

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION

YOUR QUARTERLY @OPENPHYSED MAGAZINE



**OPEN**  
Online Physical Education Network  
**— IS —**  
**FAMILY**



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION

ISSUE  
**04**

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

How's your year going?

By the time this issue is published, I'll be all the way through my district's first marking period and a few weeks into the second. It's been an exciting year so far, having had a university intern in placement here at Severna Park for the first nine weeks. I've watched him develop his classroom management and teaching style, using my classroom as an experiment with self-designed lessons from OPEN.

I wish I'd had OPENPhysEd.org when I was in school fifteen years ago. Each year seems to fly by faster and faster, giving us less time to explain all the state and national standards. Physical literacy is a tough topic to teach in two 30-minute periods each week. That's why, when the school day ends, I'm energized to go home and do my part, helping to lead the team of volunteers who develop modules and create amazing presentations for the rest of the OPEN tribe.

But the real honor is when I get to travel, meeting and working with educators and school districts from all over the country and learning from them in the short time we're together. Each member of the OPEN tribe has a story, and those stories are what makes this community of health and physical educators so unique. They also fuel *our* story, *this* story: Physical Education Magazine. (And we'd love to have you contribute to the next issue — email me at [rich@physedresource.com](mailto:rich@physedresource.com) to be part of this version of teachers helping teachers!)

Our goal with this issue of Physical Education Magazine is to take you on a road trip into another educator's story, and we think it's perfect for the winter season. Each story, review, and article is from an educator in the gymnasium or classroom who's teaching a full load of students daily. We're here to inspire you and challenge you. So put another log on the fire, and let us stoke the passion burning in your heart.

Keep pushing hard for your students and community. You are making the difference each day. Have a great holiday season.

Sincerely,



**Rich**

OPEN Curriculum Development Team Leader  
Physical Educator at Severna Park Elementary School



“TREAT A CHILD AS THOUGH HE ALREADY IS  
THE PERSON HE IS CAPABLE OF BECOMING.”

- HAIM GINOTT

## THE "WHY" OF UNDERSTANDING, ACCEPTING AND ADVOCATING

BY **TRACY SHARLOW**, @TRACYNSHARLOW

One morning this past June, I was driving to work and found myself swerving all over the road. But I just kept driving and didn't pull over. (Weird, right?) I arrived at school, turned off my car, pulled the keys out of the ignition, looked at the car door, and thought, "Hmmm. How do I get out of this car?" Again, very weird — I'd never experienced something like that before. At the time, though, I didn't think it was weird at all.

So I got out of my car, entered the same school door I had entered for the past 29 years, walked into my office, put down my bags, and promptly passed out on my office floor. I laid there feeling hazy for about an hour until a staff member discovered me. When they asked me about my condition, I found I couldn't speak or answer any questions. An ambulance transported me to the ER, and the doctor diagnosed me with carbon monoxide poisoning.

My first thought after successful treatment was that I could have killed someone driving to school that day; after all, I'd continued to drive erratically and hadn't felt the need to be safe and pull over to the side of the road. I'd been unable to make good choices, and my bad choices could have had horrific consequences.

This, I would come to learn, was one of the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning. It shuts down the brain's ability to use your executive functions, which are a set of cognitive processes that a person learns through typical childhood development. They're necessary for behavioral control, including the ability to follow directions, stay on task, and inhibit impulsive behavior — and therefore make appropriate choices.

This "incident" led me to develop an even deeper understanding of my students' struggles. As an adapted physical education (APE) teacher of 33 years, the amount of time I spend working to understand my students' needs has allowed me to learn something new from them every day — a privilege I feel fortunate to have. So I'd had (what I thought was) a good understanding of how immature executive function skills could affect my students. But now I'd actually *lived* what they live through on a daily basis. I now truly identified with the way my students struggle with their behavior.

Many students do not intentionally misbehave; they just haven't yet developed the skill set they need. We, as educators, can help them achieve these skills. I hope that my story will inspire you to spend more time considering the *why* of executive functioning skills and the role they play in your students' abilities to follow directions, stay on task, and inhibit impulsive behavior. I believe this is necessary in order to build a true environment of inclusion.

Of course, best practices in PE follow Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines in order to enable all of our students to reach their potential. More importantly, though, best practices also include fostering and focusing on the *capabilities* of our students, regardless of their disabilities. By incorporating compassion and learning strategies through understanding, accepting, and advocating for all of our students, we can make a difference in their ability to be active learners — and incorporate wellness throughout their life.

## ENTITLEMENT

/noun/

The belief that one is inherently deserving of a reward, privilege, or special treatment.

## GRATITUDE

/noun/

The quality or feeling of being thankful with a readiness to show appreciation and to return kindness with kindness.

# GRATITUDE VS. ENTITLEMENT

BY **AARON HART,**  
@NYAARONHART

When I was in my early 20s, I wrote a term paper on the purpose of physical education. The focus of my belief statement was that physical education is a vehicle for social reconstruction. More than 20 years later, I'm still writing the same paper.

As you may know, OPEN operates based on three core values:

**We help teachers.**

**We inspire and defend loyalty and trust.**

**We question the status quo.**

OPEN is an organization run by humans. Therefore, it will never be perfect. But we believe that if we run our decisions and actions through the filter of these three core values, we will move toward positive social reconstruction.

