As a physical education professional, have you ever walked into a classroom teacher’s room and admired the walls and bulletin boards created to display student work, key concepts and behavior management materials? Physical educators at all grade levels; including adapted physical educators, often provide instruction in open environments and classrooms without walls, such as gymnasiums, school playgrounds and athletic fields. Open teaching environments present unique challenges when it comes to implementing and displaying class information such as class schedules, routines and procedures, rules and consequences, and key lesson concepts (Lavay, French, & Henderson, 2006; Rink, 2006; Sidentop & Tannenhill, 2000).

Verbal instructions and reminders alone frequently miss the mark when it comes to communicating important class information and instruction. Students need to receive instruction in a manner that matches their preferred learning style (e.g., auditory, kinesthetic, or visual). Approximately 40 percent of students learn more effectively when able to read or see the information (Dunn, 1983), justifying the need for visual posting of class information. Viewing the posted material can help students internalize the class information presented by the teacher.

A viable option for physical education professionals who do not consistently have access to wall space, or who are assigned to more than one school is the use of a trifold display board – a positive, creative, economical, and portable way to display student information in physical education. The display boards are lightweight, useful either indoors or outdoors, and easy to transport for physical education specialists who travel among schools. These display boards take the place of classroom walls and provide a way for physical educators to display and communicate information visually. Physical educators can individualize the contents and style of the display board to meet the unique needs and interests of each specific class. For example, use trifold display boards to post class routines, rules, consequences, motivational slogans, and team building exercises (Glover & Anderson, 2003). Folders or pouches on the board can store reinforcement materials, such as stickers or certificates for younger students and baseball/sports cards or opportunity passes for older students. Figure 1 provides an example of class information in a trifold display board layout developed by one of the authors that incorporates key behavior management concepts to the class. The display board includes a daily class schedule/calendar, class rules and consequences, routines, motivational quotes/slogans, (center view) reinforcement charts, student of the week, and student levels of responsibility (side views).
Additional key class information or concepts to include on the trifold display board may include the following ideas:

- Age appropriate reinforcing, such as stickers, baseball cards, reward coupons, and fitness tickets. These should be kept in an envelope or folder that attaches to the board with Velcro.

- Pictorial representations of exercise sequences for students to refer to when leading warm-ups and cool-downs, helping to promote leadership and personal responsibility.

- Pictorial representation of dance steps/routines for students to refer to when introducing new material.

- The school/class mascot name (e.g., Patriot Pride, Red Sox Nation, Go Beach, etc.) to foster school spirit and promote teamwork.

- Individual student accomplishments including certificates, awards, newspaper articles, and personal best times/scores.

- Identify a “Student of the Week” who may be designated as the exercise leader or to assist with distribution of equipment (Lavay, French, Henderson, Silliman-French, Alexander, & Lawrence, 2003).

- A list of the Hellison’s levels of self responsibility (Hellison, 2003).

- Squad or team lists posted to reduce wait time.

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**Rules**

In this area state class rules, consequences, routines, etc. that guide & reinforce teacher-student/student-teacher responsibilities. Can post student responsibility behaviors here.

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**Teamwork**

Students can create & adopt teamwork slogans like “GO BEACH” or “If you rest, you’ll rust”.

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**Calendar**

Develop a calendar to identify units, theme-based activities, and/or special events (e.g., off-campus activities, guest speakers). This section can also contain future planning for students’ self-responsibility toward next day/week goals.

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**Be Creative Have Fun!**

Attach file folders with Velcro to keep track of stickers, reward coupons (elementary), fitness tickets (middle school/high school) from which students may choose.

File folders may also contain some of the cue/task cards used when teaching certificates, surprises or specially constructed awards for use when catching students “being good.”

In this section post the name & picture of the “Student of the Week” or those students who help others and display responsible behavior.

**Display a large visual for student responsibility levels. Teacher and students design levels of student responsibility.

For example,

**SLAM DUNK**

- Cooperates & helps others
- Participates in activities consistently
- Is a team player

**THREE POINT SHOT**

- Cooperates with others
- Participates in activities part of the time

**AIR BALL**

- Does not cooperate with others
- Does not participate in activities
- Plays alone

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Figure 1. Trifold Display Board
- Behavior/skill rubrics to clearly define class expectations and assessment criteria.

- Motivational posters or photographs to coincide with teaching unit themes.

- An area to organize Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) cards for visual learners, such as students with autism.

- Picture cues that reinforce cognitive concepts, such as target heart rate equation or components of health related fitness.

