

See Your SEA benefits!

Learning Scenario

Title Blue Mind by the Sea: Moving Body, Calming Mind

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Abstract

This interdisciplinary learning scenario connects physical activity by the sea with adolescent mental wellbeing, building on the Blue Gym project's activities (traditional sea games, beach circuit games, cycling along seaside promenades and the Design Thinking "invent your own game" challenge). Students first learn the science behind the "Blue Mind" effect – how proximity to water and movement lower stress and improve mood – and then test this personally by tracking their own mood before and after a sea-based physical activity carried out in international teams. In the second part of the lesson, teams use Design Thinking to create their own short "Blue Mind beach break" activity, tag it with the specific mental-health benefit it targets, and add it to the project's online Best Beach Games booklet, ready for dissemination at the school's Open Day and on the project's eTwinning page.

Keywords

Blue Gym, Blue Mind, adolescent wellbeing, physical activity, sea

Table of summary

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Subject	Physical and Health Education; Biology / Natural Science; Psychology / Personal and Social Development; ICT / Digital Media (interdisciplinary)
Topic	The connection between physical activity by the sea and adolescent mental wellbeing (Blue Gym x Blue Mind)
Age of students	15 years old
Preparation time	Approx. 2 hours (preparing the "Blue Mind" mini-lecture, setting up the online journal/booklet/mood-form, arranging equipment and safety/permissions for the beach or promenade activity)
Teaching time	120 minutes (two connected sessions, or one mobility-day activity block)

Online teaching material	Online mood-tracking form (e.g. Google Forms), project's online student journal, online Best Beach Games booklet (e.g. Book Creator / Google Docs), Google My Maps interactive promenade map, short "Blue Mind" explainer video, presentation slides
Offline teaching material	Bicycles or scooters (if cycling the promenade), balls/ropes/other equipment for traditional and beach circuit games, camera or smartphone for photos and video, printed mood-scale cards, flipchart paper and markers for the Design Thinking task

Integration into the curriculum

The scenario fits into Physical and Health Education (health-related fitness and movement in a natural outdoor environment), Biology/Natural Science (the nervous system and the body's stress response), Psychology / Personal and Social Development (emotional wellbeing and stress-management strategies) and ICT (collaborative digital tools). It also supports cross-curricular themes on health education, sustainability and the value of the local marine environment, present in the national curricula of all partner schools.

Aim of the lesson

By the end of the lesson, students will understand and personally experience the connection between physical activity by the sea and their own mental wellbeing, and will be able to design a short activity that combines movement by the sea with a specific mental-health benefit.

Outcome of the lesson

Each international team designs and presents one original "Blue Mind beach break" activity card, tagged with the wellbeing benefit it targets (stress relief, focus, mood boost or social connection), which is added to the project's online Best Beach Games booklet. Each student also completes a personal before/after mood-journal entry in the project's online journal.

21st century skills

Critical thinking and creativity (Design Thinking process), collaboration and communication (international teams), digital literacy (online journal, booklet and interactive map), social and emotional self-management, health literacy, and active/environmental citizenship (appreciation of the sea as shared natural heritage).

Activities

Describe here in detail all the activities during the lesson and the time they require.

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
Blue Mind warm-up	Short input (video/infographic) on the "Blue Mind" science – how proximity to water and movement lower cortisol and boost mood – followed by a brief class discussion.	10 min

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Mood check-in #1	Students individually rate their current mood on a 5-point emoji scale and log it in the online journal.	5 min
Moving by the sea	International teams take part in one of the project's physical activities: a traditional sea game taught by the hosting-country team, a beach circuit-game session, or a short cycling/walking/running session along a seaside promenade.	30 min
Mood check-in #2 and reflection	Students repeat the mood scale and discuss in pairs what changed and why they think it changed.	10 min
Design your Blue Mind beach break	Using the Design Thinking method (empathise - define - ideate - prototype - test), international teams design an original 5-10 minute beach/sea activity aimed at a specific mental-wellbeing benefit (stress relief, focus, mood boost or social connection) and add it, with its wellbeing tag, to the online Best Beach Games booklet.	30 min
Gallery walk and peer presentation	Teams present and briefly demonstrate their designed activity; peers try a short version and vote for the activity that best links movement with mental wellbeing, using the assessment rubric.	15 min
Wrap-up and dissemination planning	Class discusses how to share the results (school Open Day, eTwinning page, social media with the project hashtag) and completes a final reflection in the online journal.	10 min

Assessment

Formative assessment throughout: comparison of each student's before/after mood-journal entries; teacher observation checklist (participation, collaboration, communication) during the physical activity and the Design Thinking task. Peer assessment of the designed beach-break activities using a simple colour-coded rubric (criteria: creativity, clear link to a wellbeing benefit, feasibility on a real beach, clarity of presentation – rated 1 to 4, green/yellow/red). Self-assessment: a short closing reflection in the online journal, e.g. "One thing I learned about how the sea affects my mind is..." and "Next time I'm at the beach I will try..."

Annex

- Background reading: Wallace J. Nichols, "Blue Mind" (the science of water and the brain)
- Mood-scale card template (5-point emoji scale)
- Peer-assessment rubric (colour-coded, 4 criteria x 4 levels)
- Link to the project's online journal, Best Beach Games booklet and interactive promenade map