With this in mind, the Thanksgiving holiday gave me time to reflect on what gratitude is and how small acts of appreciation can create ripples of love and positivity. But I also took time to consider how even the smallest acts of entitlement can hurt others in careless and insensitive ways.

### ENTITLEMENT DOES NOT SERVE.

I believe that entitlement is that status quo that we must continually question and work to replace. Entitlement does not serve. Entitlement operates from a position of self-preservation and with intense pressure to maintain the status quo.

Veteran teachers from across the US tell me about a growing sense of entitlement among students, fueled by loving but overzealous parents who are determined to make sure their children have access to the best of everything (sometimes with complete disregard for other children). In fact, if we're looking for

it, entitlement in our culture is widespread, while gratitude is often sold as a self-help idea — one that we somehow know is important, but find difficult to practice without a gratitude guru outlining exactly how to be grateful.

## **BUT GRATITUDE DOES.**

In contrast, gratitude serves. Gratitude operates from a position of community empowerment with a readiness to show appreciation.

“

**But we believe that if we run our decisions and actions through the filter of these three core values, we will move toward positive social reconstruction.**

”

While I love a lot of things about the group of educators who make up OPEN's 50,000-member community, on the top of that list is the authentic sense of gratitude that we pass from one teacher to the next. (No self-help guru needed.)

## **I AM GRATEFUL.**

So as 2018 comes to a close, I'm reserving the holiday season as a time to be mindful of what I'm grateful for and how gratitude is reflected in my work and my life.

**First**, I'm grateful for the love of my family. It's the fuel that pushes me to improve as a human being.

**Second**, I'm grateful for US Games and BSN Sports for giving me the opportunity to dream bigger and bigger dreams for the physical education community. Nothing about OPEN is an entitlement that has been reserved for me or anyone else on the OPEN team. US Games and BSN Sports took a chance on the OPEN project because they believed it was the right thing to do for teachers. I'm thankful every day for the opportunity we've been given, and I work hard to make the most of this gift.

**Third**, I'm grateful for the OPEN National Trainers for the willingness to share their time and their gifts. This team has become an extended family for me, and watching that group of amazing teachers spread their gifts to other teachers has been completely surreal. I know that this moment in my career should not be taken for granted.

And **fourth**, I'm grateful for you — the teacher/coach/parent/community member who works tirelessly to prepare students' minds, bodies, and spirits to find every drop of potential that they were born with.

**Thank you for being a living example of gratitude.**



This year, I wanted to give the students and teachers at my school a fun little distraction heading into the Thanksgiving break. So in November, the school started a classroom fitness challenge called “You’ve Been Gobbled.”

The challenge combines the tradition of “booing” your neighbor during the Halloween season (AKA surprising a friend with treats) and a similar activity developed by a fellow physical educator, John Frye, which he called “Tag You’re It.”

I began the challenge by secretly hanging a “You’ve Been Gobbled” sign on the teacher’s door, thereby issuing a five-minute fitness challenge to that classroom. The class had two days to complete the challenge. Then they agreed on which class they were going to Gobble next and what five-minute fitness challenge they wanted to issue to that class.

# YOU'VE BEEN GOBBLED

BY **ERIC TURRILL**, @RHEPE1

I also provided a clipboard for the teachers. It included a chart with one row for each of the classroom teachers in the school, including their room numbers. The chart’s columns included Activity Challenge Description, Date Assigned, and Date Completed. I filled in the Activity Challenge Description for the first classroom to be Gobbled, and at the bottom of the page, I provided a few more examples to get the ideas flowing. Attached to the clipboard, in a folder, I also provided enough “You’ve Been Gobbled” signs for every class. Due to the size of my school, I had one clipboard for grades K–2 and another clipboard for grades 3–5.

Just one week into the school-wide activity, my teachers and students were very excited. They were wondering, “When are we going to get Gobbled? What fun challenges are the other classes doing?”

Some of the fitness challenges our classes issued to each other include:

- ✓ Do 10x your age of jumping jacks. (Count by 10’s.) If you’re 6 = 60 jumping jacks.
- ✓ Do 1 lap around the track, moving in a creative manner.
- ✓ Do the Electric Slide on YouTube from GoNoodle.
- ✓ Do 1 lap around the track, moving like your favorite animal.

Next, I’m going to ask the teachers if they want me to start a December version called “You’ve Been Elfed,” or maybe we’ll wait until January for “You’ve Been Frozen.” But for right now, I’m enjoying the tweets coming out from our classes as they complete their fitness challenges.

