Regular participation in physical education (PE) has the potential to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to engage in physical activity as an ongoing lifestyle choice (SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators, 2014). With appropriate instruction and ongoing deliberate practice, children can improve their motor skill performance and health-related fitness components, which are the building blocks of future participation in games, sports and fitness activities (Behringer, Vom Heede, Matthews, & Mester, 2011; Robinson et al., 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the development of select motor skills and fitness components early in life as a prerequisite for continued participation in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and protection from obesity later in life (Cattuzzo et al., 2016; Rodrigues, Stodden, & Lopes, 2016).
By Laura E. Bruno and Anne Farrell

Previous research has indicated that developmentally appropriate learning experiences can specifically improve muscular strength and fundamental movement-skill proficiency in children (Morgan et al., 2013). Moreover, the potential health benefits of muscular fitness for school-age youth highlight the importance of muscle-strengthening physical activities for children and adolescents (Lloyd et al., 2014; Smith et al. 2014). Although the importance of integrating both health- and skill-related fitness components is clear in the literature, there is an urgent need for their implementation in school-based programs. Regular physical activity during childhood and adolescence is associated with numerous physiological and psychosocial benefits, and has the potential to improve quality of life for boys and girls as they progress to adulthood and beyond (President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, 2017). Despite these potential benefits, numerous studies have shown that children and adolescents are far less active than their predecessors and are often physically inactive. Because of the current health state of children, the National Task Force on Community Preventive Services recommends modifying school PE to enhance physical activity behaviors and improve physical fitness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). These and similar recommendations have prompted the need for and development of new and creative approaches that provide an opportunity for children and adolescents to participate in regular, health-based physical activities (Bukowsky, Faigenbaum, & Myer, 2014; Faigenbaum et al., 2014; Farrell, Faigenbaum, & Radler, 2010). Therefore, physical educators need to look for inspiration in many different areas.

Like it or not, pop culture consumes a large part of many students’ lives. Therefore, it behooves all educators to acknowledge and embrace current popular television shows, video games and cultural phenomena to use those “hot topics” as platforms to connect critical course content with student interests. In recent years, a string of shows that focus on health, fitness and dance have provided a unique opportunity for PE. Shows like Danc-
level. The teacher can choose to define this as 1) a skill challenge (e.g., complete five equalizer pull-ups), 2) a timed challenge (e.g., move from Point A to Point B or complete the task within a given time), or 3) an obstacle-focused challenge (e.g., select 5 of the 10 obstacles to challenge yourself).

The next step is to build up the hype and obtain the necessary buy-in from students. The teacher can do this by discussing the popular television show. Dialogue about the series can include identifying the show objectives, who the competitors are, what the challenges are, how the event works, etc. Incorporate technology into the classroom by using iPads or a projector to show the challenge course so students have a clear understanding of the concept. Allow students an opportunity to create an individual and/or team profile. Encourage students to promote their team through a team name, team cheer or team chant. The excitement for this unit will be evident, and therefore, the physical educator’s introduction to fundamental integrative training (FIT) will be easier. Fundamental integrative training is a method of conditioning that incorporates both health- and skill-related components of physical fitness into well-designed lesson plans (Bukowsky et al., 2014). It is designed to enhance muscular fitness and fundamental movement-skill performance with meaningful instruction, deliberate practice, and progression based on technical proficiency. In addition, with qualified instruction and supervision, participants can learn health promotion concepts and skills while participating in a program that is safe, effective and fun. The concept of FIT was based on earlier reports on resistance training and motor skill development for school-age youth, and it was refined based on process evaluations from previous investigations (Faigenbaum et al., 2014; Myer et al., 2011).

Fundamental integrative training is the perfect platform to scaffold an ANW-inspired unit. Unit objectives and current student knowledge should serve as an opportunity for the teacher to tie the ANW trend into PE, hence creating PE Ninja Warrior (PENW). For students who are unfamiliar with the show, the teacher should discuss the fun and creativity behind the obstacle-course challenges. A strategic plan to further obtain buy-in should place the emphasis on personal growth and accomplishments. Such accomplishments can be demonstrated both on a personal level and through teamwork. This discussion time serves as an ideal time to identify the health- and skill-related fitness components and their benefits. Because the primary focus of ANW is to improve functional strength, speed and agility, this craze could not have come at a better time. Given the ongoing decline in fitness test scores specific to all health-related components of fitness during the past few decades (President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition, 2017), this type of training and education is critical.

