

# Celebrating 40 Years of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)



Linda Griffin, David Gutierrez, Shane Pill and Ellen Gambles

With special acknowledgements to Jeroen Koekoek,  
Alan Ovens and Naoki Suzuki of the TGfU SIG  
Executive Board



# Introduction



The mission of the **AIESEP TGfU Special Interest Group** is to establish a globally representative group of institutions and individuals committed to the promotion and dissemination of scholarly inquiry around ways of knowing, learning and teaching through games-based approaches.

One of our major goals is to broaden international cooperation and understanding among teachers, coaches, researchers, students and institutions of the world through best practice, critical educational and research collaborations and exchanges.

# History of Games-Based Approaches (GBAs)

28–50 minutes

Another form of lesson suggested is the following:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time Allocation</i>
A	Team Game	5–10 minutes
B	Revision of known work	8–15 „
C		
D	Teaching of new work	15–25 „
	Team Game	

28–50 minutes

*Note.* In this last example Sections B and C would nor-

Williams, L. C. & Willee, B. A. (1954). Playground games for secondary boys. Blackie & Son. p. 6.



# History of Games-Based Approaches (GBAs)

## In sport

### Wade (1967) practice schedule:

**Match Practice** – developing systems of play

**Small sided games** – developing principles of play and tactical Possibilities

**Functional training:** phase practice – developing understanding between small groups of players

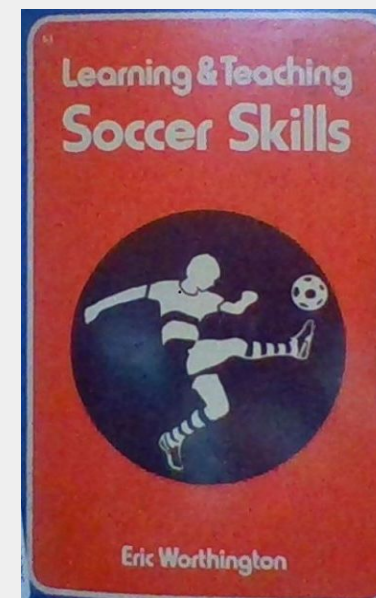
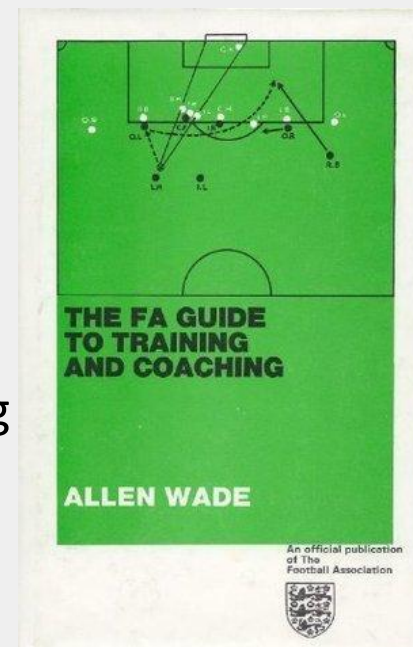
**Tactical practice** – developing set plays

### Worthington (1974)

Principles of Play

Freeze replays

‘Conditioned games’ (deliberately designed)



