**Sport Education**

**Frequently Asked Questions & What-Ifs**

Below you find a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that teachers (including first-time users) have asked or you may have when using Sport Education. In addition, we have added some what-if scenarios. These offer some possible suggestions that you might consider in response to certain specific events or situations. The FAQs address general issues related to getting started with Sport Education. The what-if scenarios more specific issues such as how to address poorly performing Duty Teams or what to do with excessive absenteeism.

***FAQs \_\_\_\_\_***

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| * ***With how many classes should I do Sport Education when I first try it?***   Two words: **Start small!!** We suggest you start with one class only. As you and your students gain more experience, and you become more efficient, you can build up to having multiple classes doing it at the same time. It is not unusual for students from other classes, not yet introduced to Sport Education, to ask, “Can we do that too?” Give yourself a chance to be successful. |

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| * ***What sports/activities lend themselves well for Sport Education?***   Given some of your own creativity, most any sport or activity typically taught Physical Education can be offered in the context of Sport Education. HOWEVER, with this being the first time, you are doing a Sport Education season, select a sport that you are familiar with (i.e., where you consider yourself to have a well-developed level of content knowledge). If you have not ever taught Track & Field to a group of 35+ HS students, we suggest you start with a different sport to introduce Sport Education. |

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| * ***How can you do Sport Education with “non-sport” activities such as dance, orienteering or fitness conditioning?***   The Sport Education model works very well with activities that are not really considered sport activities or those that are not generally viewed as the “big and popular” sports. Activities such as dance (a form of art), aerobics, fitness conditioning, cross-country, and orienteering can be organized in a way so that teams prepare for competition and complete a series of meets or events in which the teams’ performance either judged (i.e., Dance) or timed (e.g. orienteering). Each of these events requires numerous non-playing roles as well.  As noted in the text, teams preparing for dance competitions need to select music, choreograph the dance moves, design costumes etc. The dance competition needs to be judged to determine the champion team. In orienteering, non-playing roles might include Course marshals, timers, course designers, etc.  The competition format generally consists of scheduled weekly meets (e.g., orienteering) or performances (e.g., dance). The days leading up to those are dedicated to team practices and other preparatory tasks. |

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| * ***So when the teams have their coaches, and they are responsible for designing organizing practice at the beginning of each class period, does that mean that I don’t have to teach?***   NO! Teachers still have a primary instructional function. Teachers typically move between the teams’ home bases (i.e., practice facilities) and monitor to ensure that teams are in fact engaged in focused practice, and offer the coach assistance when needed. This is where you should point out the apparent areas of strengths and weaknesses, based on the teams’ play in previous games. For example, you might need prompt a team to defend the opposing team’s top goal scorer more aggressively, or tighten focus more on defending space (as opposed to man-to-man) if the opposing team is not attacking aggressively. |

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| * ***It seems that I really don’t have time to teach skills. When do I actually teach them the skills?***   Actually, when you make the shift to teaching fewer sports/activities over a year, you actually have more time to teach. In addition to teaching the techniques and tactics of the games, you can teach more explicitly toward Fair Play, and the various non-playing roles.    The preseason phase is a key phase of the season to do focused class-wide instruction (using predominantly guided practice). During this phase, you introduce the types of techniques and practices tasks that teams can then use during team practices once the official competition starts. It is also the critical time to focus on teaching the various non-teaching roles (i.e., scorekeeping, refereeing, court/field set-up, etc.). This is central to developing the authenticity of the experience. |

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| * ***The Team Binders look like a lot of busy work. The students do not seem to use them all that much. Do I have to use them?***   YES, you really should! When put together and introduced effectively, they are central to the success of a sport season. They are a vital resource for the teams (Not unlike a detailed course syllabus . . .). Team binders serve as a key reference guide for each team. Their usefulness is dependent on what is included. Chapter 5 on the web resource offers a suggested Table of Content and template for team binders.  The development of team binders does take time, thought and planning. Once you have the system set up and the students are used to them, it will help you a lot. Make use of the Sport Education materials templates that are supplied on the web resource. That is, do not try to re-invent the wheel. We encourage you to modify the template to fit your needs, but there is no reason to re-invent the wheel. In essence, a team binder is an important instructional aid, allowing students to seek information without needing you. |