**Implementation**

Although ANW is designed as a multistage challenge course, it is appropriate for the instructor to adjust and create PENW obstacles/courses that are appropriate for differing student abilities. These obstacles/courses may range from a sequence of three obstacle skills that address each of the selected components (e.g., strength, agility and balance), to a full multi-

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**Figure 1. Progress chart**
level showcase that highlights all health- and skill-related components of fitness. All activities should be taught and practiced multiple times in the months leading up to the main event. Poor form for any fitness-based activity is not desired and will likely hinder performance.

In ANW, competitor success is measured by the speed of completion; so, if a competitor falls or fails to complete a task, their “run” has ended. However, the goal and/or objective of PENW is to successfully complete each task to the best of one’s ability. For this reason, if a student is unable to or has difficulty completing a task, rather than failing or being eliminated, he or she will continue until success is achieved or a maximum predetermined time is met.

Physical educators may choose to have students compete in some of the following ways to address the needs, interests, skill levels and competitiveness of each class (for the team competitions, it is strongly suggested that the physical educator create the teams to ensure they are equitable):

1. Personal improvement or personal best: Each student will have multiple opportunities to run through the course. Each run will be timed, and the student’s goal is to improve their time with each attempt.
2. Team competition: In a team of four participants (or a number that divides evenly into the number of obstacles), each participant completes four of the obstacles. Team completion time is recorded. To challenge students, they may be asked to complete the team competition a second time, but they must select different obstacles from the previous round(s).
3. Total team: Each of the four team members completes the entire course, with each recording their own completion time. All times are added and compared to previous completion times or against other groups. Maximum participation and time on task are always encouraged and recommended; however, with strenuous activities such as PENW obstacles, rest time is necessary. Lead-up activities allow students to practice each obstacle at their own pace and progress outside of the typical obstacle-course order. This practice time will provide the opportunity for the physical educator to structure the class so all students can participate fully. The final minutes of each class should be reserved for total stage completion. Additionally, progress charts may help students see gains in their physical fitness levels. These progress charts can be done daily, weekly or monthly at the team or individual level (see Figure 1).

**Time Recording**

It is recommended that the physical educator develop a reliable time-recording system. This role may rest solely with the instructor; however, students have shown a strong interest in assuming this duty. For this class, iPads were used. The iPad timers were set at multiple stations, and participants began and finished at a similar location so they could start and stop their own timer. An alternative may be to establish a rotating timekeeper role as demonstrated in the sport education model (Dyson, Griffin, & Hastie, 2012), wherein one participant from each team takes a turn scoring and maintaining participant time(s). Another option could be to use a traditional stopwatch.