# History Cont.

## In Physical Education

### Games Teaching (1969)

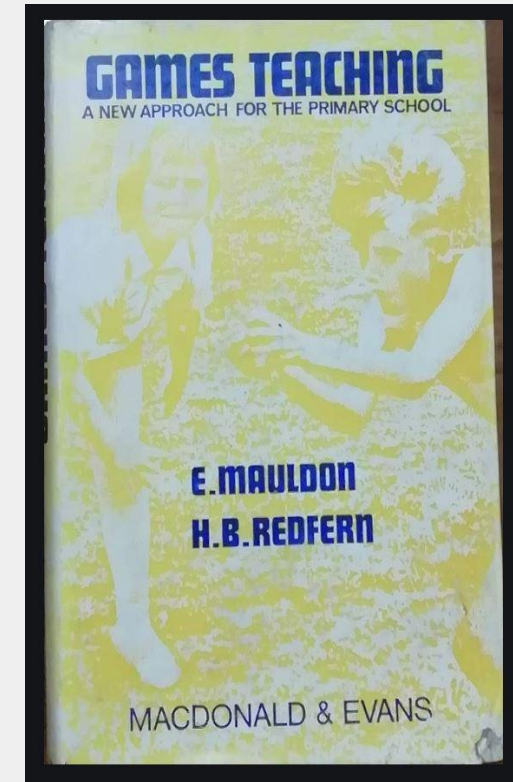
Mauldon & Redfern

#### The Lesson Model

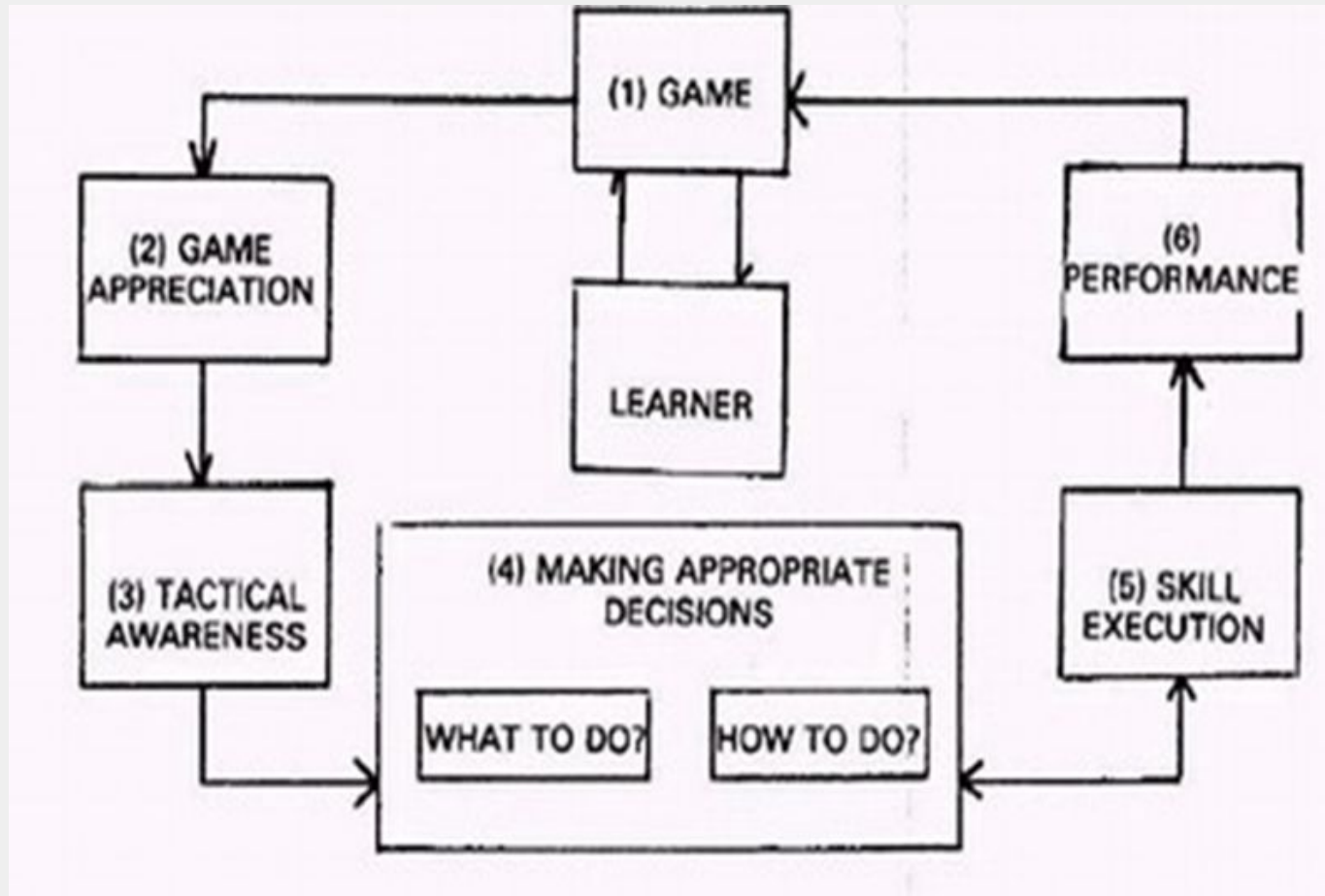
Begin with a game  
Suspend the game  
Inquire  
Practice  
Return to the game

#### The Curriculum

Stage 1 - Exploratory play  
Stage 2 - Play for individual acquisition of skill  
Stage 3 - Play for acquisition of skill and the ability to play with others  
Stage 4 - Competing with others in play and making games



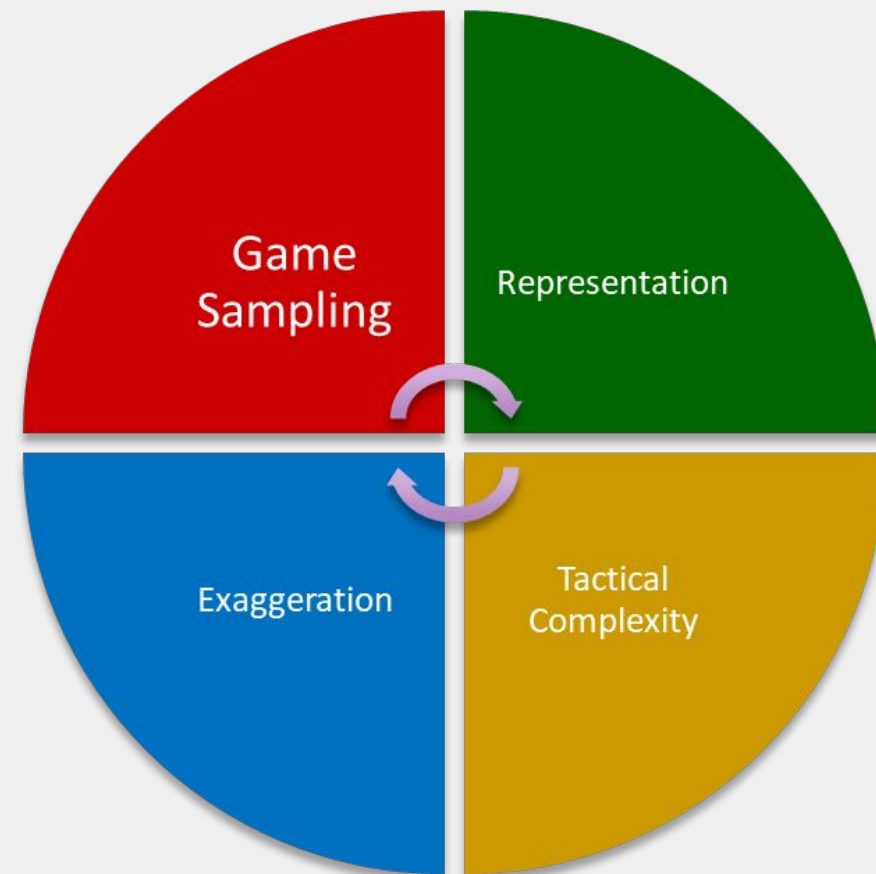
# Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)



