

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION

YOUR QUARTERLY @OPENPHYSED MAGAZINE

## INSTANT ACTIVITIES FAQ

What is an IA? How long should an IA last? How do I choose my IA?

## THE DANCE DIGEST

ROCK THE HOUSE with Brandon Herwick, OPEN dance curriculum contributor.

## PEDALING FOR PE

Read about OPEN and Eat Move Grow's recent pedaling event to make high-quality PE more accessible in rural Louisiana.

## IT'S A SUNNY DAY IN NEW YORK

For Mike Martinez, teaching in the lower-socioeconomic neighborhoods of NYC is challenging but incredibly rewarding.

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Welcome to **Physical Education Magazine**, a publishing project from your tribe of OPEN educators. [OPEN](#) (Online Physical Education Network) is an organization of teachers helping teachers. We're on a mission to improve the effectiveness of education for every child by providing rigorous, outcomes-based free curriculum tools to every physical education teacher.

This quarterly publication is meant for you, the physical education and health community. In this first issue, you'll find many articles from OPEN National Trainers and friends. In future issues, we'll be adding in even more articles, ideas, and motivational stories from the broader OPEN tribe. While each issue will feature a few consistent columns—including classroom ideas, details about recent OPEN adventures, and technology and products reviews—they'll also include real stories from real, on-the-ground educators.

We know that great educators are amazing storytellers, and we want to share our love with our tribe. We want Physical Education Magazine to be your forum for support, helping to guide your instruction throughout the year. If you would like to contribute a column, story, or idea, please don't hesitate to contact me at [rich@physedresource.com](mailto:rich@physedresource.com).

Sincerely,

Rich  
OPEN National Trainer  
Physical Educator at Severna Park Elementary School

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# HOW TO MAKE A MOVEMENT

BY **ELYSE LOUGHLIN**, OPEN NATIONAL TRAINER

**Before** you read this article, do me a favor: [click here](#) and watch this excellent 3-minute TED Talk by Derek Sivers. In it, he uses a fun video clip of people dancing at a festival to share his philosophy about leadership and the skills necessary to build momentum for an idea or movement.

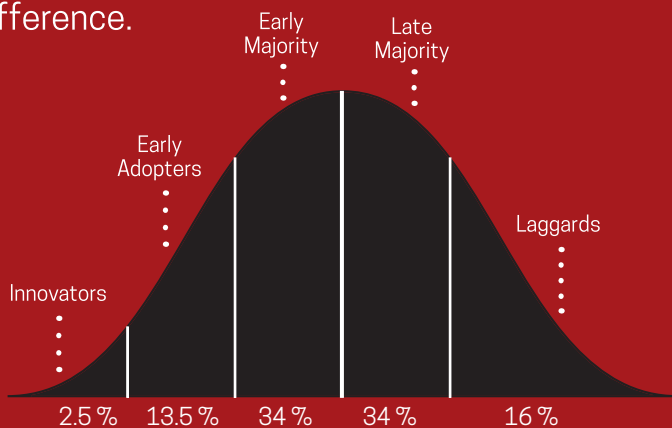
OPEN is a movement gaining momentum, and the OPEN tribe is filled with bold innovators who don't mind dancing on their own. We've gotten the movement started, but now we need others to join the dance. It may be daunting to jump into the mix, but OPEN needs you. Without the support of the first follower, the crazy-looking people dancing wildly by themselves can't make as much of a difference.

convince the early majority, they create momentum. They are the real spark that starts the movement. A movement must be public to be effective, and social media is a great way you can both find encouragement and encourage others to push outside comfort zones and reach new professional heights. You can also attend meetings (like department, board of education, professional organizations, PTA, or faculty) and advocate for physical education and health programs. Use these platforms to create momentum in your community.

“

**A movement  
must be  
public to be  
effective**

”

