



The Role of Physical Education at School

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Abstract: Physical education is not merely a play-time or leisure activity that brings satisfaction and comfort to individuals. It is the face of education and shares the same objectives as education in general. Physical education should be considered one of the most important parts of the school curriculum. It has several contributions to the total life of students in schools, and one of the major contributions is the promotion of the level of health and physical fitness among students.

To ensure the total benefit of physical education for students, it needs to be well taught and organized through an effective physical education program for schools. The physical education teacher is the first factor to be concerned about in an effective physical education program. Taking this into account, it may be assumed that physical education teachers need to be prepared more carefully through effective professional preparation programs.

Keywords: Physical Education, Physical Education Teachers, School Physical Education, Physical Education Students, Leisure-time, Physical Activity.

Introduction

It can be argued that physical education can lay the foundations of pupils' physical health and lifelong active lifestyle. Quality physical education ought to provide pupils the opportunity for physical development and movement as well as a suitable milieu for personal and social development (Konstantinos Goran, and Owe, 2011). There is a relationship between physical education and health, and they are two sides of one coin. Physical education is a way of promoting high standards of health, and health is an integral part of physical education as well. Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure (Caspersen et al., 1985).

Evidence suggests that increasing physical activity and physical fitness may improve academic performance and that time in the school day dedicated to recess, physical education class, and physical activity in the classroom may also facilitate academic performance. Physical education is the foundation of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program. It provides cognitive content and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for physical activity and physical fitness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011). Today we urge our children to play in order to increase their knowledge when playing for later, when they are adults. Scientific research over the past 30 years has taught us that the most important period of human development is from birth to eight years old. During these years, the development of cognitive skills, emotional well-being, social competence and sound physical and mental health builds a strong foundation for success well into the adult years. Play is one of the most important ways in which young children gain essential knowledge and skills (UNICEF, 2018).

Physical Education for Leisure

Play is of vital importance for the healthy development of children. It allows children and adolescents to develop motor skills, experiment with their (social) behavioral repertoire, simulate alternative scenarios, and address the various positive and negative consequences of their behavior in a safe and engaging context (Sanne L. Nijhofa, Christiaan H. Vinkersb et al. 2018). Play is considered one of the most important physical needs of the individual, and is as important as rest, recreation and enjoyment. It is a free time activity, voluntarily chosen which provides joy, satisfaction and development for the individual. Croombridge, wrote; we need to be thinking about it in very large comprehensive terms. We need leisure to rest; we need it for recreation, but also need it for development (Croombridge, 1966). The importance of play and recreation in the life of every child has long been acknowledged by the international community, as evidenced by the proclamation in the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 2013).

Today life full with drastic change, violence, economic problem, rhythm of work, sorrow and joy, health and sickness. People from all economic levels and ages should have to think seriously of how to get away from the insufficiency, meaninglessness and monotony of their lives. They need to find ways to spend their free time in meaningful activities to gain joy and happiness. Needless to say that the most significant differences between play and work are the degree of enjoyment that comes from either. Participating in different kinds of vigorous activities during free time will bring deep satisfaction and release from tension. Moderate-intensity activities are those that get you moving fast enough or strenuously enough to burn off three to six times as much energy per minute as you do when you are sitting quietly, or exercise that clock in at 3 to 6 METs. Vigorous-intensity activities burn more than 6 METs (Harvard T.H.CHAN, 2020). Vannier in his study pointed out that; work and play are like the two sides of a coin: each is an integral part of the other. We work so we can play or enjoy life during our free time, but we play so that we can work more productively (Vannier, 1966).

Today our children need to be taught how to play as well as how to work. Through vital physical activities the child and the adult are revitalized, refreshed and recreated. One of the important contributions which good primary or secondary physical education programs provide is that they enable students to make wise use of their leisure time. It helps them to develop tools with which they can play more effectively and efficiently as children, and later as adults.

Physical Education for Health

There is a relationship between physical education and health, and they are two sides of one conn. Physical education is a way of promoting high standards of health, and health is an integral part of physical education as well. Physical activity is central to health, and its importance clearly extends beyond its role in achieving energy balance to prevent and treat obesity and overweight. Adequate daily physical activity improves cardiovascular health, metabolic health, brain and mental health, and musculoskeletal health-benefits (Kohl and Cook, 2013).

Obesity is a complex disease that affects whole body metabolism and is associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes (Kelsey Pinckard, Kedryn K. Baskin, and Kristin I. Stanford, 2019). Regular physical exercise has several beneficial effects on overall health. While decreasing body mass and adiposity are not the primary outcomes of exercise, exercise can mediate several diseases that accompany obesity including Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (Ashor A.W. et al, 2015). There are several risk factors leading to the development and progression of CVD, but one of the most prominent is a sedentary lifestyle (American Heart Association American Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics, 2018). A sedentary lifestyle can be characterized by both obesity and consistently low levels of physical activity. Ajisafe defines the meaning of health as follows: Health may be defined as a state of physical and mental well-being which enables the individual to live and to work at his optimum efficiently (Ajisafe, 1980). Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Adam Felman, 2020).

