

Integrated Curriculum: Using Traditional Games and Activities in Physical Education

Integrating physical activity into other disciplines within the school curriculum fulfills the ultimate goal of teaching children about lifestyle physical activity in a variety of contexts. Integration can be considered in many different forms. Beane (1995) considered integration as holistic, whereby knowledge and skills are drawn from all disciplines, to create a meaningful learning experience. Placek and O’Sullivan (1997) also stated that true integration requires rethinking traditional teaching concepts and models, and integrating internally within, and externally across, disciplines.

Even though the integrated approach can sometimes prove time consuming and problematic, there is significant evidence in other subject areas to substantiate the benefits linked to student learning. Nevertheless, some teachers may have insufficient content knowledge and experience with integration—content areas may not always match well, and terms can differ between content areas. These limitations are especially applicable to physical education as a unique subject, as content knowledge in this area is often weaker than traditional disciplines such as mathematics and English.

Hartzler (2000) found overwhelming evidence to support the conclusion that students in integrated curriculum programs do better on standardized and program-developed assessments of achievement than students in traditional classrooms. Weilbacher (2001) also identified three reasons that teachers choose to use curriculum integration including the ability to develop relationship with students: its ability to make learning more relevant to students, and its ability to bridge traditional academic disciplines with students and their communities. Zhanova et al (2010) investigated integrated curriculum lessons centered on Africa involving arts into social studies and other subject areas through mask-making and dramatic story-telling with first and second graders. According to the authors, mask-making required higher-order thinking skills of planning and solving spatial problems. They found that students were empowered during the lessons to make many choices related to their masks and the other Africa-related activities, making it an authentic learning experience. The activities addressed knowledge from different fields across subject areas and encouraged students’ motivation.

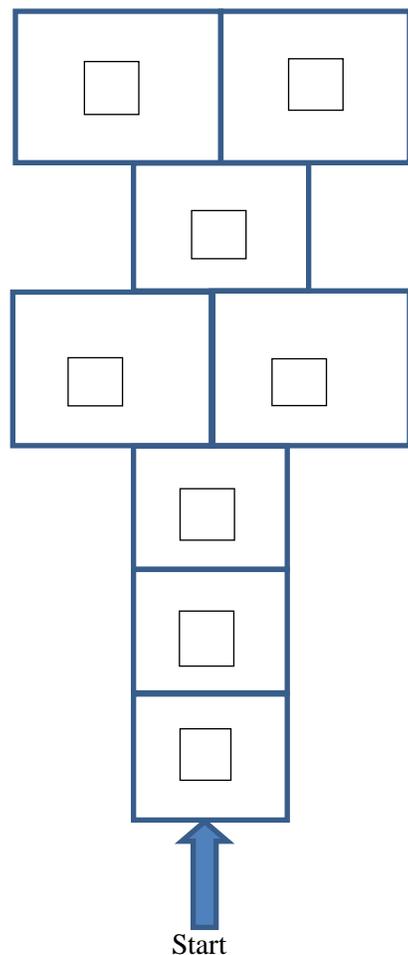
An integrated curriculum in physical education should align with the goals of quality P.E. programs. However, activities that do not meet these criteria should not be considered as appropriate for integration. “Integrated learning offers a means of enriching the teaching and learning process, by allowing students to use knowledge and skills in different settings and ways” (Humphries, Bidner, & Edwards 2011, page 179).

Selected Ghanaian traditional activities that can either be performed as games or leisure activities will be shared with pre-service and in-service teachers as well as other conference participants in the form of hands-on activity.

1. Physical Education Concept/Skill: Locomotor skills.

Lesson Objective: Students will learn hopping, jumping, balance, straddling, sliding, agility and spatial awareness

Activity : Odeme Variation 1 - Can be played by both male and female (two to four players) Elementary & Junior Secondary School.



