**Teaching Physical Education in US Schools**

1. **Educational policy and system in US schools**

In the United States the academic year begins in the month of August. Typically, a high school and university setting will begin during the 3rd week of the month. In high school the school day begins around 8:30am and the ends around 3:30pm. A student will begin school at age 5. At age 5 the student will begin in kindergarten at an elementary school. The student will spend 6 years at the elementary school (Understanding). In elementary school, the student will begin by learning how to count, how to read, and other simple skills. Throughout elementary school the student will gradually build on these skills as well as learn about history and science. Also during elementary school the students stays with the same teacher throughout the entire school day. In elementary school, how many times the student has PE is dependent upon the school. Although, it is required that each elementary school student has at least 150 minutes of moderate to physical activity each week. Unfortunately, physical activity does not necessarily have to be a physical education class (Understanding).. In physical education class in elementary school, the student will begin by learning basic locomotor patterns (Understanding).. As the student advances through grades the student will begin to combine locomotor patterns and begin to learn strategy within sports. The PE teacher must teach different PE standards during each lesson. The PE teacher is responsible for teaching a standard from each of the following sections: psychomotor, cognitive, affective, and health-related fitness. The psychomotor standard focuses on how to perform the skill. The cognitive standard focuses on the physics behind performing the skill. The affective standard focuses on the how to work together with other teammates and other elements that are related. The health-related fitness element focuses on the ensuring the activities are providing the students with opportunities to be physically active. These standards are implemented in all levels of schooling. After the completion of 5th grade at the elementary school, the student will move onto middle school.

Middle school consists of 3 years in which the student will complete grades 6th, 7th, and 8th. In middle school the hours remain the same (Understanding).. Although, in middle school the student will switch teachers for each subject/class that is taught. In middle school, typically each class will last for 90 minutes. The student will then have 5 minutes to walk to the other class. In middle school, students will take a physical education class during each year. This means that for one semester of school, a student will have a PE class every day for 90 minutes. In middle school, physical education classes will focus on the same standards as elementary school except the standards will be adjusted to fit the students’ skill levels.

After the completion of the 8th grade, the student will then move onto high school. High school consists of grades 9th-12th. After the completion of 12th grade, the student will be granted a high school degree. During high school the student must take a PE class during his/her 9th and 10th grade year. This class occurs during one semester and the student has the class for 90 minutes every day. In high school the standards remain the same, but now focus on team sports and finding what sport that the student prefers to play.

A general calendar for physical education in schools looks like this: (Required by NC)

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| --- | --- |
| Grades | Time |
| Elementary (K-5) | Once per week for 45 minutes/ All year |
| Middle School (6-8) | Every other week for a semester/ 50 minutes per class period |
| High School 9 | Every other week for a semester/ 90 minutes per class period (required)  |
| High School (10-12) | Every day for a semester/ 90 minutes a day (elective) |

1. **Prepare for teaching class**

 While preparing for each class, it is important to complete a pre-assessment of the students so that as a teacher, you can understand what types of lessons would be appropriate for your students. At each grade level, there is appropriate standards that must be met. In the state of North Carolina, each grade level has essential standards that must be met. These standards are broken down into 4 different categories such as: psychomotor objective, cognitive objective, affective objective, and the health-related fitness objective. Each objective is broken down based upon grade level so that the objective is in line with the grade level. After the objectives, have been chosen then the teacher will pick an assessment style for each of the objectives that were chosen. After picking these then the teacher picks a warm up activity that is loosely tied to the objectives that were chosen. After 5-7 minutes of the warm up, the teacher will then use complete an informing task. The informing task is when the teacher teaches 2 individuals “drills” that teach the student how to perform the skill that is being taught. In the informing task, the teacher will also teach the students the critical elements of the schools. The critical elements are when the teacher breaks down the skill into its individual parts so that the student can understand how to perform the skill. After the informing task, the students will complete an application task. The application task is when the students use the skill that was taught and apply the skill to a game like situation.

1. **Teaching Cntent**

The content that is taught is dependent on grade level. In elementary school, the teacher will begin the school with a pre-assessment so that the teacher can better understand the skill level of the students. After the pre-assessment, then the year-long plan will be developed. The teacher may spend 2 weeks on catching and throwing at the beginning of the year and then return to this unit later on in the year. A year long plan can change from teacher to teacher and is often based on the skill level of the students. If the students are advanced in catching and throwing then the teacher may not spend as much time on this unit.