Today there is a great emphasis on the vital role of vigorous exercise and fitness in improving the health of the individual. People who are able to achieve good health and fitness should be able to live a more successful life, and this should also mean they would be less affected by disease. Clearly the national strategy for controlling heart disease and its associated problems of obesity, hypertension, stroke, and diabetes, calls for vigorous activity in the lives of persons at all ages (Seefeldt, 1984). Reaching a high standard of health depends on the development of both physical well-being, fitness and the practice of good habits for healthy living. This

implies that promotion of physical wellbeing and fitness is one of the procedures needed to get good health, and these come from continuous and regular participation in physical activities. Optimum physical fitness cannot be developed without giving consideration to emotional, mental, and social fitness as well as to the development of healthful habits of living (Baley and Field, 1976).

Through vigorous participation in a daily physical activity people physical strength and shape will be enhanced and their daily work will be better. Physical education has another contribution to health. It helps students to know something of the capacities and limitation of their bodies, and gives them knowledge of how to improve their fitness and health. One of the highest goals of physical education programs in the schools is to achieve positive health among students. If this goal were achieved, the result would be a healthy and fit population of students who could act and react with high efficiency in modern society. Baley and Field, give a picture of school health services with which this present writer agrees; Obviously in teaching physical education activities, physical educators cannot devoted a large amount of time to direct teaching of health but they can provide health learning whenever the opportunity presents itself. These opportunities are presented quite often. Comments can be made regarding posture, cleanliness, adequate rest, exercise, nutrition, smoking and use of alcoholic beverages (Baley and Field, 1976). School lessons and other supervised periods are the only formal opportunities for the promotion of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that underpin regular physical activity (Cale, 2020).

Physical Education for Education

Physical Education is "education through the physical". It aims to develop students' physical competence and knowledge of movement and safety, and their ability to use these to perform in a wide range of activities associated with the development of an active and healthy lifestyle (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2018).

Play could be considered as a phase of learning, and learning as a phase of play as well. When children take part in various physical activities (jumping, throwing, running), they will discover new environments, and their well-being will be promoted to and perhaps lead to reflective thinking. Hoffman et al. in their study pointed out that; Play is now considered part of the total learning experience rather than a diversion from academically respected experiences (Hoffman et al. 1981). Play is multi-faceted, complex and dynamic, eluding easy definition. It is usually felt to be a universal activity and children are often portrayed as having an inherent desire and capacity to play (The Education Hub, 2019).

A study which was conducted by the Maryland State Department of Education stressed the vital role of physical education in the whole of the educational process. The study has identified that; Physical education is that essential part of the total educational experience which, through physical activity, contributes to the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of the individual (Maryland State Department of Education, 1983).

Today we urge our children to play in order to increase their knowledge when playing for later, when they are adults. By being actively involved in your child's play, you can help them learn and grow. You create opportunities to build a supportive and trusting relationship with your child and help build them up in the process. You have the power to help your child unlock the power of play! (Kylie Rymanowicz, Michigan State University Extension, 2015). Now we have realized the fact of the importance of physical education in our life. Needless to say, the person who has good well-being and health is more able to develop his abilities (such as acquisition of a variety of knowledge) than the person who has poor well-being and health. Andrew in his study points out that; because physical education is an integral part of education its activities must be selected and directed by the same criteria as education (Andrew, 1979).

Play is children's work. Through play, children learn academic skills like math, science, reading, language and literacy. They learn social skills like effective communication, conflict resolution, problem solving and cooperation (Kylie Rymanowicz, Michigan State University Extension, 2015). Learning through play has emerged as an important strategy to promote student engagement, inclusion, and holistic skills development beyond the preschool years (Rachel Parker et al. 2022). Available evidence suggests that mathematics and reading are the academic topics that are most influenced by physical activity. These topics depend on efficient and effective executive function, which has been linked to physical activity and physical fitness (NIH National Library of Medicine, 2013).

This means that there is a relationship between physical education and education, and both of them strive to achieve similar objectives. It seems very hard to find a study or an article concerned with the objectives of education which did not identify that one of the major objectives of education is to create good citizens. A good citizen is one who works conscientiously at this job, and is able to be more productive. A good citizen lives peacefully and comfortably with his neighbors. Hoffman et al. identify the basic general aims of education as follows; as has always been true, the positive aspect of basic of education is that the fundamental skills are the foundation for mastery learning in all school subjects and the development of a fully functioning person (Hoffman et al. 1981).