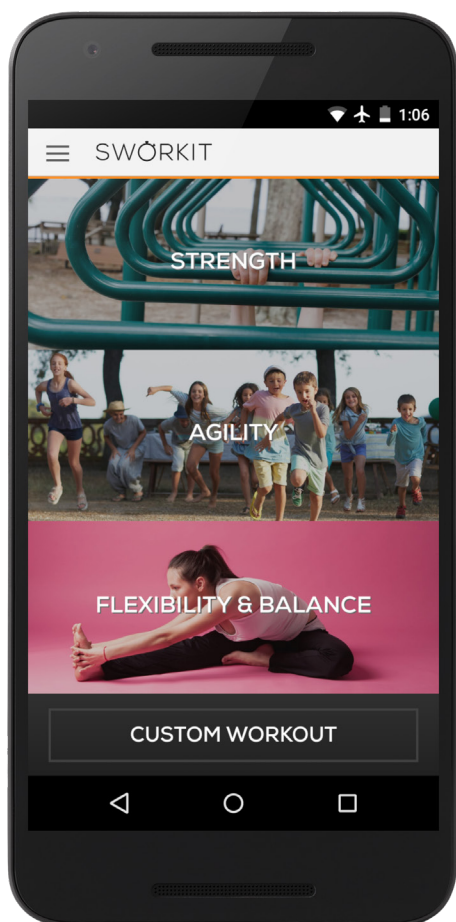


**Rogers Diffusion of Innovation Bell**

Developed in the 1960s, E.M. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation bell curve lists the roles people typically play as a movement grows. The health and physical education profession benefits greatly from early adopters who—like the first follower in the video—call on, teach, and encourage others to join in. The idea may not have originated with them, but they make it happen, because if they can successfully

We promise you: you will not be the only person dancing. Join us, and courageously follow and invite others to come with you. Take the opportunity to create or become part of the “in crowd,” as Sivers puts it, to make it easier for others to get off the fence and join too. Participate, adopt, and advocate.

**Be the movement!**

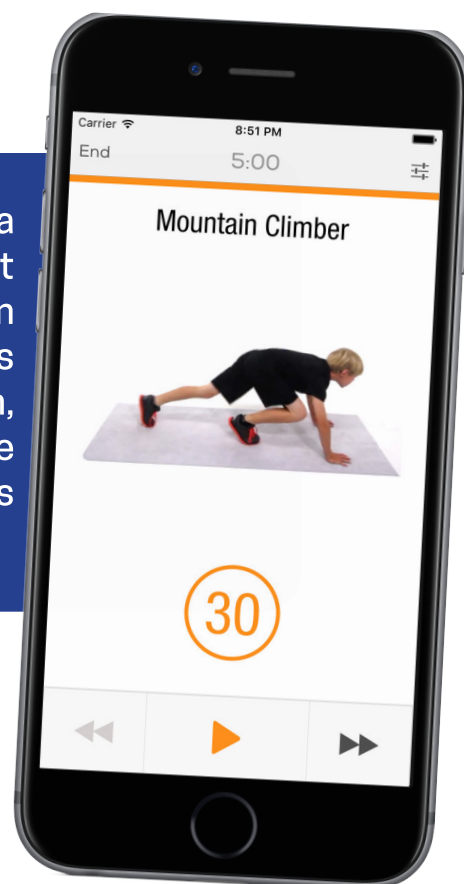


# TECH REVIEW: SWORKIT KIDS APP



BY **KEVIN TILLER,**  
@PHYSEDREVIEW

This app is great if you have the ability to project onto a screen in your gym. It displays kid-friendly exercises that students can follow and even allows you to also play your own music in the background while the app is running. Workouts are customizable, and exercise categories include strength, agility, flexibility, and balance. You can also customize workout length, exercise length, and break length. My kids loved it, and so will yours!



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# PRODUCT

## REVIEW

BY **RICH WILES**,  
EDITOR, @RICH\_WILES



### DELUXE BEADED JUMP ROPES

Over the past three years, I have been transitioning all my old segmented jump ropes to Deluxe Beaded Jump Ropes. The surgical tubing in the middle of the ropes helps to absorb ground impact and reduce abrasion on the floor. For students learning to jump, the long rope's neon tubing is a great visual support for tracking. Plus, because this tubing is soft, students seem less afraid of the rope while performing front- and rear-door entries. Finally, the cost of the Deluxe Beaded Jump Ropes makes it a great economic purchase for class or recess equipment.

If you're looking for inspiration for using jump ropes in your gym, don't forget that OPEN has a great [Jump Rope module](#) for the intermediate level.

16" Double Dutch Ropes    [#1305005](#)  
8" Deluxe Beaded Ropes    [#1304985](#)

### PLAY LINE SLACKLINE AND SLACKSTAND

I have had a Play Line Slackline in my backyard since the SHAPE National Convention in St. Louis, MO. At home in the summer, my children and their friends love to play with it as they use their imagination for hours of fun.

This year was the first time I had extra funds in my budget to purchase a Slackstand, which allows you to set up a Slackline anywhere, for instruction at school. My students love balancing on the Slackstand, acting like their favorite ninja warrior. The equipment can supplement OPEN's [Circus Arts module](#) at the middle school level and [Creative Mode Fitness module](#) at the high school level. You could even use it in your high school weight-training program to help your student athletes increase their agility and balance. I recommend [YouTube](#) as a way to get some amazing Slackline inspiration.



