

## Simple, Generic Approaches to Teaching Invasion Games Tactics

### Using the Teaching Games For Understanding Model

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by Dr. Lisa Pleban- Castleton State College

**Brief description of this presentation :** *Participants in this hands-on session will learn about practical ways to teach simple invasion game tactics using the Teaching Games For Understanding Model of Instruction. Examples of tasks that can be modified for teaching tactics such as the give-and-go and screening will be introduced. Come ready to play.*

#### I. What is *The Teaching Games for Understanding Model*?

A teaching approach that emphasizes the playing of the game, or, playing a simpler, modified version of a game, before all of the skills incorporated in the game are learned or mastered. The learning emphasis is on the development of cognitive strategies to play the game, while skills refinement is added as needed. Basic motor skills competency is required, however. Simply put, "what to do" is emphasized over "how to do it". In addition, many tactics and strategies can be transferred from one type of invasion game to another.

Q: Why use this model?

Simply put, students like to "play the game". Drills (skill practice) and rules can be worked into the "games". A small-sided approach allows for more time on task, practice opportunities, and involvement.

Traditional model vs Tactical games:

Traditional: lessons are planned as a progression of basic drills to more complex skills, followed then by an explanation of the rules to playing the full version of the game.

TGFU Model: sequence of learning tasks that have a game-like structure are used to develop student's ability to use both motor skills and tactics, leading to modified and then full version of the game.

This model evolved from a British conceptualization of *teaching for understanding*, (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982). The idea of categorizing games by common features such as invading space, moving an object to score in a territory, fielding an object as a defensive measure, are elements that help to define games as invasion, net or wall games, run scoring games, and target games. Invasion games include basketball, hockey, football, soccer, Ultimate Frisbee. Water polo, speedball, among others. The TGFU model includes among its intended student outcomes, knowledge about the rules, history, and tradition of the game; tactical awareness (decision-making) to solve "problems" during the game; skill competency; and the use of game-like activities to develop competency in utilizing tactics and broader strategy during game play. The lead-up games utilized may be an isolated or exaggerated representation of a game situation that may be faced during regular game play.

## II. What are tactics? How are they different from strategies?

**Tactics:** Decisions applied during game play that have a specific purpose or goal (i.e. to gain an advantage, to move in efficient manner, to adhere to a rule) which combines motor, cognitive, and perceptual skills. The application of these decisions are usually momentary, and may be repeated many times throughout the course of game play.

Learning outcomes for tactical play focus on *situational applications* of the target skill (correct positioning, decision-making, understanding of correct execution of the skill during game play).

An example of essential tactics for invasion games might include:

1. moving the ball (puck, Frisbee, etc) on offense
2. shot selection: who has the best shot from where, and at what time?
3. off-the ball movements
4. defensive guarding techniques (ball, player, zone; help position, deny the player)
5. positioning for rebounds, loose ball, or transition

### **Generic Invasion Game Offensive Tactics**

1. gaining field position (objective is to get to an end zone or specific part of the field)
  - running the ball (or another object), following blockers or screens: "curl off of a screen"
  - using a fake, and then moving in the opposite direction: "cut back door"
  - passing, kicking, or propelling the ball to an open receiver: "give and go" pass
2. Achieving and maintaining individual possession of the ball
  - Receiving the football: facing or sideways, above or below the waist
  - Communication to teammates: Utilizing a verbal or silent snap call, hand signals
  - Manipulating the ball or carrying an object, with a skill refinement unique to the situation
  - recovering a fumble or loose object (drop to ground, and cover ball)

### **Generic Invasion Game Defensive Tactics**

1. Defending space
  - Defensive stance into a backpedal
  - Providing help or maintaining a cushion
2. Defending the opponent
  - Denying the receiver
  - Goalie or defender decreasing the angle of opponent's attack or shot
  - Double-teaming an opponent
  - Providing help or support

**Strategies:** individual or team-based decision making, including offensive and defensive positioning relative to other players and the goal; use of time or choices relevant to the score, and; decisions regarding the timing and purpose for the execution of motor skills and tactics.

