

Video Teaching Episode - Critical Analysis

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Plan & Presentation

The purpose of this grade 11 lesson was to develop students' understanding of fitness principles, including progression and specificity, which align with the Benefits Health outcome in the curriculum. This lesson was designed to give students meaningful choice throughout the fitness stations, allowing students to progress through each exercise based on their individual ability and fitness goals. The initial plan began with a discussion to introduce the topic, followed by a dynamic pyramid warm-up and concluded with exercise stations and a quick recap of the knowledge applied throughout the lesson. The warm-up was intended to be high energy to boost students' movement, heart rate, breathing, which would then be followed by a rest during the explanation of the stations. During the station explanations, each exercise was to be demonstrated and supported by movement cues, safety consideration, exercise progression levels, and the specificity of the movement, to ensure students correctly participated. The six stations were picked to include different components of fitness including shuttle runs for cardiovascular endurance, skipping for coordination, lunges for lower body muscles, push-ups for upper body muscles, plank for core muscles, and medicine ball squats for full body strength. Thus, following the lesson ideas, students were encouraged to select an appropriate level of the progression, while maintaining proper form in the activity.

When teaching the lesson, the activities tracked the lesson plan quite well, with the support of preparing stations prior to the lesson for effective transitions. Adjustments were made to the pace of activities, such as the fitness stations were reduced from 3 minutes to about 2 and a half minutes per station due to the extended time that the warm-up took. This was noted by the peer observers as the total lesson was approximately 31 minutes, which was planned to last 30 minutes. As observed in the video, the introduction was effective for providing insights for the lesson and allowed students to discuss individuality of fitness and build upon their previous

knowledge about progression and specificity. This establishes the purpose of the lesson by connecting knowledge to previous learning within physical activity. Throughout the dynamic pyramid warm-up, we added in a quick break half way through for students to catch their breaths and lower their heart rates so they could finish the rest of the movement. After the entire warm-up, some students grabbed their water bottle to help them recover during the station explanations. Due to the fatigue of some students, a break and overall time taken to complete the warm-up, the original time for the stations was slightly shortened to keep the lesson moving. The flow and transition was made easy by organizing the equipment on the sidelines in the correct locations and having the task card posters taped to the walls before the lesson. Each explanation of the stations helped reinforce the fitness topics of the day and gave the students an opportunity to choose their own progression that was appropriate for their fitness goals. The video demonstrates that students chose to do different exercises at each station, which allows variability and differentiation within the lesson. Overall, the lesson maintained a consistent theme centred on the fitness principles of progression and specificity, thus, encouraging students' to make active choices in their exercises.

Strengths

One of the most significant strengths in this lesson was the use of detailed station task cards. These provided students with visual reference for each exercise, an explanation on how to execute the movement, the specification of the exercise and the progression. The task cards were great for students that needed a reminder of the exercises and guided students learning of progression and specificity. Peer observer 1 specifically noted that these supported students' expectations at each station and identified what students were supposed to be doing, even if they forgot upon arriving at the station. As seen in the video, lots of students referenced the task cards

when they initially arrived to recall the station. In addition, students would view the task cards during their rest period to decide on their next progression or learn the specificity of the exercise.

Another strong aspect of this lesson was student choice and the opportunity to differentiate based on student abilities and individuals' fitness goals. The deliberate lesson structure matched the students current ability with progression levels to adapt each exercise to making it more challenging. Ultimately, this aspect of the lesson supports the dimension of individual activity for the purpose of fitness and personal health rather than competition. Both peer observers mentioned this as a strength and indicated they valued progression and differentiation at each station. Peer observer 1 stated "Progressions and differentiations were great" for allowing students to choose their level of participation and was "essential for engagement." By creating lessons that increase students' intrinsic motivation and perceived autonomy, this encourages self-determination motivation for students to enjoy learning experiences (Chang et al., 2016). Thus, this lesson did more than differentiate exercise but gave students the power to make decisions based on their own ability and willingness to challenge themselves.

The clear organization in the lesson supported the flow and efficiency within the lessons transitions, promoting high engagement and student activity throughout the entire learning time. Both peers noted transitions were in the outstanding category, notably peer observer 1 commenting on appreciated the end "warning times" for the stations and the encouragement to push themselves for the remaining 20-30 seconds for each station. As demonstrated in the video, clearly directing students to the next station decreases the chances of students wandering off task. Moreover, the organization was helpful for the stations as each station required some sort of

equipment that was set up previously to the lesson so that instructional time was not lost. These organizational techniques increased student participation and safety of students.

Thirdly, teacher demonstrations of each exercise were very helpful in displaying proper technique in all the activities. Peer observer 1 described the teacher demonstration as useful support to show students exactly what to do. This gives students both visual and auditory information to learn exercise technique, form and safety. In addition, active teacher circulation throughout the lesson allowed for safety concerns and engagement to be addressed in response to individual's needs. For instance, injured or fatigued students were provided with exercise modification, improper form could be corrected and lastly, provide praise and encouragement on students participation. Specifically, peer observer 2 stated that feedback during stations, such as holding the plank exercise “like a board” were important cues for students to hear in supporting comprehension of the exercise technique. Similarly, peer observer 1 modifications were made throughout the warm-up and station activities to accommodate individuals with previous injuries, although these adaptations were primarily identifiable through the teacher’s active circulation and observation.