Play Line Slackline    [#1363724](#)  
Slackstand    [#1363762](#)

# PEDALING FOR PE:

REMINDING US WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT  
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON AND BEYOND

BY **CHRISTINA COURTNEY**  
@C8462COURTNEY



'Twas 14 days before Christmas, and down in the South, teachers were moving all throughout. They brought fun, joy, and collaboration every day while pedaling their bikes on these cool windy Louisiana days.

December 11th to 14th marked one of the proudest periods of my life as a physical educator. I was fortunate to be one of the eight OPEN National Trainers asked to participate in #Pedal4PE through rural Louisiana, the first of what I hope to be many more pedaling events across the U.S. It was special to me for many reasons, the most important being that I myself am a teacher in the great state of Louisiana; the children we visited

throughout the week-long journey will directly impact the future of the state I call home.

Let me start as close to the beginning as I possibly can: OPEN executed #Pedal4PE in partnership with Eat Move Grow, a federally funded grant program that offers a wide variety of engaging programs for children, families, and underserved schools in rural communities across Louisiana. Their primary mission is to close health gaps and create opportunities that promote a stronger health environment for children. These two organizations make a

truly perfect match to build the foundation for healthy, active schools.

#Pedal4PE accomplished a great deal in just a few days' time. The event consisted of a four-day, 400-mile bicycle ride to visit and celebrate 12 rural schools throughout the state. Our cycling

**“ The children we visited throughout the week-long journey will directly impact the future of the state I call home. ”**

team biked from school to school, with anywhere from 11 to 50 miles between. During our visit at each school, the students participated in a high-energy activity session with one or more OPEN trainers. Each school was then gifted a huge bag full of US Games physical education equipment packs (including scarves, balls, cones, and more) designed to be used with OPEN curriculum modules. These equipment packs were significant to these schools, as they typically operate in severely underprivileged conditions with little to no resources.

It's hard to find the words to help you truly understand how impactful this event was. Picture it: hundreds of children at each school dancing and moving with smiles and excitement on every single face. Scarves of every different color flying in the air, waving all around both when the bikers came in and left for the next leg of the ride. A biker dressed up as Santa Claus, riding in and bringing not only the joy of the Christmas season but also tears to so many eyes, including my own. Children excited to move, cheering for healthy lifestyles and the physical education teachers and administrators who do so much to make a difference in their lives with so few tools. Can you see it? (Watch [this video](#) to see for yourself.)



Those kids' high-fives, hugs, smiles, and thanks at the end of each event and throughout the week mean so much more to me than I will ever be able to express. These are not the faces of nameless children, they are the faces of my own students, the ones I strive to teach and educate every day. They are the faces of our future, and they deserve everything we can give them and so much more. Even as I write these words, their excitement and joy for life remind me how much more of myself I can give to others, and I will continue to give as long as I can.

We cannot continue to forget those who are without; we are one nation, and together we can build a future in which we focus on developing the whole child—body, mind, and spirit. I encourage each of you to remember that you are valued, and what you do every day makes a difference in so many lives. Keep up the great work.

**And if you haven't joined the OPEN movement, we are waiting for you.**

# FLAG POLE

BY **BRIAN DEVORE,**  
@BDEVORE7



It was just a flagpole. You see them at schools across the entire country. But this flagpole was different. I had to see this one.

I'd heard about this flagpole before embarking on the #Pedal4PE celebration in Louisiana in December. I'd also heard stories about teachers in these rural areas struggling to make quality physical education happen. No gyms, sewage regularly leaking up through the restroom floors, loofahs being used as balls due to \$0 budgets, and the struggle these obstacles create as teachers attempt to build curriculums and lesson plans.

But the flagpole? Related to physical education? Was this a cruel joke related to AngleBall™?

At this particular stop along our #Pedal4PE journey, the work of OPEN and Eat Move Grow was in full effect. The gym or cafeteria or auditorium—take your pick depending on the time of day and weather—was transformed into a place where students could move, learn, and thrive. The physical education teacher bubbled with enthusiasm about her new chance to really teach thanks to OPEN's limited-equipment curriculum resources. During a media interview, the school's principal touted the importance of letting students move throughout the day and the resulting improvement in attention, classroom learning, and behavior.

The playground had also been updated with new equipment and painted stencils

from Eat Move Grow; no longer did students have to wait in line to shoot hoops with the one basketball or jump rope with the one rope. It was a remarkable transformation.

But still, I was drawn to the flagpole. When it came time for us to depart, I couldn't leave without seeing it and taking a photo.

