

Orienteering: An Alternative Environment Learning Experience

Overview of Alternative Environment Activities

Alternative Environment Activities (AEAs) are physical activities not restricted in scope to the traditional uses of gymnasias, sports fields and running tracks

AEAs enhance individual components of fitness such as: **Strength** and **Endurance**.

Unique to AEAs:

- Students are exposed to such places as swimming pools, arenas, sports facilities, camping sites, trails, etc.
- Participation and skill development can promote life-long physical activity as AEAs are those that the students can access as adults.

Teaching Progressions

Preparatory Work On-Site At School → Off-Site Instruction → Off-Site Exploration

Teaching Issues

- Consider students' previous knowledge and skill level
- Plan for student learning outcomes
- Communicate to students the specific learning outcomes expected from participation
- Ensure that the activity has a purpose rather than just organized play time
- Consider modifying the content of off-site activity so that students can experience some of the elements in the gymnasium before going off-site
- Plan activities that are developmentally appropriate
- Consider any modifications for students with special needs
- Ensure that students have proper equipment
- Always consider safety – site, equipment, clothing, supervision, medications, etc.

What is Orienteering?

Orienteering is an activity which requires participants to navigate through a specific environment. Typically this is done with the aid of a map and/or compass. The object of orienteering is to use a defined form of movement (e.g., running, walking, biking, skiing, canoeing, etc.) to locate a series of points (referred to as "Control Points") and reach a designated finish line in the shortest amount of time possible.

Brief History of Orienteering

- The Swedish military first coined the term "orienteering" near the end of the 19th century
- Was originally endorsed in Sweden as a means to get youth interested in athletics
- First international competition took place between Sweden and Norway in 1932
- The Canadian Orienteering Federation was founded in 1967
- 1st Canadian National Orienteering Championship - Ottawa's Gatineau Park (August 10, 1968)
- Today, the International Orienteering Federation has over 70 member countries and is recognized by International Olympic Committee

Teaching Considerations for Orienteering

- Activity needs to be developmentally appropriate and safe
- Consider completing a gymnasium/class-based orienteering activity prior to a school-wide or off-site location
- Plan and develop the route ahead of time
- Go over the route the day before the orienteering activity will take place
- Let school personnel know what the class will be doing
- Consider students with special needs when planning the route and control points
- When selecting the control points, consider the developmental level of students and available amount of time allotted to complete the activity
- Circulate around the area being used while students are completing the activity
- If an off-site location is chosen, consider utilizing parent volunteers or *buddies* from an older class to assist in supervision, etc.
- Have an activity planned for groups that finish quickly
- Set a time at which all groups must return whether they are done or not

Benefits of Incorporating Orienteering into a Physical Education Program

- Helps achieve curriculum outcomes
- Inexpensive activity (maps and compass are not mandatory)
- Introduces students to alternative environments for physical activity
- Fosters integration with other curricula (e.g., geography, science, math, language arts)
- Can be used to develop several aspects of physical fitness (e.g., cardiovascular, muscle endurance)
- Encourages decision making, leadership, communication and teamwork
- Easy to make it developmentally appropriate and enjoyable for all students
- Fun, enjoyable and adds breadth and variety to physical education programs

Possible Ways to Run an Orienteering Activity

(1) With a map:

- create routes and develop a map that has all control points, start, and finish labelled
- divide groups into no more than five people
- provide each group with a map
- all groups can begin at the same time or in timed intervals (to avoid following)
- groups may go in any direction they want to reach all the control points
- have something that must be retrieved at each control point (e.g., a card, answer a question, a stamp or sticker, etc.)

(2) Without a map:

- create route
- divide groups into no more than five people
- groups must go in order to each control point
- all groups can begin at the same time at different points, or leave at timed intervals starting at control point #1
- have something that must be retrieved at each control point (e.g., a card, answer a question, a stamp or sticker, etc.)
- have the next control point location listed at each control point
- record finish times as groups complete the course

Positive Learning Outcomes Associated with Orienteering

- Program of Studies
- Cooperation
- Motor Skill Development
- Understanding of Health Benefits
- Functional Fitness
- Goal-Setting/Personal Challenge
- Leadership
- Safety
- Active Living

Orienteering Rules

- Group members must stay together (within reach of each other)
- Groups cannot walk together to the various destinations
- Groups cannot share answers (answers are sacred property)
- Questions must be answered in the order that they appear on the sheet
- Groups are not allowed to gather answers to future questions on their travels

References:

International Orienteering Federation (2009). <http://www.orienteering.org>
Kellström, B. (2010). *Be expert with map & compass* (3rd ed). New York: Wiley
Orienteering Canada (n.d.). <http://www.orienteering.ca/contact>

Questions for Teachers of Physical Education

What steps would you follow to create an Orienteering Activity within your PE program?

How could the level of physical activity be enhanced during an Orienteering Activity?

What other strategies could be used to strengthen the effectiveness of an Orienteering Activity in your PE program (e.g., integration of other subjects, compass, technology)? Be Creative!

Why might you want to include Orienteering in your regular PE program? Is there a grade you think it would be best suited for? Why?

Notes:

Orienteering – Student Self-Assessment Example

Student Name: _____

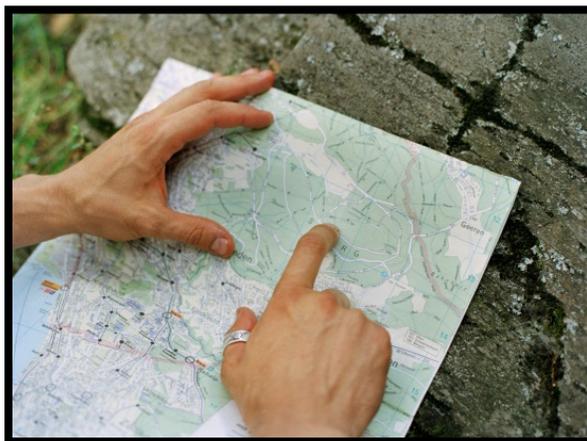
Date: _____

The Orienteering Activity increased my physical activity levels by?

The Orienteering Activity helped improve the following skills

The most enjoyable aspect of the Orienteering Activity was?

I think Orienteering is a _____ activity in Physical Education because



Orienteering – Assessment Example

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Criteria	Consistently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely, if ever
Suggests ideas to group members				
Willing to take ideas into consideration from group members				
Uses the map reading equipment properly				
Understands proper/efficient ways to reach control points				
Strives to help other group members develop map reading skills				
Follows the rules set out by the teacher				
Comments:				