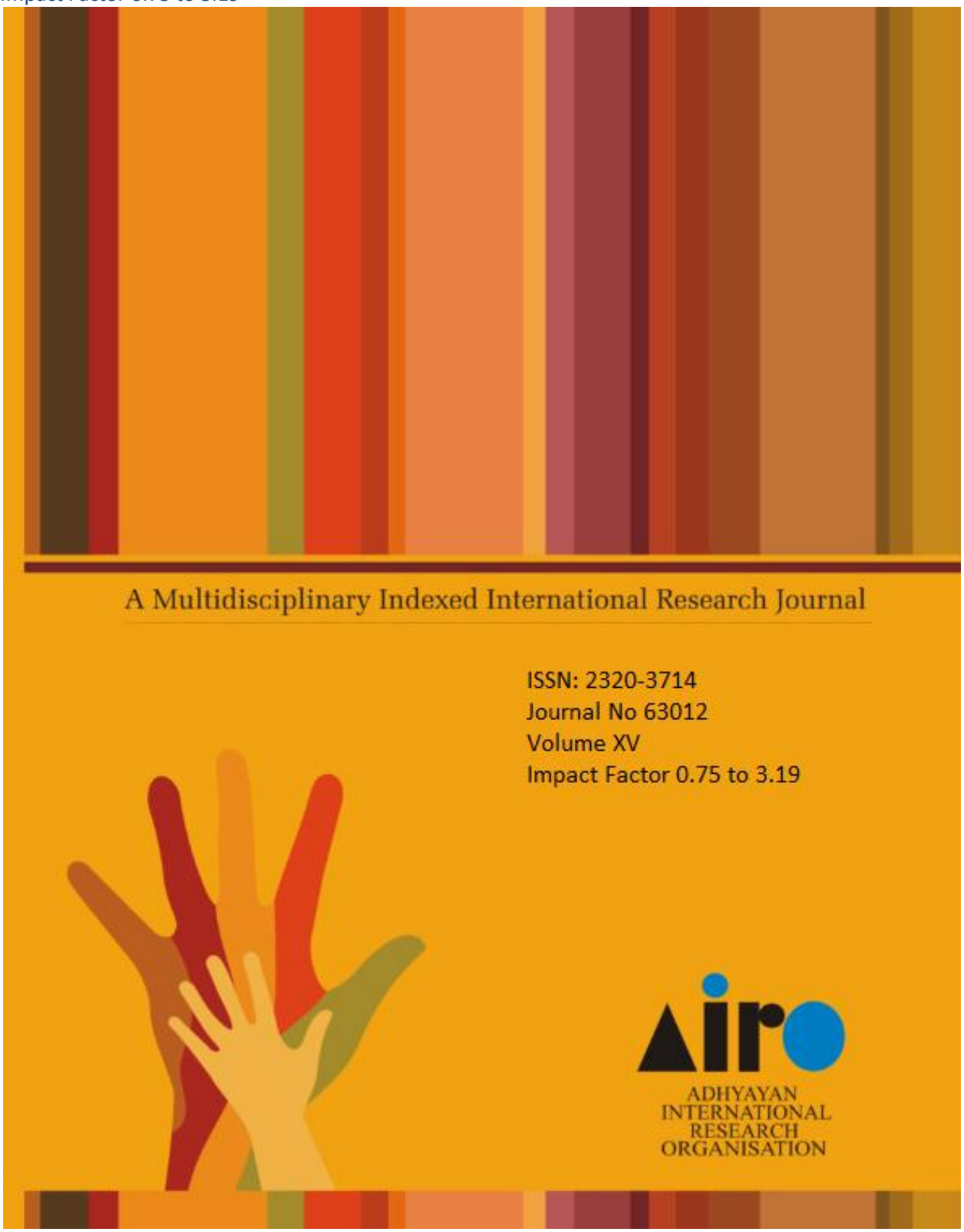
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ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN MOULDING NURSERY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILDREN

Mr. Kuldip

Research scholar Dravidian University Kuppam (A.P)

Dr. Baldev Singh

F.G.M. Govt. P.G. College ,Mandi Adampur, Hisar

ABSTRACT

Critical and creative thinking are central components of learning. Within physical education, one focus should be on "reflective thinking that is used to make reasonable and defensible decisions about movement tasks or challenges". More importantly, students need to experience opportunities to use critical and creative thinking within movement performance to understand more deeply the how's and whys of movement.

Teachers should plan for authentic learning experiences that will support students in exploring, questioning, reflecting, and making decisions to develop deeper understanding that will lead to the transfer of learning to new situations. Students need opportunities to think critically and creatively, thus setting a foundation for future learning.

An inclusive physical education environment is one which provides the opportunity for students of all abilities and interests to participate in physical education with their peers. Inclusive physical education recognizes the inherent value and strengths of each student, the need for independence and self-determination, and the right to choice.

KEYWORDS: *Physical, Education, Children*

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive physical education provides all students, including students with disabilities, the opportunity to take full advantage of opportunities to enhance personal fitness, acquire motor skills, increase knowledge and understanding of movement, and strengthen their psychosocial wellbeing.

All students can learn about the talents, challenges, and abilities of all classmates. Students learn to appreciate that individual

differences exist between people, and they learn that participating in an activity in a different way does not lessen its value. Inclusion recognizes the inherent value, dignity, and worth of each student, and reduces perceived differences among students.

The process of identifying each student's needs and accommodating them in a dignified and effective manner is the key to ensuring full and meaningful participation in physical education.

All students can benefit from adaptations to the learning environment and/or learning experience. They will all benefit when teachers use a variety of instructional strategies. Almost all students can achieve curriculum outcomes in authentic ways when basic adaptations are made.