Whether due to a hurricane, age, or some other reason—I never heard which—this school's original flagpole had fallen. So for a very long time, they hadn't had one at all. But when I visited, after #Pedal4PE had generated media attention and national support, there it was in all its glory. It stood majestically on campus, watching the students come, play, learn, and go.

In my eyes, it's more than a flagpole. It symbolizes the rebirth of the entire school—and community—through the gift of physical education. The spirit on campus that day was alive once again. Parents proudly decorated the school with ribbons, hung signs, and made sure every part of the campus was just right for the celebration. Local and district administrators lauded the work of the organizations who'd partnered to boost the success of their school and their students. The quest and arrival of real physical education and activity facilitated this rebirth.

Let's also use this flagpole as a reminder of the massive opportunity for physical education teachers across the nation to use the power of our subject to make a difference. Because we see students so often and so regularly, it's easy for us to have a thumb on the pulse of the entire school. Sometimes, we're the most consistent adult in a child's life, especially at the elementary level. By delivering quality physical education learning experiences, building a positive school culture toward physical activity, and acting as a champion for movement during the school day, we can lead a paradigm shift to value physical education and activity for kids—which, as we all know, benefits everyone.

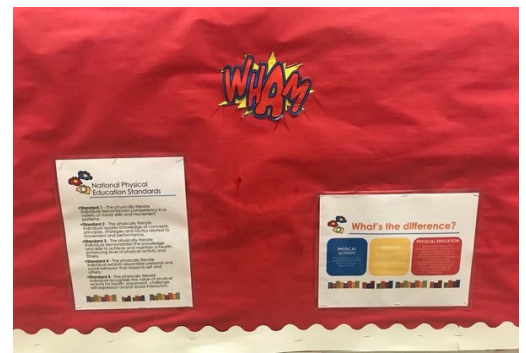
As we tackle the second half of the academic year, resolve to be that leader. Create opportunities for your students. Lead the charge for physical education and activity throughout your school and district. Do the things that convince someone to come in and put up a new flagpole. Just think of the possibilities.

# BULLETIN BOARDS

## WHAT'S YOUR PHYSICAL EDUCATION SUPER POWER?

ROY MITCHELL, H.D. COOKE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

With this bulletin board, we are taking a look at the national standards as superpowers and learning how we can attain them throughout the school year.



## OLYMPIC COUNTDOWN

RICH WILES, SEVERNA PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Among other things, we used this bulletin board to prepare for the Olympics with my students at Severna Park Elementary. We will be using OPEN's new Olympic module in physical education class as a part of a project-based learning unit with our media specialist and classroom teachers.



BY **BRANDON HERWICK,**  
@BROOKLYNDREAMER

# THE DANCE DIGEST



Dance! The word alone can elicit such a wide range of emotions and feelings—joy, insecurity, confidence, fear, excitement. This is true for students and teachers.

But don't let that stop you. Dance can help us express ourselves, learn teamwork, believe in the power of practice, and feel the joy of accomplishing a task or challenge, all while providing us a venue to grow and exercise our minds, bodies, and spirits for a lifetime.

The OPEN dance modules (see [K-2](#) and [3-5](#)) are structured to help make rhythmic movement digestible and accessible for both students and teachers. Our goal is to leverage the incredible creativity and energy of educators around the world to create a dance curriculum that combines cultural,

creative, and social themes to make the [Elements of Dance](#) easy and exciting to incorporate. We want to offer dance resources that inspire those who already teach dance, encouraging them to try new things and expand their curriculum, as well as motivate those with little or no dance experience to step outside their comfort zone and enhance the great things that already happen in their classes.

Come back and visit this column in future issues of *Physical Education Magazine* as we explore more aspects of dance, reflect on our feelings about dance, and grow together as more confident, competent movers and healthier humans. As always,

please take, try, share, and provide any feedback you or your students have. You can reach me at [brandon.herwick@gmail.com](mailto:brandon.herwick@gmail.com).

Let's continue to learn together, empower and inspire each other, and ROCK THE HOUSE each and every day we walk into our classrooms. Life is a musical, and you are the star. Live it!

“  
**Learn together,  
empower and  
inspire each  
other and rock  
the house...**  
”

# CHAT WITH A TRAINER

BY **RICH WILES,**  
**@RICH\_WILES**

**NAME:**

Mike Martinez

**AGE:**

37

**ROLE WITH OPEN:**

OPEN National Trainer,  
OPEN Forum Podcast Co-Host

**Where do you teach?**

Democracy Prep Endurance High School (Democracy Prep Public Schools) in East Harlem, NY.

