

January Special Blog: Mauldon and Redfern's (1969) 'New Approach'

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Introduction

To celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) model, there will be a monthly 'spotlight' focus on key models/approaches with the field of Games-Based Approaches (GBAs).

To start I would like to provide an outline of *Mauldon and Redfern (1969) Games Teaching: A New Approach for the Primary School*. This book has been considered as an early writing on games teaching in England, similar to what would later become known as GBAs.

Background Information

It is relevant to initially consider this book within the terms of the prevailing educational landscape and the changing climate of opinions. An outcome of the 1944 Education Act was that secondary education in England was provided by grammar schools and secondary modern schools, with children being allocated on the basis of their 11 + selection test result. The majority of children went to the secondary moderns and the more academic minority to the grammar schools, a situation which informed Primary school teaching. Towards the end of the 1950s it was recognised that the system was failing, and in the early 1960s a committee was set up to review the secondary education system. In 1963 the Central Advisory Council for Education (CACE) produced the Newsom report, "Half our Future" which led to the discontinuation of the selection test.

In August 1963 the Minister of Education asked CACE 'to consider primary education in all its aspects, and the transition to secondary education', which initiated a review of the UK primary education system by the Plowden Committee which was detailed in their report "Children and their Primary Schools". The abolishment of the 11+ test for most children opened the door for changes in attitude within primary schools as they encouraged a more progressive, child-centred style of teaching with the emphasis moving towards "finding out" as opposed to "being told".

"Games Teaching- a new approach for the Primary School", co-authored by two female PE university lecturers, was published 2 years after the Plowden Committee Report. The book was originally written due to 'the authors' uneasiness about the teaching of school Games in general and about the methods used at the Primary level in particular' (Mauldon and Redfern, 1969, p.v).

The Plowden report had tasked teachers with ensuring that “girls and boys at the top of the primary school will be acquainted with the rudiments of the national games- netball, hockey and tennis for the girls, football and cricket for the boys” (Plowden, 1967, p.258). Hence, the book was aimed at both teachers who might have little knowledge of how to play a game and so feel apprehensive in games lesson planning, but also those who did have some experience of playing games.

Chapter 1: Games in Education and Chapter 2: The Complexity of Games

In these Chapters, the authors present a debate for the inclusion of games in the curriculum and the values attributed to games; as education for leisure, outdoor exercise, as a compensation for academic endeavour, as a vehicle to encourage fair play and character-building qualities etc. They argue that games are attractive to children but that Primary schools provide a limited range of the traditional games which are often not appropriate for their needs and abilities until towards the end of Junior school.

They remarked on observing how these games often serve to curb the physical capacity of children, describing “immobile figures” on a pitch, and how the school focuses on their sporting elite whilst disregarding the misery and humiliation of those with little aptitude or athletic ability.

When we are all familiar with the joy that young children obtain from simple bodily actions and sense of accomplishment as they develop physically and mentally, it seems a woeful description of games in the education system. This can be further underlined by a quote provided from Colin Cowdrey, England Test cricketer, that “to thrust a bat into a child’s hands at an early age and teach him how to hold it in the conventional way is enough to kill any interest in the game for ever” (Mauldon and Redfern, 1969, p.8).

Chapter 3: Developmental Stages in Games

The authors opine that, young children welcome new experiences with unbounded curiosity and enthusiasm. By providing opportunities to participate in a diverse range of pursuits that employ differing apparatus, they will become generally skilful.

I was struck by the phrases- “they are guided towards a recognition of the principles governing games as a whole” (Mauldon and Redfern, 1969, p.17) and later “to share ultimately in the process of making a new game or a variation of one already known, finding answers to problems arising and then playing it according to mutual consent, is surely of greater value than only learning prefabricated games with externally imposed rules” (p.17) - which provides similarities with what we now consider the basic principles of GBAs.

The Approach

As this book is confined to discussing games within the context of Primary education, the authors stated

their definition of a game as *“an activity in which a minimum of two people, themselves on the move, engage in competitive play with a moving object within the framework of certain rules”*. (p.vi)

As children progress through Primary school, the authors suggest four stages for appropriate evolving games play associated with child development.

Stage 1: Exploratory play- where children are provided access to a wide variety of apparatus (e.g., quoits, beanbags, different sized balls, hoops, shuttlecocks, assortment of bats, etc) primarily individually but in the company of others.

Stage 2: Play for acquisition of skill, individually, e.g., with the desire to beat their personal best.

Stage 3: Moves on from Stage 2 to a greater emphasis on playing with others, elementary rule making and rudimentary understanding of the behaviour and control of the apparatus.

Stage 4: Increasing emphasis of playing a “proper” game, competing with others, problem-solving, tactical and rule development.

