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A Teacher Self-Appraisal Checklist for Physical Educators to Assess Instructional Performance

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Many of the instructional challenges physical education teachers are confronted with today are very different from even those of our recent past. Advances in educational practices have found different ways to reach students, respond to their activity needs, and provide more interesting, effective, safe, as well as, novel ways to approach the teaching-learning process. Exploration into “Best Practices”, Instructional methods, and teaching effectiveness over the past three decades has brought about numerous changes that have focused on enhancing the quality of the teaching-learning experience in physical education. Student assessment, teaching effectiveness and instructional accountability are just a few of the concepts “BUZZing” throughout the halls, offices and classrooms, including making their way into the gymnasium. Toward this end, and certainly with an eye on creating a positive impact on instruction, the authors have put together a list of instructional elements. Each of these instructional elements are presented with the idea of motivating the individual teacher to think about each of their classes as an critical experience in the development of each and every student, and plan a presentation of lessons in physical education that will have a positive effect immediately and help to set a firm foundation for future lessons to build upon. The ultimate goal is to provide a solid foundation with skills and knowledge that will serve to draw students into activity throughout their adult life.

Revisiting “A Teacher Performance Self-Appraisal for Physical Education” Instrument

In March 1988, Dr. James Bateski (1988) introduced a self-appraisal “tool” to help teachers identify the occurrence of instructionally important tasks that would impact performance using a five-element scale to recognize the frequency (always, frequently, sometimes, rarely and never). This self-appraisal instrument would also serve as an ongoing tool to facilitate instruction, as well as, to impact in a positive way, the teaching-learning process. Dr. Bateski’s (1988) article referenced many of the current instructional trends (Mosston, Hunter, Rosenshine, Siedentop, Pangrazi and Darst) and provided a rating scale attached to 40 instructional characteristics. The self-appraisal checklist was divided into five “trait or task” categories (planning, lesson execution, lesson evaluation, data-based goals and personal qualifications) with each category having four or more elements. Bateski was clear that there should not be an expectation for each element to occur in each lesson. He suggested that instructors take a more global look at their performance, “focus on consistency” and be cognizant of each happening “happening habitually in my teaching repertoire” over time. Bateski did identify “feedback and re-evaluation” as areas that should be visited on a regular basis, along with “teacher development being an ongoing, dynamic process.” While the article “tease” suggested his self-appraisal tool could be used to improve annual performance reviews, as a focus for evaluation, or as an instrument to teach other administrators about physical education, the focus was still for teachers to look at their own instruction.

Over the years, there have been several physical education content specific national programs, such as Physical Best, Fitness for Life (2009) (2007), SPARK, NASPE - Appropriate Practices Guidelines (2000) (2004) (2005) (2008) and others that have been introduced to change the course of instruction in a positive manner. These instructional initiatives, along with different methodologies, such as Sport Education, Adventure Education, Tactical Games, Teaching Games for Understanding, Teaching Responsibility Through Activity and many other creative methods, have been joined by several interdisciplinary programs, along with technology, to interest students in engaging in physical activity. In 2007, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (2007) introduced a much more comprehensive, yet cumbersome, “Physical Education Teacher Self-Assessment Tool” with the intent of providing administrators, curriculum specialists and physical education teachers with an opportunity to impact the instructional infrastructure related to instruction within the physical education venues (opportunity to learn - curriculum, instructional practices, classroom management, student assessment and teacher evaluation). This effort was an attempt to provide insight into teaching K-12 physical education from a variety of vantage points by providing a check-list of instructional benchmarks and encouraging a “meaningful, ongoing assessment and evaluation” effort. Each of the 67 components is placed into one of five categories and is recognized with a ranked number as part of the evaluation process, with a five level rubric expressing any of four evaluations which respond to the component. To support the evaluation, a reference guide is included to explain, as well as, amplify the component. As the explained intent is as an evaluation tool, in the introduction the “Evaluation Principles” are defined and explained in an effort to establish ground-rules in support of a fair review.

