

P.E. NEWS
A Free Monthly E-mail Newsletter
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JANUARY FEATURED ORIGINAL ARTICLES

- Technology in PE is Not Just Pedometers and Heart Rate Monitors Anymore
 - Is My Child the Next Tennis Star?
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 - Professional New Year Resolutions in a Strange Political Environment
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JANUARY MEDIA REVIEW

- [Upside Right: A Children’s Guide to Movement](#)
 - Author: Gaetano J. Amato
 - Reviewed by: Kayla Johanson, *pelinks4u* Editorial Assistant

 - [Putting Research to Work in Elementary Physical Education](#)
 - Authors: Lawrence Locke & Dolly Lambdin
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EDITORIAL

IS INTERDISCIPLINARY TEACHING THE KEY TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION'S FUTURE?

Last month, Education Secretary Arne Duncan posed the following question to a convention audience of social studies teachers:

"How can we promote both a well-rounded education with rich offerings across all subjects - civics, geography, economics and history, the arts, foreign languages, physical education, the sciences etc. - and simultaneously create a system of real and meaningful accountability that doesn't lead to narrowing of the curriculum?"

Noteworthy of course was public acknowledgement by no less a figure than the nation's educational leader of the important contribution made by subjects such as physical education to a well-rounded education. But beyond this, Secretary Duncan's words challenge physical educators to think differently about how to succeed in school climates so heavily focused on improving reading and math scores.

Not surprisingly, under the threat of NCLB penalties and fears of closer public scrutiny of student test scores, school administrators have felt compelled to focus on nationally assessed content to the exclusion of other subjects. Hence the ongoing program and position cuts in physical education. Implicit in their thinking is that more time devoted to assessed content will translate into higher test scores. Sadly, after almost a decade of trying, test scores have shown little improvement.

Stepping back it's obvious that the medication being prescribed to solve the nation's academic malaise just isn't working and that simply increasing the dosage makes no sense. Critics of American public school education reform efforts point to impressive success stories beyond our borders. In Finland for example, students spend less time in school, more time in recess, manage to master two or three languages, and still perform better academically.

If time was the crux of the problem the solution would be simple: Pile it on. Extend the school day, lengthen the school year, and restrict the curriculum to little more than mathematics and reading. But as we've seen, the premise of this solution is based on faulty logic: that more time will inevitably improve test scores. This simplistic viewpoint just isn't true. It is not the amount of time that is so important but rather *how* the time is spent.

Inherent in this observation is the idea that educators need to think more about how they could better use the time already available to them. An obvious starting point for scrutiny is a public school curriculum inherited and largely unchanged since the days of the late 19th century Industrial Revolution.

We might ask ourselves whether the subject matter distinctions of English, mathematics, history, geography, chemistry, biology, art, music, foreign languages, and so on remain meaningful in today's world? Are these neatly compartmentalized distinctions an effective way to organize what we'd like today's public school students to learn? And of course where in this melee of subject matter does physical education best fit? In response, consider this example of a different kind of curriculum thinking.

Several years ago at Tahoma High School, not far from Seattle Washington, future National High School Teacher of the Year Tracy Krause collaborated with two teaching colleagues, Mike Hanson and Jamie Vollrath, to create what became known as the "Outdoor Academy." Three teachers, one in science, one in language arts, and one in physical education integrated the content from all three areas into one class. They managed to throw out traditional class scheduling and met together with their students every other day for the entire day. They organized their instruction in a way that demanded academic rigor, emphasized content relevance, and enhanced student and staff relationships.

These teachers focused on creating integrated interdisciplinary learning experiences that complimented each other. For example, when the science curriculum called for studying rivers and the biology of river life, Tracy introduced his students to the knowledge and skills of fly fishing. Simultaneously, Jamie, the language arts teacher successfully inspired students, previously reluctant to read more than the minimum necessary to get by, to immerse themselves into the intrigue of Norman Maclean's novel "A River Runs Through It."