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| * ***So with the team binder template it should be easy to set up my complete Sport Education season?***     Planning a Sport Education season goes well beyond just getting the team binder set up. The team binder is really a way of communicating a lot of the season’s structure, format and logistics to your students. You will need to make numerous decisions that will be reflected in the content of the team binder. So do not underestimate the time needed for season planning and preparation.  Especially the first time you do Sport Education, it will require extra time and effort to make those numerous decisions and complete preparatory tasks. Decisions on how to structure the season, how many teams to have, and what modification in the game structure to make all require attention. Tasks such as securing the needed equipment, developing the team binders etc. all take up MUCH more time than you realize.  Remember that teaching something for the first time (and trying to do it right!) is harder and will require thoughtful planning, preparation, and ongoing reflection. We suggest you write short reflections following each day of the initial seasons. This will help you become smarter and more efficient as you develop subsequent seasons.  If working in secondary schools, gradually you will be able to recruit the assistance from the Sports Board in designing and organizing the season. |

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| * ***When do I start with giving Team Points? Does this occur when the actual competition phase of the season starts? Or earlier?***     We assume that you have allotted class time very early on in the season to explain to student what Team Points are, how they get earned, why they might be deducted, and how they directly count in the team standings to determine the season’s overall champion.  Since Sport Education places strong emphasis on the development of personal and social development of all students, we believe that the use of team points (as well as fair play points) should start as soon as teams have been formed. When these heterogeneous groups of students are placed on teams, their first and perhaps most important task is to become a team through taking on the assigned team roles and helping and supporting each other. Teams that show this development quickly should be reinforced for doing so as quickly as possible.  Thus, the team standings should be kept up to date and posted as soon as the teams have been formed and start preparing for the official competition. To wait until the real competitions start is true wasted opportunity. |

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| * ***How hard is it to balance the time that you need for teaching new “roles” that students have to take on, relative to playing the games?***   Experience suggests that teaching the non-playing roles works better if using the following three principles:   * + - * 1. **Avoid introducing all the roles at once in a season**. Over the initial pre-season days, you can have 3-4 scrimmages or meets while non-playing teams can practice their refereeing skills. Scrimmages on subsequent days can then focus on keeping score and doing statistics;         2. **Introduce the nonplaying roles using hands-on practice of the non-playing roles around pre-season scrimmages**. Long lectures on refereeing will not work; and         3. **Provide frequent prompts, demonstrations and feedback to the students on their performance** in developing the nonplaying roles. An added bonus of using this approach is that students actually get “to play” early on during the season! |

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| * ***What seems to cause most problems for students?***     Based on our experiences with teachers who have started Sport Education, students tend to have more difficulty with the following early on: Refereeing. As well, getting used to taking on the various roles may be difficult at times. Finally, students sometimes report that they have a hard time with peers who do not help out or are not good team players.  You will notice that oftentimes it is the central features of Sport Education (“Building true teams among small, highly heterogeneous groups of players that work successfully toward a common goal, by engaging in healthy fair competition that means something”) will take several season to really emerge. |

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| * ***Can we really expect student to do all these extra things like scorekeeping, refereeing, fitness trainer etc.?***   Sport Education aims for students to take increased responsibility and ownership for a lot of the management and organization of the season. However, this is a learning process that spans several seasons. It is much like learning to do a pick-and-roll. That too takes frequent opportunity to practice with good guidance. And depending on where a group is, you will want to go slower. Simply telling students that they are now going to be referees, scorekeepers, publicists and then say “here is the Team Binder, just read it” is a recipe for disaster. Just as you are trying to get good at “doing Sport Education” they will need time to get used to this new way of “doing PE.” As noted, with longer season you will have more time to teach to the various non-playing roles and responsibilities. |