In developing this 2008 Self-Appraisal Checklist, a review of the literature revealed that the NASPE characteristics of a “Highly Qualified Physical Education Teacher” identify four key elements to help make a positive impact and strengthen the instructional process. Kyriidis (2006) identified 10 elements of great importance that are essential for the “improvement of teaching” and creating a clear path that will lead to effective teaching in physical education. When reviewing the most commonly acknowledged elements associated with instructional practices, the author identified: planning of/for instruction; a positive-supportive learning environment; feedback; teaching methodology/strategies; instructional interactions; personal characteristics, and organization/administration. Eldar reported and then used the elements of Cohen’s (1987) work when he identified the three main types of criterion for evaluating teaching as: predictive criteria (content knowledge, intelligence, communication skills, motivation, responsibility level), product-based (student achievements) and process-based (instructional characteristics, teacher-student interactions, problem solving ability, flexibility/improvisations). He further expanded and clarified the characteristics in each of these categories to acknowledge the personal traits of physical education teachers that impact and distinguish quality teaching. Graham (2000), in developing a profile for a “Master Teacher”, identified the characteristics, as well as, presented the techniques and skills that contribute to the maturity and strengthening of an effective physical education teacher. In addition, Graham identified elements essential to an effective presentation that would “teach” the students engaged in the K-12 physical education teaching-learning process. Included were his suggestions for minimizing non-instructional distractions, as well as, creating a positive environment that would invite, welcome, support and protect students (physically and psychologically) while each individual is engaged in activity. The sketch of a “Master Teacher” then brings closure to the profile by challenging each physical education professional (with the obvious extension to future professionals) to become an enthusiastic teacher who prepares to have a life-long impact on the life of each student.

Individually, each of the previous instructional tools has embraced the most current teaching trends while blending local, state, regional and national trends into the instrument. The development of each instructional tool has
served to contribute to reform efforts, whether
designed as a "top-down" supervisory effort or
as a "bottom-up" course of action to strengthen
the skills, knowledge, in-and-out of school
activity experiences or the development of
such areas as character and problem-solving
abilities. In addition, as new curricular thrusts,
educational initiatives and laws are introduced,
these too are included into the evaluation
jumble. These efforts, each looking to impact
the quality of the learning experience, have
launched and been blended into programs in
an effort to establish instructional standards as a
means of impacting the quality of instructional
physical education programs, both in actual
change, but also to keep physical education
moving forward along with all the other subject
areas that have their learning measured by
standardized tests.

Different Times Require Special Considerations
and a New Tool
This 2008 version of a Self-Appraisal Check­
List for physical educators has several very
significant changes, as well as additions
that have been designed to facilitate the
self-appraisal process. The underlying
objective of this venture is to facilitate a
positive instructional impact on practicing
professionals and provide guidance, as well as
lesson structure to the future-professional
physical educators. The intent of this
appraisal instrument is to provide practicing
professionals, and future professionals, with
a guide for planning and a tool for reflective
analysis to measure how individual lessons
and/or groupings of classes (units), met their
learning objectives.

This new document embraces component
parts of the current NASPE "Standards",
"position papers", and the appropriate
practices for physical education series that have
been created to lead the physical education
profession to a stronger, more respected,
position in the educational community. It
must also be acknowledged that teaching, as
viewed by the author, is much more of an "art"
than merely acknowledging the frequency
of an event as would a technician. It is the
thoughtful preparation, biomechanically correct
demonstrations, clear explanations with high
performance expectations, sensitive interaction,
numerous authentic practice opportunities,
frequent and substantive individual feedback,
along with a caring attitude, that when blended
craftily, transforms the technician into an ever­
challenging artist in the gymnasium.

