

Building Stronger Citizens through Physical Education

By Donald Glover, Professor in Human Performance Department, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

What is our ultimate purpose when it comes to molding young hearts and minds through physical education and sports? Yes, our job as educators and coaches is to help youth meet specific physical education outcomes. **Bigger picture, however is to facilitate an understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and grow into people of integrity.** Physical education and sport provides the perfect environment to teach valuable life skills such as teamwork, determination, work-ethic, self-control, goal-setting, and leadership.

Specifically the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, through provincial curricula, expects that students will develop the cross curricular competencies, one of which is to “*Develop Social Responsibility*”, or, “*the ability of people to contribute positively to their physical, social, and cultural environments*”. This includes the goal, within this competency, to “*Consistently apply fundamental moral values*”. Another cross curricular competency is to, “*Develop Identity and Interdependence*”, which, “*develops as an individual interacts with others and the environment, and learns from various life experiences*”. Goals within this competency include learning to value, and care for, oneself and others.

PHE CANADA also firmly believes that Physical Education Ensures key character traits such as fair play, cooperation, and teamwork are reinforced through physical activities.

Many of us do not know how to reach these lofty goals; we have not been prepared to teach them. We have been schooled very well in the psychomotor domain and during the last two decades the cognitive domain has risen considerably in our subject area. It seems like the affective domain is just along for the ride. Teaching movement skills and helping children to become fit has always been our number one goal and it is a very important endeavor and when Physical Educators get together and attend workshops they will always find plenty of breakout sessions that have to do with the psychomotor domain. There is rarely a choice among affective domain sessions at these workshops. That’s the way we were taught in college and that is what we continue to look for; new and better ways to present fitness and skills. If Physical Educators had to rate teaching priorities we think our colleagues as a whole would put the domains in the following order:

1. Psychomotor domain--fitness and skill acquisition
2. Cognitive domain--quick thinking - game strategies
3. Affective domain---relationships among team mates --Character Education. (Most of us think this learning will just happen as a result of being on a team and competing.)

This is how I prioritized my teaching over the course of my career. I was always on the lookout for new fitness trends and new classroom ideas. After 45 years of teaching Physical Education I now think I would change that priority list to look more like this:

1. Affective domain
2. Cognitive and Psychomotor domain

Please don’t misunderstand--I think the Psychomotor domain is still our number one goal, I just don’t think that the best way to achieve our long term Psychomotor goals is through the Psychomotor domain and the traditional techniques we have used to deliver its content. I now

believe we **must emphasize teaching the affective domain** if we are to achieve our long-term fitness / skill goals and outcomes.

We can't keep doing things the way they have always been done. To grow and evolve as a profession we need to keep trying to improve. Teaching social skills, responsibility and citizenship has not always been a big priority, maybe it should be.

Professor in Human Performance Department, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Don Glover has taught physical education, including adapted physical education, since 1967 at the preschool, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels. He has also coached multiple sports at these different levels. Don has authored several books from character education to team building and is a global presenter.

SPEA is excited that Don will be sharing his expertise at the 2016 Conference