# TECH REVIEW: COMIC LIFE APP



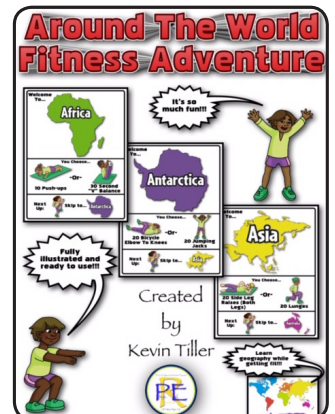
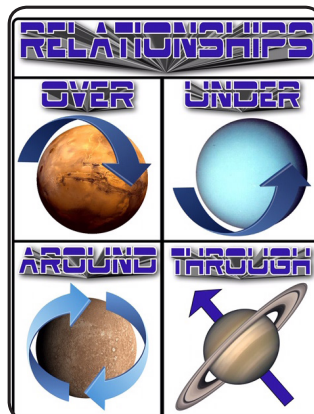
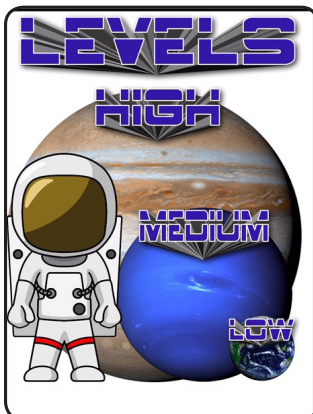
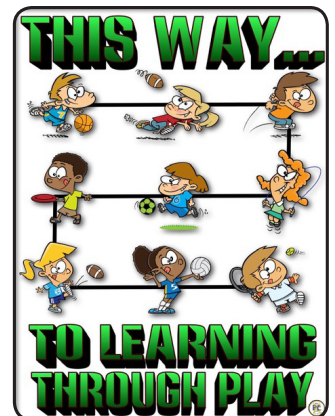
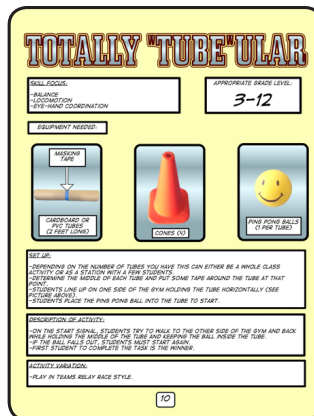
BY **KEVIN TILLER**,  
@PHYSEDREVIEW

Comic Life is an app that can be used to create a ton of visuals for your physical education classroom. From posters and lesson plans to newsletters, the only limitation is your imagination! I've been using it for five years now, and it's become my "go to" when I sit down to create resources for my classes.

The app is available for desktops, smartphones, and tablets.

Here are some examples of things I've made.

CLICK FOR LINK TO APP:

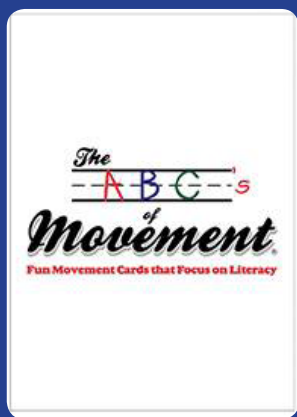


## PRODUCTS FROM THE TRAINER

# ABC'S OF MOVEMENT ACTIVITY CARDS

BY **LAURIE GOMBASH, @ABCsofMOVEMENT**

Young children are kinesthetic learners, meaning they learn best through movement experiences and activities. So naturally, physical education class is the perfect place to teach young children their alphabet! The ABC's of Movement® activity cards can help you do just that.



These cards merge developmentally appropriate movement concepts with learning letters and letter sounds. Young children have a blast walking like an ostrich, waddling like a penguin, and hopping on one foot. They're a great resource to use for children of all abilities between 3 and 7 years of age, and they even include modifications for children with special needs—especially autism.

The ABC's of Movement® activities can be incorporated into physical education class in multiple ways. For example, you can play Follow The Leader: After the teacher identifies the letter on each card, students take turns picking a card, identifying its letter, and leading the group in the movement. Kindergarteners and 1st graders who already have a pretty good grasp on letter identification can be challenged to spell short words. For example, for the word "bat," instruct the students to sequence the movements with the corresponding letter to spell the word: B = Bear Crawl, then A = Alligator March, then T = Tip Toe.

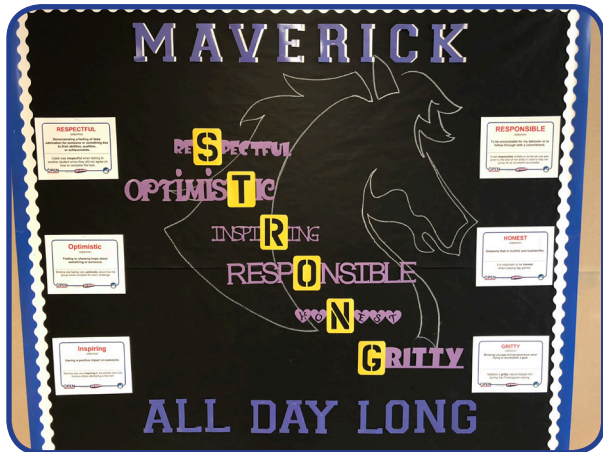
Exploring educational concepts through movement and multiple senses gives children an opportunity to learn in ways they understand. By bringing early literacy games and activities into your classroom, students are sure to link movement exploration with academic success. For more classroom activity ideas visit the ABC's of Movement® Activity Cards Module in the [Early Childhood](#) section of [OPENPhyzed.org](#).

To purchase a set of ABC's of Movement® Activity Cards, please visit [USGames.com](#).



