

1. Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) Approach

The Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) approach was developed by researchers at Loughborough University to tap into children's inherent desire to play. Bunker and Thorpe (1982) developed TGfU around the concept of **teaching pupil's games by playing games**. Butler et al. (2008) identified six Basic TGfU Concepts:

1. *Teach games through games.*
2. *Break games into their simplest format - then increase complexity.*
3. *Participants are intelligent performers in games.*
4. *Every learner is important and is involved.*
5. *Participants need to know the subject matter.*
6. *Need to match participants' skill and challenge.*

Recent approaches to TGfU have advocated for a thematic approach to teaching games. Rather than teaching sport-specific units (e.g., volleyball unit, soccer unit), pupils gain skills and knowledge to apply to different sports by playing a variety of games associated with 4 main game categories:

- **Target Games** in which the participant propels an object, preferably with a high degree of accuracy, at a target (*knock down, hit, go through, bounce in etc.*)
- **Net/Wall Games** in which the participant propels an object into space trying to make it difficult for an opponent to return it (over a net or off a wall – squash).
- **Striking/Fielding Games** in which the participant strikes an object so it is placed away from defenders in the field allowing points to be scored or 'runs' to be made.
- **Invasion Games** in which participants move into ('invade') an opponent's territory to score. These are the most common type of Games / Sports played and the most complex due to the relationship in space, rules and numbers.

These categories represent games and activities that are similar in structure. By exposing pupils to the primary rules, fundamental skills, and tactical problems associated with each category, they become literate in a variety of games, activities and sports and develop an understanding and competency of the skills and tactics associated with playing sports.

The skills and strategies used in the activities are applicable to several different sports. For example, if a child understands the basic concept behind keeping possession of an object in an adapted / conditioned invasion type game (e.g., use short passes, shield the ball, support the player with the ball), this will help them to play a variety of other invasion games / sports whose tactics can be applied to related sports (e.g., basketball, soccer, handball, lacrosse, wheelchair basketball, goalball, netball etc).

Teaching Games for Understanding is a child-centred approach where the leader acts as a facilitator and the participants make their own adaptations in order to maximize the level of challenge and fun! The following steps are elements of a Teaching Games for Understanding approach:

Activity Appreciation: trying out a version of the activity in a small-group where the 'sport' or game is modified and adapted (conditioned) to allow and facilitate learning e.g. no overhead passing or everyone in the team must touch the ball before you can score etc.

Tactical Awareness: developing understanding of common elements of games and tactics needed for success – such as how to create space in attack, limit it in defence, mark, get free.

Decision-Making: learning and practising making decisions in action, in response to different situations e.g. when to pass the ball, how to pass the ball.

Application of Skills: identifying and practising the skills needed to improve play

Performance: putting it all together, applying the skills, decision-making and tactics in game situations.

Target games

The aim of a target game is to place a projectile near, or in a target in order to have the best possible score. Target games can be further analysed by classifying them as **unopposed** or **opposed**.

- In **unopposed** games (e.g. golf, archery, tenpin bowling), the accuracy of the player in relation to the target determines an individual's success. If other players are less accurate then the player will win.
- In **opposed** games (e.g. lawn bowls, boccia) the players have the opportunity to 'interfere' with the target or the opposition's ball in order to create an advantage for themselves. These sports involve up to four players per team.

When playing target games, no pressure is put on the player to make a decision quickly. The limited tactical options ensure that the players are not overloaded mentally. At the same time the nature of the game allows players to practise techniques in a fun environment.

Target games are often overlooked by those who teach games as they do not fit in with more associated sports such as Football, Netball etc. The modern primary school has access to a wide range of equipment already which can facilitate Target games such as hoops, skittles, quoits, balls etc. but more recently and with PE Premium investment in activity-based equipment such as the examples below are available to purchase and invest in Early Years and Key Stage 1 provision.



Target Games

With target games begin with simple games that use a large of small ball that is rolled towards a target and then gradually add other equipment such as frisbees.

Activity 1: Target roll In pairs.

Place a target 5 metres away e.g. a witches hat type cone, between the pairs.

Practice rolling at the target.

Begin with a large ball and then introduce a small ball.

Questions: What is the best way to make sure the target is hit? Discuss the best technique when rolling a ball towards the target.

Activity 2: Multiple target roll

In groups of 4 or 5.

Place a number of lines (you can use throw down lines or spots / ropes) with different point values.

The closest line your ball is to your score.

Let each student have 3 turns.

Questions: How hard should you roll the ball? What techniques are required to aim the ball?

Activity 3: Frisbee throw

In pairs throwing a frisbee to land in a hoop.

How many throws are required to land in the hoop?

Questions: How hard do you need to throw the frisbee? If it is going to left or right of the target, how do you correct it?

Activity 4: Frisbee golf

Set up a mini golf course of 5 holes using hoops as the hole.

Students can play the game in pairs.

Questions: How do we determine whose turn? Use questions from above.

Activity 5: Golf

In Pairs.

Set up a mini-golf course using hoops as the holes. Place hoops in such a way that for some the pupils cannot throw directly but will need to take two or even three throws to reach the hole. Place some hoops behind benches or bins on the playground so pupils have other problems to solve.

Questions: How do you throw for accuracy? How did you throw for distance? How do you throw if there is something in-front of the hole?

The extensions from here are numerous for the introduction of bowling, golf and other target games.

With Tri-golf, Bowls, New-Age Kurling, Boccia kits there are ideas for games, mats for targets etc. providing you with a full range of adaptations and innovations to promote learning. Kits can also contain ramps and other adapted equipment to ensure inclusion for SEN/SEND pupils.