

Share The Wealth 2013

Moving To Success: Locomotor Patterns Are the Critical Link for Teaching Skillfulness

Televised College Basketball Game

TV Announcer: *That big guy sure does catch the ball extremely well over his head while in the paint.*

TV Analyst: *He catches the ball well because his footwork is so good. He is always in position to catch the ball. Watch how he moves under the basket. He has great footwork.*

How often have coaches been heard saying the following:

He has a great first step.

She moves well without the ball.

He stays in position on defense.

These are examples of how important footwork is for successful movement experiences. The importance of teaching for mature locomotor patterns is critical for students to become skillful movers.

The locomotor tasks in ***Moving To Success*** focuses on kindergarten through third grade. However, the teaching of footwork will continue throughout the motor tasks in all grade levels. The aim for locomotor patterns is for students to use the patterns skillfully by the end of second grade. Students skillful in locomotor patterns will be better prepared for learning most motor tasks taught through fifth grade.

The following are the locomotor patterns that are taught in kindergarten through second grade. The patterns are developed in the locomotor instructional units. Climbing is a locomotor pattern and it will be taught in the K-2 ***Body Management*** instructional units because it fits well into the objectives of that unit.

Galloping

Hopping

Jumping

Skiping

Leaping

Side Stepping

Running

Sequencing Locomotor Patterns

The following are the locomotor/agility patterns introduced in the third grade. Rope jumping and dodging can be taught in earlier grades. It is a teachers' choice. Grapevine is the most complex of the locomotor patterns. It should be taught after the other patterns are developed.

- Jumping Rope
- Dodging
- Grapevine

Locomotor patterns are first learned in their purest form. As they are integrated in with other movement patterns and skills they are adapted to the specific learning experience. The purpose of teaching locomotor patterns is to help students become versatile and safe movers in normal everyday physical activities as well as in game and body management activities.

Most kindergarten students will enter school having already developed some fundamental locomotor patterns. The physical education program has the responsibility to continue this learning so all students will become developmentally proficient in the use of all locomotor patterns.

Locomotor Patterns can be taught two ways. The patterns can be taught as a unit or they can be taught throughout the year. ***Moving To Success*** takes the position for developmental reasons it is critical to teach the locomotor patterns throughout the year. The locomotor patterns can be taught during the warm-up time. Because proficient locomotor patterns are used with or incorporated into many other movement and sport patterns, it is critical to continually develop the patterns. Teach for skillful versatile movers.

It may be important to spend more class time on the locomotor patterns at the beginning of the year and gradually reduce the time as the year progresses. Another reason it is hard to spend extended periods of continuous time on locomotor patterns is that they are very tiring when practiced correctly. However, they can provide excellent health enhancing aerobic activities. Because locomotor tasks are part of everyday life and are critical skills to wide range movement and sports activities, teaching for skillfulness continues throughout the physical education learning experiences from kindergarten through high school.

The Learning Environment

Space approximately the size of a gym would be appropriate for these tasks. Using outdoor spaces are equally effective for developing locomotor patterns. The boundaries should be at least five feet from the walls, stage, water fountains, standards and other fixed obstacles. Even more distance from sharp unpadding corners.

Equipment Recommendations

The use of hula hoops, floor, low hurdles, ropes, bean bags, cones, flat circles, and lines on the floor can all be used for students to move in and out of, around and over. Safety is a critical consideration when planning for and how to use equipment. The equipment cannot hinder the skill development or cause a student to stumble when performing a movement. The use of non skid equipment so students won't slip and or fall if they land on it is a consideration. Many of today's physical education equipment companies sell equipment that can both enhance the learning environment as well as make it a safe place.

Music can enhance the locomotor patterns and sequences. The use of various percussion instruments is excellent for this purpose. Teachers should use percussion instruments to help set a beat when learning the locomotor patterns. Depending on the patterns or the specific task extension, using a beat to set the tempo will help students with the rhythm of the pattern. Some students will actually benefit from the use of a beat. Selecting the right beat for the specific experience is the key when using a percussion instrument. The wrong beat will make it very difficult some for students to practice the pattern.

There is also a variety of commercially produced music that is excellent for this purpose. Taking the time to listen to the music to identify the beat will be critical when using commercial music. The music can be an invaluable resource for the physical education teacher. Other teachers in the school or even a parent may have the background to help with music selection. The important thing is to recognize the value music plays in the learning environment.

Pre Kindergarten

Pre K5 students benefit greatly from instruction in basic motor patterns. In schools where these grades exist, every effort should be made to provide well planned learning experiences in locomotor patterns. The educational benefits may go beyond the acquisition of increased motor performance. It is believed that students can benefit cognitively from motor skill acquisition and regular physical activity.

Ready position

Ready position is taught with locomotor patterns because the stance is the most effective and efficient preparatory position to take before initiating and finishing many actions. It is introduced in first grade. The ready position is sometimes referred to as the athletic stance.

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