

Upper Canada schools adopt 'physical literacy'

Posted Oct 6, 2011 By [Doreen Barnes](#)

EMC News - During the August timeframe, 150 teachers from the Upper Canada District School Board voluntarily attended the sixth Annual Quality Daily Physical Education Conference, Physical Literacy: 'The New Brain Surgery' at Thousand Islands Secondary School in Brockville.

The keynote speaker and author was Ted Temertzoglou, (former teacher at Birchmount Park Collegiate Institute, Toronto), who spoke about students' needs for physical activities, about putting the fun and social aspect back into it.

Temertzoglou brought along his Healthy Active Living, Keep Fit, Stay Healthy, Have Fun book which each student taking part in the physical education program will receive to take home.

"There is information in here (book) for kids on the curriculum that deals with all sorts of things that will impact their lives from the day they are born until the day they die," said Temertzoglou. "The way the whole program works, this (book) is intended to go home to moms and dads because unlike math or science, this impacts the family's climate as well."

Temertzoglou's book contains sections on What is Healthy Active Living and How Do You Go About It, Appraisals and Fitness, Core Health (sex, drugs, rock and roll, and nutrition) with all the Activities In Sports grouped.

"I teach the kids the fundamental movements to become proficient movers in all of these activities," added Temertzoglou. "It's about healthy active living, it's for everybody. And there's never been a resource like this for our kids."

The book took three years to write, is purely Canadian and user friendly.

Included in the morning session along with Temertzoglou, was a discussion on research done by Dr. John Ratey, a clinical psychiatrist, a Harvard professor and author of a groundbreaking book, Spark. He found that exercise, getting kids to move was the best medicine.

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE

The person who organized this annual conference and a champion of the re-introduction of physical activity into schools is former Thousand Islands Secondary School principal Randy Ruttan.

"A number of years ago we started to implement a quality daily physical education in the schools of Upper Canada District School Board," said Ruttan. "It became part of the strategic plan that we mandated and when the minister (health) mandated 20 minutes of daily physical activity, we felt it should be curriculum-based. About five years ago we mandated 30 minutes a day in all the elementary schools, kindergarten to Grade 8 and in Grade 9 there's one credit towards physical education."

Ruttan went on to say that the challenge was to build capacity in the staff which led them to start an additional qualification course and this mini physical education conference. This year, the sixth year for the Annual Quality Daily Physical Education conference, is called Physical Literacy: 'The New Brain Surgery'.

"The reason why we called it the Physical Literacy: 'New Brain Surgery' is because all the research coming out now is showing that the brain tissue actually does grow as the result of exercise. That's Dr. John Ratey's research and there are all kinds of stuff out there around neurogenesis, growing brain tissue. We know as well about the elderly delaying the onset of dementia by exercising the brain or just exercise."

For the first time, this year students will be tested in four fitness components, called Fitnessgram. It's a pacer test with maximum aerobic capacity, a sit and reach which is flexibility, push-ups for

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Doreen Barnes, Perth EMC

One exercise-testing tool that will be used is the Sit and Reach. Here, teachers Keith Kelsey of Chimo Elementary School of Smiths Falls and Sue St. Marseille of Rothwell-Osnabruck Elementary and Secondary Schools of Ingleside, demonstrate the technique used.

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