

2013-2014
Physical Education Curriculum Report
Specialist: Lisa Mann

“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.” -Plato

The overall objective of the PE program is to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to make active living a way of life. Cooperation, fair play, sportsmanship, communication, and respect are emphasized in all venues of activity.

Snow tubing happened this year!!!

This was my third year teaching at Miquon. During the first two, winter, for the most part, didn't exist. The most snow that fell was in October of my first year. It snowed 10 inches on a weekend and it was gone by Monday. Besides that, we had 2-4 inches here and there, but not enough to go snow-tubing. This year was a snow tubing year! Every class was able to go at least a few times.

For some students, it was their first time going down the Miquon hill. From the top of the hill, it can be a little intimidating. I recall one student asking about the risks of tubing. “Is it safe? What happens if we hit the railing or one of the trees on the side? What if we fall off? Will we be able to slow down before we get to the creek?” All are good questions. The truth is that everything we do in life involves risk to some extent. A lot of things we do in PE class, and at Miquon in general, involve risk. We risk tripping and falling as we walk or run from one place to another, or falling as we climb things. We can choose not to take that risk, but what fun is life without it? Is it even possible to have fun without some risk? Learning how to judge and learn which risks are worth taking and which are not is a critical life skill. But, snow tubing...it's worth the risk...it's fun! I am proud to say that almost all the students took that risk this year from ages 3-12...at least once, and snow tubed down the hill.

Cooperative and Team Building Activities:

Every year, we start the off with cooperation and problem solving activities. In these activities, the group confronts a specific scenario or problem to solve (a sinking ship to escape, a poisonous or toxic swamp to cross, an electric fence to get over, or a minefield to get a blindfolded partner through safely). The focus in these activities is fostering cooperation, encouraging dialogue, listening to a different opinion than your own, and having fun at the same time! These activities help me get to know the new students and help all of us get used to the new groupings as group dynamics change and grow and as students shift groups. The activities, of course, also work on collaboration, communication, cooperation, respect, teamwork, and problem solving skills. Those skills are a necessity for the success of any physical activity, game, or sport...at least any that involve more than one person. Some groups spend a few classes on cooperative activities,

others spend a lot more time and do a wider variety of them, depending on what each group needs and how well they are working together. I find that starting each year with cooperation activities helps for an easy and smooth transition into skill work, partnered, small and large/whole group activities and games.

A few examples of these activities:

Titanic: Students are told they are aboard a sinking ship (the Titanic) and they need to get everyone off and to the shore safely using only the 3-4 “life boats” (hula hoops) provided. Students may only step in the hoops and may pick up hoops, but only those that are empty. Hula hoops cannot be dragged or tossed. Teams may take any number of passengers on the lifeboats but if any passenger steps out of the hoops, everyone must return to the ship. Passengers may step out of the lifeboat only when they have reached land, but they may not throw the hoops back to the boat.

T-P Shuffle: Students stand on balance beam, and have to get in order (by height, alphabetical order by name, by birthday, etc.) without stepping off the balance beam. If anyone steps off, they start over. Sometimes this is modified by not allowing verbal communication.

“All aboard”: Groups have to all stand on a box for 5 seconds. First, a quarter of the group, then half, and, then, the whole group.

Group Juggle: The juggling starts with one student tossing to another student and then they toss to another student, etc. Once a pattern has been set with one object, another object is added, then three, maybe four, and even up to five objects. As groups begin to toss more objects, they will notice the importance of communication, eye contact, and discussing strategies.

After the initial Cooperation and Problem Solving unit, we move onto eye-hand coordination skills and activities that combine the eye-hand coordination skills with cooperation and problem solving. Also, at times during the year, if a class is having difficulty with their group dynamics, we revisit a problem solving activity - usually a new one or one they have done with a little twist.

Popular activities among all ages at Miquon:

Activities are introduced to students as part of a lesson, and, usually are the culmination of a lesson. For example, if the students are working on throwing at targets, I usually teach the skill cues (jumping jack, muscle man, point, step, throw, follow through...a little different if the students are older), have them practice individually throwing at targets (paper plates on walls or various objects to throw at), then, they play a partnered game (“p-i-g” or “t-i-g-e-r”), followed by a larger or whole group game.

Knock'em and Block'em is usually the first large group activity I introduce. Knock'em and Block'em is a 2 team game, with each team on a side of a room, with pins set up in a bowling

pattern, but spread out. The object of the game is to throw at the other teams' pins and knock them down without your teams' pins getting knocked down. After I have the students play this game once, they want to play it again and again. When I explain that it isn't working on what our skill is that day, they tend to come up with ways to modify it so it does. For example, 1st and 2nd graders were being introduced to frisbee throwing using foam hoops. They decided they could play Knock'em and Block'em with the foam hoops instead of balls. Third and Fourth graders came up with the same solution, but with using lacrosse sticks and small foam balls (so no one would lose teeth). Another class decided we should combine Knock'em and Block 'em with Castle ball (see below).

I introduce a lot of new activities here and there to the students, but no matter what, there are some activities that are, and probably always will be, favorites at Miquon. Some of them, in addition to Knock'em and Block'em include:

Pirate Ship Knock'em and Block'em - Similar to Knock'em and Block'em, but with 4 teams guarding their "ship", which is a mat with 5 bowling pins behind it. One person (the ball collector) rides on a scooter to get balls and throw/roll them back to their teammates. Sometimes there are shared "islands" that the ball collector can go to to throw the balls from. Once the pins are knocked down, their ship is sunk...and we start over.

Four Team Knock'em and Block'em - Similar to Knock'em and Block'em, but with 4 quadrants. If a team gets their pins knocked down, other teams can go into their area to throw (that team can still throw, but can't leave their area).

Steal the Gold - A lot like field capture the flag, but with 10 balls. There is a narrative about two towns where gold was discovered on the border. Instead of giving all of it to one town, they split it amongst the two towns.

Four Team Steal The Gold - Four team field capture the flag, except we use colored balls, with everyone starting with one or two of your own color balls and one of each of every other teams' color ball. The object of the game is to go into the other teams' territories to collect all the balls that belong to your team (your teams' color) without getting tagged...and not allowing them to take theirs.

Ga-ga - A game that combines dodging, blocking, striking, running and jumping with the object of hitting opponents with a ball below the knee while avoiding being hit. Ga-ga is usually played in a large octagon or hexagon called the Ga-ga pit. We don't have one of those at Miquon, so after the Science show I had the idea to use the tables (that were left up in my room the next morning) to make a court. It's a great game that teaches students "athletic position", as well as the skills mentioned above. Ever since, I have had numerous requests to revisit the game, and I have seen our students out at choice playing Ga-ga on the basketball court (a modified version with no walls and any ball they can find).

Poison Ball - 2 teams on their own “island” with a “poisonous swamp” in between the two islands with contains the poison ball. Each team throws little balls from their island at a large ball (the “poison ball”) to keep it away from their “island”. If the poison ball goes onto a teams’ island, we start over (play again).

Castle Ball - 2 teams on either side of the “gym”, guarding their castles (usually 3) made out of 6 hula hoops balanced to make a castle, while trying to throw balls at the other teams’ castles. If a castle gets knocked down, it can be set up again. If all castles are knocked down at the same time, we set them all up again, and start over.

I understand why students at Miquon love playing these activities. I LOVE to play these activities. On Grandparents Day, even THEY loved participating (they played Knock’em and Block’em). One grandparent suggested that there should be PE classes for seniors. It goes to show, no matter how old you are, the love of play doesn’t really go away.