

NEW TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to identify the current trends and challenges in physical education and sports and based on these current challenges, future trends and challenges would be discussed. There are various factors, which are diminishing the interest of students in physical education activities. Although the physical education is being taught as a part of curriculum in all the schools but lack of adequate time and trained teachers, good facilities are responsible for little interest in this field. The future challenges to make this field interesting involves an adequate curriculum, sufficient funds allotment for holding various competitions and role of technology to create awareness about the importance of physical activities and sports in our daily life. All these issues have been discussed in the present study.



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Introduction

The importance of physical education has never been emphasised more than it is today. It is widely recognised that physical education and sports is relevant and important in developing an active and healthy lifestyle and the solution to rising obesity rates worldwide. Although in most countries, physical education is part of the school curriculum, lessons are not given, thus leading to a reduced experience of physical activity for children and youth. The practice of a physically active lifestyle in combination with healthy nutrition, however, needs to be started in early childhood. Therefore, ensuring that all children engage in regular physical activity is crucial, and the schools are the only place where all children can be reached. Quality Physical Education is the most effective and inclusive means of providing all children, whatever their ability/disability, sex, age, cultural, race/ethnicity, religious or social background, with the skills, attitudes, values, knowledge and understanding for lifelong participation in physical activity and sport and is the only school subject whose primary focus is on the body, physical activity, physical development and health. The present study will identify the current trends, issues and challenges in PE and sports based on which future challenges will be addressed.

Current trends in school physical education and sports

Physical education trends have developed recently to incorporate a greater variety of activities besides typical sports. Introducing students to activities like bowling, walking or hiking, or

Frisbee at an early age can help students develop good activity habits that will carry over into adulthood. Some teachers have even begun to incorporate stress-reduction techniques such as yoga, deep-breathing and tai chi. Tai chi, an ancient martial arts form focused on slow meditative movements is a relaxation activity with many benefits for students. Studies have shown that tai chi enhances muscular strength and endurance, cardiovascular endurance, and provides many other physical benefits. It also provides psychological benefits such as improving general mental health, concentration, awareness and positive mood. It can be taught to any age student with little or no equipment making it ideal for mixed ability and age classes. Tai chi can easily be incorporated into a holistic learning body and mind unit. Teaching non-traditional sports to students may also provide the necessary motivation for students to increase their activity, and can help students learn about different cultures. While teaching students sports and movement skills, P.E. teachers are now incorporating short health and nutrition lessons into the curriculum. This is more prevalent at the elementary school level, where students do not have a specific Health class. Recently most elementary schools have specific health classes for students as well as physical education class. With the recent outbreaks of diseases such as swine flu, school districts are making it mandatory for students to learn about practicing good hygiene along with other health topics. Today many states require Physical Education teachers to be certified to teach Health courses. Many colleges and Universities offer both Physical Education and Health as one certification. This push towards health education is beginning in the intermediate level, including lessons on bullying, self-esteem and stress and anger management.

Future for Physical Education Physical education

should be individualized. One size does not fit all. This is extremely challenging, but with creative tools like Physical Best, Fitness for Life, and Fitness gram, physical educators are becoming more like personal trainers than coaches. We should focus on activity and nutrition leading to good health and wellness. If we can't do everything, we need to at least do this. Therefore, while playing age-appropriate games is important, our emphasis needs to be on building lifelong skills and attitudes. Being active and eating well is vital at any age, but it becomes a matter of life or death as we get older. We can't put fitness in the bank and use it later; we have to keep active and eating well to maintain the benefits. We also need to emphasize participation and stop the trend toward becoming a nation of spectators, with a few highly skilled athletes playing and everyone else watching. All students should be provided opportunities to both cooperate and compete in physical activities. Both are important life skills, and both can be fun. Our students should graduate with an understanding of the key principles of fitness and

nutrition. They should be informed consumers of activity, nutrition, and wellness and be ready to assume self-responsibility for their own health through prevention.

Role of technology

Children born in the early part of this millennium are known as the “iGeneration” (Rosen, 2010, 2011). This group of individuals has access to forms of technology unheard of just two decades ago. They have never known life without wireless high-speed internet connections, cellular phones with data connections, texting or video gaming consoles. Most of them are very familiar with technology interfaces, using apps and social media on a regular basis. The implications of such dramatic changes in access to technology among children and youth should be self-evident in all learning areas. Applications in health and physical education pedagogy are available and can be applied to enrich and enhance curricular offerings in most school settings. Numerous technological applications focused on promoting physical activity and fitness are available and easily accessible. However, application of various technologies will require new student and teacher competencies and practices. Students will be required to demonstrate competency in basic motor skills and also competence in using technology. In addition, such technology will enable individuals to learn in a student centered self-directed fashion; students will be required to gain greater time management skills in order to enable appropriate time on a task. Teachers will also be required to gain knowledge of contemporary, technology-based instructional strategies. Furthermore, teachers will need to gain a greater awareness of teaching strategies that support anytime, anywhere learning and leverage technological applications. Technology holds promise for the way that students learn and also for the way in which teachers teach. Physical and health educators are challenged to become more responsive to a technology-driven environment that provides enhanced opportunities for learners well beyond the walls of the traditional classroom setting. Technology thus can play vital role in generating the interest in physical education and sports activities.

Conclusion

The current practices and present curriculum need to be modified to generate interest of students in physical education and sports activities. The future challenges will mainly be the appropriate curriculum to be made and followed and to make available adequate funds from various organisations in order to support the needy but intelligent children so that they can only focus on their game without worrying about the funds. The technology will also play an important role in expanding and creating the interest in physical activities. The importance of physical education and sports activities are being identified in today’s world and efforts are being made to improve the situations so that more and more talent can be recognised.

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