**Why do you love teaching physical education?**

Too many reasons to list! Selfishly, I get to share my passion and love of sports, physical activity, fitness, and movement with kids. On a larger scale, I love being able to teach multiple disciplines (ELA, math, science, history) along with life and social skills (integrity, responsibility, communication, teamwork, sharing, leadership, etc.) at the same time! I love knowing that the lessons learned in my gym will stay with my students for a lifetime and make a positive impact on the duration and quality of their lives.

**What do you do to be physically literate?**

I truly believe in being a lifelong learner! Whether it's taking up a new activity (currently disc golf and cycling), engaging in a new form of exercise (CrossFit) or participating in tried and true traditional activities (golf, Spikeball®, softball, and racquetball, among many others), I firmly believe in keeping active and enjoy learning new ways to keep moving!

**What is the OPEN Forum Podcast?**

The podcast is a project that started with a conversation between Mike Miller and me at the NYSAHPERD conference about two or three years ago, and it has turned into a fantastically awesome avenue to explore important issues in physical education. OPEN is always looking for ways to personally connect with it's more than 31,000 members, and this is just one more way to do it. We invite listeners to email and tweet us about the topics that interest them, and then we get to have amazing conversations with some magnificent physical education folks along the way. The hope is to continue bringing awareness to key issues and events in our field (Take Your Parent To PE Week and #Pedal4PE, to name a few), delve into meaty topics (assessment, administrative support, etc.) and most importantly, have a blast interacting with some spectacular physical education folks!

**What are some of your favorite motivational jams for working out?**

Depends on the day and the exercise, but usually anything upbeat like Michael Jackson or Bruno Mars for cardio-based exercises, and 90s hip-hop, Rage Against the Machine, etc. for strength-based exercises.

**How can we follow you on social media?**

I'm on twitter [@PhysEdFreak](https://twitter.com/PhysEdFreak) and LOVE to engage with others!

**I have been lucky:**

to impact thousands of students doing a job that I love for 9+ years, and to have had the opportunity to meet so many beautiful, like-minded people thanks to my association with OPEN!

I've been teaching for nearly a decade, and I can comfortably say that I know nothing. Oh sure, I've gotten pretty good at creating units, lessons, and activities that are engaging, exciting, and aligned to standards. I've also done a decent job of using assessments to measure student growth and guide my instruction. But if there's one thing I'm sure I've learned, it's that I still have so much farther to go!

You see, for the past nine years, I've taught physical education in New York City. After graduating with a degree from one of the top physical education teaching programs in the area, I'd had no idea that teaching in an urban setting like New York City would present a whole different set of challenges.

I spent the entire summer after graduation coming up with unit and lesson plans so that I could hit the ground running on day one. From a content perspective, I felt as prepared as possible. But what does a first-year teacher do if they don't have access to a gym for some—or all—of their classes? In New York City, particularly in the less affluent areas, it's not uncommon for multiple schools to share a building and, in turn, a gym.

How do you effectively plan for three fourth-grade classes when one is in the gym on the first floor, one is in a multipurpose room on the fourth floor, and one is in a cafeteria on the third floor? What does a teacher just out of college do when they realize that they don't have nearly enough equipment or materials to adequately engage their classes—groups of anywhere

from 20 to over 100 students at a time? I'm not ashamed to admit that these challenges got the best of me during my first few years on the job.

But it's not all doom and gloom. Over nine years and three schools throughout Brooklyn and Harlem, my experiences teaching in lower-socioeconomic urban neighborhoods have provided me with a wealth of unique opportunities to make a positive impact on my students.

In some cases, my students haven't had physical education (or, at least, quality physical education) in years, if ever. The majority of my student population is composed of students from West Africa and various Caribbean Islands, and most of their previous physical activity experiences center on their national love of soccer and their regional love of NBA basketball. This allows me to expose them to a myriad of activities in which they've never engaged before—activities that will serve them well on college courtyards, during family reunions, and in adult recreation leagues.

Being restricted to the “concrete jungle” has also allowed me to plan field trips that expose my students to activities normally outside their reach. Selfishly, there is nothing

better than being responsible for a child's first hike or bike ride, or their first trip to a bowling alley, ice skating rink, or rock climbing wall. Living in New York City also gives physical education teachers the unique opportunity to take students to their first—or maybe only—professional sporting event to see the games, sports, and skills that we're learning performed at the highest level.

Our job is to provide our students with as many skills, concepts, experiences, and resources as possible on their journey toward physical literacy. Doing so in New York City has provided my students and me with no shortage of opportunities to learn from one another and grow together. I'm approximately one-third of my way into my career in physical education, and as I've stated, I know nothing yet. But I couldn't be more excited about the chance to grow my craft and share my passion for health and physical activity with the lovely, hungry, and eager boys and girls of New York City!