# BULLETIN BOARDS: FROM THE GYM OF JASON LEACH

@JKLEACH01

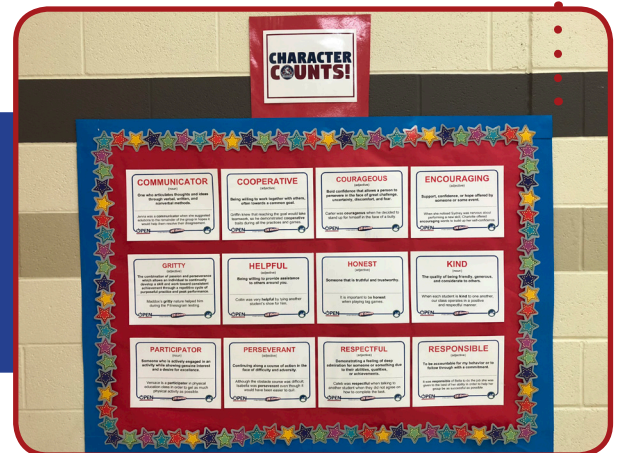


## MAVERICK STRONG

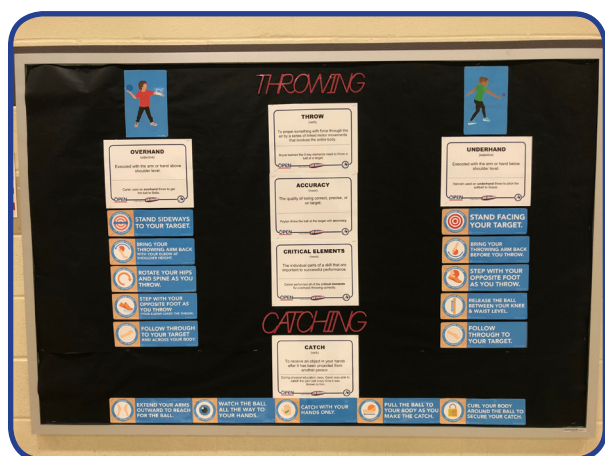
During class, at random times, I say "Let's Go MAVERICKS!" The students do jumping jacks while spelling Mavericks in unison out loud. I then say, "Maverick Strong!" and the students say, "All Day Long!" while striking some type of pose. The purpose of this bulletin board is to help them understand what it means to be Maverick STRONG. I used the academic language cards from OPEN to define each letter of STRONG.

## CHARACTER COUNTS!

Using OPEN academic language cards, I have character traits displayed for student reflection in order to help them identify their strengths. When there are poor behavior situations, I also use the board to discuss which traits would have been a better choice for that particular situation.



## THROWING AND CATCHING



Since students throw in a variety of activities and have to choose which type of throwing is best, I use this bulletin board to display the key elements to underhand throwing, overhand throwing, and catching for students to be able to review throughout the year. Again, I use the academic language cards from OPEN. The key elements of each are from [Joey Feith's website](#).

# ENJOY A HEALTHY SNACK

BY **LYNN HEFELE**  
@LYNNHEFELE

As physical educators, our ultimate goal is to develop our students into physically active, health-conscious citizens. To do so, we plan to meet standards in the psychomotor, cognitive, and social/emotional domains. We aspire for at least 50% of our class time to be devoted to moderate to vigorous physical activity. We weave health and wellness concepts into our activities. We create bulletin boards and thematic units.

We work really hard to get our students to buy into health and fitness. And yet if our students don't begin to create healthy habits at home, all of our hard work may add up to nothing more than a wonderful 40 minutes of play.

Over the years, I've sent home calendars, created websites, and given incentives for students to complete physical activity beyond the gym walls, but the results have been mediocre at best. The students who participate in sports will always have a full calendar of activities, but it's the non-athletes with whom I struggle to make a connection. So this year, I'm trying something new—capitalizing on the technology created for the selfie generation! I'm counting on social networking and two phenomenally fun apps to get students to enjoy a “physical snack” at home by following fun videos we create together.

I first learned about “physical snacks” from my friend AndyHair (@MrHairPhysEd) at the Elementary Physical Education Workshop (EPEW) conference over the summer. Physical snacks are short movement activities that give your mind and body a boost. I love this term because everyone loves a snack!

## Here is my physical snack healthy habit recipe:

1. Video record students exercising in front of any solid green background and flooring.
2. Create a background animation using the Doink Animation app.
3. Upload the animation and the green screen video to the Doink Green Screen App.
4. Upload the final video to Youtube and add music using the Creator Studio.
5. Invite parents to subscribe at back-to-school night, invite teachers to give physical snacks in class, and invite you to use them yourself as an instant activity!

The two iOS apps can be purchased together for \$5.99 in the Apple App Store. Any solid green background will work but there are inexpensive professional backdrops available on Amazon if you want a better-quality video.

To enjoy the physical snacks we've created so far, subscribe to Southdown PE on Youtube and check out Andy Hair's website. And if you need a tutor to help you create some physical snacks, email me at [lynn.hefele@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.hefele@gmail.com).

**Bon Appétit!!**

# CHAT WITH A TRAINER

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

**NAME:**  
Ashley Sharp

**AGE:**  
35

**SCHOOL:**  
Buena Vista Elementary School  
in Palmdale, CA



## Why do you love teaching physical education?

I love teaching PE because it combines my love of being an educator with my love for physical activity. Every day, I get to come to work and educate students on the benefits of being physically active and healthy through our daily activities and lessons. The enthusiasm my students bring to my classes each day motivates me to be better. My goal is for my students to have so much fun being active in my class that they'll then want to be more active outside of class—with the ultimate vision of lifelong health and wellness.