- The model was first introduced by Bunker and Thorpe (1982)
- It was designed as a step-by-step procedural model for teachers
- The aim was to enable students to become competent game players

# Thorpe and Bunker (1989) Pedagogical Principles

- **Game sampling**- exposing students to a wide range of games to explore the similarities and differences
- **Exaggeration**- changing the secondary rules of the modified game to create a specific tactical problem
- **Representation**- developing modified games that have the same tactical structure of the full version sport. Could consider a thematic curriculum as discussed in the Games Classification System (Thorpe, Bunker and Almond, 1984).
- **Tactical complexity**- ensuring that the modified game is developmentally appropriate for the student.



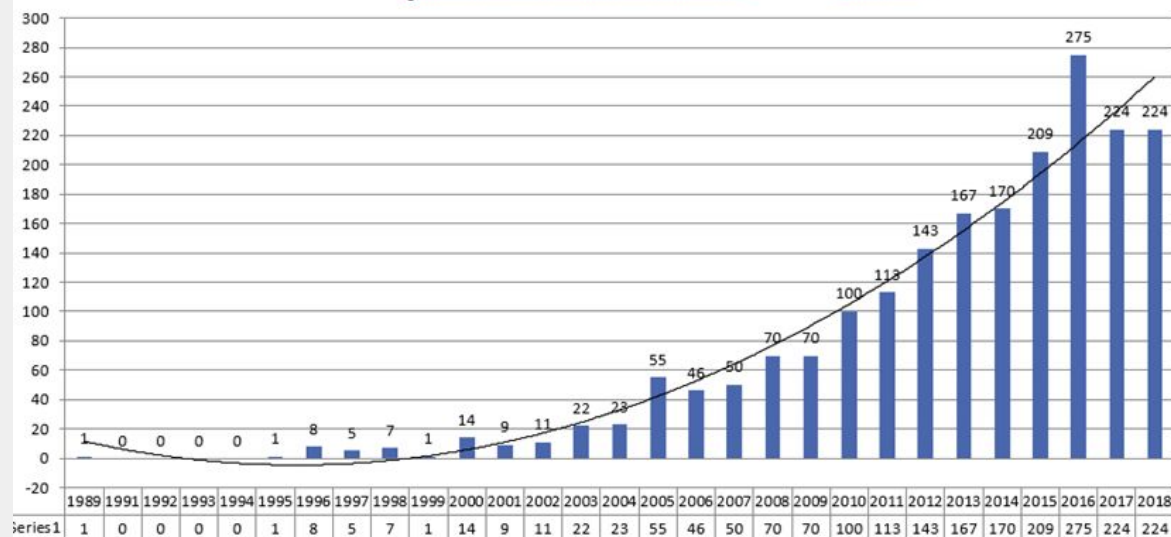
# Variations

- Teaching Games for Understanding (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982) UK
- Tactical Games Approach (Mitchell, Oslin, & Griffin, 1994) USA
- Designer games (Charlesworth, 1994) AUS
- Game Sense (Australian Sports Commission, 1996) AUS
- Play Practice (Launder, 2001) AUS
- Game Intelligence (Wein, 2004) GDR
- Tactical-Decision Learning Model (Gréhaigne, Wallian, & Godbout, 2005) FRA
- Ball-School Concept (Memmert & Roth, 2007) GDR
- Invasion Games Competence Model (Tallir, Lenior, Valcke, Musch, 2007) BE
- Play with Purpose (Pill, 2007) AUS
- Games Concept Approach (McNeill et al, 2009) SING
- Positive Pedagogy (Light & Harvey, 2017) AUS/USA



# Developments

## TGfU publications (Google Scholar)



(Adapted from Butler & Ovens, 2015)

## 'How does TGfU work?': examining the relationship between learning design in TGfU and a nonlinear pedagogy

Clara Wee Keat Tan ✉, Jia Yi Chow & Keith Davids

Pages 331-348 | Received 24 Jun 2010, Accepted 09 Mar 2011, Published online: 17 Nov 2011

## Teaching Games for Understanding and Situated Learning: Rethinking the Bunker-Thorpe Model

David Kirk and Ann MacPhail  
Loughborough University

Bunker and Thorpe first proposed Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) in 1982 as an alternative to traditional, technique-led approaches to games teaching and learning. Despite interest from teachers and researchers, there has been no attempt to review the TGfU model. This is an oversight, given the important advances in educational learning theory and ecological approaches

## How Would Socrates Teach Games? A Constructivist Approach

JOY BUTLER

It is clear from Socrates' evaluation (figure 1) that he would perform poorly at any level of our contemporary education system. He published nothing and thus would be denied college tenure. The k-12 school administration would deplore his dependence upon small teacher-pupil ratios. Any self-respecting physical educator would question the value of his dialectic approach if it

our present set of rules or we create a new set of rules that better account for what we perceive to be occurring. Piaget (1952) referred to this as assimilation and accommodation. Consider, for example, a young girl whose only experiences with sand have been in the sand box playing with her toys. Her experience of the sand is that it is stationary, coarse, and dry (always covered at night by a

essential truth. Essentially, the Socratic method takes a statement and then analyzes it to reveal its inconsistencies. Then after the positor accepts its fallacies, the questioner asks questions that help bring out the truth. Imagine Socrates talking to a physical educator about Dodgeball for example.