# IT'S A SUNNY DAY IN NEW YORK

BY **MIKE MARTINEZ**, @PHYSEDFREAK

# A NEW HOPE

BY **RICH WILES**, @RICH\_WILES

I've always liked Star Wars and the idea of the Force, and I believe that the light side and the dark side exist every day in our teaching. We can choose to teach toward the standards and positively impact student achievement, or we can choose to roll out the equipment and play inappropriate activities.

The path to either the light side or the dark side of physical education is paved by your teaching experience and previous knowledge learned in the Jedi Temple (college/graduate school). Your journey is led by either the Master Jedi, who use the force to prepare you for future adventures and challenges, or a Dark Sith Lord, who leads you to a fixed mindset.

In the physical education universe, we've watched the dark side grow for many years. The introduction of "fun-based" curriculums and too much focus on MVPA have led to poor teaching practices. They've replaced quality programs with stormtroopers who play games and activities focused on inappropriate tasks and enjoy shooting Death Stars of negativity toward students with lower skill levels. Each year, the dark side continues to expand their influence through various physical education sites and questionable Facebook, Twitter,

and YouTube content. We're watching the Sith Empire of fixed-minded educators control our universe.

We're at a tipping point that could force the light side to disappear, enabling the rule of the physical education Empire for the next 25 years. The Last Jedi Masters are spread across our universe, trying to protect the past and the knowledge of the profession, but the battle of ESSA is apocalyptic to the remaining Rebels, and there are too many battles to sustain the push against the dark side without more help.

Over the past few years, I've been on a quest to find some of these Master Jedi. I've noticed the same problem each time: we're losing them to retirement. We need the next generation of Jedi to step up and join the Rebellion to push the physical literacy movement forward. We need a Rebellion that will change the momentum against the dark side and provide enlightenment for the next group of apprentices.

**"DO. OR DO NOT. THERE IS NO TRY." - YODA**

Master Yoda understood the

powers of the Force and how to use it to make a difference. Do you commit to the future of physical education or not? We, the Jedi apprentices on social media, need to evolve into Master Jedi to lead the profession into the future. We need to continue to grow while sharing our knowledge with new apprentices in order to educate another generation.

We have two major factions leading the Rebellion: SHAPE America and OPEN. Please consider joining these two organizations to help us bring more resources and attention to quality professional development locally. To reach all 200,000 physical and health educators in the United States, we must believe—and always have hope in the Rebellion.

**SAVE THE  
REBELLION.  
SAVE THE  
DREAM.**

– SAW GERRERA



# JIM'S GYMNASIUM

BY **JIM DELINE**, @JIMSGYMTX

Walking down the hallway, talking to myself, totally unaware that I was being followed by a 3rd grader:

**"Hey, Coach!"**

"Hey, Preston!"

**"Who are you talking to?"**

"Myself."

**"Why?"**

"It helps me think."

**"Do you do that a lot?"**

"Yup."

**"Does it work?"**

"Sometimes..."

**"Well, if you get frustrated, let me know."**

"Why's that?"

**"I'll help."**

"That's nice. How so?"

**"If you get bored listening to yourself,  
I'd be happy to be a good listener."**

"You won't get bored?"

**"Maybe, but if I do, I won't let you know."**

"I appreciate that."

**"Good luck, Coach."**

"Thanks, Preston."

**"Anytime, Coach!"**

## THE ART OF LISTENING

**A Million Reasons Why I Love My Job!:** Reason #82,715

### **Moral of the story:**

It has to be a good thing if they're actually listening to you more than you're listening to yourself, right? (God, I hope so!)

I'm convinced that they hear us. They may not seem like they're listening, but this, I suspect, is a well-orchestrated ruse meant for our own benefit. Think about it: if they followed directions the first time, they wouldn't need us for long; they know we like to hear ourselves talk, and that's why they pretend not hear our directions the first time. They are only trying to help us feel useful! Bless their little hearts. That's my story, and I'm sticking with it. I think so, anyway...does anyone hear me...?

# INSTANT ACTIVITIES FAQs

BY **DAN TENNESSEN**, @BIGTENNPBYSED

A couple years ago, while I was serving as Indiana's Elementary Physical Education VP, the council was meeting to plan our state conference. While brainstorming session topics, someone mentioned instant activities (IAs). Everyone agreed that discussion around the topic was needed, but no one volunteered to present or find a presenter. I requested a show of hands from those who regularly used IAs in their curriculum—less than half of us.

I asked those with IA experience why they didn't want to tackle the topic. "I don't have enough activities," they said, or "I'm not sure I do them right, and I don't know who does, so I don't feel comfortable presenting on it or finding someone who can." Now that I've conducted IA presentations and surveyed teachers in various states, I realize that this situation is the rule and not the exception; usually, only about 1/3 of the teachers say they regularly use IAs in their curriculum.