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| * ***How do I keep track of all the game performance data?***   Another reason we suggest you start small, is to have you get more comfortable with this part of the SE process. Therefore . . .  First, when selecting game performance indicators (e.g., shot attempts, scores, blocks, kills, turnovers, etc.), keep it simple. Irrespective of the age or grade level, we suggest that beginners are asked to only track 2-3 indicators. Over time, as experience mounts, this can be increased gradually to 4-5. In secondary schools, the sports board can be made responsible to decide which statistics to track.  Second, if computers are available, use this resource. With some practice, PDAs and Tablet PCs can be used effectively during class to help scorekeepers. Team Statisticians can also make good use of this technology. The web resource has numerous examples of electronic assessment and score sheets.  Third, IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, have the Team Statisticians and/or Publicist use the available computer technology to track game performance data, and for daily updates of season standings. When the statisticians from each team are responsible for entering the data, they will likely ensure that this is done accurately. |

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| * ***How can I do assessment of the students when I have to teach all the different roles in addition to the teaching of techniques and tactics?***   Indeed assessment is a difficult function that Physical Education teachers have had difficulty with over the years. As indicated in the text, the prime focus for your assessments is on assessing students’ performance in context. In virtually all cases, that is, the assessment of student performance should occur during games/match/meets. This will offer a more authentic measure of their performance than any isolated skills test.  As you develop Sport Education over time, with students taking on more responsibilities for more of the managerial and organizational tasks around lessons, you should have more minutes per lesson to devote to actively assessing game performance will have more minutes per lesson to assess their game performance, Fair Play, and/or Duty Team performance. The important thing is that when you assess students, you create some type of “permanent record” that you can use to track the students’ progress over the season across these three main areas of assessment.  Traditionally, when doing assessment, many teachers have created separate days where entire lessons are devoted to assessment. Oftentimes, these are days where students spend most of their time either performing isolated skills for “testing purposes” while the rest of the class is made to watch. We strongly suggest that you try a different approach, where you weave your assessment activities throughout your daily instructional efforts. For students, this will make it seamless and less visible. Not only will you end up with a “paper trail” of their performance, you can also immediately use the gathered information to reinforce and/or prompt teams and individual students. The web resource includes many resources (see chapter 18 folder) that you can use to get started on making assessment an integral part of your Sport Education seasons.  Again, this process will take time to develop. However, you will end up with authentic information about your students’ development as more competent, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic sportspersons. |

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| * ***How does Sport Education fit with the current emphasis on standards-based instruction? In other words, how can I link with the national content standards or my State’s content standards?***   Sport Education actually aligns quite well with all of the national content standards (SHAPE America, 2014). You can find a detailed overview of the link between the Sport Education objectives and the U.S. Content Standards in chapter 16. Similarly, the link of the Sport Education objectives with learning outcomes and aims of other countries is addressed in Chapter 17. |

***What-Ifs . . . Solving Problems\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_***

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| * ***“My Duty Teams are not performing as they should. They are sloppy, show up late, handle equipment poorly, and are slow in getting things done.”***   **Possible corrective actions:**  1. Ensure that your students understand what the roles and responsibilities are.  2. Conduct a brief class-wide review of duty team roles and responsibilities.  3. Offer more opportunities for duty teams to practice.  4. Develop a checklist of specific daily tasks and equipment assignments.  5. Encourage Duty Teams to arrive prior to the start of the class to start preparing the setting.  5. Increase the weight of duty team points in the league-scoring scheme. |