### **Generic Invasion Game Offensive Strategies**

- Maintaining possession of the ball/object
- Pulling the defense out of position (i.e. "Overloading" one side of the field or court to place more offensive than defensive players in one space)
- Specific alignments and player cuts indicated by position (i.e. soccer offensive alignments, basketball set plays)
- transitioning from offense to defense: alignments for punts, kick-offs, throw-offs:
- transitioning from offense to defense: object distribution (choice of target)

### **Generic Invasion Game Defensive Strategies**

- Press defense
- Zone defensive sets: Specific alignments indicated by either position relative to the ball, or position relative to an opponent.
- Player to player defensive sets (i.e. Switch on screens, use of a double team on the ball)

### **III. Teacher skills required for using this model**

1. Must be able to identify the major tactical problems of the game, and know appropriate solutions
2. Must know the student readiness for learning: identify what prerequisite motor skills are required to begin tactical instruction.
3. Must be able to create/use lead-up games that develop both tactical awareness and the proper use of the target skills
4. Think "small"... small sided games, small group work to allow for more individual contributions to the "problem solving" goals of this model,
5. Teacher should encourage and may guide problem solving/ creativity. Modeling, deductive questioning, should be implemented.
6. All lead-ups and games must be safe, developmentally appropriate for the ability, experience, and age of the learners. "Grown-up" versions of the games are not needed.

### **IV. Implementation of the model**

**1. Pre-assessment:** Use of small sided "games" (or *game form*, a modified version of a full game that utilizes a select few skills)

- 3 on 2, object keep away (as in Frisbee or soccer). Used to assess defensive positioning, off-the ball offensive movement, basic catching and throwing skills
- 3 on 3 offense and defense (as in half-court basketball). Used to assess defensive positioning, off-the ball offensive movement, rebounding/transition position, freeing up the shooter, shooting ability
- Controlled "scrimmage" 4 on 4, 5 on 5, one team stays on offense, one team stays on defense, use a goalie (as in large field games). Used to assess defensive positioning, off-the ball offensive movement, finding gaps in the defense/scoring opportunities, team communication.

## 2. Skill development drills based upon student needs, time allotted for unit, space.

Remind students that these skills are essential to play the game

i.e. Teacher: "what is the main goal for your possession?" reply: "to score a basket" Teacher: "then, how skills increase your chance of doing that?" reply may be "good passing, passing to the open teammate, being a good shooter... all of the skills can be practiced.

Examples:

- Passing into shot drills
- Defensive support drills (as in 3 on 4 ball, help, support drills, or 5 on 4 zone Box drills)
- Object control/dribbling chained with passing or shooting (hockey, speedball)
- Elementary level students: focus on skill development first! Choose tactically simple games over complex games, use game forms as learning tasks.

3. Modified games with changes encouraging certain aspects of the game. The task/game modification may include an explanation of how the modified version relates to the full game, and why the modification (or rule change) is being used.

Important to highlight the tactical problem! Teacher states the tactical objective (i.e. best way to get open, best way to move the ball down the field, best way to stop your opponent from invading your territory). Try to retain the essential structure of the game when possible (i.e. an offensive rebound may result in another shot, not a stop in action)

Give ample time to let students identify solutions to the tactical problem. Draw upon similarities from better-known games.

Sample generic modifications include:

- Small sided game, teams cannot shoot on goal until all members touch the ball/puck (intended outcomes: passing, communication, teamwork)
- Elementary-level games: reduce size of field, size of goals (increases opportunity to "touch" the ball/object, increased defensive participation, more shooting or passing accuracy needed )
- Increase time allowed to hold the ball/object, or allow for more "drops" without a turnover (intended outcomes: more passing with better decisions, communication, off-the ball movement)
- Simplify rules (i.e. *rules of three*: three touches, three drops, three steps before a turnover)
- Modifications for students with special needs: modify equipment, size of playing area, focus on simpler tactical problems, use various communication aids (wipe boards, on the field "walk-through")
- Middle school students: use mostly modified games over full games.

4. Full games: these are not "adult versions" with all of the "adult rules" incorporated. Additionally, students develop a conceptual perspective of the game in steps (three levels).