Example of Semester Long High School Plan:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Week 18 weeks semester | Unit |
| Week 1 | Ultimate Frisbee  |
| Week 2 | Football |
| Week 3 | Softball |
| Week 3 | Track and Field |
| Week 4 | Soccer |
| Week 5 | Chasing Fleeing and Dodging |
| Week 6 | Badminton  |
| Week 7 | Golf |
| Week 8 | Tennis |
| Week 9 | Indoor Hockey |
| Week 10 | Weight Lifting |
| Week 11 | Dancing |
| Week 12 | Basketball  |
| Week 13 | Pickle ball |
| Week 14 | Handball |
| Week 15 | Volleyball |
| Week 16 | Basketball |
| Week 17 | Competition Week  |
| Week 18 | Final Exam Prep |

1. **Managerial Strategies**

Student discipline may vary from school to school. Typically, the school will have its own set of rules that the students must follow and the classroom teacher will have additional rules. When I teach, I have 3 rules that I share with the students at the beginning of each lesson. These rules include: Be respectful of your classmates, the teacher, and the equipment, when the teacher is talking the students are not talking, and have fun. If a student does not follow the rules, then there are 3 levels of consequences. The consequences are the following: a warning, timeout, and then a phone call home. These consequences are done after each offense and are advanced if the student breaks the same rule in the same class period. When the students are younger, the parents are involved a lot due to the student being young. As the students get older, the parent is called much less but remains involved. To motivate the students, many teacher will grade the students on participation. This causes the students to participate due to their grade being at stake. Another way that teachers attempt to motivate the students is by creating activities that the students are interested in. This makes it important for the activities to be on skill level. If the activity is too easy then the students will become bored, but if it is too hard then the students will become frustrated.

Here is an example of management strategy that is used in elementary school:

The school mascot is a Patriot so we have the Star rules in our class:



So as our students have an issue we talk with them about if they are following the “S” rules, or the “T”, “A”, “R” rules. If not what do they need to do to change or fix it. We start our class with an instant activity they are moving as soon as they arrive to class, from something as simple as a walk, or a game of tag.

Then we move into an activity and have the students participate in the activity. Then we walk them through a cool down at the end of the lesson. We will have a student sit out if they receive 3 verbal warnings, then we will speak with them for a moment and reaffirm the type of behavior we want to see and have them do.

1. **Technology in PE in USA**

In the United States there is a lot of technology available to use. Teachers commonly use a Bluetooth speaker in the classroom. Teachers also use PowerPoints or other Microsoft products. Teachers also use video to complete a formal assessment of the students after the lesson is complete. The first thing using is the pedometer to measure not only the steps but also the heart rates. Also, accessibility to smartboards, laptops, I-pads, and much more are available. These products help to enhance the lessons to make them more engaging to the students.

1. **Popular activity programs in USA**

 A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan (CSPAP) is “a multi-component approach for schools to provide opportunities for students to be physically active for 60 minutes each day” (Action For Healthy Kids, n.d.). These types of programs allow students to receive a sufficient time of sixty minutes for physical activity throughout the school day. There are five main components to a CSPAP: “high quality physical education, physical activity during the day, physical activity before and after school, staff involvement, and family community engagement” (Action For Healthy Kids, n.d.). Examples of programs that implement these components include healthy staff meetings, family fun nights, activity clubs before and after school, and intramural sports programs.

1. **Students’ involvement in physical activities in and after schools**

The most common activity program within the United States is after school sports at the school that the child attends. If the child is in elementary school, then the child will commonly play for a community league based upon the childs’ age. There are teams for students of all ages and for all sports. The most popular programs for young children is a little league baseball team. These teams gradually advance based upon age and skill level. A large portion of students participate in sports at some point in their life. Although, as students get older this number decreases.

1. **Professional development for PE Teachers**

In the United States a PE teacher must engage in certain professional development activities to maintain his/her licensure. In the year that the teacher’s licensure expires the teacher must complete certain education credits that will help the teacher maintain his/her licensure. These requirements are the following: 1 credit in physical education and 5.5 general credits (How to, 2018). These credits are completed to show that the teacher is continuing his/her education and staying current in his teaching. These credits are also done so that the teacher can continue to update the activities and lessons that are taught within the classroom. Many times, teachers obtain these credits through conferences that the teacher can attend. Some of these conferences are organized by many different physical education organizations including: SHAPE America, Open PhysEd, and NCAAHPERD (North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Dance, and Sport Management). There is also many websites that teachers’ can use to learn new activities and lessons. Some of these websites include: Openphysed.org, pecentral.com, peuniverse.com, teachers.net, and lessonplanz.com.

1. **Successes and barriers in teaching**
* Need discussion on the Blog.
1. **Improvement for teaching?**
* Need discussion on the Blog.
1. **Pros and cons of educational system and PE programs in US schools**
* Need discussion on the Blog.