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# Teaching Sport History at the Secondary Level

by

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Sport history by its very nature is a self-learning educational activity, and is a subject of much interest to people of all ages. The potential of such a high interest area as a way to help young people improve their learning skills was very apparent. A major problem at the secondary level of education has been the attitude of indifference of many students and their resistance to learning. There often is a wide range of ability and interest levels in the same classroom. It was felt that a class such as sport history might be a means of encouraging student learning. We deal daily with students who are literally non-readers, while at the same time we have college level readers in the same class. Young people from such extremes of academic ability as well as many average students have in common an avid interest in one or more aspects of the world of sport. It was thought that such a class could assist these students to learn and willingly apply the various skills of learning.

From the beginning, it was strongly felt that a class in sport history must be based on academic performance rather than be an easy, "fun and games" type of class where watching sports movies would be the highlight. In the past few years, a separate class, Sports Literature, within the English Department district-wide, has been developed and is very popular.

Because of the desire to encourage general study of the total scope of sport history, yet to allow flexibility for the student to do concentrated, in-depth study of the areas of sport of particular interest to the individual student, it was decided to establish the course around the teaching method of individualized instruction.

## GENERAL BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

*To successfully complete this course, the student will do the following:*

- 1. Assume full responsibility for planning, scheduling, and doing the necessary projects, learning activities, readings, etc., in order to cover the outline and contents of the course;*
- 2. Investigate through various opportunities the limitless scope of sport and the endless array of kinds of sports that have been apart of the history of man, ranging from those activities related to man's survival to those that are unusual and valuable only in that they are pleasurable;*
- 3. Discover, record, and report factual, biographical, and other information about various phases of sport in general and about specific sporting activities and events;*
- 4. Explain through writing and or oral means to another person and to groups, both as an individual and as a member of a group, the various phases of sport in general terms and about certain sports in detail;*
- 5. Analyze sports and their histories, make comparisons of various types of sport, and interpret and draw conclusions from the historical study of sport(s), including observing the similarities of sports found all over the world as well as throughout the history of man;*
- 6. Describe the causes of the conflicts found in society which exist in sport as well, study these problems, and seek solutions or ways of improving these undesirable social situations and problems;*
- 7. Determine, by means of self-analysis and through a joint evaluation by the student and teacher, the quality of the work done -this involves a mutual determination of the grade on each project and the final grade for the class.*

## MAJOR CONCEPTS FOR THE COURSE

- A. By thinking about the role that sport has played in the life of man and the development of civilization throughout the history of man's existence, especially at the present time, the student will*
  - 1. Realize that sport has had a significant influence in the history of man, and*
  - 2. Through self-analysis, determine how much of a factor sport has been in the student's own life, causing insight into his own philosophy of life.*
- B. By studying sport as a whole and the various individual and team forms of sport, the student can develop an interest which might be useful at the present time and in future years. Basic to this appreciation is an understanding of the history and development of sports, knowledge of the rules and basic strategy and purpose of the games, and major events and leading personalities over the years.*
- C. By discovering and using the various methods of research, the student will*
  - 1. Realize some of the problems and difficulties encountered by a researcher, and*
  - 2. Gain an appreciation of the importance of thoroughness and accuracy in presenting factual information, data, descriptions, accounts of athletic competitions, etc.*
- D. By delving into the various aspects (not just one specialized area) about many sports (not just one sport), the student will develop a broader awareness of the complexity of sport.*
- E. By observing, reading about, and discussing the varied forms of athletic competition the student by experience will further understand the act of learning.*
- F. By having completed the respective projects, and over the course of the semester having accomplished a great deal of work, the student will have proven that he can do the work and will gain considerable personal satisfaction by this achievement.*