

The Power of Play

Lesson 7: Silken Laumann | Suggested Grades: 4-7

Lesson Plan

Objectives:

Students will....

- understand the concept of play, the benefits of play, and its influence on their life
- invent a game that includes physical activity
- reflect on how to include more play time in their life

Curricula Links:

- Physical Education
- Language Arts
- Personal Planning

Materials:

- Chart paper
- Blank Overhead Sheets
- 40 pieces of gym equipment
- Class set of Appendix 7.1
- One copy of Appendix 7.2
- Class set of Appendix 7.3
- 6-8 Copies of Appendix 7.4
- One copy of Appendix 7.5
- Class set of Appendix 7.6

The Big Idea

Silken Laumann's dedication and passion for rowing elevated her to become "World Champion". Since her retirement from rowing, Silken's passion has shifted, from the competitive world of rowing to the creative world of play. Her focus has been on finding ways of incorporating more play in children's lives, helping kids and parents recognize the important aspects of play, and taking an active role to spread the message about "The Power of Play".

Opening Motivator (40 min)

Ask the students "what types of games do you play during recess or lunch?" and record the various responses (ex. hide and seek, tag, capture the flag, soccer, etc.). Ensure that students are familiar with each game, then ask students to vote for one game as their favourite. This can be extended as an elimination vote, where you perform a series of votes and the game that receives the fewest number of votes during each voting round is eliminated (similar to the voting process at political leadership conventions, or the elimination process in many sports playoffs). Once the favourite game is selected by the class, go outside and play the game. If possible, allow the students to organize themselves.

Classroom Activity (40 min)

1) Refer back to the list of games from the opening motivator. Ask students to provide more examples of games they play outside of school. Record their responses.

Put the students in group of 4-5. Ask each group to consider the examples they have provided and write a definition of the word "play". Students can be encouraged to consider asking "who, what when, where, why and how" to help them develop their definition. Ask each group to share their definitions with the rest of the class. On the board/overhead, record the various aspects of their definitions of play (ex. unstructured, active, any time, anywhere, usually only kids, adaptable, creative etc.). Once all group definitions have been heard, have a class discussion and generate a comprehensive definition of the word "play".

Teaching Tip

Non-examples can be included in the process of concept attainment. Create a separate list of examples that do not fit their idea of play and label them as "not play". Students can refer to the non-examples to check if their definition is specific and explicit.

2) Further the discussion of play by examining the life of Silken Laumann. Hand out one copy of Appendix 13.3 (Life Cycle of Activity) to each student. Read the biography of Silken Laumann (Appendix 7.2) aloud to the class. While reading, the students are to fill in Silken Laumann's 'Life Cycle of Activity' (Appendix 7.3), which examines the various activities she was involved in during her lifetime. Students may write words or draw pictures that represent Silken's activities during the four stages.

With the class, discuss the influence that play had on Silken's early successes in athletics. Ask leading questions that allow students to realize:

- an active early life positively influenced Silken's involvement in sports later in life.
- Silken was not focused on one sport throughout her life. She had the courage and willingness to try new things that eventually led her to rowing in her late teens.

In the Gym:

Create an Original Game (80 min)

1) This next lesson will be done in your school gym. The teacher will need to bring one copy of Appendix 7.4 and one pencil for each group. Once in the gym, take out 30-40 pieces of equipment from the storage room. Spread them out along one wall. Organize the class into groups of 4-5 students in front of the equipment, along the length of the gym. Each group is to make a line (could be ordered alphabetically by first name). The first person in each line is going to select one piece of equipment and return it to the group. The next person in each line then selects another piece of equipment for their group. Once each student has selected a piece of equipment for their group, explain that they are going to invent a game that uses at least 2 pieces of their chosen equipment. The game must meet the following criteria - kids are to be active throughout the game, use creative ideas, and create clearly written instructions. Use the rubric (Appendix 7.5) to evaluate the games.

Teaching Tip

Providing the students with the criteria in advance of the assignment will give some guidance for completing the assigned work and what the students are working towards.

Students will want to consider the following for their game:

- a theme (ocean, jungle, survival etc...)
- the purpose (accumulate points, eliminate others, capture an object, avoid others etc...)
- involve various numbers of students (from 3-30)
- include the equipment on your school playground (swings, slides, tether ball, climbing apparatus, hop-scotch, etc...)

Each group will write the instructions for the game on a sheet of paper. Be sure to have the students do a quick test of the game to check their rules/instructions are complete.

