

CASE STUDY 2 2021-22

Competition

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Background

Competition in the Cleveland area has traditionally been the main focus of schools. The same schools tend to win the cluster competitions and the same schools generally end up last. As the new SGO, (started in September 2021) the first thing I was told was that competition is what the schools value, competition is what the schools want and that is all we need to concentrate on, particularly as most schools buy in to the Cleveland School Sport Partnership.

The Cleveland SSP had an extensive competition programme, which followed the format of cluster competition, Partnership, and County finals. There were four clusters of schools. Up until the point I was appointed SGO, each cluster had a one-day-a-week School Sports Coordinator in post. Two retired as they had heard that the School Games and felt that the time was right to retire.

Due to the retirements, the new SG Outcomes and the appointment of a new SGO, it gave me the confidence to make changes sooner than I otherwise would have.



Intent

The intention was to change staff perceptions of what a competitive event is, and to implement some of the changes to competition events into next year's Events Calendar. This focussed on outcome 2, to create positive experiences ensuring our events are designed to reflect children's motivation, competence and confidence and has clear intent.

I made some bold changes on day one.

Gone were the SSCo roles.

Replaced with an SGO & Partnership Manager, a Teaching & Learning Lead, and a Competition & Leadership Manager.

Gone were the four clusters of schools.

Replaced with The Cleveland Partnership. Cleveland is mostly a rural area, so we continued to work in the four areas, or close by, but stopped referring to them as clusters. For logistical reasons and the cost of transport, we have now created a Coast area and a Country area. Schools can enter in either area, usually choosing the one closest to them. This has meant that the events are bigger, but we now have fewer events that are the same, freeing up more time for different events.

Gone were the cluster Primary Link Teacher meetings. **Replaced** with PE Subject Leaders Meetings for all schools in the area to attend. This was to facilitate more learning. Some clusters only had five schools, so they now had 19 schools to share good practice with. I could also explain the 'why' for the changes being implemented across the partnership, giving the same message to all PE Leads at the same time.



Due to Covid, the competition calendar had not been finalised for the year. That enabled me to make some changes at the beginning, which wasn't popular, and did create some stiff conversation which usually started with 'That won't work!'. My response was simply, 'How do we know it won't work if we haven't tried?'. I made it known that trial and error is all part of the process, and that we would change some things and keep some for this year, reviewing all events as we went and at the end of the year.

Implementation

The fact that the Competition Calendar had not been planned gave me the chance to re-format it and once again make changes that I would have otherwise made for the following year.

Working alongside other SGO's in the Tees Valley, each term had a theme taken from the School Games Values, with an event which reflected that value. Our events had that value run throughout with certificates given t each event for those children who displayed that particular value. I had pop-up banners made for each value which were taken to events.

Intention statements were added for each event on the calendar using the YST Physical Me, Social Me, Healthy Me and Thinking Me, along with the type of event, such as 'Festival' or 'Pathway'. More detailed Intention statements were added to the Events Plan given to schools.



The major change was to change the format of some of the competitions. In the past, all events were competitions.

We introduced Festivals to target children's competence and confidence, such as a Fundamental Super-Hero Academy (festival), where schools brought a whole class to take part in a carousel of fun activities to help children with the balance and coordination. Staff were also able to take away some ideas for lessons.

Another major change was the introduction of 'Development' events running alongside a Competitive event. This was a hard nut to crack because, once again, I was told that it would not work. Our first event was Netball. One half of the sports hall was run as a competition, and the other half development. The difference between the two was that the rules in the development event were changed slightly to encourage a higher score (a point was given for hitting the ring, and two points for a successful shot) and there was more explaining of the rules and tactics during the game, much the same as a PE lesson, so that children could learn. Children and Teacher feedback was very positive from both sides of the hall, as those who wanted to compete could, and those who needed more game time could learn without the added pressure of a full competition.

The success of the Netball event changed everything. There was a willingness amongst all involved to try and

improve other events.



Impact

On the back of the successful Netball event, it was decided that the next development day would be for the cricket events in the summer term. The usual cluster events were renamed 'Coast and Country', with two events rather than the traditional four.

Local cricket grounds were used, and volunteer coaches recruited to help on the day. The schools whose children were highly skilled in cricket entered the competition and were not frustrated by the school teams who were not skilled, and vice-versa - the school teams who needed more skills development enjoyed a day of coaching and fun games. The local club was also able to recruit new members to their junior section.

As well as the success of the children, taking part in appropriate activity, the teaching staff were also very pleased with the changes taking place. They felt that their children were benefitting from the activity they were taking part in, rather than just another competition to attend.



At the final PE Subject Leader meeting of the year, I asked them if they would like to go back to how we used to run meetings and events, or continue on our journey to improve our physical activity and competition offer. It was a 100% thumbs up for continuing to improve our offer, and to keep the schools together and not return to cluster events or meetings.

Next year's Events Calendar has had a full re-vamp. There are events for every year group, from a story-book trail for Early Years, to ReActiv8 festivals to reengage children into physical activity, to Development days, Fundamentals (Manipulation), and of course, the Fundamental Superhero Academy... and competition.

All we have done this year is catch up. We have educated staff, in-particular PE Leads, explaining why we are making changes. We have included CPD at every meeting, such as 'Reframing Competition' and 'Active 60 minutes'. Our journey is long, but when everyone we work with has bought in to the changes, it makes all the hard work worth it.





I have not done this on my own. Nor can I make claim to the ideas. All I did was implement some of the amazing work SGO's are already doing. I have had incredible support from the other Tees Valley SGO's, all of whom have a wealth of knowledge and experience and are always keen to share. In particular, I would like to mention my mentors and YST Development Coaches: Claire Tennyson and Dan Moody who have inspired me and have given me the best possible start as a new SGO. *Thank you*