The sample PENW course used by the authors included various stages and 13 different challenges as seen in Tables 1 and 2. In an effort to replicate ANW, students began with the quintuple steps and ended by defeating a warped wall and hitting a buzzer to stop the clock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Course Stages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Stage 1**
| Feel free to add obstacles that primarily test the competitors’ agility and speed.
| 1. Quintuple steps
| 2. Sliding wall walk
| 3. Plank paper plate party – shuffle
| 4. Spooner walks
| 5. Equalizer bars – bar running
| 6. Warped wall
| 7. Crazy chicken sprint to buzzer
| **Stage 2**
| Feel free to add obstacles that primarily test the competitors’ strength and speed.
| 1. Quintuple steps
| 2. Arches over/under
| 3. Rope pull/scooter tunnel – prone
| 4. Plank paper plate party – inchworm
| 5. Spooner flies
| 6. Equalizer bars – knee tucks/oblique taps
| 7. Warped wall
| 8. Crazy chicken sprint to buzzer
| **Stage 3**
| Feel free to add obstacles that primarily test competitors’ upper-body and grip strength.
| 1. Quintuple steps
| 2. Rope pull/scooter tunnel – supine
| 3. Plank paper plate party – side step/jacks
| 4. Medicine-ball alley
| 5. Crab walk
| 6. Balance dome cones
| 7. Equalizer bars – pull-ups
| 8. Warped wall
| 9. Crazy chicken sprint to buzzer
| **Stage 4**
| Culmination of all stages
| 1. If a climbing rope is accessible, incorporate it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Fitness Component Addressed</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Key Training Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quintuple steps (see Figure 2)</td>
<td>Agility/balance</td>
<td>Leaping laterally between five staggered steps. BOSU balance trainers can be used as steps, but an alternative could include triangle wedge mats or self-created steps. Students who are unsuccessful are asked to start again. After two unsuccessful attempts, students move on to the next obstacle.</td>
<td>Soft knees and tight core when landing on the BOSU balance trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliding wall walk (see Figure 3)</td>
<td>Lower-body strength</td>
<td>Traditional wall sit while moving approximately 10 feet in a lateral direction (both right and left). Students keep shoulders/head below an identified line on the wall to remain in a seated squat position. Multiple lines may be identified, so shorter students may need to sit lower than taller students.</td>
<td>Back straight and ankles under knees at a 90-degree angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arches over and under (see Figure 4)</td>
<td>Upper-body strength and lower-back flexibility</td>
<td>Each two-part sequence is completed three consecutive times: forward power jump over rubber tube arches, followed by a striking cobra yoga pose and/or dive bomber (pike position with hands and feet on ground, hips in air, lower upper body to ground and swoop under arch, then pull through).</td>
<td>Squash-jump landing (bending ankles and knees). Maintain flexion in lower back and place wrists directly below shoulders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope pull/scooter tunnel (see Figure 5)</td>
<td>Upper-body muscular strength</td>
<td>While lying on the scooter in the prone or supine position, use the battling rope to pull yourself forward. If in the prone position, pull in a breaststroke or lateral pull-down motion, while releasing the rope midrith. If in the supine position, fully extend arms above head, while pulling toward the ceiling and finishing/releasing at the hip. Many students enjoy pulling themselves through a parachute-lined tunnel. Students return the scooter to the starting position before progressing to the next obstacle.</td>
<td>Tight core (belly button pulled toward spine)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Quintuple steps

Figure 3. Sliding wall walk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment/Setup</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Task Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Five staggered BOSU balance trainers and/or triangle mats, approximately four to five feet apart  
- If steps are not available, alternatives could include poly spots or carpet squares with differing distances between them.  
- Stop watches, iPads or other timing devices at or near the start of this station | It is recommended that equipment be secured to the floor (duct tape is the PE wonder). | - Varying distances between steps, BOSU balance trainers or mats  
- Emphasis on agility: move quickly from step to step  
- Emphasis on balance: leap and maintain postural control |
| Wall  
- Cones  
- Tape | Wall surface should be stationary and smooth. | If no stationary or suitable wall is available, students can Sumo walk or “space invader” walk (wide squat, low profile, chest up, elbows on knees) between cones that are 10 to 20 feet apart. |
| - Six rubber tube arches spaced approximately two to four feet apart in a linear fashion  
- If rubber tube arches are not available, use hurdles or cones. | Emphasize proper form for striking cobra/dive bomber. Equipment should not trip or hinder anyone’s movement (e.g., break- away arches). | - Modify number of sequences and/or distance between each.  
- Eliminate equipment if necessary.  
- Split tasks if appropriate.  
- Jump for distance rather than height.  
- Substitute start jump for power jump.  
- Select number of stationary dive bombers. |
| - Secure battling rope to a wall anchor, stationary pole or heavy sandbag(s). Extended or connected scooters are recommended to support the head and neck when in the supine position.  
- Place scooter by the end of the rope for the starting position.  
- Form the parachute tunnel using chairs, standards, ropes, etc. The bottom of chute should be wide enough to not get caught under the scooters. | Properly secure rope, as an unsecured rope could be hazardous. Getting on and off the scooter should be done safely and properly. Utilize mats under ropes. | - Use one or both strands of rope  
- Begin with prone position and progress to supine position for increased difficulty.  
- For highly skilled groups, secure the rope between two stationary anchors and have students complete an inverted tractor pull (inverted army crawl where the body is off the ground and hands and feet alternate to move along the rope). |