**Socrates:** What is this game "Dodgeball?"

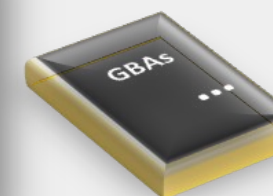
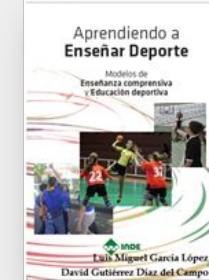
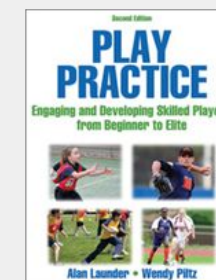
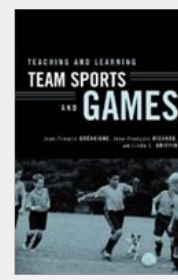
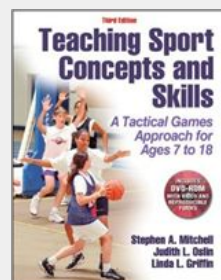
**Teacher:** Kids really love it! Well,

# Developments

## Game- Based Approach: TGfU and more

TABLE 1  
Selected Overview Textbooks, Conference Books, and Significant Events in the Area of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) and Subsequent Games Concept Approaches

Year	Authors	Content
1982	Bunker & Thorpe	Landmark article: a model for the teaching of games in secondary schools.
1986	Thorpe, Bunker, & Almond	Launches the TGfU approach into the physical education community with this book as the first TGfU resource.
1997	den Duyn	Emphasizes game sense and initial sport-specific movement skill development through the context of game play.
1997	Mitchell, Oslin, & Griffin	Teaches with the tactics of the tactical games model, skills, and off-the-ball movements to achieve greater flexibility for the teacher.
1999	Curriculum Planning and Development Division	The games concept approach became part of the National Curriculum. Revised physical education syllabus for primary, secondary, and preservice levels. Longitudinal study by researchers at Nanyang University followed.

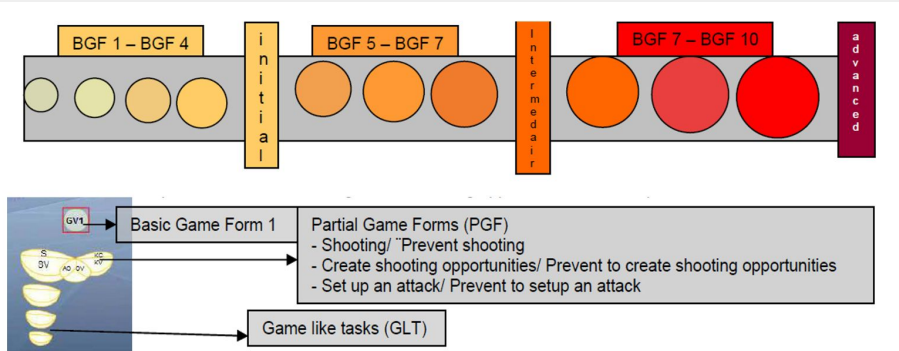


2013	Pill	With the game sense theory, develops a teaching guide for early-years and primary school educators for physical education.
2014	Light, Quay, Harvey, & Mooney	Examines new approaches in games teaching and team sport coaching that are player/student-centered and inquiry-based.
2015	Memmert	Introduces tactical creativity in the field of TGfU and discusses on the basis of a new theoretical framework (tactical creativity approach) new rules for training conditions for teaching and coaching tactical creativity to children and young people.



# Developments: Structure

# Tactical Game Model



+ DIFFERENT ROLES AS REFEREE OR COACH

## Invasion Game Competence Model



## Step game approach

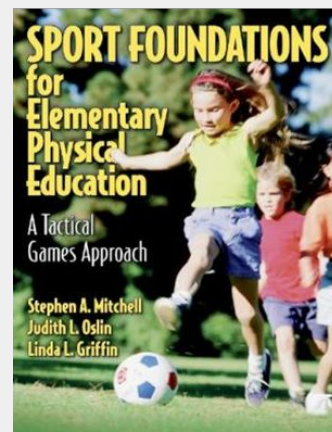
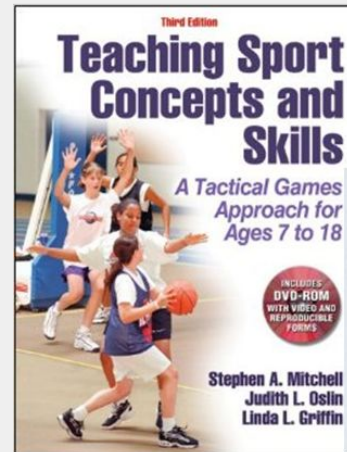


