Any effective teaching situation rests on the development of objectives, the implementation of effective instruction, and the evaluation of student learning. Assessment is a collection of evidence of student work that requires an evaluative judgment on the part of the teacher (DinanThompson & Penney, 2015), and it is viewed as an integral component of the teaching–learning exchange (Mercier & Doolittle, 2013). Assessment of student learning takes a variety of forms depending on the teachers’ goals and objectives, and it includes both assessment for and of learning (Hay, 2006). Assessment of learning seeks to evaluate student understanding, whereas assessment for learning takes on a process orientation that emphasizes the “student’s role in underrating and assessing their own learning” (DinanThompson & Penney, 2015, p. 487). The purpose of this article is to provide practical strategies that physical educators might consider adopting as assessments for learning in the context of sport education. Sport education is the focus because it represents a models-based approach that presents opportunities for a wide variety of assessments (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2011).
Assessing for Learning

Whereas assessment of learning refers to the demonstration of what students have learned, assessment for learning refers to helping facilitate student learning as students progress in learning activities (Hay, 2006). Assessment for learning supports the learning process as it places the individual at the center of their learning and integrates the acts of instruction and assessment. By promoting student application in authentic contexts, “the assessment approach is situated within the learning context and allows for a range of responses and interpretations expected of students from, at times, diverse backgrounds and experiences” (Hay, 2006, p. 14). Sport education represents one curricular model that seeks to develop authentic sport experiences in physical education (Siedentop et al., 2011) and therefore “can provide a framework to develop assessment practices that are more authentic in nature” (Hay, 2006, p. 5).

Sport Education

Sport education is a curricular model in physical education that aims to help students “develop as competent, literate, and enthusiastic sportspersons” (Siedentop et al., 2011, p. 4). The competency aim refers to students being knowledgeable and skillful players in different sports. The literacy aim is for students to value and understand the sport, along with being able to differentiate between positive and negative sport practices. Finally, enthusiasm seeks to develop behaviors that maintain, protect and enrich the culture of various sports. To accomplish these goals, sport education provides a set of features through sport seasons that are necessary to maintain fidelity to the model. These features include developing affiliation by competing on the same team throughout the season, engaging in nonplaying roles (e.g., coach, fitness trainer, manager, referee, statistician) that facilitate the flow of the season, structuring formal competition, maintaining individual and team records, and festivity that includes a culminating event or championship game (Siedentop et al., 2011). Sport education promotes a context in which decision making and control are transferred from the teacher to the students as the season progresses. To promote student engagement in their own learning, assessment for learning should be utilized in the model, as it helps the teacher understand the students’ current learning and when they may be able to take on additional responsibilities (Hay, 2006).

Assessment for Learning in Sport Education

Regular assessment of student practices in sport education is a critical part of the model (Siedentop et al., 2011). These learning outcomes of the model should include students’ performance as players, as well as their performance in their nonplaying roles (e.g., coach, statistician, referee). When possible, assessment for learning should occur as part of instruction and be built into the lesson as a learning experience. When used after instruction, student assessment should promote authenticity in that students can apply the assessment content to real-life experiences. “If sport education intends to provide children and youth with authentic and realistic sport experiences, then it is only appropriate that assessment strategies be designed to determine how well this goal is achieved” (Siedentop et al., 2011, p. 318).

To engage students in their own learning through sport education, the performance of players should be considered in four domains (i.e., psychomotor, cognitive, affective and fitness domains). First, in the psychomotor domain, students might engage in their learning through a video self-reflection of their techniques and tactics (e.g., game-play performance). They may also use a checklist of specific techniques they should be performing and walk themselves through the skill during a learning experience created by their team’s coach. In the cognitive domain, students should be asked to evaluate their knowledge of the sport being played. Instead of using a multiple-choice test, students could be asked to complete a game-play performance instrument (Game Performance Assessment Instrument; Oslin, Mitchell, & Griffin, 1998) on their peers during game play to evaluate specific techniques or tactics. An out-of-class assignment on knowledge in action might be to watch a video-recorded game between two teams and reflect on the tactics they perform well and those on which they need to improve.

In the affective domain, students can create a chart of fair-play behaviors on a poster and hang the poster by the entrance to the gymnasium. They can be asked to acknowledge these behaviors upon entering the gym and complete a self-check after each game. Each team can also be asked to develop a checklist that measures fair play and self-assess their performance at the end of each game. Also related to the affective domain, students can be asked to rate their perceived competence related to the expected learning outcome at the end of each lesson. To ensure authenticity, these competence evaluations can be written in a journal along with an action plan and objectives for further skill development. Finally, in the fitness domain, students may be asked to wear pedometers during class lessons. They could then be asked to develop a warm-up that will maximize step counts or chart their activity during game play and present it as part of an end-of-season portfolio. Additionally, students could be asked to identify physical activity opportunities in their communities that relate to the sport education season and discuss how participation in the season prepared them for those opportunities.

Assessment for learning should also be utilized in sport education to promote learning in nonplaying roles such as statistician and referee, and specific team roles such as a coach or warm-up leader. On each team, every student should be given criteria to guide their performance and hold them accountable for their specific role (see Siedentop et al., 2011, for examples). Completing a self-check or reflection related to role performance each day could prove to be helpful to promote authenticity and commitment to the team. To further support learning in nonplaying roles, students might perform a peer assessment of others during games. For example, stu-
students could complete a peer assessment on the referees’ ability to make fair and impartial calls and consistently reinforce the rules or the scorekeepers’ ability to compile accurate and complete statistics and announce points scored during games (Siedentop et al., 2011).

Conclusion

Utilizing assessment for learning places the students at the center of the learning process by empowering them to evaluate their own learning and that of others (Hay, 2006). Importantly, the nature of sport education creates an environment in which students are empowered to take control of their learning, and the model therefore lends itself to the integration of student-centered assessment practices (Siedentop et al., 2011). Although only one way to evaluate student learning, assessment for learning that is employed as part of the instructional process further promotes the student-centered model advocated in sport education. This article has provided some broad-scope options for integrating assessment for learning in sport education. Readers are encouraged to adapt them to fit their particular teaching situations.

References


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Submissions Welcome!

Readers are encouraged to send “Advocacy in Action” submissions to column editor K. Andrew R. Richards at advocacy@shapeamerica.org.

The purpose of the Strategies column “Advocacy in Action” is to provide tangible, real-world examples of grassroots and national-level advocacy activities taking place in the fields of physical education, health education and physical activity. Submissions should be written in a conversational, practical tone. Columns should be 1,000–1,300 words, or roughly four typed, double-spaced pages.