

The Importance of Physical Education in School

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Abstract – Physical education became a subject matter in schools .Its role in human health was quickly recognized. By the turn of the 20th century, personal hygiene and exercise for bodily health were incorporated in the physical education curriculum as the major learning outcomes for students. The education community subsequently adopted Wood's inclusive approach to physical education whereby fundamental movements and physical skills for games and sports were incorporated as the major instructional content. During the past 15 years, physical education has once again evolved to connect body movement to its consequences (e.g., physical activity and health), teaching children the science of healthful living and skills needed for an active lifestyle.

Physical education is a formal content area of study in schools, it is standards based, and it encompasses assessment according to standards and benchmarks. Select curriculum-based physical education programs have been described in this chapter to show the potential of high-quality physical education in developing children into active adults. Such models provide the only opportunity for all school-age children to access health-enhancing physical activities. Curriculum models for physical education programs include movement education, which emphasizes the importance of fundamental motor skills competence as a prerequisite for engagement in physical activity throughout the life span; sport education, which emphasizes helping students become skillful players in lifetime sports of their choosing; and fitness education, which imparts physical fitness concepts to students, including the benefits and scientific principles of exercise, with the goal of developing and maintaining individual fitness and positive lifestyle change. The emergence of a technology-focused fitness education curriculum and the new Presidential Youth Fitness Program offer further motivational opportunities for students to engage in lifelong physical activities.

It is suggested that through this proposed comprehensive framework, fitness education be incorporated into the existing physical education curriculum and embedded in the content taught in all instructional units

INTRODUCTION

Physical education became a subject matter in schools .Its role in human health was quickly recognized. By the turn of the 20th century, personal hygiene and exercise for bodily health were incorporated in the physical education curriculum as the major learning outcomes for students. The education community subsequently adopted Wood's inclusive approach to physical education whereby fundamental movements and physical skills for games and sports were incorporated as the major instructional content. During the past 15 years, physical education has once again evolved to connect body movement to its consequences (e.g., physical activity and health), teaching children the science of healthful living and skills needed for an active lifestyle.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS PART OF EDUCATION

In institutionalized education, the main goal has been developing children's cognitive capacity in the sense of learning knowledge in academic disciplines. This goal dictates a learning environment in which seated learning behavior is considered appropriate and effective and is rewarded. Physical education as part of education provides the only opportunity for all children to learn about physical movement and engage in physical activity. As noted, its goal and place in institutionalized education have changed from the original focus on teaching hygiene and health to educating children about the many forms and benefits of physical movement, including sports and exercise. With a dramatic expansion of content beyond the original Swedish and German gymnastics programs of the 19th century, physical education has evolved to become a content area

with diverse learning goals that facilitate the holistic development of children .

To understand physical education as a component of the education system, it is important to know that the education system in the United States does not operate with a centralized curriculum. Learning standards are developed by national professional organizations such as the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and/or state education agencies rather than by the federal Department of Education; all curricular decisions are made locally by school districts or individual schools in compliance with state standards. Physical education is influenced by this system, which leads to great diversity in policies and curricula. According to NASPE and the American Heart Association (2010), although most states have begun to mandate physical education for both elementary and secondary schools, the number of states that allow waivers/exemptions from or substitutions for physical education increased from 27 and 18 in 2006 to 32 and 30 in 2010, respectively.

CURRICULUM MODELS

Given that curricula are determined at the local level in the United States, encompassing national standards, state standards, and state-adopted textbooks that meet and are aligned with the standards, physical education is taught in many different forms and structures. Various curriculum models are used in instruction, including movement education, sport education, and fitness education. In terms of engagement in physical activity, two perspectives are apparent. First, programs in which fitness education curricula are adopted are effective at increasing in-class physical activity .Second, in other curriculum models, physical activity is considered a basis for students' learning skill or knowledge that the lesson is planned for them to learn. A paucity of nationally representative data is available with which to demonstrate the relationship between the actual level of physical activity in which students are engaged and the curriculum models adopted by their schools.

SPORT EDUCATION

One prevalent physical education model is the sport education curriculum designed by Daryl Siedentop. The goal of the model is to “educate students to be players in the fullest sense and to help them develop as **competent, literate, and enthusiastic** sportspersons” The model entails a unique instructional structure featuring sport seasons that are used as the basis for planning and teaching instructional units. Students are organized into sport organizations (teams) and play multiple roles as team managers, coaches, captains, players,

referees, statisticians, public relations staff, and others to mimic a professional sports organization. A unit is planned in terms of a sports season, including preseason activity/practice, regular-season competition, playoffs and/or tournaments, championship competition, and a culminating event (e.g., an awards ceremony or sport festivity). Depending on the developmental level of students, the games are simplified or modified to encourage maximum participation. In competition, students play the roles noted above in addition to the role of players. A sport education unit thus is much longer than a conventional physical education unit.

