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Reflection #1

In this week's *Hall of Shame* articles, the content of various popular children's games are debated for their inadequate physical, mental and emotional value to students. As an educator I can see the reasons for focusing in-class games on the growth of students and their emotional and physical safety, as opposed to choosing popular games. Though I have always seen games like Red Rover as un-wise choices for the classroom, I do not think that all of the games mentioned are invaluable in the physical education classroom; some of the games require simple modifications to become more valuable to us for this purpose.

I have seen, over my years working with students, that some games can damage children physically and should not be considered in the classroom. I have played Red Rover several times in my life and each time one person was hurt, sometimes quite badly. In cases where games are a threat to the physical safety of students, no matter how accepted it is in popular culture, I would not incorporate it into my lessons.

Games that are often cited as emotionally damaging to children are also not appealing to me as I do my classroom planning. Though free choice of teams, etc. may be a popular choice of those in the past I believe I have experienced first-hand how much it can discourage a child to always be chosen last. We never want our students to connect physical activity with punishment or exclusion. Though this may seem like it makes our job much harder as educators, I am encouraged by the simple fact that many games can be free of the emotional harms simply by choosing positive team-creation tools. Some of the ways choosing teams could be less

exclusionary might include students pairing up with a friend and then the teacher splitting the pairs, one to either side of the learning space or creating a continuum line based on a fun trait, like birthdays, and folding it in half/cutting it in the middle.

Some of the games that I do not see as a large concern in the classroom that the *Hall of Shame* articles noted are the games that involve students being inactive for 20% or less of the game. This is mainly because I believe that, even in games that may have students inactive for a large percentage of time, games can often be re-formatted to allow for more floor time. In games where students are choosing others, like in Duck, Duck, Goose, students can be given a name before the game starts and keep it secret until they “Goose” that person; in this way all of the students get the chance to play. Using smaller groupings can help with this concern as well, as it forces more people to be chosen in a smaller time frame.

Over-all I can see how we can still choose from so many games that were not listed in the articles to fill our Physical Education periods that we don't have to revert to using many of the games debated in these articles. If I saw students playing on the playground any of the games in the last category, where the percentage of movement time is lower, I would not stop them, but I do think I can make wise choices in class time that engage as many students as possible without discouraging them or providing students with the opportunity to dislike a facet of physical education learning. My goal as a teacher is to encouraging a passion in learners for holistic learning, which includes physical education, and I would be selfish to choose familiar games that may be harmful to students' conceptions of activity just because it is easier for me.

## **Game Modification: Four Corners**

### **Game Description:**

All students participate and are shown the four corners of the room with numbers on paper attached to each corner of the room (could be modified to be words related to another subject, etc). One student begins in the centre of the room and counts to 15 or 20 with their eyes closed (depending on the size of the room. Students move around the room and choose a corner before the time stops. When the person counting reaches the last number they keep their eyes closed and call a corner name (ie. Corner number 4 or corner “mammals”). Students in that corner are out of the game and sit elsewhere in the room. The person in the centre begins counting aloud again and the remaining students repeat this process. Once all students have been called out, the game ends.

### **Good points about the game:**

- Students learn to move in light motions to avoid being heard by the person in the centre.
- Students cover large portions of the space as they move between corners.

### **Bad points about the game**

- Very little activity – students run from corner to corner and spend half of their time standing or out of the game.
- The student in the centre does not change and has little to no movement throughout the game.

### **Points that can fit under either good or bad:**

- Students are not excluded on their own merit and it is often a game of chance if their corner is called out.
- Students begin to learn to work together to outsmart the centre person as

they move through the space.

**Modifications:**

Major problem: Students are not moving for the entirety of the game if they are in the centre or called out.

If students were to instead become the centre person for one round each time a corner was called, there would be continual participation. This would mean the person who starts in the centre of the room would get to join the game after the first round and the groups that would usually be out of the game could simply come to the centre for one round before re-joining the others in the game. This approach would minimize the amount of time that students are inactive.

Students may also be taught or review movements by being asked to move through the space to a new corner in a particular way. An example of this may be stated by the centre group such as “move like frogs. 1,2,3,4...)

## **Game Modification: Four Corners**

### **Game Description: Bag-toss**

All students participate in this full-space game, students are divided into two teams (using numbered heads, paring up, etc). The room is divided into two using tape or pylons and a large bucket of bean bags is emptied half on either side of the line (50 minimum). Each team is given a side of the room that they must stay on. When the timer starts students pick up bean bags and toss them over the centre line continually until the timer ends. If one team successfully gets all of the bean bags over the line before the 5 minute timer blows they win the round. If the timer ends and this has not happened students will stop throwing and count the bean bags on their side of the line. The side with the fewest bags wins.

### **Good points about the game:**

- Students all have the chance to move around the room continually.
- Oftentimes the game continues for the full allotted time and can be played in multiple rounds.

### **Bad points about the game**

- Students may not choose to pick up beanbags and may stand back.
- Beanbags may hit students in the head if a rule is not specified.

### **Points that can fit under either good or bad:**

- Students move continually but the actions may seem repetitive.

### **Modifications:**

Major problem: Beanbags may hit students in the head and discourage students from playing.

Students should be given clear direction up front. This should include the rule that people do not throw bean bags at others and they must keep a low throw. If students follow this rule the concern above should be avoided.