

You'll need: Cones, bean bags, hoops, foam balls, rubber chickens, polyspots, foam blocks

You can play: outside, in the gym, on the blacktop

Game 1

Scavengers

Place cones all over the play space. Hide bean bags under some of the cones and not others. Divide the group into small teams and start them at one end of the space. The first person in the team runs to a cone and looks underneath. If there is a bean bag underneath they pick it up and take it back to their team. If there was no bean bag, they also have to run back to their team. Once back in line, the next person goes.

Game 2

Chickens to the rescue!

Place a few hoops on the outer edge of the playing area that contain a number of rubber chickens (you can use bean bags or any other pieces of equipment if you do not have rubber chickens). Select a number of people to be taggers (with a ratio of 1 tagger to every 4 runners) and give them foam balls to tag with. When a player is tagged, they stand in one spot with their arms above their head. To be unfrozen, another player has to collect a rubber chicken (or bean bag) from the hoop and give it to the frozen player. This thaws the frozen player who then runs the chicken (bean bag) back to the hoop and rejoins the running side.

Game 3

Float the Pond Teams

Divide the group into teams of at least three players. Ask each team to pick one more object than there are players on their team from a selection of equipment (for example, if they have five players they need six pieces of equipment). The aim of the game is to move around the playing area (i.e. pond) without falling off the objects (i.e. lily pads). Teams can move anywhere in the pond. Players must use their hands to move the objects to any other member of the team.

Only allow one foot on each object
Provide more unstable objects

Offer an extra object for them to use

Debrief

What strategies did you find were effective? Did it work on first try?
What changes would you make to your strategy next time?
Did you copy the strategy of anyone else?

Strategic thinking is a complex thought process that requires the individual to apply foresight, analysis and synthesis of information within the context of the situation or activity. It has been shown in research that this ability begins to develop in preschool and by five years old children can begin to anticipate the behaviour of others. As with many facets of cognitive development, the application of actions in relation to the anticipation of behaviour develops with age. However, research has indicated that adult-like strategic thinking can be seen in children as young as seven years old.

Within a physical education environment, the ability to think about the strategy of an activity can greatly enhance the ability to understand the movements involved, the communication elements that may create success and develop the understanding of how and when to act in a certain context.

In some of the the games used in the above lesson plan, strategic thinking is shown through working together as a team to complete the task. Using peers and teams in this way provides the learners with the opportunity to observe the behaviour of others and compare it to the behaviour that they themselves would have selected. This provides a starting point to understand whether a predicted behaviour differs from what was expected, thus building the knowledge necessary to develop foresight and analysis of other peoples thinking.

In other games, the strategic thinking is placed within a game in order evade a tag or another player. In this mode of learning, the individual is required to analyse the space as well as a multitude of components that are in motion at that time. Performing this analysis in the context and speed of an activity allows the learner to formulate the appropriate response that may lead to success, as well as allowing for trial and error of a range of strategies.

To further enhance the learning, taking the time to discuss the strategies that worked and why the children think they worked is important. Additionally, discussing any strategies or tactics that were not successful, the reasons the children think they didn't work and any changes or different decisions they would make next time are equally important.

Starting this learning early fosters the development of the thought process, which can then be translated in to other subjects and ways of analytical and strategic thinking.

If you have any questions or would like more information on how to accomplish anything mentioned above, please email play@pise.ca.