

The Silver Linings in teaching Elementary PE during the Pandemic

With the start of the school year, I found myself anxious and uncertain, even after 26 years of teaching. I have re-created and adjusted my curriculum to accommodate the new CDC guidelines of a minimum of 6 feet of social distance between students inside and outside. Wow, it is tough; I started completely outside then realized how challenging that is. Thankfully I can use my gym for part of my lesson. Class begins with an instant activity, reviewing the learning targets, and then we go out for the main activity.

Teaching outside is no easy task with recess in progress, moose running around, crazy weather, cars driving by on the highway, speaking through a mask, and more. Running and playing in the gym is also a challenge, maintaining distance at all times, sucking in air through a fabric, not touching anything, and trying to hear children speak through their mask. Also, creating lessons to teach virtually on top of everything else. Whew, no wonder we are tired when we arrive home in the evening. I find I get between 15,000 and 20,000 steps every day.

Even with these challenges, I find many silver linings in this Pandemic. There are more Physical Education resources than ever on youtube, Facebook, Google, Teachers Pay Teachers, Pinterest, etc.. Teachers worldwide are genuinely helping each other by sharing ideas to promote great activity ideas in the gym, outside, and at home. Students tend to be more thankful for attending school, severe behaviors have decreased, and finding self-space is easy to teach. Also, Zoom meetings have made communication possible when we cannot be face to face. I want to share a few successful teaching games and ideas I find that work with my attempt to be positive and look for the silver lining.

- PE spots with at least 8 feet of distance in the gym provide ample room for students to spread out.
- Hoops, poly spots, field paint, and cones are my best friends. Students stand near, in, or on. I don't need to remind them to move apart.
- I spend additional time prepping for students to arrive for PE, but it is well worth it to help with social distancing.
- Moving-in Bubbles, don't pop a bubble.
- Noodle Tag: Using Pool Noodles to tag instead of hands provides the 6 feet needed. A quick review of how to tag and not use the noodle as a weapon is necessary. Have enough floor spots for everyone; students stand on these spots, then choose three people to be noodle taggers. On the signal go, or when the music starts, students scatter not to get tagged. The taggers try to touch all the runners with their noodle. When a runner is tagged, they go to a spot close to

them and do an exercise. (Mountain Climbers, Push-up or plank, jumping jacks, etc.) Once everyone is tagged, choose new taggers.

- Fruit Loop Tag: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYXbBIMO4hs> I use more deck rings than shown in the video
- Choice board station activity: Examples: skip or hop, star jumps or jumping jacks, balancing ideas, etc. Pictures are helpful for younger students. You can also add reviewed manipulative skills for assessment.
- Soccer Steal the Treasure <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvNdlBk6H2Y>
- Zone Soccer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05lgJeARU70>
- Dribble Pirates <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88biX7dQOXI>

As educators, we are facing tough times, but I try to find the silver lining. Every one of you helps the children of Wyoming stay active, engage in the fun during school, and continue the lifetime movement quest. Keep your chins high, and don't forget to take time for yourselves to rejuvenate! Hang in there. We are in this together.