- High School: use full games after students have shown skill competency in modified games

## Examples of offensive strategy outcomes for full games

- Level I outcomes: student understands his or her position on the field, relative to the goal/end zone
- Level II outcomes: student understands where, when and how to pass the object/ball to gain the best advantage
- Level III outcomes: student able to plan ahead (utilizes strategies) to anticipate opponent's reaction, or to take advantage of team strengths / opponent weaknesses

## V. Sample learning objectives with accompanying generic tasks (drills/*game forms*)

### *NASPE*

- *1: Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.*
- *2: Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.*

### *VT GEs Knowledge/Motor Skills*

- *PE1 Students will apply problem-solving skills in movement-related activities by...*
- *PE3 Students show an understanding of space concepts by...*

### 1. Objective: identify tactics in a new game

Task: Identify common features of the game: Show a brief instructional video of the "new game" (You-Tube has them all!). Then ask students to list what they features they saw that was "like skills used their favorite game" (or use soccer as the example). Group shares, teacher can explain tactics further.

### 2. Objective: chaining of skills while moving (i.e. passing and receiving a ball or puck)

- Task 1: Partners pass and move in a circular motion, then in general open space, then with a "tagger"
- Task 2: Game form" modified "fast break" to the goal, no goalie... compete 2-3+ passes and then shoot

### 3. Objective: Goalie play

- Task: Game form" modified "fast break" to the goal, compete 2-3+ passes and then shoot, all students rotate to all positions

### 4. Objective: learning offensive tactics (i.e. give and go with shot from certain spot)

- Task: 3 on 2, 3 on 3, 4 on 3 "break" drills; with or without goalie.

### 5. Objective: defensive positioning: deny the receiver

- Task: 3 on 3 "keep-away" games
- Extension: Controlled drill: add "help defense", one pass away, passer counts to five before next pass

Cont....

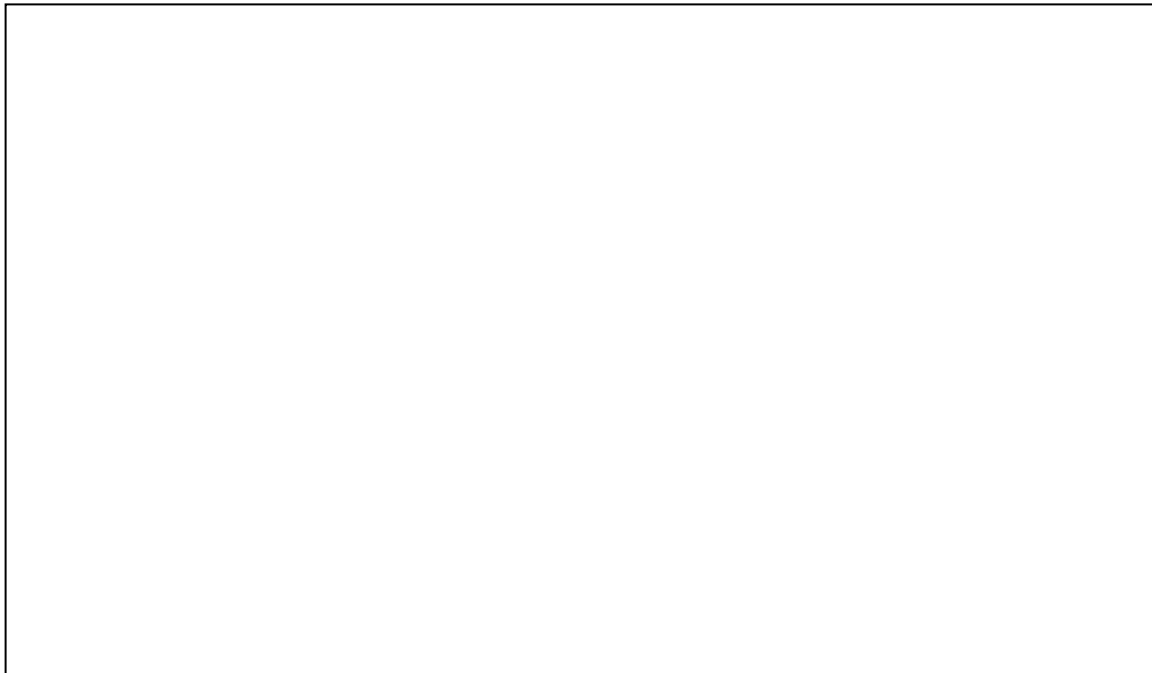
6. Objective: offensive strategy- set offense

- Task: game form: demonstration, slow-motion, shadow defense. Offense resets after each attempt, "huddles" to decide set

7. Objective: defensive strategy- zone play

- Task: game form: demonstration, slow-motion offense. Offense & defense resets after each attempt or series. Both positioning and communication are emphasized (on "ball", "help", "support")

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