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| * ***“The team practices seem to go poorly with teams being barely active, and/or the coaches seem unprepared.”***   **Possible corrective actions:**  1. Provide some opportunities for peer coaching (1 on 1) in the early practice session.  2. Recruit the assistance from the Sports Board to offer some prompts for coaches to better prepare for team practices.  3. Provide some sample team practice plans to team coaches.  4. Meet with all team coaches (like a “coaches’ workshop”) and offer specific suggestions to help them plan implement team practices.  5. Create a menu of drills and scrimmage-like activities that can be added to the team binder.  6. Alert team coaches that their updated practice plans should be available for review for “teacher approval.”  7. Remind the team coaches how the quality of team practices is a key part of the league scoring system.  8. Check to see if practice tasks that team coaches use are too easy, or too complex. Stationary “drill-type” tasks are likely less inviting. Game- or scrimmage-like tasks are more likely to appeal.  9. Remind TEAM COACHES about how team practices should link with what happened in previous games (e.g., game restarts; turnovers; playing position etc.).  10. Build in some class time to for coaches to draft team practice plans (this works especially well in programs that use block periods (i.e., 85-90 min. lessons). |

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| * ***“Referees are very reluctant to make their calls. They are timid and seem uncertain about the rules and how to apply them.”***   **Possible corrective actions:**  1. Plan a class-wide referee workshop to review both some of the basics of officiating and address the key problems (e.g., have students practice the correct hand signals).  2. Model the type of refereeing behaviors you would like to see (e.g., clear whistles; hand signals, field-/court movement, communicate with scorekeeper etc.).  3. Provide daily “excellence in refereeing” certificates.  4. Review the number of game rules in effect. Perhaps simplify the rules that are to be monitored.  5. Invite an outside speaker who is an official. |

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| * ***“I feel very reluctant to hand over control of the various organization and management duties to the students. I am not convinced that they can handle it . . . I fear for pure chaos.”***   **Possible corrective actions:**  1. Remember that it is not an “All or Nothing” proposition. Giving more responsibilities and ownership to students is a gradual one that they need to learn as well.  2. Start off with giving them responsibilities that are harder to mess up or less critical if they do err.  3. Especially early in the process, frequently recognize excellence.  4. Consider using a sport board (made up of responsible students) and have them assist in monitoring the progress, discuss possible solutions, and be actively involved in deciding what to do to remedy the situation.  5. Give them a chance!  6. At all cost, try to avoid jumping in and taking over again as soon as something does not go exactly as how you would do it. |

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| * ***“Students have a difficult time keeping up with League statistics and standings.”***   **Possible corrective actions:**  1. Check to see if the number of statistics kept is too much or too complex.  2. Allocate some class time at the end of each class for these types of tasks to be completed.  3. Assign the tasks as homework.  4. Create “assistant statisticians.”  5. If available, have students use spreadsheets to manage the information.  6. Create a short checklist of tasks that need to be completed. |

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| * ***“Students are tiring of the sport we are doing. Boredom is becoming an issue.” (a first-time user of Sport Education)***     Likely the students are not used having longer “seasons,” and it will take a couple of seasons for a true rhythm to develop where student become accustomed to having a real pre-season, full competition schedules and post-season.    **Possible corrective actions:**  1. Review the game structure (i.e., format; secondary rules) to see if the game structure is too simple. Seek new ways in which you can challenge the teams.  2. Try breaking the competition into first half and second half, where at the halfway point you might adjust game format and rules to make it more complex/challenging.  3. Speak with the Sports Board and see if/ how some more festivity can be built in, before the end-of-season culminating event.  4. Depending on the sport, and non-playing roles already present, see if you might challenge them with new roles.  5. Assess your own level of energy, and decide if you are modeling the level of energy you would want to see from your students. |

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| * ***“Student absenteeism is affecting the success of teams both in teams of their game play and their ability to perform their other roles.”***     **Possible corrective actions:**  1. If possible (though not preferred) you could allow duty team members to be substitutes for a given day.  2. With a shorthanded team, have the opposing team that does field a complete team rotate players in and out so the number of players is even.  3. Consider additional game modifications |