That needs to change. If you're less than 100% comfortable with IAs, this is for you. Below are the answers to some questions I frequently receive from teachers across the country during my presentations.

## **WHAT IS AN IA?**

An activity designed to engage students in a lesson as soon as they enter the gym (or nearly). If your students usually come in and sit while you explain their first activity, that first activity is not an IA.

## **Why should I use IAs in my curriculum?**

The use of IAs benefits a physical education class in many ways and has been identified by SHAPE America as a best practice at both the elementary and middle school levels. I believe they can—and should!—be used at the high school level, too. For more information on best practices, [click here](#) for SHAPE America's appropriate practices document.

## **How long should an IA last?**

About 3–5 minutes, or no more than 10% of your class time. A great way to gauge the right length is to use music; one or two songs are plenty.

## **What should an IA cover?**

I'm a firm believer that IAs can be created from just about any activity. For example, while I was demonstrating Spikeball lead-up activities at a state conference, the participants didn't quite believe that they could be used as IAs at the secondary level. I had them leave the room and re-enter as if they were a class coming in from the hallway or locker rooms. I asked, "Do you remember the activity we ended class with last time? We're starting with that. As soon as you get two people at a Spikeball net, you can begin." They ran in and got started, and grumblings of disbelief turned into the sound of note-taking.

## **How do I choose my IA?**

I don't recommend using the same IA all year long. Instead, choose an IA that either leads into the main lesson content or supplements it as necessary. If your lesson is on throwing, choose an IA that incorporates throwing; if your main activity has a high cardio output, consider an IA with a high muscular component. As stated above, you can also use an IA to review previously learned material by picking up where you left the last class. (It can be helpful to tell your students to expect this before they leave.)

## **How long should it take to get the IA going?**

Of course, the gold standard is immediately. However, that's not always realistic for activities involving groups, teams, or a specific arrangement of students. Personally, I always aim for less than one minute.

**My students enter the gym, immediately run laps, and then break off to perform the workout posted on the projector/whiteboard. Is that an IA?**

Technically, yes; they are active as soon as they enter your gym. But while there is a place for these types of workouts or warm-ups, ask yourself if, at that age, you would have liked to do that activity every single time you came into the gym? Don't be afraid to mix it up.

**What benefits have you noticed?**

I've noticed a positive impact on my students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. They're a lot quieter while I introduce the main activity because they're tired and out of breath. They enjoy my class more. And if I use the last activity from the previous class, I can also quickly assess whether they've mastered the content and are ready to move on, or if we need to back up a little bit, review, and then move on. As a result, my students' content knowledge has really deepened since I started using IAs.

**How do I implement them?**

As must be taught beforehand, and that's the secret. If they aren't, it will take too long to get them started. When I was teaching at the elementary level, I would use each class's last lesson of the month to teach a new activity. That would serve as the main IA for the following month. We'd spend time developing strategies, determining groups, deciding on any group roles and responsibilities, modifying the activity or any rules, and doing any other troubleshooting. (This technique also helps when you're introducing a new unit, when ALT-PE and MVPA are usually lower.) This allowed us to start the next month active at the door. We'd use that IA 3-4 times per month, and for the other 2-3 classes, we'd use a previous IA that worked better depending on what the class needed, what my setup was, etc.

After one of my IA presentation sessions this year, a teacher approached me to chat. Not realizing that IAs were considered a best practice, he'd been doing traditional warm-ups to start his classes. I asked him what he had to lose by using IAs instead of his normal routine. Less than a month later, I received an email from him: "I was VERY hesitant to replace my stretches, but I ended up doing it, and it works GREAT! They take it and run! Love it! If you have any other instant activities and diagrams, please send them my way. I am a believer!"

MY QUESTION TO YOU IS THE SAME:  
**WHAT DO YOU  
HAVE TO LOSE?**

# WHAT REALLY MATTERS

BY **CHRIS HERSL**

@MDPHYSED

Advocacy is a challenging topic. Most people know that it's necessary in order to shift public opinion, but not everyone is comfortable with or skilled at it.

In the physical education community, causes such as improved youth fitness levels, greater staffing for schools, and smaller physical education class sizes have required advocacy for a long, long time. Methods have evolved from letter-writing, postcard campaigns, paid advertisements, and public testimony to more modern techniques. For example, social media tools have made it quicker, easier, and cheaper to communicate with the masses; in the time it takes to download an app, anyone access the same tools used by major media outlets. Unfortunately, though, the same issues continue to plague both students and professionals.