Report that evidence is insufficient to support the conclusion that use of the model results in students' developing motor skills and fitness and learning relevant knowledge; some evidence suggests that the model leads to stronger team cohesion, more active engagement in lessons, and increased competence in game play.

FITNESS EDUCATION

Instead of focusing exclusively on having children move constantly to log activity time, a new curricular approach emphasizes teaching them the science behind why they need to be physically active in their lives. The curriculum is designed so that the children are engaged in physical activities that demonstrate relevant scientific knowledge. The goal is the development and maintenance of individual student fitness. In contrast with the movement education and sport education models, the underlying premise is that physical activity is essential to a healthy lifestyle and that students' understanding of fitness and behavior change result from engagement in a fitness education program. To incorporate standards and benchmarks into a fitness education model, a committee under the auspices of developed the Instructional Framework for Fitness Education in Physical Education.

EMERGENCE OF ACTIVE GAMING IN FITNESS EDUCATION

Today, active gaming and cell phone/computer applications are a part of physical activity for both youth and adults. Accordingly, fitness education in school physical education programs is being enhanced through the incorporation of active video games, also known as exergaming. Examples of active gaming programs with accompanying equipment include Konami Dance Dance Revolution (DDR), Nintendo Wii, Gamebikes, Kinect XBOX, Xavix, and Hopsports. These active games have been incorporated into school wellness centers as high-tech methods of increasing student fitness levels to supplement the traditional modes

for attaining vigorous- or moderate-intensity physical activity

From the research cited above, as well as ongoing research being conducted by the Health Games Research Project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, active gaming is promising as a means of providing young children an opportunity to become more physically active and helping them meet the recommended 60 or more minutes of vigorous- or moderate-intensity physical activity per day. Different types of games may influence energy expenditure differentially, and some may serve solely as motivation. Selected games also appear to hold greater promise for increasing energy expenditure, while others invite youth to be physically active through motivational engagement. The dynamic and evolving field of active gaming is a promising area for future research as more opportunities arise to become physically active throughout the school environment.

OTHER INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

While several evidence-based physical education programs—such as the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) and Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK)—are being implemented in schools, many innovative programs also have been implemented nationwide that are motivating and contribute to skills attainment while engaging youth in activities that are fun and fitness oriented. These programs include water sports, involving sailing, kayaking, swimming, canoeing, and paddle boarding; adventure activities such as Project Adventure; winter sports, such as snow skiing and snowshoeing; and extreme sports, such as in-line skating, skateboarding, and cycling.

FITNESS ASSESSMENT

All states except Iowa have adopted state standards for physical education. However, the extent to which students achieve the standards is limited since no accountability is required.

An analysis of motor skills competency, strategic knowledge, physical activity, and physical fitness among 180 4th- and 5th-grade children demonstrated that the physical education standards in force were difficult to attain. Among the study participants, fewer than a half (47 percent) were deemed motor competent, 77 percent demonstrated adequate progress in knowledge, only 40 percent were in the Healthy Fitness Zone on all five components of the Fitness gram fitness assessment, and merely 15 percent engaged in 60 or more minutes of physical activity each day. Clearly most of the children failed to meet benchmark measures of performance for this developmental stage. This evidence highlights the need for additional physical

activity opportunities within and beyond physical education to enhance opportunities for students to achieve the standards.

Relationships among these student-learning outcomes were further decomposed in a study of 230 children.

When administering fitness assessments in the school setting, caution is essential to ensure confidentiality of the results. The results and their interpretation should be shared with students and parents/guardians to have the greatest impact.

When fitness assessment becomes part of a quality physical education program, teaching and learning strategies will guide all students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain and improve their personal health-related fitness as part of their commitment to lifelong healthy lifestyles. Teachers who incorporate fitness education as a thread throughout all curricula will make the greatest impact in engaging and motivating students to participate in vigorous- or moderate-intensity physical activity in order to maintain and/or improve their personal health-related fitness. For example, the development of the Presidential Youth Fitness Program with the use of a criterion-referenced platform provides students with the educational benefits of fitness assessment knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Physical education is a formal content area of study in schools, it is standards based, and it encompasses assessment according to standards and benchmarks. Select curriculum-based physical education programs have been described in this chapter to show the potential of high-quality physical education in developing children into active adults. Such models provide the only opportunity for *all* school-age children to access health-enhancing physical activities. Curriculum models for physical education programs include movement education, which emphasizes the importance of fundamental motor skills competence as a prerequisite for engagement in physical activity throughout the life span; sport education, which emphasizes helping students become skillful players in lifetime sports of their choosing; and fitness education, which imparts physical fitness concepts to students, including the benefits and scientific principles of exercise, with the goal of developing and maintaining individual fitness and positive lifestyle change. The emergence of a technology-focused fitness education curriculum and the new Presidential Youth Fitness Program offer further motivational opportunities for students to engage in lifelong physical activities.

It is suggested that through this proposed comprehensive framework, fitness education be

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