

LIFE SKILLS

Encouraging value-centred PE lessons

Sports Council toolkit will help coaches design classes based on values they want to impart

EUGENE NEUBRONNER
eugenen@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE – Beyond simply honing students' dribbling or passing skills during a football match, physical education (PE) teachers should design classes around values they want to teach, such as perseverance and cooperation.

Crafting such "teachable" moments are something the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) wants to help PE teachers and coaches do better, with its new Game For Life toolkit.

The toolkit features a framework for developing character and leadership through sport.

It aims to help sports coaches craft lessons based on values they want to

impart and to execute them.

The toolkit will also be made available to student leaders of co-curricular activities.

The framework builds on the National Standards for Youth Sports (NSYS) that was launched by the SSC last November.

The NSYS was designed to address various issues in sport, such as abuse, favouritism, cheating and poor sportsmanship.

The toolkit also includes a book entitled *Game For Life*, which features how sports has inspired the lives of 25 personalities, including Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam and Singapore football referee Shamsul Maidin.

It will be launched on Monday at a Leadership Symposium organised by the SSC and the Singapore Management University (SMU) in conjunction with SMU's Life Lessons Programme launch.

The toolkit has been piloted at six

schools — Admiralty Primary, Evergreen Secondary, Shuqun Secondary, Tampines Secondary, Temasek Secondary and SMU — since the start of the year.

PE teachers TODAY spoke to said they found the framework easy to use and implement.

Evergreen Secondary PE teacher Adam Chan, 30, said that, in the past, teachers focused on the skills or game concepts before drawing a teachable moment from the lesson.

However, with the new framework, they have a more "systematic way" to bring attention to these moments, he said.

Admiralty Primary PE teacher Shahril bin Mohamed Jalan, 33, said the framework allows him to "pre-empt situations" by considering what potential problems or issues might arise over the course of a lesson.

The school chose to focus on "graciousness" for the semester, so the pilot was designed to teach Primary 4

students what the term meant.

While "it (was) not an overnight improvement," students from the pilot class were noticeably internalising the idea over the course of the semester, such as by helping a competing student who had fallen or being the first to shake hands with opponents after a game, said Mr Shahril.

Evergreen Secondary Principal Carol Lim said the framework "empowers the PE teachers".

"The framework gives enough space — especially in the debrief section — to find the teachable moments and talk about how they will also apply outside sports," she said.

SMU Sports Union President Oh Zhan Yuan, 22, agreed but said "the biggest limitation" is that facilitators have to be able to "do it well" in order to get their message across to students convincingly.

Another limitation is that the results can only be seen in the long run, he added.

Pilot project

● The Game For Life toolkit has been used in six schools: Singapore Management University, Admiralty Primary, Evergreen Secondary, Shuqun Secondary, Tampines Secondary and Temasek Secondary.