Description: Player begins play by tossing a marble into square 1 within the boundaries. Then jumps over placed marble to land on square 2 with one foot, hops on same foot to square 3, and then makes a straddle landing by splitting both legs to land on square 4 and 5 simultaneously. Next, hops on one foot to land on square 6 and continues on to squares 7 and 8 performing a split straddle stance as was done in 4 and 5 with back towards starting point. Player then jumps vertically off both legs spinning around to land on same squares 7 and 8 in straddle position now facing starting point. Next, player hops on one foot to land on 6 again, then performs straddle landing on square 4 and 5, and continues hopping on one foot landing on square 3 and 2. Player leans over to pick tossed marble without touching square 1 by jumping off and over starting point. Same routine is repeated through all the squares, and if successfully completed, player then turns back to starting point and tosses marble over to secure restricted square which will be prohibited by remaining players performing their turns. Every player takes a turn until all squares have been secured and the game could be restarted.

This game could be used to teach directions in Geography, Literacy students and Mathematics skills to elementary students.

In mathematics lower elementary students could learn to count as they jump, or do addition and subtraction operations.

Integrated Objective: a. Literacy: teaches terms such as hopping, stepping, straddling, accuracy, agility and balance.

b. Math: teaches numbers, addition & subtraction, shapes, areas.

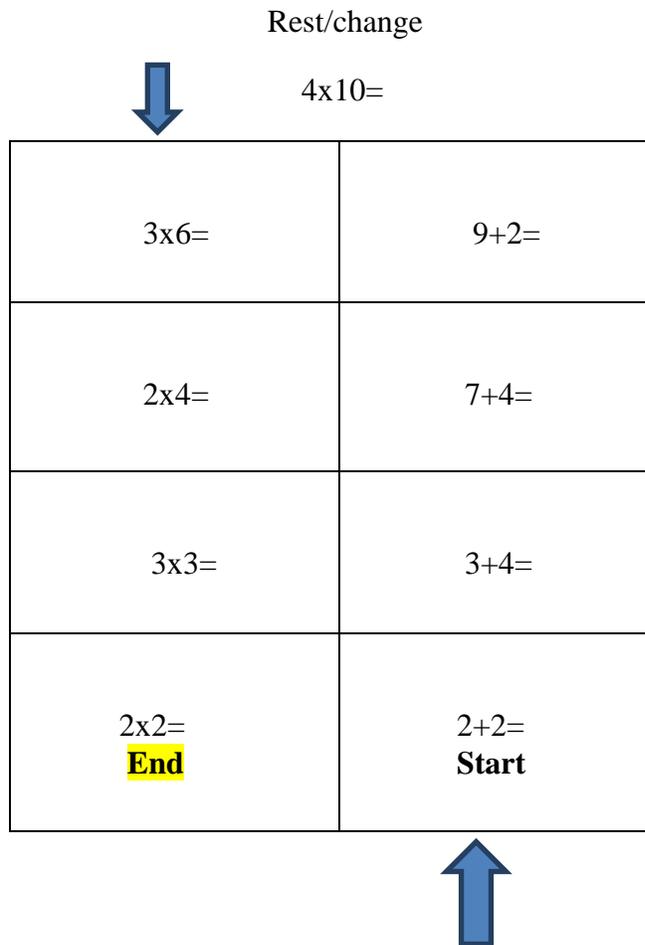
2. **Physical Education Concept/Skill:** Movement activities.

Lesson Objective: Students will learn how to hop, jump, balance, straddle, and slide to a pattern; and improve spatial awareness.

Game/Activity: Odeme variation 2.

Description: Can be played by 2 to 4 players taking turns. Player who elects to start will toss a marble into the right square followed by a hop on one foot to land in the square close to the marble. Using the foot on the ground player moves the marble across to the next square forwards through to the last square on the right, and then moves it into the semi-circle before switching foot. Player then continues to move marble on the other foot from square to square towards the starting point. Player continues this routine until all squares are successfully completed. With back to the squares the player tosses the marble backward to secure a square which will be prohibited from encroachment until all squares are claimed. The player with the greater number or secured squares wins.

Multiplication and additional operations could be written into the squares for players to provide answers when they land on it. Lower grade elementary students could learn to count the squares.



Integrated Objective: a. Math: Teaches numeration, multiplication, addition, balance and control