Evaluation or assessment, even self-appraisal
is an ominous task that is difficult; humbling
and, more often than not, humiliating as a
direct result of the personal investment in the
effort. The individual conducting the self­
appraisal does not always get a clear view of
the instruction events and interactions
when looking through their own glasses. This
Self-Appraisal Check-List has been designed
to provide an individual teacher/future
professional with four areas identified as a
foundation for instruction. It should be used
in the development of lessons/units as well as
a reflective instrument to document the
occurrences of planned events and the absence
of intended instructional opportunities. As
with Batesky's tool, while considering each
instructional element is a product of intuitive
teaching, each and every element need not
be planned nor occur in every lesson--but the
opportunity for inclusion when planning to
meet the learning objectives of the experience
should be considered.

About this Self-Appraisal Instrument
This instrument is designed to help individual
teachers in the preparation of upcoming
teaching-learning experiences, as well as,
reflect on what has happened during lessons.
This current instrument includes six major
categories (pre-class organization; instructional
presentation; student assessment, Post Lesson
Reflective Self-Appraisal and Reflective Self­
Appraisal - Growth Opportunities), each having
no less than three descriptive elements that
can be further sub-divided depending on the
instructional circumstances. Depending on
the focus of the program, the instructional
objectives, and the learning level of the
students, the teacher may add elements to
either a grouping or further delineate a specific
element to clarify addressing, as well as,
achievement of an instructional focus/objective.
The responsibility for analysis, in each of the
categories, belongs to the individual teacher
who is empowered to conduct the review fairly
and objectively in an effort to strengthen the
teaching-learning process. Each of the elements
of the Self-Appraisal instrument is included
in an effort to provide physical education
teachers with an opportunity to consider the
purpose, as well as, the impact addressing
these fundamental elements of instruction will
have on the planning and execution of each
instructional presentation.

Using the Teacher Performance Self-Appraisal
"Checklist"
1. Start by reading each of the 50 elements so
that you have an idea of intent of the elements
in each of the categories. Then reread each
of the categories so you can develop a clear
understanding during your lesson preparation
on how you can include the element in the
design of a lesson.
2. Reflect on the instructional significance of
the elements and why it is positioned in a
category.
3. Review the process by which you have
worked to develop a past series of lessons and
compare and note completion of the elements
in a category. You should also begin to make
notes on how to include elements and focus on
areas which will strengthen your lessons.
4. Review and reflect on the changes you
have noted for inclusion in your lesson.
5. Draft a new activity unit and address each
of the elements in the first category, then the
second and third. You need not over-subscribe
yourself, as including one or two new elements
in a lesson may be enough to strengthen your
lesson.
6. Review and reflect on the changes you
have noted for inclusion in your lesson.
7. Review the learning objectives in the
completed lesson plan along with learning
experiences (practice activities, drills, modified
games, etc), as well as those elements that you
have acknowledged being addressed. Create an
image as to how the new elements will blend
into the new lesson.

