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How to Use Sport as a Means to Acquire Life Skills, Including Strategies of Communication with Families

Teacher of All Subjects

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Introduction

The toolkit aims to identify strategies to promote and develop life skills through sport, as part of the key skills of European citizenship, particularly the skills concerning “learning to learn” and “communication”.

In this respect, the toolkit develops a series of strategies for the involvement not only of PE teachers, but also teachers of other subjects, trying also to identify appropriate strategies for communicating with the families.



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Transferable life skills connected to sport and to the development of the PE curriculum

The body and the movement are two of the main elements of the individual and social dimension in personal development, therefore physical activities provide a particular contribution to the establishment and strengthening of expertise in the various areas of knowledge. In particular, within the educational path of Physical Education and in a continuous connection to its specific experiential features, the curriculum helps to develop life skills to consolidate different areas and types:

- Cognitive skills
 - Develop and improve coordination, perceptual and representative skills related to space, time and body and improve its knowledge and awareness;
 - Develop the ability to analyze and synthesize, to problematize, to evaluate in order to interpret behaviors, situations and events;
- Communication skills
 - Express oneself and communicate with the different languages owning their respective codes of access;
- Methodological skills
 - Find out solutions, even creative ones, to solve problems;
 - Organize the skills and the knowledge acquired to plan and build effective procedures; (small progression to improve one's own skills ...);
 - Orient oneself (assess, self- evaluate, choose) among different opportunities;
- Social and relational skills
 - Participate in a conscious and effective manner in group life, in accordance with one's own and other people's attitudes and characteristics;
 - Take on the adequate sanitary and health prevention and protection behaviors;
 - Acquire aware and well-informed outdoors lifestyles in relation to the characteristics of the territory and in respect of the environment.

Many of the skills to be found in this path can be recognized as being the same skills related to the European Framework of the key competences of citizenship, such as problem solving, learning to learn, communicating, using different languages in the communication process.

Learning Objective

The teachers of the different subjects, coordinated by the PE teachers, can:

- Examine the curriculum, in order to highlight the activities that most contribute to develop life skills
- Examine the students' work to enhance the life skills related to motor activity in their path
- Plan common and shared paths to promote life skills through Physical Activity.



Online Resources

- [Looking for teaching resources about the European Union?](#)
If you want to teach your pupils about what the EU does, Teachers' Corner contains all kinds of material for different age groups.
- [Valori in rete - il gioco del rispetto](#)
Description of an Italian experience. The document is available only in Italian
- [Not Only Fair Play](#)
In the "Not Only Fair Play" Project Portal more can be read about the connection between "Sport and respect for the law"



Promotion, among the teachers of other subjects, of a deep consideration of the development of life skills through Sport at and beyond school

Traditional teaching generally focuses on the transmission of specific contents, but nowadays the aim of an inclusive society involves the increasing acquisition of life skills that should be integrated with the contents of all subjects. Recent studies suggest teaching students through the direct dealing with problems related to reality and making sure they mainly learn through experience and teamwork. Here life skills get back into the game. The EU promotes a wide and comprehensive approach to learning, a complete set of different learning methods and environments, including informal learning.

Many skills can be acquired using sport activities, such as communicating, working in groups etc. The class council, or in any case the working group within the school, could spread this information to promote a deep consideration of the development of life skills through sport.


The goal is a dedicated project in the school organized as follows:

- Planning a skill based cross-curricular learning unit, indicating the life skills as prerequisites or as a requirement to learn during the PE classes
- Giving greater weight to life skills in the assessment stage
- Making the curriculum more flexible
- Planning the operating modes:
 1. Suggesting the goals to be pursued (general and specific)
 2. Handing out a questionnaire in order to conduct a sociometric analysis
 3. Identifying the students (or pairs or small groups) to be entrusted with a practical responsibility, on the basis of the results of the analysis made
 4. Using the same strategy in other subjects, exploiting the results of the analysis carried out

Learning Objective

- Collect and examine the best practices in order to develop life skills
- Identify current practices for integrating life skills into teaching
- Enhance the sharing of experience

Online Resources

 [Integrating Life Skills in Education and Training: Findings from the Asia-Pacific](#)

This website contains some data concerning the types of challenges in integrating life skills in policies and practices.

 [Key skills for lifelong learning](#)

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning. The link is available only in Italian

Previous experiences and projects at school

The aim of this step is to suggest planning experiences that have focused on reflections on the promotion, through sport, of life skills and key skills of citizenship, taking into consideration the different socio – educational aspects.

