



Return to School 2020: Meaningful Assessment in Physical Education

Please note: This resource is meant to complement and enhance the recommendations and guidelines provided by Public Health. If you are unsure about any situation, please contact your public health unit for specific guidance.

Latest update: August 24, 2020



INTRODUCTION

Knowing that classrooms will look different across the country in the fall, PHE Canada wanted to ensure that teachers felt comfortable assessing students' progress throughout the year, regardless of what their learning environment looks like. It is important to **keep assessment in physical education** classes to ensure that students' progress and successes can be monitored and celebrated. Without meaningful assessment for, of and as learning, we are depriving students, parents and teachers of critical developmental information and reflection, a critical part of a wholistic education.

PHE Canada discussed assessment practices for Physical Education with Josh Ogilvie, Department Head and First Vice-President of PE BC. Here is a summary of our conversation.



(Josh Ogilvie)

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- Josh Ogilvie

01

Q: In your opinion, which assessment tools work well in traditional, blended, and fully online PE classrooms?

Rubrics, checklists (Yes/No, frequency, etc.), visual/verbal feedback (eg. thumbs up, conversations), and exit tickets, are all great options for all types of PE classrooms. To keep track of ongoing assessment, learner portfolios are a great way to “house” information you collect throughout the learning process. Portfolios are not necessarily assessment tools but do help to collect and reflect on student learning progress and achievement throughout the year.

Regardless of the tool(s) you select, it is imperative that **assessment criteria are clearly communicated, understood, and transparent** so all students have equal access to the same success criteria - have a hope of achieving success - whether they are learning in a face-to-face class or via remote instruction.

02

Q: Which approaches to planning, teaching, and assessment will be manageable for an in-person, blended, and/or remote PE class?

A **backwards design approach to planning, teaching, and assessing student learning** will help create clarity and direction for students and teachers in any learning environment. This approach also **promotes flexibility** for learning activities and demonstrations of learning, which will be an important aspect of planning and teaching in the upcoming school year.

There are three important phases of a backwards design approach:

1. Identify the desired outcomes - What am I learning?

These are the desired curriculum goals for knowledge building, understanding, and skills that students learn in your class. They serve as destinations in learning and help students and teachers answer the question, “what are we learning?”

To help navigate the uncertainty of the upcoming school year, and to make teaching and learning manageable in unpredictable times, it is helpful to **prioritize key learning outcomes/standards from your curriculum**. Here are three tips to use in considering which learning outcomes/standards to prioritize:

- **Cross curricular connections:** which learning outcomes/standards connect with other subject areas? This can help students use the learned content and/or skills in more than one context and help to deepen their understanding of it
- **Learning beyond the school:** which learning outcomes/standards will positively impact students outside of the school building (or virtual school)? These are the deep, life-long learning experiences that can benefit students now and, in their future
- **Contextual realities:** which learning outcomes/standards can authentically be explored and learned given the local and current realities of your context?

By establishing a set of prioritized learning outcomes/standards, you are clarifying what is truly essential for students to learn in the realities of the current school year. This will help you and the students understand what the **goal of the learning** is (i.e. the learning outcome/standard) in any face to face, blended, and/or remote/online PE class.

2. Determine acceptable evidence of learning - How and I doing?

Prioritizing your learning outcomes/standards helps to answer the question, "where are we going" with the learning. To understand how well students are progressing, or how they are doing in this learning, we need to answer, "how are they doing?" We can find out through ongoing assessment of each of the prioritized learning outcomes/standards.

With each prioritized learning outcome/standard identified, you can then determine what evidence will show that students have learned the desired content and/or skills. This also helps to **determine appropriate assessment methods** and tools to use in gathering information about student learning progress and achievement.

3. Plan for supportive learning activities and experiences - What will we do to learn?

Knowing where the learning is going (prioritized learning outcomes/standards) and what evidence will tell us how students are progressing (assessment/success criteria), we then **plan a series of progressive learning activities** that will build capacity for students to succeed in their learning. These can include the moments where we are teaching and/or students are engaged in activities to help explore identified concepts and skills.

03

Q: Are there clues that teachers can look for that show children are meeting the outcomes?

To understand how well students are progressing in their learning, it is important to **communicate clear learning targets** (or goals), with related success criteria, for each class and/or learning activity that students are involved in. This ensures that everyone knows what success looks like throughout the class and can determine how well learning is progressing and what, if any, interventions are needed. These individual learning targets/goals act as building blocks of a prioritized learning outcome/standard and they build upon each other as the learning activities progress in complexity over a time period. They also serve as checkpoints throughout the learning period to ensure that all students are progressing in their learning and building capacity to succeed with the prioritized learning outcome/standard.

04

Q: What does a learning progression look like?

Learning progressions help to outline a **logical or common learning path** students take when they are engaged with learning. They are small "bite size" pieces of the bigger puzzle that build upon each other as the material builds in more complex ways. For example, babies usually learn to balance in a crawling position before they crawl; they crawl before walking; and they walk before running, etc. Of course, some babies might not follow this exact progression, but most do, and this allows us to have a good idea of what to look for and how to support them in developing these skills.

Learning progressions should be related to the learning targets/goals in each class and build upon each other in a sequential manner. This allows for the teacher and the students to know what they are successful with, what could use more time and practice, and what learning is coming next. Learning progressions help to **form a learning map** and provide an easy means for reflection and self-assessment in learning.

05

Q: Given the changes that have been made to school environments this year, do you think assessment will be different?

Yes and no. At the core of it, assessment looks to gather information about student learning (progress and achievement) and inform supports and decisions that can aid students to succeed in their learning journey. In this light, **assessment will not change** in an in-person, blended, and/or remote PE class.

However, what is likely to change is what we teach due to provincial and district safety guidelines, policies, and logistical realities. Depending on the impacts that these realities have on teachers, some of what has been taught in the past might not be a primary focus in the coming year (e.g. team games/sports) and this can be a change when it comes to assessment of student learning. To help navigate through these challenges, it is highly recommended that teachers look at their curricula and prioritize a few learning outcomes/standards to create certainty on what is being learned and **establish a sense of ease for both teachers and students** in these current uncertain times.

Self-assessment will play an instrumental role in the coming academic year as student learning could possibly take place in and/or out of the school building (i.e. remote learning). To help empower students to continue their learning, and to take on a deeper sense of autonomy in their growth, students will need the tools and opportunities to **become their own assessors** on their strengths and areas to grow. Developing clear and understandable success criteria is a vital process in student self-assessment and, whenever possible, **involving students in this process** will benefit them in their journey to succeed.



06

Q: Lastly, do you have any tips for teachers who are new to teaching PE this year?

This year will be a new year for everyone and **there is no official play book on how to teach PE during a pandemic**. I suggest starting small and focusing on developing a trusting and caring culture in your PE class, whether it's in-person, blended, and/or a remote learning environment. Likewise, **building relationships with colleagues** will help establish a sense of connection and comradery, opening up a world of professional learning opportunities to help you excel through the upcoming school year.

Lastly, provide as much opportunity as possible for your students to offer their ideas and points of view when it comes to their learning. **Their voice is the most important one in the PE class** and this act alone can empower them to become more autonomous learners this year, and beyond.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Ophea - How to Assess for Student Success

<https://www.ophea.net/article/how-assess-student-success#.X0Q69C2z1IM>

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- Josh Ogilvie



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