Figure 4. Arches over and under  
Figure 5. Rope pull/scooter tunnel
Table 2. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Fitness Component Addressed</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Key Training Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spooner walks</td>
<td>Balance and core strength</td>
<td>Begin standing on the spooner board with feet in a parallel position. Keep</td>
<td>Tight core (belly button to spine) and slight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see Figure 6)</td>
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<td>the weight planted on the back of the board. Unwind and transfer weight to</td>
<td>bend at the knees</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the front of the board while shifting the board forward (in a walking</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>motion). Travel a distance of 20 feet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spooner flies</td>
<td>Core/lower-back strength</td>
<td>Laying prone lengthwise on the spooner board, lift the lower body off the</td>
<td>Even while lying prone, maintain a tight core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see Figure 7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>floor and use hands to start body/spooner-board spinning in either a</td>
<td>(belly button to spine) with ears and arms in</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>clockwise or counterclockwise rotation. Attempt to hold the flying</td>
<td>line.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>position for multiple rotations. Students are typically asked to complete</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>five clockwise spins followed by five counterclockwise spins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine-ball alley</td>
<td>Upper- and lower-body</td>
<td>Using a series of medicine balls placed several feet apart, approach each</td>
<td>Straight back, weight in heels/wiggle toes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see Figure 8)</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td>ball, set feet slightly wider than shoulder-width apart, squat down to</td>
<td>arms near ears on overhead press, and soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pick up the medicine ball, complete a bicep curl to the chest, press arms</td>
<td>knees to land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>straight overhead while completing a jump squat, land with soft knees, and</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reverse arm motion. Place the medicine ball back on the floor and quickly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>move on to the next medicine ball and complete the same squat, bicep,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab walk</td>
<td>Upper-body strength</td>
<td>In a supine position, with body weight in the arms and legs, move through</td>
<td>Hips high, hands and fingers pointed out and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(see Figure 9)</td>
<td></td>
<td>space to a designated line. Suggested distance is 10 to 15 feet.</td>
<td>away from the body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6. Spooner walks

Figure 7. Spooner flies
### Challenge

**Fitness Component Addressed:** Balance and core strength

**Key Training Principle:** Equipment/Setup, Safety, Task Modifications

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment/Setup</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Task Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Mark a distance of 20 to 30 feet with cones.</td>
<td>• Spooner boards slip easily on the gym floor, so care must be taken when mounting and dismounting. By placing spooner boards on mats, the task may be more challenging but safer. If on the gym floor, the ground surface should be smooth and free of debris.</td>
<td>• Increase or decrease the distance between end lines for participants. Allow a group and/or partner to assist with moving the board forward (e.g., participant transfers weight while a partner holds his/her hand).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Place spooner boards approximately five feet apart to ensure participants have ample space to move the board in a forward direction.</td>
<td>• Allow a generous amount of space between boards/participants to ensure the safety of all. A partner may help a student by holding their hand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A five-by-five foot area for each student or a generous amount of space between boards/participants to ensure the safety of all participants</td>
<td>• To minimize the chance of hands/fingers getting pinched, begin with hands out in front of the head/shoulders. Stopping should be done by lowering feet to the ground. Determine the amount of space needed to ensure there is enough room to spin without kicking others moving around in the gym. Increase or decrease the number of spins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If on the gym floor, ground surface should be smooth and free of debris.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Medicine balls</td>
<td>• Medicine-ball weight should be appropriate for the age/skill/fitness level of the students. Any portion of the movement may be eliminated if students' form is suffering due to the complexity of the movement.</td>
<td>• Use nonweighted balls in place of medicine balls (e.g., playground, nerf, volleyball, etc.). Use punch balloons in place of medicine balls. The focus may then be on the &quot;slamming down&quot; of the balloon. The squat jump may be eliminated and replaced with &quot;stand after the squat&quot; if the coordination of the movement is too complex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poly spots to mark the location of each medicine ball</td>
<td>• Ground should be smooth and free of debris or equipment. Allow participants to gauge their strength level and allow for breaks as needed.</td>
<td>• Increase or decrease the distance traveled. Incorporate a &quot;relay&quot; where teams or partners travel a shorter distance and &quot;tag&quot; their partner midway. Allow for a &quot;bear crawl&quot; (prone) challenge if the crab walk is too difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10 cones or other equipment to define the &quot;alley&quot; (e.g., Styrofoam balance beams)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 8. Med-ball alley**