Project: “Sport , Language & Culture”

A cross – curricular learning experience including the following activities:

Sports activity: beach volley courses and minor sports activities.

Language enhancement: beach volley courses held in English language.

Hiking and sightseeing: visits to the main Art Cities (Venezia, Gorizia, Trieste), the lagoon and canals of the old coast road , the mouth of the river Tagliamento.

Datini Institute “ Live Sports”

The project was carried out in different school years. All students were involved together with teachers of Literature, Psychology, IT, Maths, Science, History, Geography, Tourism.

A students’ office was set up to identify and promote sports activities. A survey on the needs and activities within the school was carried out. Each activity was divided into parts and students in charge of supervising it were appointed.

Learning Objective

The activities carried out in the project have developed the following skills:

- Collaborate and participate by working in groups, interacting, managing conflicts, thus contributing to common learning
- Act autonomously and responsibly. Each participant had to demonstrate to be able to respect the rules and share the common values of sports culture.
- Learning to learn by planning one’s own learning

The project allowed to carry out educational experiences useful to:

- Enhance socialization and the empowerment process
- Improve the skills to observe reality in order to enhance and increase environmental, anthropological, naturalist, topographic and orientation knowledge.
- Spending free - time by bringing into play the skills acquired at school.
- Self – perception of the body and the movement to enhance one’s self – esteem.

Online Resources

- [The importance of project based teaching](#)

This essay is about the Kilpatrick- Dewey dispute on PBL.



Cross – curricular activities in the classroom

Cross – curricular activities have a lot of benefits: they involve students as they allow them to bring into play skills connected to different subjects: students are actually asked to deal with real life situations and problems. These activities also emphasize both contents and procedures thus focusing on life skills, they also allow to adjust the teaching action in accordance with the different learning styles of the students. The following form is specifically made for planning cross – curricular activities.

Project title

Project aim:

Competence focus :

Related skills :

Key competencies of citizenship :

Problem situation

Organization of educational work

Persons involved

Prerequisites

SCANNING OPERATION

STEP 1 : Sharing goals

STEP 2 : Training : Development of foreign language contents

STEP 3 : Integration of the acquired data and operational development

STEP 4 Consideration of the course and project evaluation

Learning Objective

- Involving teachers in a productive dialogue on the process of teaching / learning
- Helping students to link all their knowledge.

Online Resources



[Initiatives from Not only Fair Play](#)

All references available on the “Not Only Fair Play” project portal





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Cooperation and joint planning with teachers of other subjects

Cooperation concerns mainly the observation of learning styles. Physical activity allows PE teachers to observe the students' different learning styles and to offer thereby the teachers of other subjects a point of reference useful to consider in the learning processes and activities of other areas. Such cooperation can develop the necessary activities and actions in the classroom.

Overcoming the lack of flexibility of curricula can take place within the project work, by involving teachers from other subjects on concrete projects and initiatives where the teaching objectives, the role of each teacher (or class councils), the final products of the students and the certification of skills and evaluation (and self-assessment) are clear and well – defined

Learning Objective

The purpose of this step is to promote a common consideration among teachers upon the added value of PE on the educational path of the students and on the exchange of experiences and skills among teachers of different subjects; it is also useful for the first two years of secondary school, especially when it comes to tackling early school leaving.

Online Resources

- [Physical education and sports at School in Europe](#)
A good overview about connections between different areas of interest in PE
- [Teaching for competences in physical education](#)
An Italian article dealing with competences and teaching styles in physical education



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Use of technology to promote transferable skills

The use of technology to promote key skills through physical activity and exercise might be improved through two lines of activities:

- the availability of a wide range of documents (videos, testimonials, guides) useful to stimulate teachers' reflection on teaching activities to be designed and implemented in the curriculum and beyond.
- the use of technologies both by teachers and students to communicate the educational paths and activities carried out which relate to the promotion of transferable skills. These activities should be connected with concrete projects and educational paths (physical wellbeing, lifestyle, strengthening of relations, spirit of entrepreneurship)

Transferable skills you can acquire by playing sports are numerous, for example understanding the value of teamwork, having a sense of responsibility, respecting rules, solving problems, being motivated and motivating, being organized. The use of technology can facilitate the development of these skills:

When talking about technology, it is natural to refer to the "class 2.0", that is, the digital classroom. There are some European "[twin-projects](#)" such as the project "Escuela 2.0" in Spain and the project [CAPITAL](#) in England

In 2.0 classes, each student is equipped with multimedia support such as personal PC or tablet. Each student is responsible for what the school offers him, he must guard it with care, use it properly, follow the rules. Students in upper secondary schools have the opportunity to surf the internet and must demonstrate consciousness in the use of this instrument. Students are also provided with a personal email address they are responsible for

Learning Objective

Knowledge building by making links, further and deeper knowledge built both on an individual basis and on a common basis with the help of teachers of all subjects. Learning to learn, act responsibly, acquire and interpret information, create connections and relations, solve problems.

