

Digital engagement

Using the digital allure to engage less active children in physical activity - Nancy Murdoch

WHICH AREA OF THE SGO TASK LIST DOES THIS IMPACT?

1	Increasing engagement in School Games
2	Developing competitive opportunities
3	Increasing and sustaining participation
4	Workforce – Broadening the range of participation opportunities

ABOUT NANCY

Sedgemoor SGO Nancy Murdoch works three and a half days per week – three days as SGO and half a day delivering curriculum competitions linked to a ‘buy in’ service. Nancy works with 47 schools across the rural area of Somerset.

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WHY

- There was a need for a new way to engage children in physical activity for non-active Year 3 and 4 pupils who had low levels of self confidence, low competence levels and were motivated by playing video games.
- The SGO believes we need to get into these children’s minds, understand their motivations and understand their world.
- Too many children spend too much time playing video games, using games consoles and not being active enough. They need to sit less and move more.
- The first MOTIV8 festival included a carousel of activities all based on games that the children would recognise, e.g. Temple Run, Noughts and Crosses, Angry Birds, Heads Up (charades), Top Trumps, Pokemon Go, Mario Carts, Emoticons, etc – making the video games they love into real life versions.
- The SGO worked with local schools in meetings and via email, so that the staff really understood the festivals and what sort of children they were aimed at (those with low levels of confidence and low competence levels in physical activity, but were motivated by having fun).
- Children received a party invitation to attend the festival. The invitation looked funky and like a text message conversation (once again, getting into the children’s worlds).
- Everyone at the festival was either on the Blue Team or the Red Team. Leaders were given a double-sided results sheet (one side red and one side blue). After each activity the leader held up either the blue or the red side to show the SGO which team won.
- Competitions at each activity were not solely based on athletic ability. One of the activities was based on Top Trumps cards. The children took turns to run out and collect a card. Upon their return they carried out a Top Trump ‘battle’. The winner of this activity was the winner of the ‘battles’. This is one example of really focusing on the process and not the outcome when planning a competition or festival – the children were being physically active, but it didn’t really matter who was the most athletic as long as they were having fun (Competition Principle 2).
- The SGO worked hard to ensure the event had a fun party-like feel. This included music and ensuring that the SGO and all of the leaders were energetic, highly enthusiastic and passionate about getting these children active and having fun – a great example of the facility and the environment of the competition or festival reflecting the children’s motivations, competence and confidence (Competition Principle 5).



ACTION

- The SGO designed her MOTIV8 festivals. The festivals were designed ‘by accident’ with her own children. The children would not get off their games console whilst playing ‘Temple Run’. The SGO decided to design a version of ‘Temple Run’ outside to get them out and active. They loved it!



IMPACT

- Volunteers, leaders and officials were appropriately trained and displayed behaviours reflective of the nature of the competition (Competition Principle 3).
- Future MOTIV8 festivals were delivered due to the high demand. Leaders then helped to design the activities. They found this easy as they understood the games and were very creative.
- The SGO designed a certificate for the children attending. This has more details on the back about getting more active.
- These children either did not usually attend sporting events, or felt very anxious about doing so. The way the children were invited to the Motiv8 festivals and the party atmosphere has reduced these anxieties significantly.
- One boy always wrote about his Xbox in creative writing lessons and had never taken part in a sports festival before. He came back fully engaged!
- The children are engaged in the activities very quickly because they understand the games. The digital allure!
- **“The children loved it. Red faced and out of breath, but motivated and on task all the way”** – Teacher
- **“It was great to see these particular children so excited, animated and fully engaged in all the activities”** – Teacher
- **“Jo gave it 10 out of 10. That is the first time I have heard him use that expression. He was so energised by the whole experience”** – Teacher
- **“Our children loved it! They are going to tell the whole school about it in assembly”** – Teacher
- **“It was super; the children were buzzing when we left”** – Teacher



NEXT

- To deliver a MOTIV8 roadshow. The SGO would go into a school and train Y6 leaders to run MOTIV8 activities, so they can deliver a club within school. The SGO would return to school at a later date to host an intra-school festival and invite parents/guardians to get involved.
- The County Sports Partnership wants to replicate this at their family fun days.



TIPS

- Keep it simple and manageable. In one hour, deliver five or six activities within the carousel.
- Let your leaders be creative.
- Don't forget the leaders need to have high energy levels.
- Ensure you work with the schools to invite the right children.
- Encourage the schools to complete the High Quality Competition principles tool on the School Games website to understand how to engage the right children.
- If you are going to run a festival like this, you really need to be passionate. If you are then it will work.