## What do you do to be physically literate?

Being a physical educator, I know it's important for me to be physically literate because I need to have the confidence and competence to perform a variety of physical activity concepts in my teaching and in my professional development sessions. I still play softball four times a week, but I also love to try new things! I've recently stepped out of my comfort zone and tried yoga. At first, I was hesitant, but now I'm loving it! It provides me with relaxation and some time to myself. I'm also joining a bowling league with friends in January!

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

Workout time is 1990s/2000s rap time for me! That includes songs from DMX, The Notorious B.I.G, 2pac, DRE, and 50cent. They help me get motivated for a great workout!

## How can we follow you on social media?

Yes, make sure to follow me on Twitter [@PEROCKSTAR15](https://twitter.com/PEROCKSTAR15)!

## I have been lucky...

...to be able to come to work each day and genuinely love what I do and have fun. This is my 10th year of being a physical educator, and I truly cannot imagine doing anything else. Being selected as an OPEN National Trainer and being associated with this amazing group of physical educators is truly a blessing! I get to travel around the country and share my love and passion for PE by sharing the amazing modules of the OPEN curriculum. I cannot wait to see where the future takes me!



# PHYSICAL EDUCATION GONE GLOBAL

BY **SETH MARTIN,**  
@SMARTINTAHOE



Physical education teachers are always on a quest to find the best and newest activities. But for teachers whose students come from many backgrounds and cultures, it's equally important to find ways to incorporate and respect students' various cultural identities. This task can seem overwhelming and challenging, so it sometimes gets pushed to the back burner.

However, there's good news: We're natural-born movers across the globe. Movement is ingrained into our cultural identities and stories, including through games and sports. Animals need to play in order to develop life skills, and people have done the same: Games are often used to build skill, solve disputes, and build community.

As teachers, we can harness this treasure trove. World games bring cultural norms, beliefs, and routines into a game setting, and in selecting world games for our lessons, we can help students develop the essential skills they need. Plus, these skills can easily transfer to more familiar sports while also providing a class with novelty and scaffolding—and allowing us to connect with our students in new ways.

For example, Patintero, an invasion game from the Philippines, can be played with very little space and no equipment. Players advance across a small space and try to avoid getting tagged, and it can be easily modified by changing the “court” based on the level and number of players. It's amazing for developing skills to invade a space with the body in a mindful and purposeful way.

In the Philippines, Patintero is played both by small children and competitively at some high schools. One day, a child who rarely showed much interest in helping actually volunteered to help me make the court and teach the game; he told me that his older sister had played competitively before they moved here. He and I developed a stronger relationship as we introduced the rest of the class to a game he loved.

Some of my other favorite world games to teach are Ringo, Pesapallo, and KUBB. But at the end of the day, there are hundreds of world games to bring into your program, and with the power of Google, Twitter, YouTube, and OPENphysed.org, you can find the ones that will best help you connect with your students.








# Join the **Active Schools** Movement!

Take action to help K-12 schools provide all students with physical education and before, during and after school physical activity opportunities – **because Active Kids Do Better!**

Share and engage in Active Schools' vision to reimagine school environments to provide opportunities for academic, social, emotional, **and** physical learning so that all children have the ability, confidence, and desire to lead active, healthy lives.

**Become part of the 36,000+ individuals  
("champions") affiliated with over 23,000  
schools reaching more than 13 million students  
– enroll now as an Active Schools Champion!**



-  @ActiveSchoolsUS
-  /ActiveSchoolsUS
-  Search "Active Schools US"
-  [info@activeschoolsus.org](mailto:info@activeschoolsus.org)
-  [www.activeschoolsus.org](http://www.activeschoolsus.org)



Active Schools is a national collaborative of 90+ partner organizations. OPEN was one of two partners recognized as 2018 Active Schools Partners of the Year.

## HOW?

Go to [www.activeschoolsus.org](http://www.activeschoolsus.org) and click the blue Sign Up button in the upper right corner. It's free, quick and easy.

Once enrolled, you have the option of affiliating with one or more schools or districts. If you do so, those schools will be enrolled as well, which means they are eligible for grants given by Active Schools partner organizations.

## WHY?

You will receive our monthly e-newsletter full of free resources, grant opportunities, and information about special events.

You will have access to our Partner Discounts page where 20 Active Schools partner organizations provide discounts of 10-75%.

**And most important, you will be adding your voice to the Active Schools Movement.**

In addition to physical education teachers, Active Schools focuses on three important groups that influence what goes on in schools – principals, parents, and classroom teachers. Please encourage these individuals in your network to enroll as well.



**Physical activity is an important part of our children's physical and mental development, so it's critical that we make it a priority in the school day."**

**Shannon Miller**

*7-time Olympic medalist, mother of two,  
Active Schools Ambassador*



# PRODUCT REVIEWS

## SHIELD STORAGE BINS

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

SKU# 1388152

Color My Class set at \$139.99

SKU# 1384781

Blue and red set at \$89.99

## ZUME™ PICKLEBALL

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

SKU# 1393080

Pickleball™ Set at \$73.99

Not all bins are created equal.

When Ellen Ormsby, my local RSM from US Games, dropped off Shield Storage Bins for an Active Classroom training that I was hosting for my local state organization, my first thought was, “A storage bin is a storage bin.” But by the following week, I was using these bins for everything in my classroom and all my equipment at local OPEN trainings.

