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**THE
“TEACHING GAMES FOR UNDERSTANDING”
PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL
- A COMPARATIVE STUDY INTO THE EFFECTS ON
KNOWLEDGE AND GAME PERFORMANCE -**

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ABSTRACT

This purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of the alternative “Teaching Games for Understanding” (TGFU) instructional model for education in sport and games. The model was compared to a traditional approach to instruction that has been and continues to remain dominant across physical education curriculums. This model is defined as “skill-based” instruction.

The study was undertaken in the naturalistic setting of a New Zealand secondary school with year 10 students. The game adopted for instruction was short tennis. Two classes of students were assigned treatment under one of the instructional models in an eight-lesson unit with a third class assigned as a control. Twenty-two students were tested on declarative knowledge of short tennis rules and scoring, shots/strokes, and strategies in the form of a pre and post written test. Students’ pre and post game performance was measured using the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI). Player performance was coded from video footage to assess tactical court movement and decision-making as well as skill execution.

Declarative knowledge domain results revealed a statistically significant improvement in both treatment groups for overall knowledge. In specific knowledge categories, the TGFU treatment group also improved significantly in skill and strategy related knowledge over instruction time whilst the skill-based group improved significantly in skill-related knowledge only. The TGFU group’s skill-related knowledge improvement was also significantly higher than the skill-based group. Game performance results indicated that some improvement was evident in both treatment groups following instruction with a trend for a greater degree of improvement in tactical performance by the TGFU group. However this improvement was not found to be statistically significant for either treatment group or between groups for any GPAI component.

Findings are analysed and discussed in light of previous studies and recommendations are provided for future research into game and sport pedagogy.

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