



Journal of Human Sport and Exercise

E-ISSN: 1988-5202

jhse@ua.es

Universidad de Alicante

España

Suárez-Llorca, Concepción

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Journal of Human Sport and Exercise, vol. IV, núm. III, septiembre-diciembre, 2009, pp. 198-200

Universidad de Alicante

Alicante, España

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Journal of Human Sport and Exercise *online*

J. Hum. Sport Exerc.

Official Journal of the Area of Physical Education and Sport.

Faculty of Education. University of Alicante. Spain


ISSN 1988-5202 DOI 10.4100/jhse

An International Electronic Journal

Volume 4 Number 3 October 2009

Editorial

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY

Concepción Suárez-Llorca 

University of Alicante (Spain)

Received: 1 September 2009; received in revised form: 10 September 2009; accepted: 10 September 2009

The primary aim of Education is to provide children and young people of both sexes with well-rounded training that allows them to shape their own unique identities, while contributing towards shaping a concept of reality that combines both knowledge and its ethical and moral assessment.

In this way, Education allows us to progress in the struggle against discrimination and inequality, whether they are due to birth place, race, gender, religion and/or ways of thinking. They can also be traditional burdens derived from social and family old-fashioned beliefs or appeared as a result of the dynamics of society.

However, there are currently very few tools available to put these principles into practice at School for children with special educational needs.

Among the different areas that make up the curriculum, Physical Activity is the one should be highlighted, given that its characteristics allow the activation of cognitive and motor mechanisms, functional improvement of the body and the acquisition of basic motor patterns by exploring the individual capacity of bodily activities and resolving motor problems. As well as all of the above, the teaching-learning process in this area is designed to promote the acquisition of positive habits, values and attitudes towards the body and physical exercise.

In the Physical Activity area, we offer children the chance to motivate each other through programmed activities that foment self-regulation and group cohesion within the class, while



Corresponding author. Faculty of Education. University of Alicante. Campus de Sant Vicent del Raspeig s/n. 03080 . Alicante, Spain.

Phone: +34 965903721

E-mail: concepcion.suarez@ua.es

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facilitating learning to provide all of them with a feeling of happiness that has a positive effect on the educational commitments made by the Educational Centres.

All of this leads us to believe that Physical Activity and Attention to Diversity are two paths with the same aim. The aim being to deal with special needs children like any other children, with multiple educational capacities and possibilities that need to be developed and empowered.

In order to carry out the appropriate diversified, educational intervention, it is essential for us to forget what they cannot do and focus on what they can do and on the idea that they are, above all, children. Society as a whole needs to make an effort change how those with special needs are perceived.

We need to start with schools, which should transmit the idea of accepting differences as a cornerstone of education, making significant progress towards accepting those with special needs.

The importance of the context

In the field of Physical Activity, the facilities available have a major influence on the teaching-learning process, as each setting has its own characteristics that, at different times, significantly condition the motor tasks that can be carried out there.

In the same way, the organisation of the space available, as well as the arrangement and availability of materials, are essential elements in creating a learning environment. Like the materials, these elements have a major influence on the teaching-learning processes that will condition the motor activities undertaken.

Manipulation of the setting can be regarded as a strategy for activating the teaching-learning process. The different ways in which the teaching staff can manipulate the setting will be determined by the didactic approach and can vary from completely rigid and closed learning environments to others that are more open and flexible.

The following are the main didactic resources available in learning environments to carry out physical activity aimed at children with diversity needs:

- Spatial resources: The different objectives, contents and activities that take place in Physical activity classes demand spaces tailored to the characteristics of the motor tasks to be carried out by students with diversity needs.
- Material resources: These need to be different and flexible, so that the materials can satisfy the very varied functions in accordance with the characteristics of the goal to be achieved.

The inclusive methodology of physical activity for children with diversity

Physical Activity and the inclusive methodology have travelled along different routes. We should remember that we have progressed from the excessive use of directive methodologies to the use of the new, integrating methodologies. This means, with regards to Physical

Activity and Diversity, we need to make the effort to choose “didactic routes” that make it easier for us to make inclusion possible.

Based on the above, it is clear that play is the ideal context for learning processes to occur and is the didactic resource par excellence during this stage. Through play, the mechanisms of perception and decision-making are activated, we develop implementation capacities and we are able to learn new motor skills. In addition, the conflicts of interests and rules of the games help children with diversity needs to shift from self-focused viewpoints, etc. This means that the methodological approach of Physical Activity has a basically ludic nature.

When selecting the teaching techniques to be used for Physical Activity programmes, teachers need to take into account the principles specifically introduced for this part of the curriculum. They should therefore foment the connection between the cognitive and motor aspects by exploring the motor possibilities of children with diversity needs and resolving motor problems, using play as the main methodological resource to this end.

In conclusion, the Physical Activity area should attend diversity needs from a diversifying viewpoint that can be used to progress in the same direction and improve the quality of life for children with special educational needs and ensure, above all, that they are happy children.