Since then, I’ve used these bins as station equipment storage containers, to organize equipment for grade-level instruction, and even as throwing targets for students. They’re designed with corrugated plastic sheets, similar to the bins the USPS uses daily for mail distribution, so they’re built to last. I wouldn’t be surprised if, with proper care, they’re at my school for the rest of my career. I would suggest the Color My Class set for grade-level organization, but you could also buy two sets of the blue and red bins—that would be perfect for primary and intermediate station days.

Let’s start this product review in full disclosure: I usually hate purchasing nets for use in schools. They often cost large amounts of money that I don’t have in my school budget and take up large amounts of storage space with their anchoring systems. But, the Zume pickleball nets are worth it, because they solve most of my net needs at the elementary level.

They’re super durable and can be used with all ages. They work for pickleminton, pickleball, and tennis units. I also use them with my primary students for balloon striking and as boundaries between courts of play when using a sport-ed model.

The Zume pickleball sets come with two balls and two paddles for quick use and fun. But the best part is that all the pieces and the net go into a 10” X 30” bag for simple space-saving storage. I have six nets on one shelf of my storage closet! All in all, these nets will be a great addition to your program.





# 360 MULTI- PURPOSE GOAL

BY **DANIEL TENNESSEN,**  
@BIGTENNPBYSED

SKU# 1453533

360° Multi-Purpose Goal at \$164.99

I was so excited to learn that the 360° Multi-Purpose Goals were being introduced to US Games catalog. They're one of my favorite pieces of equipment! I view them the same way I do a Swiss Army Knife — I can use them for just about anything. Seriously. I use them in 80% of the units and topics I cover.

I love that I use them in a throwing activity and, later in the year, use the same activity as part of a striking unit. It really reduces teacher talk time and increases activity time. I can swap out a foam ball for a football, and in my students' eyes, the same game is suddenly football. That's why I love using them in OPEN's *Invasion Basics* module. Don't think that because the module's in the elementary section that it can't be used at the secondary level: It can. Also, using circular goals like these and pulling them away from the walls and into the activity space has been shown to increase time on task, MVPA, and number of trials. Who doesn't want that?

The goals are made of ABS plastic, which is known for toughness and durability, and it comes in three pieces: a top ring, a bottom ring with the posts attached, and a net. Assembling the net onto the goal is a quick process, and once it's assembled, the net keeps everything together and makes future set-up even quicker.

The goals come with three posts that can be adjusted to three different heights. I prefer the middle height for most of my uses. I also really like the rivets on the top of the posts that serve as a guide to let me know where the adjustment pin is; this makes adjusting the height very fast and easy.

The bottom of the net also allows you to store and move equipment in a unique way. They can be loaded with anything you'll use in your activity. Then you can just move the goals into position and the equipment will be where you need it. Also, if you need to transport the goals themselves, each goal can collapse and fit into a bag with convenient shoulder straps.

## I have a confession to make.

When I was asked to write a piece about physical education trends I'd noticed during my travels, I was told, "You know, like an Anthony Bourdain type of piece." My response: "Who's he?" (I don't watch much television, but don't worry—now I'm up to speed. And my apologies to the late Mr. Bourdain.)

# BOURDAIN'S #PHYSED TRAVELS

BY BRIAN DEVORE, @BDEVORE7

So here it is. I've been lucky to travel the country with OPEN as we execute on our mission to help teachers and provide quality professional development. The highlight of these travels is always talking with other professionals (or future professionals!) to gauge the climate of physical education in that area. Oftentimes, the trends are pretty consistent nationwide. Here are some of the ones I've seen recently:

**Middle and high school instruction is improving, but it still lags way behind elementary school.** There are pockets of excellence across the US, but one of the most common comments I get from school district coordinators is still related to the lack of "teaching" at the secondary level. Based on the attendance and participation by secondary teachers at professional developments and conventions, I understand their frustrations.

**Most teachers still don't understand ESSA or the potential to get funds from it.**

Both physical education and health have been designated as necessary classes for a "well-rounded" education, but many teachers don't know it. Thus, they're unaware that they can access or request funds related to this legislation.

**Teachers absolutely want relevant professional development.** When teachers are given the opportunity to attend sessions related to physical education and best practices, they're excited. If the session is engaging, informative, and relevant, they're really excited. That leads them to take what they learn back to their classrooms.

**Technology is still a struggle.** There are certain districts that do technology well. However, our content area is still relatively ignored when it comes to implementing technology or getting technology hardware in our classrooms. When it is requested, the usual response is, "Why do you need that in PE?"

**Social media continues to gain traction.** It used to be that only a handful of people used social media to help with their teaching. Today, social media continues to blossom as a way to share information and teaching ideas. More resources, pictures, and videos are posted all the time. However, is everything shared best practice? Not always—and that's where we need to get better.

**Alternative certification programs are plentiful.** There are many ways for teachers to earn teaching certificates other than through traditional four-year college or university prep programs. I've found that some teachers getting these alternative certificates have never taught physical education and want the certification because they think it's easy to teach PE. Unfortunately, they find out quickly that teaching children in an open space and giving them implements to throw or kick is not an easy task!

**Social and emotional learning is going to be integral to the growth of our programs.** SEL is in our standards. We teach it in nearly every class period. Yet schools and districts continue to overlook this fact and want to steamroll SEL into other content areas. That's great, but we should lead the implementation of SEL instruction in our schools.

