

PEACE POWER TOOLS

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Teaching Sportsmanship

Summary:

Sportsmanship can be defined as respectful behavior under pressure. Sportsmanship can be taught to youth to help them develop leadership skills, positively resolve conflict, and reduce off-task behaviors. Sports teachers and coaches have a unique opportunity to teach sportsmanship behaviors to youth during physical education and sports activities. Because of the major role sports plays in the lives of some young people, sportsmanship metaphors may be used in non-school settings as well.

Resources Needed:

- List of sportsmanship behaviors for posting

Implementation Steps:

- Divide the group into two or more teams.
- At the beginning of a teaching session, briefly talk about one or more of the following behavior repertoires:
 - Being a good winner – a) Positive and supportive feedback to the opposing team; b) Absence of bragging or taunting;
 - Being a good loser – a) Congratulatory behavior, b) Absence of accusations or blame;
 - Demonstration of peer respect – a) Supportive behavior toward peer leaders and referees, b) Absence of negative interactions with peer leaders and referees;
 - Showing enthusiasm – a) Peer encouragement and positive feedback, b) Absence of negative comments to peers;
 - Participating actively – a) On-task participation, b) Absence of bystander behavior;
 - Resolving conflicts – Teacher-independent resolution of game conflicts; and
 - Helping peers and the organization – a) Peer instruction and support, b) Activity organizing
- Score each group's positive and negative behaviors during the teaching session.
- Finally, offer feedback at the end of each session and then publicly post the results.

Variations:

- None

Rational and Evidence Base:

There is growing evidence that when sportsmanship behavior is directly and explicitly taught to elementary school-aged children, students experience large increases in leadership and teacher-independent conflict resolution. The available evidence indicates that these effects may carry over into non-sports settings. As much as a day later, students involved in a structured sportsmanship curriculum in physical education class experience a 75% reduction in off-task behavior, tripling of student leadership, and a quadrupling of teacher-independent conflict resolution behaviors in academic classes the following day (Sharpe et al, below). It is also likely that older youth teaching sportsmanship to younger youth may be useful to both, as teaching commonly produces learning in the teacher as well in such arrangements.

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Julia Wesley & Mark A. Mattaini