

VISIBLE LEARNING

A PHYSICAL EDUCATION NEW YEAR RESOLUTION

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The beginning of a new year is a chance to update and renew resources, spruce up the classroom, establish new systems and processes, and retire the old and broken.

We all have personal resolutions that we contemplate. But sometimes working out what your professional goals or resolutions are can be a challenge.

Here is a suggestion for a physical education new year resolution ...

Make the learning in physical education visible

That's it. Short. Simple. Meaningful. Manageable. In fact, New Zealand-based research by John Hattie supports this, not only in physical education, but across all learning areas.

Reflect on your current practice

How many times have you gone outside to play a game - a planned game? as a reward for the class? to fill in five minutes?

Whatever the reason, you can be confident in your choice if you know that the activity offers the students the opportunity to develop a range of valuable skills, such as team work, problem-solving, communication, or physical skills.

How often are you making that learning visible and clear to the students? For example,

- do they know they are playing a game to develop teamwork?
- do they understand they are expected to demonstrate and explain the problem-solving skills they used?
- are they aware of a range of communication skills they could strategically use?

Or are you expecting them to pick up this learning through osmosis by simply being in the moment?

Sometimes students do make the connection simply through doing or playing games, but Hattie's research shows that when teachers understood the impact of their practice through visible learning, student outcomes improved.

What does this look like?

At the heart of Hattie's programme is the 'visible learner'.

The learner needs to be able to answer three essential questions:

1. How am I going?
2. Where am I going?
3. Where to next?

As teachers, we need to provide students with the knowledge and opportunity to talk about their learning in physical education.

If the teacher isn't clear about the learning how can the students be?

If we don't know where our learners are at, how can we empower them to lead their own learning by being a part of the process?

What you can do

1. Be clear about the learning that you are seeking from the students in the games and activities you choose to play.
2. Take it literally and have the learning for physical education visible in your classroom. This may include the learning intention and success criteria on the whiteboard, or a display that both you and the students can refer to.
3. Be explicit about the learning before, during, and after the game so that students know what to focus on.
4. Prioritise discussion and reflection time during and after your physical education lesson or activities so that the students can reflect on what they have learnt.
5. Make it a habit. Make learning visible in all PE lessons, sports sessions, fitness, and game times. These are all valuable moments for learning.

Further reading

- Education Central Visible Learning article <https://educationcentral.co.nz/making-learning-visible-putting-hattie-into-practice-2/>
- John Hattie's Visible Learning Book <https://www.learningnetwork.ac.nz/product/visible-learning/>