2) Student groups will present the instructions of their game to the rest of the class. After all invented games are explained, students can select the game they want to play in the next gym class. This can be done as a whole class or in smaller groups if the games permit this type of organization.

Classroom Activity (20 min)

On their own, ask students to make a list of the benefits of play. Provide each student with one copy of Appendix 7.1. They are to organize the benefits of play in relation to their body's health (physiological), their mind (psychological) and their friendships with others (sociological). After sufficient time, have students share their ideas with another class member. Ask students to look for similarities in their lists. If differences exist, students may copy each others' ideas.

Ask students to share their ideas with the class. Using an overhead (or chart paper) of the same graphic organizer, record the ideas from the class and keep it for later. This information will be needed for their reflection.

In the Lab:

At the "Hero In You" section on the B.C. Sports Hall of Fame website, access the interview of Silken Laumann in the "Student Area". Prompt students to view the interview with their minds thinking of the following question: How does 'play' help kids develop a healthy body, a creative mind and an ability to get along with others? This information can be used in their reflection.

Teaching Tip

Before viewing a video, provide students with an idea of what they are to look for. This works similar to pre-reading strategies as students will be able to construct meaning and use metacognitive processes while viewing the video.

Conclusion and Reflections (40 min)

In their journal, students are to provide a detailed response to the following question: "What are the benefits of play and how can students incorporate more of this into their lives?" Students could brainstorm ideas for this response and organize them in a web format. Provide each student with a copy of the web organizer (Appendix 7.5). Use an overhead of the web in Appendix 13.6 as a model for how the ideas could be organized. Extension Ideas:

- Involve your class in the Action Schools Program. Go to their website <http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/content/home.asp> for more information.
- Invent games for the primary classes in your school (or 'buddy' class). Alternatively, teach a 'buddy' class the games students created earlier in this lesson. Intermediate students can use this a leadership opportunity in your school.
- Interview parents, grandparents, or family friends about what games they played as kids and share these with the class. Try some during P.E. class or during recess/lunch.
- Learn how to play games that are played by children around the world.

Conclusion and Reflections (10 min)

In their journal, students are to provide a detailed response to the following question: "What are the benefits of play, and how can students incorporate more of this into their lives?" Students could brainstorm ideas for this response and organize them in a web format. Provide each student with a copy of the web organizer (Appendix 7.5). Use an overhead of the web in Appendix 7.6 as a model for how the ideas could be organized.

Web Links:

<http://www.silkenlaumann.com>

Silken Laumann's personal web page

<http://www.righttoplay.com/canada/pages/home.aspx>

Right to Play website

<http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/content/home.asp>

Action Schools BC

<http://healthyschools.sd61.bc.ca/html/resources.html>

Healthy Schools Resources

<http://www.gameskidsplay.net/>

Games Kids Play - a plethora of non-electronic games organized by category or alphabetically

<http://www.positiveplaygrounds.com/>

Positive Playgrounds - a site dedicated to help put the play back in playgrounds

Appendices

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Appendix 7.1

Silken Laumann - Biographical Information

Born and raised in Mississauga, Ontario, Silken Laumann led an active life as a child. Playing, running and having fun were the focus of her childhood. In the winters, she could be found cross country skiing with her family, while in the summer her chosen mode of transportation was her bicycle.

During the summer of 1976, Silken's competitive desire was sparked by Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci's perfect 10's at the Summer Olympics in Montreal. However, at 12 years of age and 5' 11" in height, gymnastics was unfortunately not in the cards, so Silken turned to track and field. She excelled at running and found success throughout her high school years. Despite her success in track, Silken then turned to rowing at the urging of her sister, Daniele.