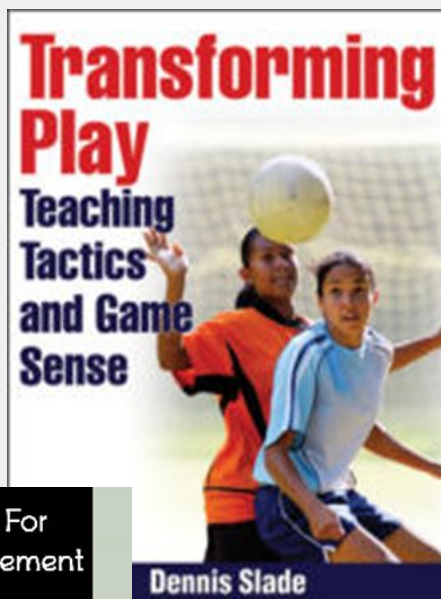
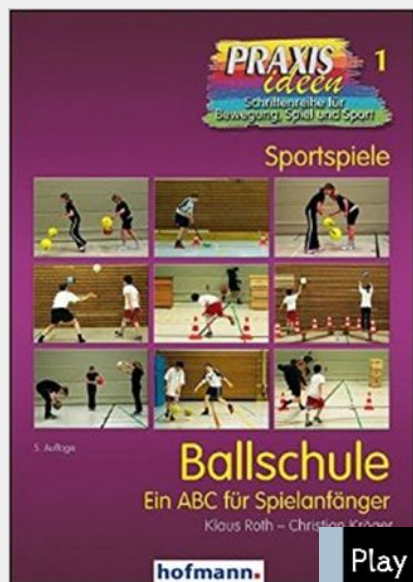
Table 2.2  
Tactical Problems, Movements, and Skills in Soccer

Tactical problems	Off-the-ball movements	On-the-ball skills
<b>Scoring</b>		
Maintaining possession of the ball	Supporting the ball carrier	Passing—short and long Control—feet, thigh, chest
Attacking the goal	Using a target player	Shooting, shielding, turning
Creating space in attack	Crossover play	First-time passing—give and go Crossover play Overlapping run
		Width—dribbling, 1 v 1, crossing, heading Depth—shielding

Table 2.4 Levels of Game Complexity for Invasion Games

Tactical goals and problems	Level of game complexity		
	Level I Three-a-side maximum	Level II Four-a-side maximum	Level III Six-a-side maximum
<b>Offense and scoring</b>			
Keeping possession	Pass, receive, footwork When to pass	Pass, receive, footwork Support	
Penetration and attack	Shooting, moving with the ball (dribbling) When to dribble and shoot	Shooting, feinting	Using a target forward Shooting, faking, change of speed, moving with the ball Moving to space, quick passing
<b>Defense and preventing scoring</b>			
Defending space		Guarding or marking, pressure Goalkeeper positioning	Clearing the ball, quick outlet pass Goalkeeper shot stopping and distribution, rebounding Tackling and stealing the ball
Defending the goal			
Winning the ball			
<b>Starting and restarting play</b>			
Beginning the game	Initiating play	Positioning in a triangle	
Restarting from the sideline and end line	Putting ball in play	Positioning	Quick restarts
Restarting from violations	Putting ball in play	Positioning	Quick restarts

# Developments: foundations



## Sport Specific Skill Development

Hockey	Netball	Australian Football	Rugby League
Cricket	Water Polo	Softball - Baseball	Soccer
Basketball	Golf	Tennis	Volleyball

## Transitional (Modified) Games

Minky	Netta-Netball	Auskick	Walla
Newkball	KangaCricket	Mini-Polo	T-Ball
OzTag	Aussie Hoops	MyGolf	Hot Shots

## Proficiency Barrier

## Fundamental Movement Skills

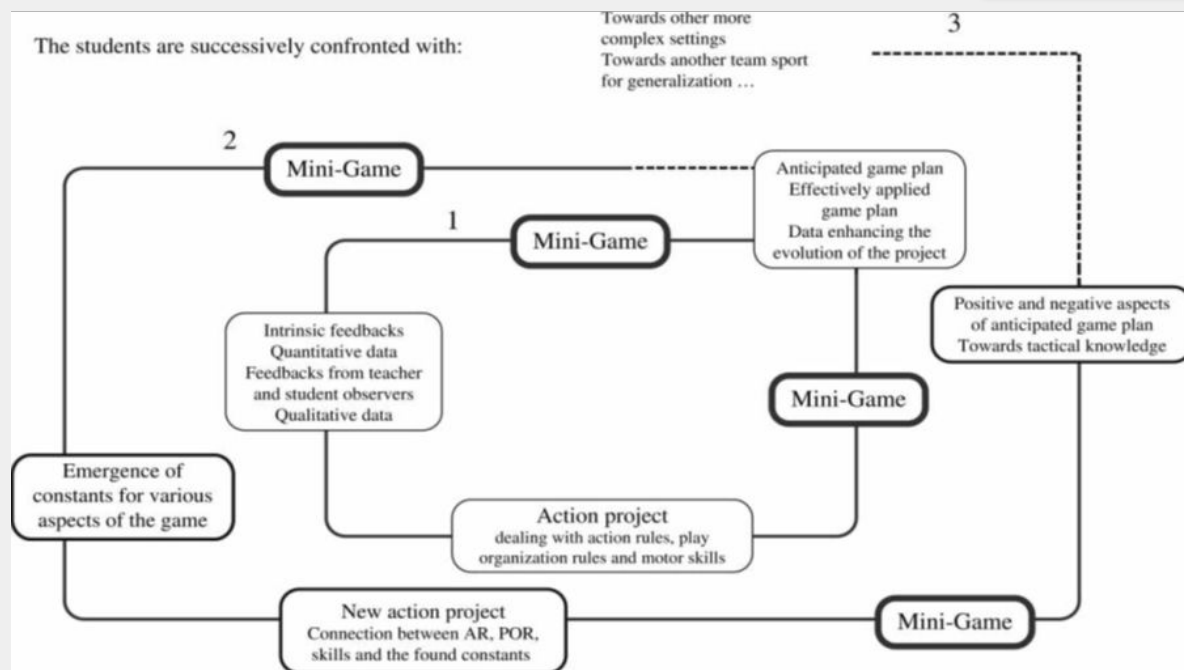
Bounce	Gallop	Roll	Stop
Catch	Hop	Run	Stay
Crawl	Jump	Swing	Kick
Skip	Throw	Dodge	Leap
Slide	Trap	Dribble	Pull
Turn	Fall	Strike	Walk