NOT all elements need be addressed in every
lesson but should be included somewhere
within a series
[Column 1- Element Number] so you are able
to identify which element(s) you are addressing.
[Column 2- Active] so you can acknowledge
that you are addressing this element in the
lesson
[Column 3, 4, 5- I, G, C] is so you can
indicate to whom you are addressing with an
instructional element. (I= Individual; G= Group;
C= Class)
[Column 6- Element Identification] explains
the instructional nature of the element.
[Column 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12- Reflective Ranking]
allows for the teacher in the self-appraisal
process to rank the effort that was made in the
lesson. (S- superior, O- outstanding, G- good,
ME- meets expectation, NI- needs improvement,
U- unsatisfactory)
8. Following a lesson, reflect how each
element was addressed and make notes on
how you can strengthen the presentation.
It is these notes that will help you to bring
more instructional accountability to your
lessons as you measure learning along with
the growth in your students. Make notes of
your modifications, teachable situations and
the Q & A that was a part of your checking-for
student-understanding for future use with the
activity. Check how your intended performance
matched your real behavior, including how you
directed instruction, demonstrated activities
and explained concepts. Make notes of your
successes and specifically detail where your
work needs to be strengthened.
9. Review your student assessments as both
a measuring-stick on your teaching and their
learning of the instructional topic. Record
student's achievement on the summative
assessment as a measure of learning. Complete
your self-appraisal by ranking your performance
on each of the elements you acknowledged
during preparation. Provide feedback as well
as record where progress has been short of the
goal. Store your notes in a place where they are
accessible and use them to prepare your next
lessons, as well as the same unit when offered
again.
10. Feel good about strengthening your
instructional lessons and tell a colleague of your
successes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Class Organization</th>
<th>Instructional Preparation</th>
<th>Instructional Presentation</th>
<th>Instructional Support Materials</th>
<th>Needs Improvement</th>
<th>Outstanding</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you thought-out, talked over and reflected on your lesson to respond to the needs of the students in the current class?</td>
<td>Do you present an introduction to set the stage for your class and encourage their interest for the activity that is to come?</td>
<td>Do you include in your written plans age-appropriate examples, clear instructional cues, exaggerated demonstrations, current events and how students can access community resources to continue to participate in the activity?</td>
<td>Do you provide ample feedback to both individual students and groups to insure proper skill execution behavior? When you provide immediate feedback (or close to the actual attempt), do you focus specifically on why the skill attempt you observed is appropriate or inappropriate?</td>
<td>Do you provide the students with enough practice attempts during class to acquire the “expected” skill?</td>
<td>Is the class organization done in a manner that the goals for the lesson are met?</td>
<td>Is there a good pace to each segment of the lesson?</td>
</tr>
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<td>Do you have a written plan for the unit and each individual lesson prepared prior to the start of the first class that include measurable instructional objectives and clearly stated performance expectations for all ability groups?</td>
<td>Have you written instructional objectives that reflect direction for the class that are linked to the instructional activities and will be assessed during the unit to measure learning?</td>
<td>Are the activities you have planned, engaging all students during the “Guided Practice” phase of the lesson or are the majority of students waiting for an opportunity to get involved?</td>
<td>Does your physical education class have a positive atmosphere that is characterized by success and an encouraging amount of praise rather than negative analysis and criticism? Do students enjoy the activity, are they, as individuals enthusiastic or is it hard for individuals to get involved as well as recognize the benefits of activity?</td>
<td>Are the students on task and is the transition time between instructional phases kept to a minimum?</td>
<td>Were a “task sheet” created or did you use other instructional support materials during instruction to enhance the teaching-learning process?</td>
<td>Do you close your lesson with a brief summary emphasizing the important instructional cues, key learning outcomes and a presentation on how to find as well as use resources outside of class to continue to develop an appreciation for the activity?</td>
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<td>Are the instructional presentations, guided practices, drills and modified games directed to accomplishing the stated objectives?</td>
<td>Do you include in your written plans age-appropriate examples, clear instructional cues, exaggerated demonstrations, current events and how students can access community resources to continue to participate in the activity?</td>
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<td>Are facilities and instructional materials (equipment, balls, racquets, cones, etc) ready and available for easy distribution to students prior to the participation phase of the class?</td>
<td>Have you included ability groupings as well as learning experiences that will challenge each individual and insure a positive experience involving success for the less skilled student?</td>
<td>Have you included instructional modifications and teacher-aided instructions for APE students who have been included in your class in your plans?</td>
<td>Have you planned your lessons to maximize shared-concepts, whole-part-whole instruction, and has the instructional phase of the lesson progressed toward your goal or instructional objective with simple to complex, sequential learning experiences?</td>
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<td>Are all safety concerns posted prominently for the students to read and do your plans include announcements that will reinforce positive behavior as well as actions to avoid?</td>
<td>Have you created a welcoming atmosphere that invites students into your “learning-center” and sends a clear message that you are glad they have chosen to be active and that you care about each individual?</td>
<td>Have you removed all the distractions that will have a negative impact on the learning atmosphere of the class?</td>
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Post Lesson Reflective Self-Appraisal

