

## ***What I Learned in School***

To put everything I learned during my time in the Master of Arts in Education program at Michigan State University down, I would need a lot of paper. Each new bit of information was all important in its own way. I learned new ways to present information, new ways to use technology as a learning tool. I learned better ways to connect to my students and help them reach their goals. I learned proper methods of training and nutrition. There are too many more to list. My goal for this essay is to narrow all this information down into the two areas I feel I improved the most in.

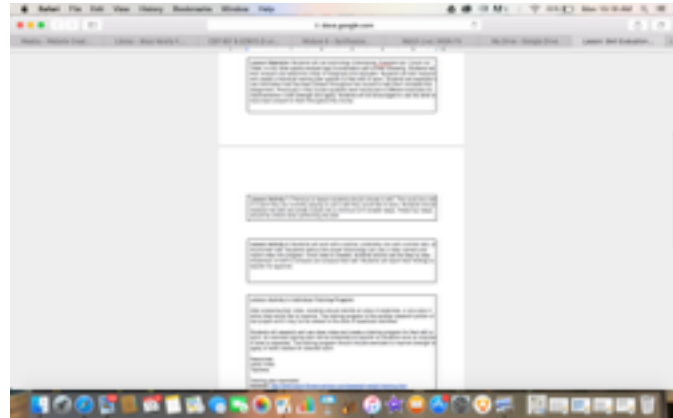
### **Technology**

Technology...it's just about everywhere these days, even in the most unlikely places. As a Physical Education teacher, technology has been a little slower to be implemented in my classroom. A huge part of a physical education course curriculum is related to movement and have your students participate in moderate to vigorous activity for a set amount of time. At first it seemed as though the idea of incorporating technology on a daily basis was a little out there, other than the normal music player or video. It was out there for two reasons, the lack of support that physical education programs typically receive and the constraints present at my current school. My own quest for knowledge was the main motivating factor for introducing more technology into my PE classroom. I began to think differently than others I listened to at professional developments. I began to wonder as it became more difficult to resist the technology movement, instead of fighting this shift, how can I cater it to fit my teaching style and needs as a teacher. To some they see technology as a young child glued to a video game system on the couch with a bag of Cheetos. It is easier for kids these days to live in the fantasy worlds created by video games and computers. For me I believe the advancement of technology in the physical education classroom has been most felt in two ways. Assessment has become easier. I am now able to enter students' fitness levels into a computer program (fitness gram) and it calculates and interrupts all the results. I am able to compare results and in some cases track and graph the students improve over a course of several years. On a higher level, technology allows you to give specific detail about a student or athlete's skill on a much smaller scale. You can capture a baseball player's swing, or quarterback's throw, and go through the movement and analyze each and every detail. There are several different software programs that will give you a biomechanical analysis of a specific skill. These programs allow athletes and coaches to break down skills like never before. It gives the athletes an opportunity to perfect their skill.

Technology has also allowed me and my students to have access to things we may not have without it. The amount of resources available online is almost unlimited. We are able to show students specific skills and sports they are not familiar with. It has given me as a teacher the ability to learn and master sports and skills to better teach my students.

It wasn't until I took CEP 810/811 did I realize that I could incorporate technology successfully into my PE curriculum. For these classes I created a technology based lesson that I could use in the physical education classroom.

Not only did I learn how to use technology to help my students learn, but to help me learn as well. During CEP 810, we learned how to learn ourselves. We took on a networked learning project to learn a new skill. The requirements of this project was to strictly use technology, youtube, and other internet based resources to learn a new skill. I took on the challenge of the guitar for this lesson. You can see my progress and resources on my blog along other projects completed for CEP 810 and CEP 811.



<https://kevinr337.wordpress.com>

Another area where I learned to use technology more as a resources was in my coaching. Technology has often been used in athletics but mostly by coaches. Coaches are able to use coaching software, such as, HUDL to film and break down game footage. This process has been done for years but, what started with driving miles for a VHS video swap, is now all done from the comfort of your couch with a computer. More recently, technology has become available for not only breaking down game footage, but breaking and analyzing one particular skill. I have been a coach for the past 9 years, and while this technology seems great, it wasn't always accessible. Even though it is easy to record an athlete perform a skill with a simple camera or phone it was over shadowed by the cost of the analysis software. Many of these programs were only available to professionals, university, or training companies. Fast forward to 2015 and any athlete with a smart phone and perhaps a small allowance can capture, analyze, and perfect a skill needed for his or her sport.

One of the greatest joys as a coach is to help your athlete overcome that one thing that may be holding the back. It could be an elbow that drops during a baseball swing, or not having the proper weight transfer during a quarterbacks throw. When you are able to break down a skill and see each contributing factor you are able to perfect each aspect of that skill. What I believe to be the most beneficiary factor is being able to show each athlete their weakness so they can fully comprehend what needs to be tweaked. That instant visual feedback is, in my opinion, crucial for the "21<sup>st</sup> century learner". We live in a world of instant access. Students today have access to almost anything with the power of technology and the internet. Being a Physical Education teacher/coach, it seems like technology has been a little slower to reach this profession for obvious reasons. Having the ability to show a student performing a skill, a skill that lasts just a few seconds, in slow motion is an invaluable resource.

