

## **Physical Literacy on the Move: Games for Developing Confidence and Competence in Physical Activity**

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### **(Book review)**

England, Wales, and Canada are the most active leaders in physical literacy. They all deliver physical literacy programs primarily through sport and educational systems. In Canada, Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) and Physical and Health Education (PHE) Canada both promote physical literacy at the grassroots level across various sectors (e.g., education, sport, recreation, public health). PHE Canada has developed resources for physical educators and parents to help them better understand physical literacy and why it is important (Aspen Institute, 2015). This book was written by a Canadian author to help educators of children and youth aged from 4-17 teach high-quality and fun games and activities that support the unique needs of their learners as they develop physical literacy.

In March, 2017, Gardner, Heather wrote the book “Physical Literacy on the Move: Games for Developing Confidence and Competence in Physical Activity” which was published in Champaign, IL, in United States. Heather is a curriculum consultant in Toronto with decades of experience in public school teaching and a provincial health and physical education (HPE) consultant. She has done a major curriculum consulting work for Ophea, a not -for -profit organization that champions healthy, active living in school and countries. She has been an HPE teacher and curriculum consultant for the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. She also has been an HPE instructor for Brock University in St. Cathartines, Ontario, and has served as a writer and instructor for the elementary teacher federation of Ontario. This book was her ideas of inspiring movement and healthy living in children.

The book is organized by 8 chapters. Each chapter has three sections to tell the theory at the beginning. 120 activities in this book are grouped into four progressive levels of leaning: beginning (age 4-8), exploring (age 9-11), competent (age 12-15), and proficient (age 16-17). This permits educators to support learner’s individual needs so they can work within their unique levels of optimal challenge. Each activity includes activity adaptations to either increase or decrease the challenge, self-check questions related to the movement skills, concepts, and strategies, except for all the normal information of an activity such as goal, equipment etc.

This book goes beyond instructing sport skills, drills, and fitness training into incorporating a holistic approach to physical literacy instruction. Chapter 1 to chapter 4 focus on comprehensive development of fundamental movement skills ( FMS) in different types of activities and games. Chapter 1 is *Low-organization games* which addresses cooperation, inclusion, and fun. Chapter 2 is *Personal fitness* which focuses on four of the health-related components of fitness: cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular endurance, muscular strength, and flexibility. Chapter 3 is *Gymnastics* which emphasizes the FMS of dynamic and static balance, jumping and landing, running and skipping, as well as other locomotor movement skills (rolling, turning), movement concepts (body, space, effort and relationships) and movement principles (center of gravity, laws of motion). Chapter 4 is *creative movement* which provides opportunities to develop the FMS of running, jumping, balance, agility, and coordination.

Chapter 5 to chapter 8 focus on specific FMS. Chapter 5 is *Running and skipping* which provides opportunities to develop and explore the FMS of running, skipping, jogging, sprinting, chasing, and dogging. Chapter 6 is *Throwing and catching* which focuses on the FMS of throwing and catching. Chapter 7 is *Striking with hands* which emphasizes the FMS of striking an object with hands, including the overhead volley in volleyball and the dribble in basketball. Chapter 8 is *Striking with an implement or feet* which addresses the FMS of striking an object with an implement and with the feet.

This book is organized smartly to show how to combine theory and practice closely. At the beginning of each chapter, the author prepares three sections to make readers understand physical literacy clearly. “*Words to know*” offers a glossary of terms as well as illustrations important to physical literacy instruction focused on the fundamental movement skills. “*Where is the physical literacy*” shows the background information and other key learning connected to FMS, movement concepts and movement strategies. “*Educator check and reflect*” gives teaching and safety tips, strategies for creating an inclusive learning environment, and reminders for educators. These three sections tell about what physical literacy is and how to create activities to support children’s physical literacy development. And the following practice part tells about what the physical activities look like in fostering physical literacy. It is helpful for educators to understand physical literacy and to implement it in teaching process easily.

According to the concept of physical literacy, confidence and competent are critical for children to pursuit in taking part in physical activities. The author offers self-check questions in each activity to encourage participants to assess their own development levels by themselves, and guide participants in focusing exclusively on self-awareness and self-monitoring. Participants can analysis their achievement through self-comparison and create motivation and confidence to move more. Therefore, games and activities in this book emphasize participation, challenge, and fun rather than competition. Most of the activities permit participants to choose their

own objects and targets to ensure an optimal level of challenge. This kind of climate is appropriate for children to develop their physical literacy basing on their own needs as well as their stages of physical and emotional development.

This book emphasis knowledge and understanding in the concept of physical literacy.

In the book, the author organizes activities for participants to explore the movement concepts of body (which parts of the body are moving and how), space (direction and pathway), effort (the speed and force of movements), and relationship (how the body moves in relation to others and the environment), as well as the concepts of communication and creative thinking skills. All these concepts contribute to aid participants to understand themselves clearly and communicate with others smoothly in physical activities.

It is a good idea to prepare self-check questions in each activity for children to assess their own development levels by themselves. But at the beginning level, children may be too young to do self-check by themselves or with partners. Educators can discuss the self-check questions with children before they can do by themselves or with partners. Educators need to observe children's performance in the teaching process , share their idea with children about their wonderful performance during or after teaching , encourage children to express their ideas about their performance. Children will learn how to assess themselves step by step.

The 120 physical activities may not be a whole activity plan to be used directly. The activity time is limited most from 15-20 minutes, less from 10-15 minutes, 30-35 minutes. A whole physical activity should include the starting part, the body part, and the relaxing part. I think most of the activities only show a body part according to the time and the content in this book. Educators should add the starting part at the beginning and the relaxing part at the end of the physical activity in organizing a whole physical activity.

In general, this is a book combining theory and practice. It is fit for persons who are interested in fostering children's physical literacy in a variety of settings. There are 120 comprehensive theory-into-practice activities that require minimal equipment and can guide you organize activities for children aged from 4-17. All the activities can be used as main part of your physical activity directly or be refined on your own experience flexibly.

## **Reference**

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