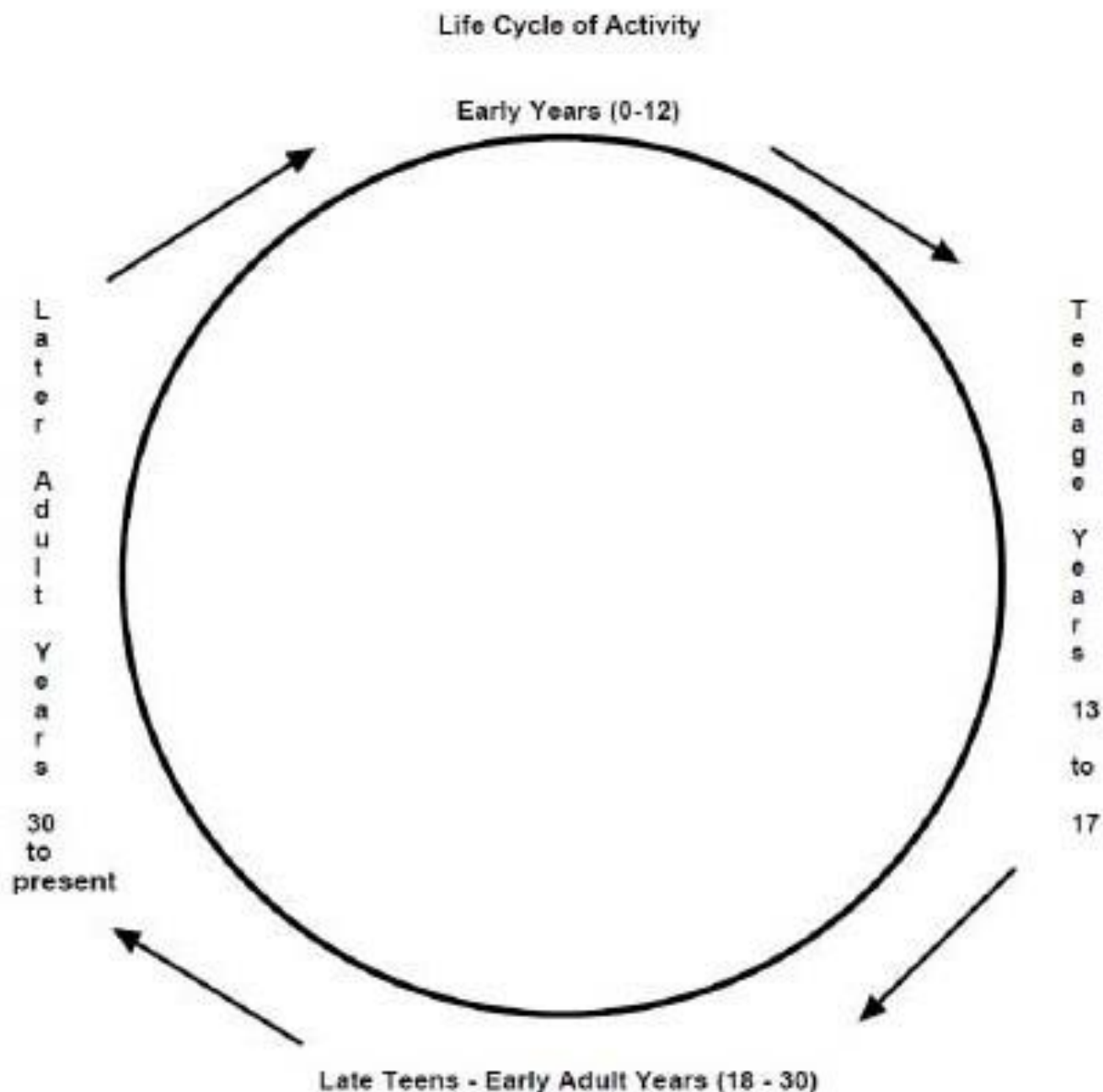
Silken's lifelong commitment to being active and her competitive nature were helpful in her quick success in rowing. In 1983, Silken made the National Rowing Team, and in 1984, she won a Bronze Medal at the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. The next 15 years would provide many successes in rowing, including 1991 World Champion, the 1992 Olympic Bronze (achieved 78 days and 5 surgeries on her leg after a rowing accident that would have ended most rowing careers) and the 1996 Olympic Silver in Atlanta.

In 1999, Silken retired from rowing. She continues to play, albeit with her children Kate and William, and gives much of her time and energy to children's charities. She currently focusses on programs that inspire and promote kids to play and be active and has established the Silken Laumann Active Kid's Movement.

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Appendix 7.2



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Appendix 7.3

Recording Sheet for Game Invention

Date: _____

Name of group members: _____

Name of game: _____

Objective of the game:

Equipment needed to play the game:

Instructions for the game:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

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Appendix 7.4

Rubric for Creation of Student Games

Adapted from <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

This rubric can be used to evaluate the games that the students create. Modify it to meet your needs and your students.

Creativity

- 4) The group put a lot of thought into making the game interesting and fun to play.
- 3) The group put some thought into making the game interesting and fun to play.
- 2) The group tried to make the game interesting and fun, but some of the things made it harder to understand/enjoy the game.
- 1) Little thought was put into making the game interesting or fun.