## Coaching

I really hit my stride in my MAED program when I began taking courses in my concentration area of coaching. There was one class in particular that open my eyes to a full range of training aspects. The course was KIN 856 Physical Basis of Coaching Athletes. In this course we learned principles of anatomy, biomechanics, and physiology for coaching athletes in various sports. KIN 856 helped me build relationships between the biological bases of coaching and physical conditioning, and performance enhancement. It really opened the door to the strength and conditioning as well nutrition aspect of coaching and training. As a coach that side of coaching can be overlooked, but this course helped me realize how beneficial this side of coaching is. The biomechanics side of this helped me break down and evaluate each skill I was coaching. Tackling is a large and important part of football, and it's also an aspect of football that has caused concern with the rising awareness and concerns of concussions.

### Tackling

*There are several fundamentals to consider when teaching the skill of tackling to young athletes.*

*Football can be an extremely violent sport. Just the idea of running full steam and colliding with another athlete is reason enough to have concern. The most important aspect of the tackle progression is head placement, but as we have learned through the course of this unit is the importance of the kinetic chain. Each fundamental skill is linked together and energy is transferred through the body with the "largest portion of kinetic energy or force being developed in the legs and trunk". Each fundamental skill begins with leg drive. It's important to teach the proper technique from the feet up. Doing this will give the athlete the proper fundamentals of tackling putting the athlete in a position for proper head placement lowering the risk of injury.*

#### **Proper tackling form:**

*Proper stance: We begin teaching tackling from the feet up. As with almost every skill in every sport, tackling begins with a proper athletic stance. Feet shoulder width apart. A proper athletic stance, feet shoulder width apart, knees bent, and a slight bend at the hips, 45 degree angle lean, will give the athlete a stable base. This stance will also lower the athlete's center of gravity and puts them in the best position possible to react to their opponent. This ability to be able to react quickly will help ensure the head is in the proper location while contact is initiated*

*The next step would be to make sure the athlete maintains this position or returns to this stance prior to beginning the tackling progression and understands. We teach this as short steps with the athlete "buzzes their feet". This helps the athlete keep their body under control and maintain the proper athletic stance.*

*Step: After establishing a proper base and the athlete is in a proper athletic stance the next step is for the athlete to take a step toward their target. This step should be between their opponent's legs. This will put them in a good position to secure the tackle and also puts them in a good position to minimize injury.*

*Head Placement: This is most important aspect of the tackle progression, because if there is a flaw in the athlete's technique it greatly increases the athlete's risk of injury. The number one rule when teaching head placement while tackling is to always keep your eyes and head up. When first learning the fundamentals of the tackle progression athletes have a tendency to drop their heads in anticipation of the tackle. The proper way to teach a safe head placement is to have the athlete remove the head from the actual tackle. We teach athletes to keep their head, eyes, and chin up. We use the phrase chest to chest when tackling, doing this will remove the head from contact.*

<http://i.imgur.com/HmJg3TP.gif>

*Wrap with Arms: After the head is properly placed the next step is to have the athlete wrap up the ball carrier, this is done to secure the tackle. The arms are brought back simultaneously with the athlete's step toward the ball carrier.*



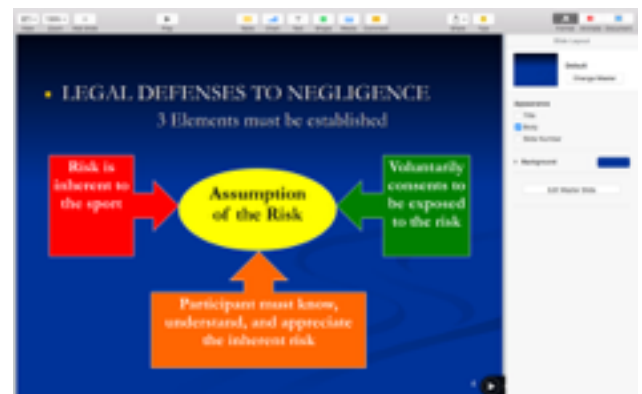
Breaking down this skill helped me become a better coach and helped my athletes be safer. Here is a breakdown of tackling I completed for KIN 856:

## Resources

**IHSA Tackling Progression Drills:** <http://www.ihsa.org/SportsActivities/BoysFootball/BestPractices/TacklingProgressionDrills.aspx>

This course also helped me realize some of my future learning goals as well. KIN 856 left me with a thirst for more knowledge and I believe that's what a great course does. KIN 856 wasn't the only course that helped me realize my future career aspirations. My other Kinesiology courses helped me understand the demands and expectations of a head coach or a coach in an administrative position such as athletic director. Athletics has been a large part of my life and I have seen first how beneficial they can be. As a coach you are asked to do a lot of things. I touched on the training aspect, but there is plenty more. Safety of your athletes is always a top concern.

KIN 854 helped explain the legal aspect of coaching. It taught us how to protect ourselves, our athletes, as well as our school. It helped us be organized as coaches. Creating off season checklist, emergency plans, transportation, and a list of duties for other coaches. Another part of this course was discussing hazing. KIN 854 will be a great resource for me as I continue to coach and move into higher positions in the coaching and administrative world.



As I've previously stated, each course in this program is important in its own way. When I look back I see what I've gain as a whole, and I take with me not just what I learned, but my future goals I realized.