**Figure 9. Crab walk**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Fitness Component Addressed</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Key Training Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plank paper plate party: inchworm/jacks* (see Figures 10 and 11)</td>
<td>Upper-body, core and total-body strength</td>
<td>With paper plates under hands and/or feet (toes), hold a plank position while moving through a variety of exercises. <strong>Inchworm:</strong> With both hands and feet on plates, begin with body folded in half/pike position. Slowly extend both arms forward until in plank position, then pull both feet simultaneously toward the hands, moving from pike to plank position (inchworm motion). Complete a series of five to 10 repetitions. <strong>Jacks:</strong> Holding a plank position with hands on the ground and feet on plates, the lower body abducts and adducts in a jumping-jack motion. Complete two to five jacks.</td>
<td>Tight core (belly button to spine), slow and controlled movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dome balance cones (see Figure 12)</td>
<td>Balance and core strength</td>
<td>Using soft dome cones placed 24 to 36 inches apart, change tempo to slow down the body to hold a balance for two to three seconds on each cone or do a balance move on the dome cones without falling. Stand on one foot and reach down to that foot with the opposite hand (right hand to left foot) and return to the single-leg standing position before moving to the next cone. Subsequent cones are placed on an angle 24 inches to 36 inches apart. If you fall off the cone or lose balance, try again at that same cone before progressing to the next.</td>
<td>Tight core, slow and controlled movements, focus point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalizer bars: Oblique (side-to-side) taps/pull-ups (see Figures 13 and 14)</td>
<td>Upper-body and core strength</td>
<td>For both activities, the equalizer bars are parallel to each other with base legs touching. One of these activities has a starting position with hands on grips, arms straight with soft elbows (elbows are not locked), and feet lifted off the ground with knees bent and pointing downward. The other activity has a supine starting position. Either complete the activity for a given amount of time and/or repetitions (i.e., 5 to 10 seconds or 5 to 15 repetitions). <strong>Oblique (side-to-side) taps:</strong> Keep knees close together and bring both legs up toward the chest, then down to an extended position, tapping feet down to the left side of the equalizer bar. Repeat, but this time tap feet to the right side. <strong>Pull-ups:</strong> Transition to a supine position with your back on the ground between the equalizer bars. Hands grasp bar grips with palms facing in, arms extend straight up from shoulders. Feet/legs may be bent or straight; pull body upward until hands/arms are next to the ribcage and then lower slowly.</td>
<td>Hands directly under/over shoulders. Push down, not out. Slow and controlled (no swinging), tight core</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 10. Plank paper plate party: Inchworm  
Figure 11. Plank paper plate party: Jacks*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment/Setup</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Task Modifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper plates</td>
<td>• Performing these tasks is much easier on the gym floor, but this activity may be done on a mat-covered surface. • Progression activities are necessary to make sure students have the body strength to properly execute these exercises.</td>
<td>• Omit paper plates. • Increase/decrease distance traveled or repetitions completed. • Place plates under knees instead of feet/ toes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Paper plates    | • Four to six soft dome cones • Tape to secure cones to the floor (optional) | Some cones do not always stay put and prove dangerous when slipping out from under a student balancing. To minimize that risk, the gym floor and dome cones can be wiped down to remove dust and debris. Double-sided tape or duct tape may be utilized to keep cones in place. Use poly spots instead of dome cones. |

| Paper plates    | At least two sets of equalizer bars | Equalizer bars may be placed on a matted surface to minimize tipping. Teachers have been known to use chairs and sturdy bars (broom handles/ weigh bars) as makeshift equalizers. The authors have not tried these and therefore cannot attest to their safety. |