Today physical education plays an important role in the curriculum. From the writer's experience as a teaching staff member, it was noticed that students who participate actively in physical activities are more advanced and productive than their colleagues who do not participate in physical activities. This implies that physical education has an effect on the educational levels of students in schools. Today teachers of physical education have a great function in the school. They should do their best to educate the administration and their other colleagues about the important function of physical education. They should explain how much benefit students could gain by participating in physical American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, indicated that; save your job, save your program, you have to prove their worth. You have to show that physical education has educational value and is a vital part of the elementary school curriculum. You have to believe it and do something about it (Sakola and Parent, 1983).

The Preparation of Physical Education Teachers

The youth of today may have been somewhat deprived of natural opportunity for active physical activities which are a biological necessity for optimum growth. The development of physical fitness and the acquisition of a variety of motor skills are fundamental needs to the individual. The physical education program should become one of the most vigorous means which help in meeting these needs. Physical education activities, under good leadership, would provide an excellent opportunity to those people involved in them. Physical education refers to the systematic learning of athletic, motor, and cognitive skills as well as the structured influence on student's habitual inclinations and health "about", "through" and "in" movement taught by certified teachers within school settings (Konstantinos and Göran, 2021).

To accomplish these stated purposes, provision must be made in institutions of higher learning for the development of leadership essential to the success of such programs. It could be assumed that good professional preparation would create good teachers, and competent teachers could provide more advanced physical education programs. The teacher is the most important factor in a successful physical education program. Good qualified teachers provide excellent leadership which can overcome poor equipment and facilities in schools. Sakola and Parent stated that; the teacher must come into our schools well prepared and certified to teach young children (Sakola and Parent, 1983). It seems that physical education teachers have a central role realizing curricular goals, transforming sports science and pedagogical knowledge into practice, taking into account the developments of the sport movement and negotiating with local agents such as parents (Kougioumtzis, 2006; Kougioumtzis and Patriksson, 2009).

A report presented to the Professional Preparation Conference of the American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation held in Washington in 1962, put forward four disciplines as the requirements for accepting students to physical education colleges. These included; students should be in good health, they should demonstrate desirable social traits, they should have potential for development in communication skills, and should have a science and humanities background. It also was recommended that students who submitted applications to the physical education courses should not chose for teaching a variety of sports activities only, but for leadership too (American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, 1962).

Hess agreed with above criteria for accepting students to physical education colleges and suggested the following; students should have an acceptable personality, they should possess emotional stability, they should have moral ethics, they should have general intelligence, and finally they should have a professional interest in teaching physical education (Hess, 1969). Bennet recommended that all physical education departments should start to establish a special clinical examination for students who wish to study physical education courses as their field of study. This will be in order to ensure more suitable students for study at these departments (Bennet, 1971).

Whitehead et al. gave an important starting point for the procedures used in accepting students on physical education courses in British Universities, Colleges and Institutions. Students who wished to gain a place in

physical education courses had to involve themselves in difficult competition. The physical education institutes would evaluate applicant's application forms in different ways. The comments of the head teachers of students and their referees, student's involvement in a variety of sports and games, and other extra-curricular activities would all have weight in the selection process (Whitehead et al, 1983).

It should be noticed that the above authors all placed great emphasis on the quality of prospective physical education teachers for schools. They put forward a number of elements to be taken into account as criteria for the selection of students for the physical education courses at universities and colleges. They clearly believed that only students with high standards should be able to gain a place in a physical education college.

One of the aims of this study is to improve the procedure used for accepting students at the physical education departments. Physical education students should have an appropriate cluster of social and physical traits, as well as good health if they wish to be models in schools when they are teachers. How pupils can believe in physical education and its objectives if the physical education teachers are overweight or of poor appearance? Such teachers should set examples to pupils, and thus provide leadership.

Conclusion

Play is considered one of the most important physical needs of the individual, and is as important as rest, recreation and enjoyment. It is a free time activity, voluntarily chosen which provides joy, satisfaction and development for the individual. Physical education is the foundation of a comprehensive school physical activity program. It provides cognitive content and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors for physical activity and physical fitness. Physical education is not merely a play-time or leisure activity which brings satisfaction and comfort to individuals. It is a facet of education and shares the same objectives as education in general. There is a relationship between physical education and health, and they are two sides of one coin. Physical education is a way of promoting high standards of health, and health is an integral part of physical education as well.

Needless to say, the person who has good well-being and health is more able to develop his abilities (such as acquisition of a variety of knowledge) than the person who has poor well-being and health. Physical education activities, under good leadership, would provide an excellent opportunity to those people involved in them. The teacher is the most important factor in a successful physical education program. Good qualified teachers provide excellent leadership which can overcome poor equipment and facilities in schools. Taking this into account, it may be assumed that the physical education teachers need to be prepared more carefully through effective professional preparation programs. It could be assumed that good professional preparation would create good teachers, and competent teachers could provide more advanced physical education programs.

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