**K-12 physical education as a whole is getting better.** More and more, I see teachers who teach and assess to the standards and then embed them in the school culture as the go-to resource for all things PE and physical activity. We must continue to encourage our colleagues to up their game in order to advance our profession.

So that's what I've seen. If you're at one of my sessions anytime soon, feel free to share your thoughts with me regarding what you are experiencing in your area. Part of #TeachersHelpingTeachers is working together to make our profession better. Listening and having thought-provoking conversations about what we need to do to get better is only going to advance physical education in the future.



Proudly sponsors the Teacher of the Year recognition for these state organizations:



## **“Go back to burrito land.”**

I shot my 7th-grade student a disapproving look immediately after those words came out of his mouth. I quickly got the class engaged in a warm-up activity and pulled my student aside to discuss what he had just said.

# BACK TO **BURRITO** **LAND**

BY **KENNEDRA TUCKER**, @MSTUCKERROCKSPE

**Aww, Ms. Tucker. I was just playing. It was a joke.”**

I explained that what he’d said to his Hispanic classmate was akin to people telling African Americans, like him and like me, to go back to Africa. I remembered how such comments had made me feel while I was growing up, as if people like me did not “belong” in America. “Do you know where that classmate was born?” I asked. “You assume that because he speaks Spanish, he comes from a place where burritos are a common food. That’s stereotyping.”

This conversation took place last year, my first year teaching middle school PE, but I was in no way surprised by this dialogue. Earlier, when I’d taught elementary PE, I’d noticed a debate between two 2nd-graders during my lunch duty. “What’s going on?” I asked. One of the students, who was African-American, said, “Ms. Tucker, he’s saying he has a white grandmother.” I said, “Okay.” He went on: “Yeah, but he’s black. He can’t have a white grandmother if he’s black.” My response was, “Actually, he can.”

While I would have loved to go into a discussion about race being a social construct created to divide people, and that we are actually more alike than we are different, my 2nd-graders were content with my confirmation that it was actually possible for a black student to have a white grandmother. They went back to their lunches, and I heard no further discussion.



## SO, HOW DO THESE CONVERSATIONS RELATE TO PE?

Great question. These examples demonstrate the need for more lessons on social awareness. Social awareness is defined as “the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.” To me, social awareness is just as important as teaching my students how to become lifelong movers. As much I love to teach students about fitness and movement, I also recognize the need to teach them how to understand and respond to the needs of others from diverse backgrounds.

## HOW DO I HELP MY STUDENTS PRACTICE SOCIAL AWARENESS?

I start with building a community. When I taught at both the elementary and secondary level, I engaged students in activities with the intent to help them get to know their classmates, determine their commonalities, and establish a classroom focused on mutual respect.

I took activities that we’d already done and revamped them. For example, I handed out Fitness Bingo sheets during our fitness unit. In previous years, students would travel around the room with their sheet and complete exercises in the bingo box with different partners. But the revamped bingo sheets also had question prompts. As students traveled around, they had to find someone who could respond to the prompt and allow that person to write their name in the bingo box before completing the box’s exercise with that person. Prompts included, “Find someone who speaks a different language. Do 10 jumping jacks with that person.” Or, “Find someone who was born in a different country. Find out what country and do 10 squats with that person.” Once the activity was complete, students discovered that they had learned something new about their classmates.

I also created an activity called “Build a Gym,” a revamped version of capture the flag. Each team has their own poster that reads “Build a Gym” with empty Velcro stickers on it. Just like in capture the flag, students are placed on two teams, and there’s a line of cones in the middle of the playing area separating them. However, instead of capturing a flag, the goal is for students to capture as many positive cards as they can to fit on their team’s poster before being tagged.

The positive cards contain all of the attributes that we want in our PE class, including respect, many languages, beliefs, patience, and different cultures. But the taggers in “Build a Gym” are students holding noodles with unkind words on them like bullying, gossiping, impatience, and disrespect. After playing a couple rounds of the activity, I ask the students, “What do we want in our PE class that helps us to build a community?” And then, “How does bullying, gossip, and disrespect prevent us from building that community?”

Unfortunately, our world has become a place where hatred of others is all too common. But my goals with “Fitness Bingo” and “Build a Gym” are to help facilitate mutual understanding between students and create an inclusive community where **ALL** are accepted.

Someday, I hope to have built a learning environment where a *student* will be the one to correct a peer who says something hateful. And I’ll be the teacher who cheers from the sideline while that student confidently takes a stand.

# DANCE DIGEST

BY **BRANDON HERWICK, @BROOKLYNDREAMER**



We asked two of our OPEN National Trainers who've been working on the latest dance module, **Shannon Maly** and **Pam Powers**, to chat about their dance experience and why dance is important to a well-rounded PE program. We also chatted with the amazing **Tammy Hanna**, a must-follow for dance on social media. She'll also be a contributor to the new OPEN Middle School Dance 6 – 8 that will be coming in 2019.

## What grades do you teach, and in which state?

**TH:** Kindergarten through 5th grade in Virginia.

**PP:** 3-year-olds to 103-year-olds all over the county.

**SM:** 9th through 12th grade in Wisconsin.

## What is your dance experience?

**TH:** I have been dancing since before I had conscious thought, with roots in freestyling to the Bee Gees in my basement. After about 9 years of ballet lessons in my youth, I studied at Virginia Commonwealth University and received my BFA in Dance and Choreography. I've been teaching dance students, teachers, and future teachers for almost 20 years.