What can we try that works? The answer is the same as it always has been: relationships.

Relationships pass policies.

Relationships drive resource allocation.

Relationships drive public opinion.

Let's commit to stopping our use of advocacy tools for individual opinions and negative complaints. Let's start using them to build relationships with key stakeholders and the public at large. This is the real skill we need to teach to our educators and advocates.

So how do you build relationships? MindTools.com suggests the following eight tips for building relationships related to work:

- Develop your people skills. Good relationships start there.
- Identify your relationship needs.
- Schedule time to build relationships.
- Focus on your Emotional Intelligence (EQ).
- Appreciate others.
- Be positive.
- Manage your boundaries.
- Avoid gossiping.

An old expression can help to put this challenge in perspective. It asks, "How do you eat an elephant?" The answer is, "One bite at a time!" With that philosophy in mind, let's look at two of the strategies listed.

First, schedule time to build relationships. Everybody is busy—including both you and those with whom you want to develop a relationship—but communication is still vital, so prioritize it in your schedule. The appropriate amount of time to set aside for relationship-building will vary on a job-by-job basis, but 2–3 times a week seems like a reasonable goal. It doesn't matter whether you use a phone call, coffee trip, tweet, or email note of congratulations; reaching out directly on a regular basis will help to advance any relationship.

Second, appreciate others. When you meet new people in the physical education community, commit their name to memory and then spend your time trying to identify their greatest strengths. Listen to their expertise; pick their brain on a specific topic. Do not dismiss wisdom in one area just because the person may not be an expert in everything. Focus on strengths, and then acknowledge and publicly celebrate those strengths. This is incredibly affirming for the person you've met, and your words will alert the entire community to the presence of a resource they may not have identified before.

Finally, remember: improving relationships is a continuous process. Don't let the "elephant in the room" intimidate you from starting with small steps today!



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# WE OURSELVES MUST WALK THE PATH

The state of the physical education community is simply a reflection of the people who are a part of the whole. As we collectively look in the mirror, what do we see?

Four years ago, I was less than encouraged. The end of an era was inevitable—PEP Grants were under attack. Rock-steady institutions were starting to crack under the pressure of a post-PEP reality, and it seemed all we could do was wait and see if the luck of the legislative process would be on our side.

BY **AARON HART**, @NYAARONHART

But honestly, why would it be? With the millions of dollars in funding that the PEP program brought to the physical education community, how many of our nation's 50 million students actually benefited from its bounty? In my estimation, less than 15 percent. Further, I think it's safe to say that much more than 15 percent of the shining technology purchased with millions of dollars of that PEP funding is now out of order or collecting dust in storage rooms and recycling centers. Based on current obesity statistics, fitness technology gimmicks sold to our schools and the promise of PEP funding failed our students.

And what about the status of physical education in the eyes of the general public? As a community, did our nation think more highly of our profession because of PEP Grants? I don't think so. Negative stereotypes of physical educators endure.

In 2014, the image that the physical education community reflected back to the public at large was a fragmented, unorganized, and unprepared mess. I can say this because, as passionate as I was about our community, I was a part of that reflection.

I'm not a Buddhist scholar, but it's hard to argue with words of wisdom that have lasted 2,500 years. Buddha told us, "Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without. No one can save us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path."

After looking into the mirror and feeling angry at what I saw, I decided to make a shift in my thinking and in my actions. I wasn't going to wait for a legislative savior. No organization was going to be able to save me if I wasn't willing to make the changes necessary to save myself. I stopped looking outside of myself for respect and justification, and I started walking down a new path.

Now it's 2018, and others have joined me on my journey. What's even more heartening is that others were walking this path before me and were happy to have me alongside them. Today, I am more than encouraged. OPEN is primarily a movement of volunteers; today, I'm the only full-time, paid employee. We're an organization of teachers helping teachers. We refuse to wait for an external savior to come



from the unpredictable halls of legislation or for respect to be bestowed upon us from some detached institution. We ourselves must walk this path.

In January, we welcomed our 31,000th OPEN member registered through OPENPhysEd.org. Physical Education professionals donated their creative energy to a collection of OPEN curriculum tools that were downloaded nearly 2,000 times per day by fellow physical educators. OPEN National Trainers and Curriculum Coaches worked directly with more than 1,000 of their peers to encourage, support, and build better physical education classrooms.

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**Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without. No one can save us but ourselves.**

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The state of this community is simply a reflection of the people who are a part of the whole. As the OPEN tribe collectively looks into the mirror, we reflect the talent, passion, and pride of a new era in physical education. I'm humbled and grateful to be able to walk this path with you—my fellow teachers.