# Developments: questioning

**Tactical Decision  
Learning Model**  
debate of ideas  
ACTION PROJECT

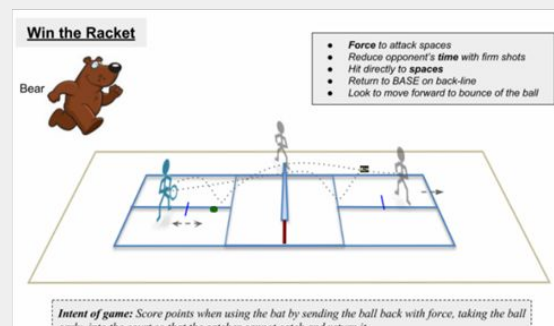
**PlaySport**  
Affective questioning  
CCR  
Check-connect-reflect



# Developments: motivation & creativity

Can Gee's Good (Digital) Game Design Features Inform Game-Based Sport Coaching?

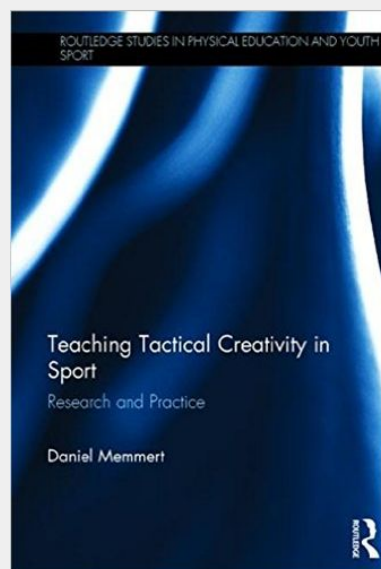
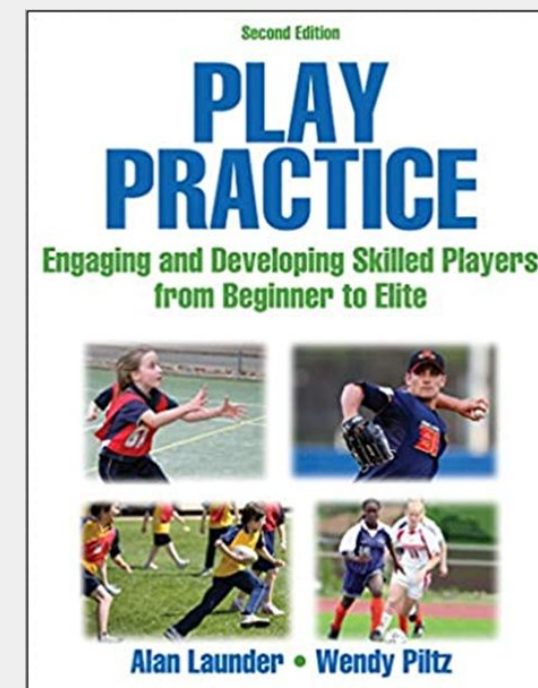
Amy Price<sup>1</sup>, Shane Pill<sup>2\*</sup>



Enhancing:

## Play Practice

Fantasy Games  
(Hooper)

