



Action Schools! BC



Instructional Example

Healthy Minds Through Tai Chi

Subject: Physical and Health Education (PHE) Grade 5

OVERVIEW

Teachers are not only charged with fostering the academic development, but the social and emotional development of our children. This begins with ensuring students mental well-being is supported, as mental well-being is increasingly impacting the lives of today's children and youth in Canada (Canadian Mental Health Association [CMHA], 2016). Understanding that a child's mental well-being is "the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity" (Public Health Agency of Canada) is of utmost importance.

As teachers play a powerful role in a student's life, they have a unique position of influence. Thus they are well positioned to help students develop the competencies and strategies to support their own mental well-being. This strategy is designed to engage Grade 5 students in a physical activity that supports gaining an understanding of life balance through mind-body connectedness and an opportunity to develop a self-regulation skill.

BIG IDEAS

- Understanding ourselves and the various aspects of health helps us develop a balanced lifestyle.
- Personal choices and social and environmental factors influence our health and well-being.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Communication (C)

- Acquire, interpret, and present information (e.g., understanding key terms and concepts related to mental well-being, physical literacy).
- Explain/recount and reflect on personal experiences (e.g., identifying activities for life balance in the physical, emotional, and social domains).

Thinking (CT)

- Get creative ideas that are both novel and have value (e.g., inviting students to think about what balance means in their lives).
- Developing ideas (e.g., understanding the differences between what constitutes a good life and a balanced life).

Personal and Social (PS)

- Recognize how their decisions and actions (e.g., taking actions to participate in physical activities such as Tai Chi that contribute to life balance) affect their physical, mental health and emotional well-being in and out of the classroom.

LEARNING STANDARDS

PHE Curricular Competencies (What Students Will Do)

Physical Literacy

- Identify and describe preferred types of physical activity (e.g., reflecting on what activities assist with life balance).

Healthy and Active Living

- Participate daily in physical activity designed to enhance and maintain health components of fitness (e.g., participating in Tai Chi).
- Analyze and describe the connections between eating, physical activity, and mental well-being (e.g., how activities such as Tai Chi can promote mind-body connectedness).
- Describe the impacts of personal choices on health and well-being (e.g., reflecting and discussing about how various activities are beneficial for physical, social and emotional wellness).
- Identify, apply, and reflect on strategies used to pursue personal healthy-living goals (e.g., creating and sharing activities promoting a balanced lifestyle).

Mental Well-Being

- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others (e.g., identifying activities that promote physical, social, and emotional well-being).

PHE Content (What Students Will Know)

- Practices that promote health and well-being, including those that prevent communicable and non-communicable illnesses (e.g., participating in activities such as Tai Chi and others).

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH PILLARS

Relationships and Environments:

- Encourage students to respect other people's ideas by listening to one another's thoughts and opinions regarding physical activity, mental well-being, and balance.

Teaching and Learning:

- Students learn role of Tai Chi can play in maintaining their sense of balance, their health and wellbeing.

Community Partnerships:

- Invite an instructor from the community into the class to lead a session on Tai Chi or yoga.

School Policies:

- Share the school policies on daily physical activity requirements and how the strategies in Tai Chi utilize offer a balanced approach. Additionally this lesson supports improving body awareness, flexibility and core strength that meets Physical Education requirements and supports social-emotional well-being.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts

- Combining different texts and ideas allows us to create new understandings by inviting students to brainstorm with partners on what constitutes a good life.

Social Studies

- The students can investigate ways to access community resources to seek help around the topics of health, safety and wellbeing.

FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

TIMEFRAME

- 45-60 minutes

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Plain white paper (8½ x 11)
- Pencils

TEACHER TIPS

- Ensure all learners are given an opportunity to learn through visual and tactile means.
- Plan for and allow wait time (student processing of information).
- Provide equal access to materials.
- During group work, mix their ability levels, which allows for peer to peer coaching and learning.
- Scaffold instruction to optimize student learning by providing a supportive environment while facilitating student independence. This is achieved throughout this investigation, self-discovery and constructive assessment.

STRATEGY

- Have students work in pairs and give one sheet of paper per pair. Next, begin the inquiry by posing the question: “What constitutes a good life?” On their sheets of paper, have students brainstorm what they believe constitutes a good life. To help guide the inquiry, you can post words on the board such as friend, money, exercise, family, etc.
- Once finished, have the desks and tables moved to the walls in the class to allow the students to sit on the chairs with space between them. Or, go outside and find a space to place their chairs in a circle. Circles represent important principles in the First Peoples worldview and belief systems, especially interconnectedness, equality, and continuity.
- Discuss with students and provide time for them to reflect on their comments and answers as to what constitutes a good life (e.g. have lots of money, healthy, happy).
- Bring in the word “balance” and open up the discussion about what students think a balanced life is and why it is better than having too much of just one thing. (Note: The elements in life that require the most balancing can be divided into two categories: internal and external. Oftentimes, the focus is on one more than the other. Often people focus on external things, like work, relationships, and activities, and pay very little attention to what is going on inside your heart and mind.)
- Have students move back to their desks and list as many activities they can think of that help them lead a balanced life into physical, emotional or social areas. What is balanced life – e.g. internal (calm, clear-headed, motivated, healthy, etc.) vs. external (school, friends, family, play/fun etc.)?
- Once complete, students can see where one or more of these areas are unbalanced. Guide them to reflect on how they can balance these areas.

- Discuss how physical activity plays an important role in assisting everyone in leading a more balanced lifestyle and then build on this inquiry by using the Action Schools! BC *Tai Chi* learning activity (available from: www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources).

ASSESSMENT

- Student verbal reflection - Check for student understanding of what constitute the differences between a “good life” and a “balanced life.”