Flexible scheduling allowed students to be transported to a local river to experience and appreciate the outdoor environment, practice their science skills in a real-world setting, and try out their fly fishing skills. The results? Students excelled in their academic tests. Student-teacher personal relationships had time to evolve and flourish. And many of the goals for students to truly becoming physically educated were met.

As Education Secretary Duncan alluded, it's hard for subject areas such as physical education to effectively contribute to student education when competing against other curriculum content for class time. It's a problem unlikely to go away as we anticipate a future in which students must perform better academically to succeed in our increasingly knowledge-based society. But as the Tahoma High School experience illustrates, perhaps the solution is to break down traditional subject matter distinctions and through collaboration better achieve the goals of all content areas including physical education.

In reality, it's hard to see how we can ever succeed in physically educating students as long as we limit what we do to traditional physical education classes. If we want our students to lead healthy and active lifestyles outside of the time they spend in our gyms, we have to rethink what we are doing and how we are doing it.

Interestingly, this moment of reflection coincides with the current discussion about the reorganization of AAHPERD. It's no secret that the majority of Alliance members work in educational settings and have physical education as their focus. But often overlooked is the fact that many teachers see their roles as *physically educating* their students rather than as location bound "gym" teachers whose sphere of influence is limited to physical education class time. Many physical education teachers also endeavor to teach health and nutrition, promote out-of-class physical activity, advocate for and often coach sports, introduce students to rhythms and

dance, and of course teach movement skills. How can all of this be done in the limited class time devoted specifically to physical education? It can't.

But maybe it could, if instead of working in isolation we integrated ourselves into a whole person approach to educating today's young people. Maybe we need to lead the charge to reject the mind-body dualism inherent in today's public school education? Instead of fighting turf battles with teaching colleagues and fighting off program and position cuts advocated by misguided administrators, how about integrating physical education with other compatible subject matter? In addition to supporting academic learning there would be many more opportunities to share important concepts involved in becoming physically educated. Physical educators would be less isolated, our content would be better understood, our importance better appreciated, and respect for our profession would increase.

Best of all, as teachers at Tahoma High School discovered, our students might enjoy school more and achieve the performance results essential for successful careers in tomorrow's world. It's a change that frustrated and stressed-out public schools physical educators might want to consider. It's also a change that, if endorsed, would have huge implications for transforming the way we prepare future physical educators.

Steve Jefferies, Publisher *pelinks4u*

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JANUARY P.E. NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, PLAY, & SPORTS

- Newt Gingrich [supported expanding](#) federal physical education mandates in 2008.
- Let's Move in School Webinar: Staff Involvement offered on January 11.
- Grant writing and [funding tips offered](#) through NASPE webinar, January 17.
- Capital High School (Helena, MT), Hannah Martin Elementary School (Lake in the Hills, IL), and Jefferson Road Elementary School (Pittsford, NY) recognized as 2012 [NASPE STARS schools](#).
- US Secretary of Education includes physical education in what is needed for a "[well rounded education](#)."
- [Carol M. White](#) Physical Education Program (PEP) has been funded at \$78.8 million for FY 2012.
- AAHPERD offers new, more flexible [e-membership option](#). Support your profession today!
- Is physical education a thing of the past in public schools? [Read](#) Alliance Scholar Steve Silverman's thoughts.
- NASPE creates new '[Coaches' Toolbox](#). Check it out!
- [ESEA reauthorization](#) stalls and appears likely to be delayed until after 2012 election.
- Researchers urge [mandated](#) physical education, recess to give kids time for physical activity.
- Jayne Greenberg, Miami-Dade's director of physical education and health literacy changes school district's [approach to fitness](#).
- Using Fitness Literacy Lessons [Focused](#) on the Whole Child.
- Rope jumping in New York City [promotes](#) physical activity in schools with limited space.

