understood, instead it took longer, and students were unsure of the rules of the game, taking away their opportunity to participate in the activities.

**Lesson’s Alignment with My Principles and Values**

I think that teachers constantly reflect their beliefs, principles and values through their lessons and I feel that this lesson aligns with my principles and values in a variety of ways. Firstly, there was a high level of participation for all students. I believe that this is important for students in any subject area; a high level of participation allows for students to repeat the learning objectives and increase their chance of success. Additionally, the level of participation involves small groups and teams. This opportunity for cooperation is also important as a real-life skill. I am responsible for students’ success and develop of skills in my classroom that students can apply to real-life.

The comfortable environment and relationship that has been created with the students also aligns with my values; I think relationships with students are the most important aspect of this career. I allowed students to choose their partners for the second activity, which shows a level of respect that I have for them and trust that they will choose wisely. I am also aware that students are more comfortable with their friends than with other classmates, which created an environment where all students participated alongside their peers. Furthermore, participating in the lesson created an environment that illustrates that I, too, am doing what students are doing. Students who are hesitant during physical activities may appreciate that I willingly am putting myself in a vulnerable situation with them.

The nature of the lesson involved concepts that built off of one another that would be learned before and after. This provides a sequential learning experience and connects ideas to illustrate the purpose. The organizational of planning lessons that work together is extremely important for students to get the most out of the school year as possible. As well, I always appreciate well organized teachers during day to day lessons, and I find that everything runs so much smoother when the teacher is organized and prepared, so I can try my best to be organized for the sake of the students. After all, the role of the teacher within a Physical Education program is vital. “Thoughtful planning that is linked to curriculum outcomes [and] well designed lesson[s] that have the intention of student learning, and effective teaching” (Fishburne and Hickson, 2005, p. 25) is important criteria that PE must align with in order to be successful

By using the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) approach, it aligned with the underlying pedagogical principles that I was aiming for. Within the lesson there was sampling, game representations, exaggeration of a specific skill and tactical complexity, the four main principles (handout from Buryl Bernard). The lesson not only aligned with my principles and values as an educator, but also aligns with the principles of TGfU.

**Physical Education Goals Going Forward**

I think my future challenges will be similar to the challenges I experienced during this lesson, such as, classroom management, giving instructions, adjusting instructions according to students’ interest and/or fatigue and peer teaching. My goals to develop these areas of my professional teaching require a lot of practice, which I intend to do during my internship. I want to develop strong classroom management strategies that can get the attention of a large group of Middle Years students quickly. I want to practice following the K.I.S.S. principle for giving instructions so that I do not lose students’ interest. I want to learn and practice how to adjust my instructions based on students’ interest and/or fatigue, which will require me to reflect on my knowledge from this course and KHS about how to modify games and activities. And peer teaching may be difficult to practice in internship, but it may be beneficial to suggest to my co-op. As well, partner presentations during April this semester requires peer teaching in which I will focus on reviewing the lesson and making sure I am on the same page as my partner. Throughout the process of learning and teaching, I must always remember to reflect on my lessons. This will ensure that I am prepared to overcome challenges, such as those in this lesson, when they arise.

References

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