

High School Students' Experiences in a Sport Education Unit: The Importance of Team Autonomy and Problem-solving Opportunities

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Background

- Student engagement declines through secondary physical education (Mowling, Eiler, Brock, & Rudisill, 2004)
- Key to sustained student engagement is to listen, take into account, and understand the stakeholder's interests (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001) and prior knowledge

Sport Education

- Sport Education structured through seasons, team affiliation, formal competition, records, festivity, and a culminating activity
- Small sided teams
- Goals are for students to become:
 - Competent
 - Literate
 - Enthusiastic
- Attempting to create active, social, and creative learners (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Previous Research

- Focused on:
 - How students felt about Sport Education
 - Benefits/limitations
 - Likes and dislikes about the set up
 - Reasons for not participating in PE
 - Importance of student-centered learning environments
- Did not emphasize student experiences within a Sport Education unit or student engagement

Purpose

- Examined student's experiences within a modified Sport Education unit
 - Smaller teams
 - Fewer roles
- Research Questions
 - What did students experience during the curriculum unit change?
 - What engaged students in the Sport Education unit?

Method

- Participants
 - 70 ninth-grade students
 - 2 Physical Education classes
 - 1 female teacher
- Context
 - High school in mid-Atlantic region of the US
 - 90 minute PE classes with block scheduling
 - Required 2 years of PE

Floor Hockey Sport Education Set-up

- 6 teams of 5-6 students
- Modified roles within each team to foster active participation by all and limit too much information
 - Captain, equipment manager
- Season lasted 16 lessons
 - 8 for pre-season; 8 for season

Floor Hockey Unit

Pre-season

- Team organization
- Role assignment
- Skill practice
- Team choice
 - Scrimmages
 - Fouls
 - Referees
 - Field size
 - # of players
- Team spirit

Season

- Round robin tournament
- Regulation games, fields
- Culminating Tournament
 - Records
 - Crossovers
 - Championship
- Awards
 - Team winners
 - Sportsmanship
- Team spirit

Data Collection/Analysis

- Qualitative Ethnographic Study
 - Observations: field notes were kept
 - Interviews: tape-recorded and transcribed
 - Curriculum guide
- Focus
 - Thoughts about the Sport Education unit
 - Experiences changed from their traditional curricula
 - Individual role within the persisting teams
- Data was coded through constant comparison
- Data triangulation

Transformation into Active Learners

- Team Autonomy = Persistent Teams
- Problem solving through team affiliation
- A male student shared, “I liked the combination of scrimmage first and then game play. We had lots of practices and improved our techniques. We also got to know the rules and picked up the fouls better.”
- In a snippet from a focus group interview, a female student shared, “I think because we got to pick our teams, we participate more because it’s whom we want to be with.”
- The teacher felt “....the overall goal was not only to be physically fit, but gain a deeper understanding of the sport and its components. They came to form bonds within their teams and worked together to achieve those goals.”

Smaller Teams Produced Higher Engagement

- More teams active at one time
- Peer teaching
 - A captain said, “you choose something to match everyone’s strengths and the teacher doesn’t always do that.”
- Teams were individualized – started where they felt they needed to with basic skills
 - A male student, shared “we had to learn to work as a team and respect whom you are with because you have to work with them everyday, instead of changing the people you work with.”

Discussion

- Students made strides to become more competent in their knowledge and skills
- Used interests, strengths, and prior knowledge to problem solve within their teams
- Peer teaching allowed development and level of respect throughout
- Higher engagement with students becoming more active