1. Was there a good pace to the lesson?
2. Was the learning environment a positive one that embraced enthusiastic participation?
3. Did you modify your lessons as a result of ongoing (formative) assessments?
4. Did you note opportunities to restructure your lessons and instructional activities based upon a final (summative) assessment evaluation?
5. Did you re-teach if the students are unsure of the material or if a predetermined percentage of the class has not achieved the desired level of acceptance?
6. Were you flexible enough to change plans during the actual lesson when students aren’t ready or you have selected an inappropriate objective?
7. Did you complete anecdotal records on your lesson plan as to the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson?
8. Did you analyze the enthusiasm of your own teaching behavior?
9. Did you provide technique feedback as support during warm-up so students maximize their efforts?
10. Do you provide specific feedback on cognitive as well as skill-related performance that is positive for both appropriate and/or corrective in nature?
11. Do you provide positive comments to open the door for each corrective element of feedback when speaking to individual students?
12. While a “teachable-moment” is many times spontaneous, it can be planned as a transition episode. Do you use teachable-moments, as a positive learning experience at least once during each lesson?
13. Generally, were all your students on task (i.e., warm-up, cognitive activities, instruction, fitness, skill acquisition, drills, modified game activities, or game play) during all phases of the physical education class?
14. Did you give specific information in 50% of your feedbacks?
15. Did you circulate to all four quadrants of the gymnasium or field on an equal basis?
16. Was there student success created within the activities and “Guided Practice” that will encourage individuals to come back again excited as well as support student participation out-of-class?
17. Were you enthusiastic toward your students and about the activity you are teaching?
18. Did you make modifications to your unit plan and the next lesson based upon the class just taught in an effort to better facilitate the teaching-learning process as well as student learning?
19. Was the lesson content presented in an organized and sequential fashion so as to keep each student interested in learning?
20. Did every student participate in a safe environment free of the fear of injury as well as free from the fear of ridicule?

Reflective Self-Appraisal - Growth Opportunities

61. Do you encourage your students to lead an active lifestyle outside of class and throughout life?
62. Do you keep yourself professionally updated and informed by reading professional journals, attending conventions, etc?
63. Students see you as an active individual who practices-what-you-preach?

Conclusion
There have been efforts to have physical education, (along with art, music, vocational classes and business education) be recognized, as well as supported, with the same reverence as the four “major” subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Toward this end, the concepts of instructional accountability for teachers, along with student-learning being measured and growth assessed based upon demonstrated skills, have made their way into the activity forum of physical education. This Self-Appraisal Check-list provides the vehicle for a quick and easy tool to not only assist in the development of a lesson, but is a review of the results at the conclusion. As occurs with all motor skills episodes---
Following the introduction and understanding, practice, practice, practice and then more practice is the only way to ensure that the execution of the intended behavior will happen as it is intended.
It is critical that each teacher have a vision for their instruction that issues a challenge that will take hold of learners and help them grow with each experience. Effective physical educators never forget that their "reason for teaching" is each and every one of the students they serve. It is the challenges, growth, enjoyment and mutual respect that keep students wanting to come to physical education because of the benefits of activity. It will be a vision for their learning, along with an observable enthusiasm for teaching physical education and an apparent caring about them as children that will make a difference in their lives. As stated by Gryphon, "Good teachers matter. This seems to be obvious to anyone who has a child in school or, for that matter, to anyone who has been a child in school." Don't be just a good teacher, work to be a great teacher who is a physical educator and more important, makes a substantial impact on the lives of every single student you teach.
References


NASPE. (2000) Appropriate Practices in Movement Programs for Young Children Ages 3-5, National Association for Sport and Physical Education. AAHPERD. Reston, VA.