- California schoolchildren lag behind in physical fitness and [Lake County Superintendent](#) points to loss of physical education instructional time, and [significant differences](#) observed between children from affluent or low income families and those who have specialized PE teachers.
- After-school physical fitness [program violates](#) Maryland school district ethics policy.
- Olympian Joetta Clark Diggs [teaches physical education](#) to students at Snyder High School in Jersey City.
- What can be learned from "[The Biggest Loser?](#)" Interesting observations from the Disease Management Care Blog.
- Chicago Public Schools should double the physical education students receive and access to recess is suggested to be a "[human right](#)."
- Florida lawmaker [proposes bill](#) to eliminate a physical education requirement from the state's middle schools.
- *Shawn Johnson* [Fitness for Life Act](#) introduced to combat childhood obesity by promoting the use of innovative technology to improve physical education programs in schools.
- States with [policies mandating](#) physical education and recess show higher levels of children's physical activity.
- High school [student drowns](#) in Wenatchee WA physical education class.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, NUTRITION, & OBESITY

- [Webinar](#) (January 12) to focus on unique equipment/innovations that encourage student engagement in physical activity, play and social interaction.
- [23 and 1/2 hours](#): What is the single best thing we can do for our health? (great YouTube video on the benefits of exercise)
- America's healthiest states 2011 - where does [your state](#) rank?
- Obesity [Rates Fall](#) Among New York City School Kids, but [10-year cost](#) of obesity related diseases in NY state estimated \$136 billion.
- [Documentary](#) focuses on teenager as it looks at national childhood obesity crisis or view preview of the "[Health Needs a Hero](#)" [documentary](#).
- Signs that bring attention to the number of calories in [sugary beverages](#) have the power to dissuade teens from buying them.
- Athletes who compete in [high contact](#) sports face higher risk of arthritis.
- Los Angeles Unified School District healthy [lunch menu rejected](#) by students.
- [Bonnie Prudden](#), coauthor of research report that spurred President Eisenhower to create the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition dies, aged 97. ([obituary](#))
- Maintaining or improving your [fitness level](#) -- even if your body weight has not changed or increased -- can reduce your risk of death.
- Outdoor physical [activity levels](#) of more than 28,000 preschool children have dramatically increased over the past three years.
- Children who [hate their parents](#) are two times more likely to grow up obese.
- Obese children who grow up into [normal-weight adults](#) have the same cardiovascular risk as people without a history of obesity.
- Obesity increases risk of [injury or mortality](#) in motor vehicle crashes.
- Do You Need a [Health Coach](#)?
- Surgeon General [Launches](#) Healthy Apps Challenge.
- Education board member [blasts](#) BMI mandate.
- The Fat [Trap](#)
- [Taste for salt](#) may be shaped during infancy.
- [Study](#): If Postmenopausal Women Lose Weight, They're Better Off if They Keep It Off. Weight Regained in Later Years Has More Fat.

GRANTS

- PE4life/Speed Stacks Sport Pack Grant Program. Speed Stacks wants to help instructors motivated to offer a full-fledged Sport Stacking program but who lack funding. The Sport Pack Grant Program can

equip you with all you need to provide your students with a unique and fun Sport Stacking experience. To apply, go to www.speedstacks.com and download the [grant application](#).

- Check out the free SPARK [Grant Finder](#).
- NASPE [grants page](#) offers database and links.

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JANUARY ARTICLE PREVIEWS

TECHNOLOGY IN PE IS NOT JUST PEDOMETERS AND HEART RATE MONITORS ANYMORE

"There's an App for that" is of course Apple's promotional mantra for their ipods, iphones, and ipads. But as author [Scott Tomasseti](#) explains, it accurately reflects the potential of today's mobile technology.

In previous articles Scott has explained the use of more traditional technology such as pedometers and heart rate monitors. This month he delves into ways in which "smart" devices are taking us into new and uncharted possibilities. If you have an iphone, ipod, ipad or a different manufacturer's smart device, learn more about existing applications that can change the way you teach and manage your physical education classes.