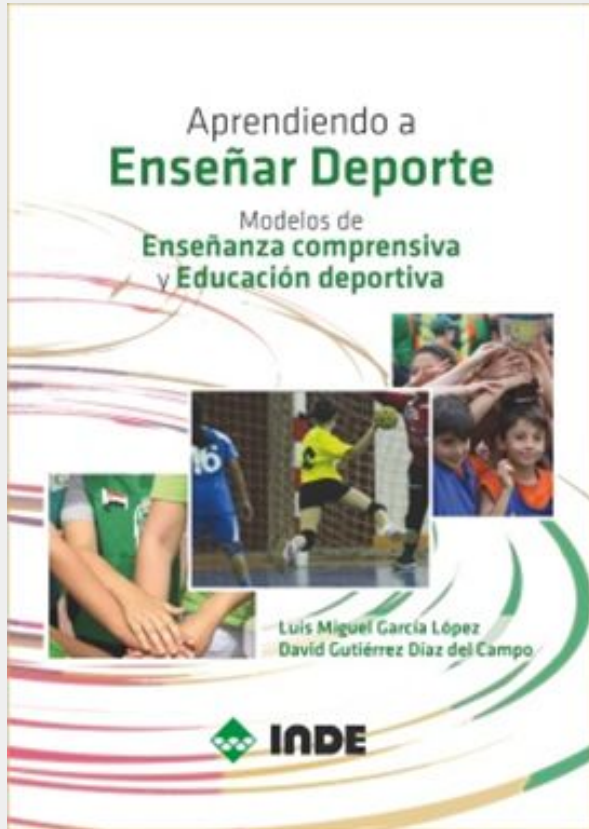


## Teaching Tactical Creativity in Sport



## Students-designed games

# Developments: GBA as global approach



Spain

## The Games Concept Approach (GCA) as a mandated practice: views of Singaporean teachers

Tony Rossi<sup>a,\*</sup>, Joan M. Fry<sup>b</sup>, Mike McNeill<sup>c</sup> and Clara W. K. Tan<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>University of Queensland, Australia; <sup>b</sup>William Paterson University, NJ, USA; <sup>c</sup>Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

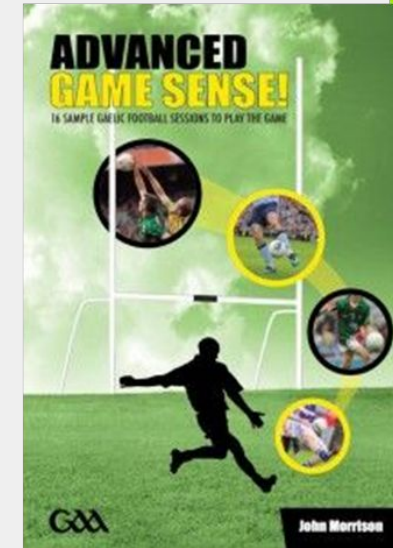
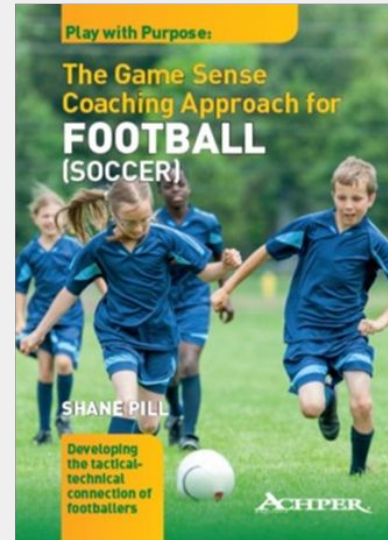
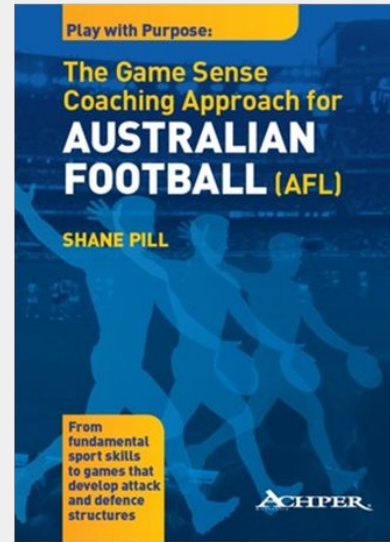


Netherlands





# Developments: Context adaptation



**Traditional VS Game Sense**

Traditional games-coaching	Game Sense approach to teaching
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performance</li><li>• Skill</li><li>• Winning-losing</li><li>• High focus on warm up, drills etc - game appears at end of lesson</li><li>• Strict rules</li><li>• Thorough instruction</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Game is main focus of lesson</li><li>• Sense of worth</li><li>• Belonging/sense of team</li><li>• Fundamental skill development</li><li>• Student centred</li><li>• Improves tactical play and confidence</li><li>• Reduced demands of technique</li></ul>

2010  
AFL NATIONAL  
COACHING CONFERENCE


AAMI Stadium, Adelaide,  
29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January

**"GAME SENSE COACHING & DEVELOPING DECISION-MAKING"**

Presenter: Ray Breed  
High Performance Manager  
North Melbourne Football Club

Contact:  
Ph: 0411 709 920

Email:  
[ray.breed@kangaroos.com.au](mailto:ray.breed@kangaroos.com.au)



## COACHING Game Sense

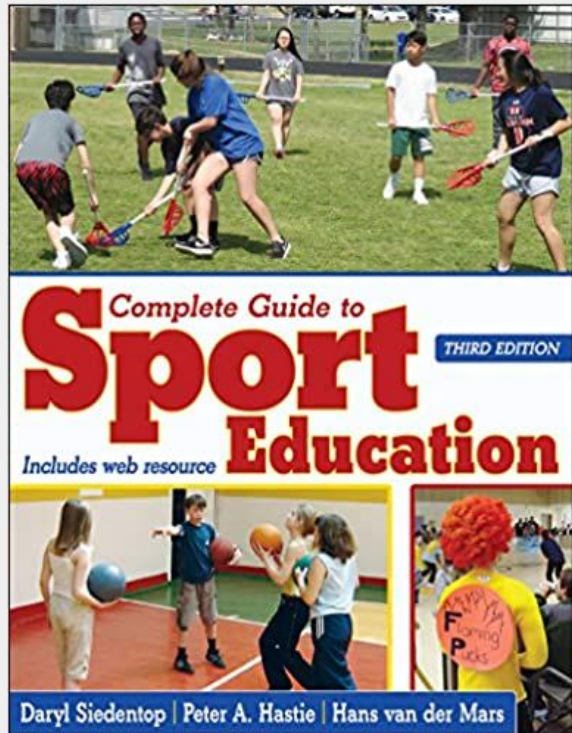


## BEGINNERS & VOLUNTEERS

TopPlay/Playsport  
Game Sense Cards



# Developments: positive pedagogy



Using a Game Sense Approach to Teach Buroinjin as an Aboriginal Game to Address Social Justice in Physical Education

in Journal of Teaching in Physical Education

John Williams<sup>\*1</sup> and Shane Pill<sup>\*2</sup>

[View More +](#)

# TGfU SIG History

1st International TGfU Conference:

2001 (1-4th August) Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, USA.