All games include a moving object which can be affected upon using apparatus or a part of the body and may be aimed at a goal/target, space or a player. A game includes one or more of the types of activity outlined below:

- *Sending away the object (striking/throwing)*
- *Gaining possession of the object (catching/collecting)*
- *Travelling with the object (carrying/propelling)*

Mauldon and Redfern advocate for teachers to look at games which have similar properties rather than teach individual sports. This consideration can lead to a thematic curriculum focusing on game classifications and they proposed the following three categories:

Category 1: Net games

Concerned primarily with striking within a divided area with equal sized teams. This does not include gaining possession of the object. Sports include badminton, tennis, volleyball, table tennis etc.

Category 2: Batting games

There are 2 sides, the batting and the fielding sides. The batting side focus on striking into unoccupied spaces, whilst the fielders are concerned with throwing, catching and collecting. Therefore, the fielding team are aiming to gain possession of the object. Sports include cricket, baseball, rounders, softball etc.

Category 3: Running games

Both teams are throwing or striking and catching or collecting and carrying or propelling. Within running games all players are concerned with gaining possession of the object. There are equal sides which compete in and share the same area, the games involve passing and shooting at a target. Sports include football, hockey, rugby, basketball, netball etc.

Emphasis is placed upon the teacher understanding these basic activities and integrating them with a firm knowledge of each child's abilities and perspective when devising lesson plans. It is important that P.E. does not consist of mainly imparting expertise but rather encourages *children's curiosity and interest in why and how things happen* in games (p.43).

Lesson plan template

- Start the lesson with a chosen game- this may be a familiar game or one newly invented. Consideration may be given to size of playing area, apparatus, rules, team size etc.
- During the game, when problems arise or weaknesses become evident, play is suspended
- The teacher guides the players to consider the issues and encourages them to investigate the problems using a questioning approach.
- Discoveries are shared and the solutions examined
- The techniques involved are practised and 'coached'
- Game play is resumed focusing on the key problems which have been investigated and the practised solutions.

Alternatively, an identified weak or neglected aspect of play from previous sessions could be used as the starting point. The children could then provide their own suggestions to resolve the issue and resume the original game.

Note: The time spent in a session on investigating and intervening will vary according to the developmental stage of the children. Mauldon and Redfern suggest that one or two investigations will likely be sufficient in most cases.

Example

Chapter 9 provides a guide using examples of experiments and problems relating to the three basic types of activity and the four stages of evolving game play. Reproduced below is an example (p.96-97):

'Throwing and Collecting

Situation. *A group of children playing a running game which involves the ball being bounced or thrown to one another, and players are not allowed to travel once they are in possession of the ball. The passing is not sufficiently skilful to allow a fluent game to proceed, and play becomes rather static.*

Suggestion. *In twos find out where the ball has to be placed if a running player is to receive it in such a way that he can throw it almost immediately.*

Questions.

a) Do you aim the ball at your partner, if not where should you send it? Why?

- b) What do you have to take into account in judging where it should go?*
- c) If he is marked to which side of him should you try to get it?*
- d) If you are bouncing the ball to your partner how can you make it easy for him to receive it?*

Responses.

- a) The ball should be sent into a space where you judge the receiver will be when he catches it, and to the right for a right-handed player if possible, so that the follow-through of the receiving action can merge into the main action.*
- b) The speed, direction and ability of the receiver.*
- c) To the free side of the player receiving it.*
- d) The bounce should make contact with the ground so that it is rising to about shoulder height as it is caught and should not be directed at the feet of the receiver.'*

Final Thoughts

Throughout the book the focus is on movement education and teaching for understanding. It emphasises that the developmental stage and ability of the children is paramount in games teaching. The role of the Primary teacher is to facilitate an environment which encourages guided discovery and problem-solving.

"It is essential that numbers, equipment, and size of pitch are appropriate for the children concerned, and the teacher must obviously know, not so much the rules of the official versions of these games, but how to assist girls and boys to acquire experience in the fundamental activities involved." (p.42).

We would like to encourage you to continue supporting the 40th Anniversary of TGfU celebrations; including our next instalment in the special blogs where we will be discussing Coaching for Understanding- Wade (1967) and Worthington (1974). Please visit <http://www.tgfu.info/40th-anniversary.html> for our other events.

References

Mauldon, E. and Redfern, H. (1969) *Games Teaching: A New Approach for the Primary School*. London: MacDonald and Evans.

Newsom, J. (1963) *Half our Future: A Report of the Central Advisory Council of Education England*. London: H.M.S.O.

Plowden, B. (1967) *Children and Their Primary Schools: A Report of the Central Advisory Council of Education England*. London: H.M.S.O.