Cooperative work

- 4) The group worked well together with all members contributing equally.
- 3) The group generally worked well together with all members contributing some quality ideas.
- 2) The group worked fairly well together with all members contributing some ideas.
- 1) The group often did not work well together and the game appeared to be the work of only 1-2 students in the group.

Rules

- 4) Rules were written clearly enough that all could easily participate.
- 3) Rules were written, but one part of the game needed slightly more explanation.
- 2) Rules were written, but people had some difficulty figuring out the game.
- 1) The rules were not written.

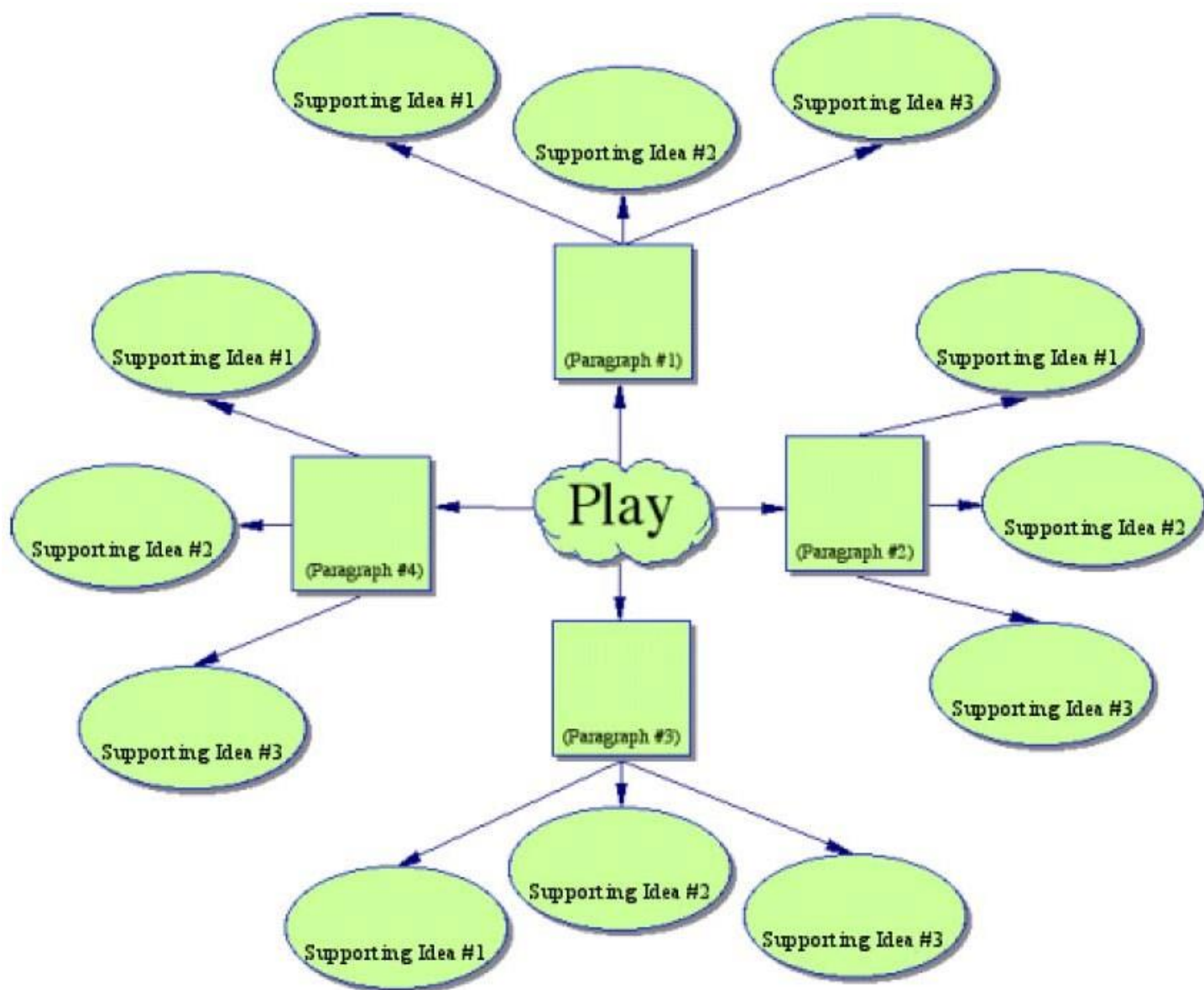
Activity

- 4) All participants active throughout the entire game.
- 3) Most participants are active during the majority of the game.
- 2) Some participants are active during the game.
- 1) Only a few participants are active during the game

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Appendix 7.5



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Appendix 7.6