Sponsored by Plymouth State University, directed by Joy Butler. (150 attendees, 17 countries)

**Theme: Teaching Games for Understanding in Physical Education and Sport**

Keynote speakers – Len Almond, David Kirk, Judy Oslin, Scott Kretchmar

TGfU task force was formed after the first TGfU conference (2001)

TGfU Task Force evolved into the first Special Interest Group (SIG) of AIESEP

The TGfU SIG and SIG Executive replaces the TGfU Task Force (2002-2008).

The first TGfU SIG executive members were elected at the 2008 TGfU Conference Annual General Meeting.



# TGfU SIG History

The **International Advisory Board (IAB)** will be responsible for:

1. the dissemination of TGfU SIG policies to critical organizations within member's country
2. Informing the SIG of pertinent information regarding progress of TGfU in each member's country.





# TGfU SIG Projects

- [Leadership Fellows](#)
- Awards Scheme
- [40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary](#)
- IAB Projects
  - [TGfU at Home](#)
  - Professional Development
- TGfU Perspectives book (Routledge)





# TGfU SIG Consensus Statement

*In order to promote terminological consistency among researchers and practitioners, the TGfU IAB suggests the use of Game-Based Approach (GBA) to refer to the learner-centered teaching and coaching practice in which the modified games set the base and framework for developing thoughtful, creative, intelligent, and skillful players.*

*The TGfU IAB also encourages the use of Game-Based Approaches (GBAs) to refer to several well-established approaches that follow a GBA like TGfU, Game Sense, Play Practice, Tactical Games Model, Ballschool, Invasion Games Competence Model and other similar proposals.*

<http://www.tgfu.info/consensus-statement.html>

# Future Directions

- Integration with other scientific disciplines and frameworks
- Teacher/coach professional development
- Game making/designing
- Using games to help address equity and social justice
- Implementation in different cultural backgrounds

We are always welcoming and encouraging of practitioners to engage with these key debates to help meet the demands of the changing physical education landscape.

# 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

## • Blogs

- [Monthly Guest Blog](#)
- [Special Blogs](#)

## • Professional Development

- [Webinars](#)
- Global Lesson Study
- [NTG Symposium](#)



### TGfU SIG 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Webinar Series

#### "Assessing in GBAs" Webinar Series

This webinar series is an opportunity to understand learning assessment in Game-Based Approaches and to apply it to new practices and research. The webinars consist of four lectures and one seminar, and you are encouraged to attend all of them because they are closely related to each other.

All webinars are FREE and have a maximum capacity of 100

**Webinar 1: Framework of Learning Assessment in GBAs**  
 Speaker: Dr. Naoki Suzuki  
 Date: 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
 Time: 1:00pm (UTC): 8:00am (EST), 10:00pm (JST)

**Webinar 2: Achievements and Challenges of Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI)**  
 Speaker: Dr. Steve Mitchell  
 Date: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
 Time: 1:00pm (UTC): 8:00am (EST), 10:00pm (JST)

**Webinar 3: Game Contribution Assessment Instrument (GCAI) as a Comprehensive Assessment for GBAs**  
 Speaker: Dr. Naoki Suzuki  
 Date: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
 Time: 1:00pm (UTC): 8:00am (EST), 10:00pm (JST)

**Webinar 4: Assessing Tactical Decision-making Competency in Game Play**  
 Speaker: Dr. Karen Richardson  
 Date: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
 Time: 1:00pm (UTC): 8:00am (EST), 10:00pm (JST)

**Webinar 5: Thinking about Future Assessment**  
 Speakers: Dr. Naoki Suzuki, Dr. Steve Mitchell and Dr. Karen Richardson  
 Guest Speakers: PE teachers  
 Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
 Time: 1:00pm (UTC): 9:00am (EDT), 10:00pm (JST)

February 2022



Action research with youth in recreational programs: Making the case for TGfU

By Jennie Petersen

January 2022



How can Teaching Games for Understanding and Sport Education be combined? Practical tips for Primary School

By Dr Eva Guijarro

# 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

- PE Matters article
- Publications promotion
- Interview with Rod Thorpe and David Bunker
- Video Project

**CELEBRATING  
40 YEARS OF  
TEACHING  
GAMES FOR  
UNDERSTANDING**



Teaching Games for Understanding SIG  
TGfU Executive

David Gutierrez (Chair); Alan Owens (Past Chair); Joy Butler (Chair Elect); Daniel Memmert (Secretary); Kelly Ann Parry (Communications); Heidi Bohler (Treasurer)

**VIDEO LIBRARY PROJECT**

1. Net & wall: Progression and Transfer	2. Invasion games: Modified games: Modification by adaptation	3. Invasion games: transfer, modification representation, modification exaggeration	4. Net & wall: Modification by adaptation
			





# Thank you for listening



## **Contact Information**

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