**PP:** I started taking dance at 5 years old, and I started teaching at 14 years old. I have a background in ballet, tap, jazz, modern, musical theater, acrobatics, ballroom, and Zumba. I was in the New Mexico Ballet Company from middle school through high school and performed in numerous musicals with several local community theater groups. I competed in ballroom dance and have taught Zumba and Zumba Kids programs. I also choreographed for most of the high school swing choirs in Albuquerque, many of whom won state competitions. I was also a co-author on the Teaching Dance in Physical Education curriculum for NASPE (now SHAPE America) and created a professional development workshop to accompany it.

**SM:** I don't have any formal dance experience, but I took a great teaching methods course in college.

## What does dance mean to you?

**TH:** Dance has saved me in so many ways. Growing up as an ADD/ADHD student with an IEP, dance helped me to focus and discipline myself while giving me opportunities to sparkle in performance. It kept me out of trouble by giving me responsibilities and goals, and it made physical fitness a priority in my life. I struggled academically, and if I hadn't auditioned, I doubt I would have been accepted into college. Now, in my career, dance has been the joy in my life that has allowed me to connect with countless people across the globe in deeply meaningful ways. Dance is an essential part of my personality, and it has opened doors for me both personally and professionally.

**PP:** Dance means everything to me. It is my first love, my heart, my soul. Dance makes me happy.

## What is your favorite song to dance to?

**TH:** I'm sort of a music geek. I was raised by two music teachers who had the expectation that all family members would read and play music. So I've played four different instruments and sung for years, which has created my love of different genres of music. When I choreograph new dances, I find myself inspired by a variety of songs, from simple peppy popular pieces with a great beat to layered orchestral pieces. I'm usually drawn to the more complex pieces that are layered with rhythmic and melodic goodies. I'll discover a new piece of music that inspires me and really immerse myself in it until I've choreographed it all. It becomes my new favorite for a few months, and then I find another. Right now

I'm lovin' Bun Up The Dance by Dillon Francis/Skrillex and Go by The Chemical Brothers.

**PP:** Whatever is playing! I love all types of music. I'm inspired by music every day. Sometimes, when a dance number comes on the television, I'll jump up and learn the choreography if I love the song. I listen to music all day long.

**SM:** That's such a hard one! I really like all genres of dance. It depends on the kind of day I'm having, but I love anything with a strong beat.

### What is your favorite dance activity to teach?

**TH:** I'm really enjoying teaching Hit To Fit, a cardio drumming program that I developed with fellow HPE teachers in my county. It's helped to reach some of my more apprehensive students because it's less technique based and more rhythmic, less "dance-y" and more percussive. And who doesn't like banging on objects and making some noise? It's like controlled chaos.

**PP:** I love teaching dance that inspires others to find their inner dancer; dance that allows an individual to move however they feel they want to move. I find this type of dance allows anyone who may feel self-conscious or inadequate the freedom to express themselves without fear of ridicule or criticism.

**SM:** I love teaching Dance with Words (which is coming soon!) and Dancin' Train from the OPEN module.

### Why do you feel dance is important to include as part of a PE curriculum?

**TH:** A sizable number of our students are not interested in sports at all. Athletics is no longer the approach that we should be taking in HPE classes when trying to instill a love for lifelong fitness. Dance, on the other hand, is the ideal way to inspire all to get active. Not only is dance great exercise, but it also has great social and cultural significance in the world we live in. Students can learn about dances from all around the world, learn different techniques, and even express themselves with their own choreography. I've always viewed dance as the bridge between arts and movements science. You can make connections between social studies, music, poetry, and much, much more when you incorporate dance with your curriculum.

**PP:** Life has a rhythm. Teaching dance is an important piece in our movement development. There are so many movements that we do on a daily basis that are rhythmic in nature—walking, for example. And the connection between skill proficiency and having a sense of rhythm is huge! Think about the connection between the schottische and a layup. And dance is an excellent lifetime fitness activity!

**SM:** It provides an outlet for all students to let loose and be creative, and it allows for the students' personality to shine!

### What advice would you give a teacher who wants to teach dance, but needs some help getting started?

**TH:** If you're thinking about incorporating dance in your HPE program...just do it! Like any other unit you teach in HPE, you'll get better and better at it as you go. What's the worst that can happen...you mess up? Well, that's fun too. Students love to see the human side of teachers. Start off with dances that are easy and popular. Line dances that repeat the same phrase over and over are good for beginners and you can always simplify your dance steps to make it easier. There are plenty of video resources out there to use (wink, wink). You can learn them with your students, and when you become more confident, you can go from facilitator to educator. Don't be shy, give dance a try!

**PP:** Leave your perceptions behind and dance! Your students LOVE to dance (at least 95% of them really do!), and it's all how you perceive it and present it to the class. Practice before you teach it, just like you practice any other skills before you teach them! If you use a video, dance with your students. They will see how much fun it can be. Going outside your comfort zone and adding something you are less confident teaching will help you grow!

**SM:** There are a lot of resources available to help you start a dance unit. Whether you use OPEN's dance module, DanSIRS's videos, or something like Just Dance, they're all great ways to get started. Allow students to suggest favorite dances and go from there.

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