Online Resources

- ["Class 2.0"](#)
Activities and strategies in a digital class. Link available only in Italian
- [Teaching History](#)
Experiences and projects
- ["I quaderni della ricerca"](#) ("Notebooks of research")
"Teaching in a digital class – technologies and teaching between theory and innovative practices". Link available only in Italian

Online Resources

- ["Approfondimenti per classi digitali"](#) ("More information for digital classes") This article contains links to documents, videos and web inquiries. Link available only in Italian
- [An inclusive digital class](#)
Research design on LIM and classmate PC. Link available only in Italian
- [A goal for the health](#)
Sport and social ethics. Link available only in Italian

Relations with the world of work

Sport, not only at school but nevertheless coordinated by the school, is a great vehicle to train transferable skills that will be helpful for students in the world of work, not only the outgoing ones but also all those experiences that students have at school (internships, alternation school/work): being flexible, reacting to a change in plans, managing conflicts, orientating themselves.

The Europe 2020 strategy has been put in place to deal with the situation of economic and employment crisis. The three priorities of the project are:

- Smart growth
- Sustainable growth
- Inclusive growth

The targets are representative of the three priorities and relate to employment, research and innovation, climate change and energy, education and the fight against poverty.

To achieve the purpose young people must be equipped with the necessary skills.

Participation in grassroots sport can develop attitudes and positive social values, skills and individual abilities such as:

- Ability to think critically
- Spirit of initiative
- Ability to work in teams and solve problems.

Employers give great value to transferable skills but often claim that new employees lack such skills.

Learning Objective

Planning a learning path of a sports activity involving not only physical education teachers but also external experts and teachers from other subjects.

Preparing reports and questionnaires referring to specific activities (such as hiking trails through the hills).

Studying possible setbacks and hitches to the planned activities. During the physical education classes, after having answered the questionnaires, some students could be asked to test their skills when it comes to overcoming the setbacks created by the organizers.

These activities will stimulate students' problem-solving skills. Students will learn to orientate themselves in difficulties, work in a team, design appropriate solutions and so on.

Online Resources

- [Team work](#)
An example of life skills used in an effective team work activity.
- [Sport and Health](#) Link available only in Italian
- [Via Francigena in Tuscany](#)
Two Italian pages about experiences connecting health and sport at school. Link available only in Italian
- [Community Employment service](#)
Checklist of transferable skills you can take with you from one situation to another, from one job to another.

Communication strategies with families

Communication with families plays an important part in the students' educational process. Strategies to be undertaken should be viewed in the context of the school-family relationships, as constant communication and effective involvement of the families in school activities.

The strategic plan consists of making families aware that through sports activities students acquire a series of effective skills to be used in the future.

The values that sport conveys are deeply consistent with the purpose of establishing inclusive societies. It is necessary that school and parents work together to reach the goal: they must become allies and teach students the most important civic and social values.

Learning Objective

The main purpose is the creation of effective communication between school and family on issues related to transferable skills acquired through sport, working especially on interpersonal and communication skills.

Communication with families plays a strategic role especially when it comes to dealing with demotivated students or in case of disadvantaged situations.

Wellbeing at school is, in this case, the result of competencies solicited through physical activity.

Online Resources

[Communicating with Parents: Strategies for Teachers](#)

Teachers must always continue to develop and expand their skills in order to maximize effective communication with parents. This article presents an overview of this topic.

[Parenting: Transferable Skills for Life and Work](#)

Education and the modern family This workshop is about all the skills that parents use (often unconsciously) that can be used for other life and work activities.

[Education and the modern family](#)

This article underlines the importance of the alliance between school and family: "Successful modern schools must make an effort be open and responsive to the needs of modern families. At the same time, modern families must also accept their responsibility in ensuring the well-being of their children – and that includes taking part in their education".