

TEACHING PHYSICAL EDUCATION WITHOUT A GYM

TOTAL'S TOP TIPS AND CHALLENGES

Growth Mindset

- Be positive & prepared.
 - Carry a bag with essentials: tissues, trash bag, two-way radio, class roster, bandages, water bottle, cell phone...
 - Load up a wagon with all equipment needed for the day.
 - Know the weather forecast. Have a back-up room in case of inclement weather.
 - Don't forget your whistle. Teaching outside is better for your hearing but not for your voice.
- Be flexible and creative.
 - One class you can teach outside, next class there is a storm.
 - Be ready for things to NOT go as planned.

Mother Nature Rules

- Weather friend or foe
 - Check the weather often.
 - When weather keeps you inside what are the spaces you can use: classroom, cafeteria, hallway...
- Embrace nature
 - Playing outside improves sensory skills, contributes to cognitive and social/emotional development, increases attention span, outdoor light improves mood (happiness)...
 - I learned all about the different types of trees in our park. We used the trees to play games and explore nature.
- Seasons determine your units
 - Change your units to fit the season. Colder weather makes it hard to throw and catch so play soccer with a foam ball or play invasion games without a jail. Children cannot handle cold weather running (or maybe your climate is too hot) so introduce fitness walking.
 - Create seasonal theme activities.
 - Fall: Capture the Pumpkin
 - Winter: sledding or winter Olympic activities
 - Spring: Earth Day activities
- Roll with the distractions
 - Learn about your local wild animals.
 - Distractions: cicadas buzzing, hawks circling, bird migration, squirrels, bees, wind blowing leaves, trains, sirens, motorcycles and more.
 - Have students sit with back to sun.

Outdoor Space

- What space can you use?
 - Teach your students about boundaries.
 - Be prepared to teach them that this is a class and not recess.
 - Don't be afraid to use the play structures. Just explain the purpose and use it in a different way than recess. We use the play structures for warm-ups: Chutes and Ladders, Follow the Leader, Partner exercises, upper body work out, climb and jump...
- What are your safety concerns?
 - Get to know your school grounds. I took some of my classes on a walk to identify trees.

- Will recess be an issue?

Equipment

- Can you use what you have or will you need some outdoor equipment.
 - Work with your administration on what you feel is needed.
- Is your budget tight?
 - Be creative, for example I asked the school, community and family members for broken hockey sticks. We purchased the \$4 plastic blades and gave broken hockey sticks a new life.

Communication

- Weather can change quickly so you need to have good communication with teachers.
- Keep administration, teachers, parents and students informed.
- Know your weather policy. Get the Administration to create weather policies. We sent many reminders to students and parents to dress for the weather. In Minnesota it is all about layers.
- You may have to make it clear to students and parents that teaching outside is not recess.
- Get a two-way radio to keep in touch with main office and health office.

Grading

If you are without a gym for an extended period will it impact how you grade? Discuss this with your administration.

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