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Tactical and Skill Approaches to Teaching Sport and Games: Introduction

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Physical education teachers have long been concerned with issues relating to how to best teach sports and games to students. The ultimate goal of sport instruction is to enable students to enjoy participation and to play the game reasonably well so that they will have increased motivation to play and gain the benefits of participation. This monograph describes the efforts of a group of researchers to investigate issues relative to teaching and learning sport in a physical education setting. More specifically, the authors of this monograph investigate what students are likely to learn and not learn as a result of a skill approach, a tactical awareness approach, and a combined tactical and skill approach to teaching badminton.

The stimulus for the research has been the recent attention that the games for understanding approach developed by Thorpe, Bunker, and Almond (1986) has received in the literature, as well as the work of researchers in the United States investigating more tactical awareness approaches to teaching sport (e.g., McPherson, 1991; Turner & Martinek, 1995a, 1995b). A large and comprehensive data set of multiple measures was gathered over two studies investigating the three different approaches to teaching a unit of instruction. The studies were designed to give both a macro- and a microperspective on questions relating to what students learn as a result of the three different approaches.

The first article lays the foundation for the research by reviewing the theoretical bases and research done in the area of instruction in sport and games and the development of sport expertise. The second and third article, respectively, present the two research studies that are the essence of the monograph. The results of the two studies investigating tactical, skill, and a combination of tactical and skill approaches are presented in their totality so that interrelationships between the multiple data sources can best be delineated. The specific tasks generated in the 6-week study are described for all treatment groups in the Appendix of this monograph.

The fourth article describes the results of the affective interviews that were done with the participants in the 6-week study. The fifth article presents the results of a simultaneous study that followed 12 high- and low-skilled target students in the 6-week study through the instructional process. Both of these articles provide a more comprehensive perspective on instructional aspects that could otherwise be obscured by the masses of data on group instructional effects.

The last article strives to draw implications from the results of these studies for both practice and future research. Our intent in this monograph is not to provide the last word on issues relating to instructional approaches for developing

sport/game performance, but rather to provide a foundation from which important issues may be investigated. The implications are relevant both to the large issues of curriculum and to instruction.

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