**Figure 12. Dome balance cones**

**Figure 13. Equalizer bars: Oblique (side to side)**

**Figure 14. Equalizer bars: Pull-ups**
Warped wall (see Figure 15)

- **Fitness Component Addressed:** Power
- **Description:** The warped wall may be challenging to include in your PENW course; however, the authors opted to have the students scale a partially matted wall. To do so, students were asked to move a short distance toward the wall, step on a mat (triangle or folded), and propel themselves in an upward motion to touch one of a variety of challenge lines.
- **Key Training Principle:** Jumping for height

**Equipment/Setup:***
- Tape to mark challenge lines/heights
- Mats for launch pad
- Move under control.
- Land with bent knees.
- Do not grab onto the top of mats or bang body into wall.
- No mat for assistance
- A variety of mats for assistance

**Safety:***
- Allow for “over-running” so the end point should not be near a wall or any other objects.
- Running toward a wall may be dangerous if students cannot control their speed.
- Be aware of personal space and mindful of others.
- Make sure the sprinting zone is free of debris or objects.
- Increase/decrease the sprinting distance.
- Incorporate the whole team by including a relay component.

*Crazy chicken sprint to buzzer (see Figure 16)*

- **Fitness Component Addressed:** Agility, speed and power
- **Description:** The final challenge is a 20- to 40-foot sprint to the finish where a squeaky rubber chicken (or other buzzer) has been mounted or hung from above. For the timer to stop, the chicken must “cock-a-doodle-do”/crow. For our course, students hit the chicken and then hit the stop button on the iPad. Scorers then recorded on the appropriate chart.
- **Key Training Principle:** Pump arms, straight direction, controlled deceleration

**Equipment/Setup:***
- Rubber chicken (or equipment of similar sort)
- iPad
- Be aware of personal space and mindful of others.

**Safety:***
- Make sure the sprinting zone is free of debris or objects.
- Increase/decrease the sprinting distance.
- Incorporate the whole team by including a relay component.

*These challenges have proven to be the most challenging for PE Ninjas and may be more appropriate for older grades.

Note. PE = physical education.
Student Impact

The ultimate goal of PENW is to improve the fitness levels of students and to do so in a unique way in which students set personal goals while having fun. The job of physical educators is to promote physical activity by creating an environment in which students find enjoyment. The PENW unit bridges this gap and brings a new concept to the forefront. With this concept comes revived energy and excitement. And because PENW places the emphasis on personal growth, all students have an opportunity to find success. As students participated in these challenges, the energy throughout the school became contagious. Students challenged themselves and pushed their mental and physical limits, which also led to improvements in students’ self-esteem. From an affective perspective, students were encouraging one another and were excited to cheer one another on as they reached and surpassed their personal goals.

It is hoped that this article will motivate and invite teachers to be creative in their classroom and design and implement a PENW challenge course that best suits the unique needs of their students. Contemporary American martial arts master O. Fred Donaldson (National Museum of Play, n.d.) said that children learn as they play, but more importantly, in play, children learn how to learn. The authors feel this concept is at the cornerstone of a PENW program. It is through the fun and high-energy personal challenges that students will learn and improve their physical fitness, which directly addresses the National Task Force on Community Preventive Services’ recommendations to modify school PE to better enhance physical fitness and develop new and creative approaches that provide opportunities for children and adolescents to participate in regular, health-based physical activities. Physical educators need to look for inspiration in a variety of areas and PENW is a new and fresh idea appropriate for students of all ages and abilities. Help students discover their inner warrior!

Acknowledgment

The authors wish to thank Jason Zablow from Antheil Elementary School for his assistance with equipment and implementation.
Fundamental integrative training is the perfect platform to scaffold an American Ninja Warrior-inspired unit. Unit objectives and current student knowledge should serve as an opportunity for the teacher to tie the American Ninja Warrior trend into PE, hence creating PE Ninja Warrior.

References


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