Trifold display board systems are fun to create, and student input can be useful when determining themes and items to be included. As the school year progresses, students benefit from opportunities to develop responsibility by helping the physical educator determine what to include on the display board. This empowers students to take greater responsibility for their appropriate behavior and enhances their intrinsic motivation. For example, in Figure 2, the teacher incorporated a surfer theme to appeal to the interests of her middle school students in Southern California after taking a survey of their interests. Her students chose their class mascot name, the “Mavericks,” and each of students’ names was displayed on a seashell. Pictures of the bone, muscle, and sign of the week promote cognitive concepts. The Tap-Out Chart, “Riding the Wave of Success,” coincides with the surfer theme, is appropriate for the age of the students and is a modification of Hellison’s leveling system, where students tap on the specific level on the chart to show the teacher what level of responsibility they best demonstrated that day during class. Staying with a surfer theme, the levels were simplified to the following three levels:

**On The Beach:** Represents the lowest level of personal responsibility; students at this level did not participate in the lesson or follow class rules.

**Paddling Out:** Represents a more desired level of personal responsibility; students at this level participated during lesson but needed reminders to remain on task and follow class rules.
In the Barrel: Represents the highest level of personal responsibility; students participated, followed class rules, remained on task, and helped others.

When creating the trifold display board be creative and definitely do not confine your efforts to the boundaries of the display board. Utilize the space on both the front and back of the board. Consider using multiple boards for different seasons, sports or themes. Be creative. Have fun. When it comes to choosing what to include and how to arrange the board, you and your students are the experts. The following is a general list of ideas, materials, and resources to help get started with the development of your portable trifold display board:

**Ideas:**

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE:** Incorporate colorful, concise, and simple concepts that are developmentally appropriate for your students. Move from simple to more complex as your students begin to grasp class information and concepts.

- **THEMES:** Holidays, seasons, movies, sport themes, and interdisciplinary applications are essential. Incorporate teamwork, cooperative theme units, and team building challenge ideas (Glover & Anderson, 2003).

- **STREAMLINE:** You do not have to be a graphic designer to create a functional display board. Teacher supply, stationary, and office supply stores carry pre-cut and ready-to-mount materials. Visit the Instructional Media Center in your school district for die cuts, paper, and a wealth of resources, including the all-important laminating machine.

- **COLLABORATE:** Team with other professionals (e.g., classroom teachers, art teachers) or parents when developing interdisciplinary ideas and collecting supplies for your display boards. Post a wish list of materials on your website or in the lounge or workroom at your school.

**Materials:**

- **Purchase TRI-FOLD DISPLAY BOARDS** at most teacher and office supply stores. They are constructed of cardboard
or foam board and are available in a variety of colors. The cost is usually $4-14, but ask for a teacher discount or, better yet, a donation.

- **Use VELCRO**, instead of tape or glue, to easily add or change concepts to meet the needs of different classes, ages, or interests of your students.

- **LAMINATE** or use **TRANSPARENT SHEET PROTECTORS** to increase the shelf life of your creations.

- **READY-MADE BORDERS** that relate to the theme add color and interest to your teaching units.

- **CONTACT PAPER** works well as a stimulating background. However, use caution not to over-stimulate certain groups of students (e.g., students with autism, ADHD).

**Resources:**

- **GOOGLE IMAGES** and **INTERNET SITES**, such as PE Central, are excellent sources for graphics and themes.

Figures 3 and 4 provide additional examples of creative trifold display boards. Figure 3 depicts a brightly colored display board designed to appeal to younger students from preschool to second grade. Once again, students’ names are an important feature, as are the students’ reinforcement charts. The happy face/sad face responsibility tap-out chart is easy for younger students to comprehend, with students placing a clothespin on the level that best represents their level of responsibility. A list of the daily sequenced warm-up exercises is displayed, and new exercises include a diagram and written instructions for student reference. In Figure 4, the teacher used a popular movie theme, *Finding Nemo*, to capture the attention of her primary/elementary-age students.

**Conclusion**

In summary, physical education specialists need to keep in mind that there is no "cookbook" or one-size-fits-all approach to follow when developing a portable trifold display board system. The potential configurations and uses of a portable trifold display board system are endless. Consider what works
best for your teaching situation and the unique physical, cognitive, and social needs of your students. Most importantly, a trifold display board system is a useful motivational tool that can help communicate class information in order to engage students and promote a positive learning environment in the "classroom without walls."

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References

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