Lastly, upon reviewing the video, it was evident that student encouragement and effective feedback were consistent strengths throughout the lesson. Peer observer 1 mentioned that I continuously encouraged students to try station progression and made an effort to connect with every student during the fitness stations. This use of encouragement is particularly important in a fitness lesson, where some students may feel less motivated to participate. The intentional music choice was deliberately used to contribute to the high energy and positive atmosphere. Along those lines, both peers rated my teaching enthusiasm as a 4/4, which aided in the role of student motivation and participation.

Limitations

The objective of this warm-up was to create high intensity engagement, although this portion of the lesson brought challenges and was identified as an area of improvement. Peer observer 1 suggested that because of the intensity it would have been beneficial to suggest a water break. Whereas, peer observer 2 stated that the warm-up timeframe may have been too long for the overall lesson. In retrospect, this warm-up may have been too intense in preparation for the main activity of fitness stations. To modify this warm-up in future lessons, the exercise on the dynamic pyramid could be reduced, making it more manageable for students, as well as, adding in the suggested recovery and hydration time. Since the primary purpose of the lesson was progression and specificity, shortening the warm-up would allow for a more appropriately paced lesson and provide students with sufficient time to fully engage at each station.

Another area of critique included the questioning strategy for student learning and understanding. Although teacher questioning was utilized and wait times were sufficient to allow students to respond, an area for improvement was to integrate different varieties of questions. Peer observer 1 noted that questions could be extended further past just simple answers and definitions. This could be done by making the knowledge more meaningful by connecting it to ideas outside the classroom and encouraging students to deeply reflect on their learning. Moreover, using student-generated questions can promote high-order thinking, which builds greater depth in learning and provides students with more confidence to apply their knowledge (Cheng et al., 2023). In the context of this lesson, students could have the opportunity to generate their own progression and specificity for each exercise. Concurrently, peer observer 2 appreciated asking for multiple students to answer the questions and using different students each time. Both comments highlight the value of using intentional questioning strategies to promote discussion and higher order thinking skills. Also, there are discussion tactics, such as small

groups or think-pair-share activities, that can be implemented to encourage more student participation rather than just relying on raised hands. Questioning in physical education is important to help support curriculum purpose within a lesson and give students the opportunity to understand why they are participating in certain activities.

For the entirety of the lesson, students seemed to enjoy all the activities, although maintaining student engagement could be improved by using a few different methods. As noted by peer observer 1, students had a great time working in partners for the stations but some students stopped or only participated in the minimum progress at certain stations. One way to improve upon lasting engagement, is to give students time to create a personal goal for their fitness, then have them self-evaluate if they achieved or worked towards that goal. Ultimately, this would create the narrative of meaningful personal improvements rather than just completing station exercises. As a physical education teacher, adding intrinsic motivations to tasks and students feeling positive affective-emotional perception can foster students' engagement in physical activity (Leisterer & Paschold, 2022). Thus, high autonomy-supportive teaching allows for personal agency within lessons (Leisterer & Paschold, 2022).

Implications for Professional Growth

One of my primary goals for my upcoming AFX field experience is to further develop my questioning strategies to assess and gauge student understanding of the knowledge being taught. For instance, connecting learning in physical education to students' physical activity and experiences outside the classroom. An important aspect of my professional growth is to develop strategies that extend student learning beyond simple recall and promote self-assessment, which fosters students' self-determination in participating in movement and physical activities. Additionally, using higher-cognitive questions allows students to apply their knowledge to

specific contexts and evaluate new information in a meaningful way (Crane, 2024). Utilizing effective questioning with broader participation supports critical thinking and benefits student understanding of practical applications.

A key takeaway from this lesson is remaining flexible and adaptable throughout a lesson. As a lesson plan provides detailed structure and organization, effective teachers can respond to unanticipated situations and modify based on students' changing needs. This experience demonstrated the decision to adapt the lesson based on injured students' abilities, timing of the activity, equipment or spacing limitations, varying participant numbers, differences in student motivation and many more. Therefore, effective teachers use a lesson plan as a guide to implementing instructional concepts, rather than a rigid plan. Moving into my AFX, I aim to purposefully adjust instruction in response to students' diverse needs, to create an inclusive learning environment.

As a future educator, I aim to continue incorporating student autonomy-supported teaching practices into all my lessons, not just for individual fitness topics. Providing students with meaningful choices can promote ownership of their learning and engage them in activities. Effective questioning is also an important component in physical education as it promotes the curricular outcomes to their learning and provides students with an understanding of the purpose of specific activities. Moving forward, my goal is to continue developing as an educator who can create organized, purposeful, and engaging lessons while supporting individual diverse needs and differences for all students. Ultimately, fostering an inclusive environment where students feel supported and appropriately challenged can enhance their meaningful learning experience in physical education.

References

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