IS MY CHILD THE NEXT TENNIS STAR?

How many parents have wondered if their child has the ability to become a professional athlete? This month, *pelinks4u* reprints an article that originally appeared in *Tennis World*. Written by a former world ranked tennis player who also has PhD in sport pedagogy, [Sophie Woorons-Johnston](#) regularly meets with parents to discuss their child's tennis future.

Sophie emphasizes the importance of providing children with opportunities to develop their skills, and potential rather than expecting to meet goals set by parents or other adults. Woorons-Johnston explains her own story of development and gives advice for parents. Not surprisingly she advises parents to avoid "pushing" their children, and to recognize that the motivation and desire to compete at the highest levels has to come from the child. Some good tips for parents of very athletic children.

W.E. THE NEW P.E. – WELLNESS EDUCATION, THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

"It is astonishing to witness the lowly place physical education holds in the public debate over the obesity and overweight crisis in America." He laments the negative portrayal of physical education in the popular TV show *Glee*, and believes it is time for a new beginning.

Focused on wellness education, John's approach suggests the need for much greater cooperation and integration of effort between school, medical, business, religious, and community services. He points out how the role of the physical educator necessarily needs to change, and of course with it the structure of professional teacher preparation programs. Read more about John's innovative ideas and watch him on featured YouTube videos.

PROFESSIONAL NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS IN A STRANGE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Similar to *Tom Winiacki*, long time *pelinks4u* contributor *Isobel Kleinman* reminds us of the importance of professional role modeling. She challenges us to ask ourselves "Are we what we want our students to be?" Physical activity, body weight, nutrition - are we examples of what we are telling our students?

If not, maybe the New Year is a good time for us to make changes in our lifestyles. Isobel also emphasizes the importance of developing good relationships with your students and gives suggestions for improving this connection.

"WORKABLE" NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

What are your New Year resolutions? Most of us start the new year with great intentions, but sadly our hopes quickly falter and often are soon forgotten. *Tom Winiiecki* has a suggestion for physical educators who's goal is to motivate their students to be more physically active: Participate more with your students and practice what you preach.

Tom points out that there are many opportunities in our classes to participate, rather than just stand and watch. He also suggests that if we want our students to eat better we should role model this ourselves in the school cafeteria. Read more of Tom's suggestions, and especially consider his encouragement to plan to present in 2012 at some type of professional workshop. It's a myth to think that you don't have anything worth sharing. You do! Presenting to others is a great learning experience and a super way to become a better teacher.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS IN THE MIDST OF TRAGEDY These past few months we've heard news about several deplorable incidents involving student athletes, coaches, and young children. Because physical educators and coaches spend so much time and energy promoting sports as wonderfully positive developmental experiences, it's discouraging to learn about negative and illegal outcomes.

Author *Christine Lottes* writes this month about ways in which she has tried to turn these incidents around and use them as teachable moments in the sport classes she teaches. What she and, of course, other teachers in professional preparation hope is that their future graduates - when faced with challenging and potentially controversial situations - will choose to do the right thing.

Perhaps these events will serve as a good reminder to all of us of the true purpose of sports and our responsibility to always behave appropriately?

ADOLESCENTS WITH CEREBRAL PALSY: OVERCOMING CHALLENGES OF SELF-WORTH As all physical educators know, self-concept (self-image, self-worth, and self-esteem) becomes increasingly important to our students during late childhood and early adolescence. It would be easy to assume that students with disabilities would - because of their conditions - inevitably have low self-concept. But in fact this may NOT be true.

This month, authors *Altavia Evans* and *Chris Stopka* report that in general, individuals with cerebral palsy do not seem to have lower senses of self-worth than individuals without disabilities, except in the area of athletic competence. This finding challenges people without disabilities to take great care in avoiding stereotypical or judgmental thinking. It also reinforces the importance of individualizing and modifying movement experiences for those with CP to help them feel better about their personal capabilities.

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