Teachers will need to make individualized adaptations or modifications to meet the needs of some students as these students work towards achieving the grade specific outcomes. Physical education teachers can seek support from the school services team and outside agencies to gain ideas on how best to work with students who have specific individual needs.

Assessment and evaluation require thoughtful planning and implementation to support the learning process and to inform teaching. All assessment and evaluation of student achievement must be based on the specific curriculum outcomes in the provincial curriculum.

Assessment involves the systematic collection of information about student learning with respect to

- achievement of provincial curricula outcomes;
- effectiveness of teaching strategies employed;
- student self-reflection on learning.

Evaluation compares assessment information against criteria based on curriculum outcomes in order to communicate with students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and others about student progress and to make informed decisions about the teaching and learning process. Reporting of student achievement must be based on the achievement of curriculum outcomes.

The assessment and evaluation strategies used in physical education must support teachers in designing instruction that will best help students achieve the learning outcomes for the grade and help students grow as responsible, self-confident, physically literate, active-living individuals who will seek out opportunities to support their own well-being as well as the well-being of others. Assessment and evaluation strategies employed must measure student learning and progress, provide students with feedback to use in their plans for growth, guide the planning and instructional practices of teachers, and provide a valid means to document and communicate student learning.

An elementary physical education program based on Laban's movement framework focuses primarily on helping students achieve movement-skill competency (national standard one) through balanced participation in three main content areas: games, gymnastics, and dance, with the fourth area (physical fitness) blended into the first three. The affective and cognitive domains are not neglected. Teachers plan experiences that allow students to develop respect for themselves and others, active involvement and self-responsibility, and caring and concern for others (standard five) within an environment that is emotionally and physically safe.

Physical educators also help to develop an awareness of the challenge, feeling, and joy of movement as a performer and as an observer. Further, teachers help students learn to value the contribution of physical activity toward health and well-being (standard six). In the cognitive domain of learning, a quality movement-framework approach requires the student to understand the language of movement; the body and how it moves; and the concepts, principles, strategies, tactics, and patterns within games, gymnastics, dance and fitness (standard two).

The movement-framework engine makes a program run. From the movement framework, the physical educator develops learning experiences designed to help the student to achieve the national standards. The framework is made up of four aspects: body, space, effort, and relationships.

ROLE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In the body aspect, which focuses on what the body is doing, students become skillful in locomotor, nonlocomotor, and manipulative skills. The space aspect focuses on where the body is moving, and the student develops skill in the use of personal and general space, and competency in moving in various directions, on different pathways, and through varied levels, planes, and extensions. The effort aspect focuses on how the body is moving. Here, the student develops the ability to use time (e.g., fast/slow), weight (e.g., strong/light), flow (e.g., free/bound), and space (e.g., straight/flexible) to improve the quality or the "flavor" of movement.

Finally, the relationships aspect focuses on with whom or what the body is relating as it moves. This aspect helps students develop awareness and skill in how body parts relate to one another when moving and how the mover relates to individuals, groups, apparatus, objects, and other factors such

as a rhythm, music, boundaries, and rules.

The curriculum content that comes from the movement framework helps students develop competency in loco-motor skills (skipping, running, hopping, galloping, sliding, leaping, jumping, and landing); non-locomotor skills (curling, twisting, stretching, bending, swaying, spinning, swinging, sinking, rising, opening, closing, and gesturing); and manipulative skills (striking, collecting, carrying, catching, throwing, kicking, dribbling, and volleying).

Competency in games, gymnastics, and dance requires students to apply and improve these body skills, while responding to spatial demands, varying effort, and maintaining appropriate relationships to others and things.

It is important to remember that space, effort, and relationships are skills and concepts that are always taught within the context of a particular program area (i.e., within games, gymnastics, or dance), never in isolation, and always with selected movements from the body aspect. For example, there would never be a lesson just on changing directions, without a sense of why or how the different directions are to be used. The ability to travel in different directions would either enhance game skill or expand and improve traveling skills in dance or gymnastics sequences.

The content selected for each unit is a small piece of one or more aspects of Laban's movement framework called a theme. These themes (or chunks of movement) of content are spread out and revisited over many units, and they progress from simple to complex within a balanced presentation of games, dance, and gymnastics throughout the elementary years. The comprehensive and integrative nature of the framework allows a particular skill or concept to be introduced, for example, in a dance unit first, then revisited in a games or gymnastics unit, or introduced in games and revisited in dance, and so on, thus reflecting the fact that the units are meant to build on one another and that the framework is applied universally.

The learning experiences that result from the movement framework are found in three content areas: games, gymnastics, and dance. These areas always include body, space, effort, and relationship aspects, which are the roads of learning in elementary physical education. Physical fitness concepts and health-enhancing physical activity always permeate travel along each of these roads. Quality travel along these roads many times over the elementary years will produce effective and efficient games players, gymnasts, and dancers who are well on their way toward achieving and maintaining a health-enhancing level of physical fitness (standard four).

These skills are grouped into three categories (Mauldon & Redfern, 1981): (1) sending an object away (striking, kicking, throwing), (2) gaining possession of or receiving an object (catching, trapping, collecting), and (3) traveling with an object (carrying or dribbling).

Moving students along a novice-to-expert continuum in games requires blending space, effort, and relationship skills and concepts with body skills. Spatial-learning experiences in games include travel in different directions, pathways, and levels with and without implements or objects.

Combining space with effort can allow students to make spatial adjustments in order to create and deny space in an invasion game, for example. Students also need to be able to vary the amount of force they use (from strong to light), the amount of speed

they use (from fast to slow), and the amount of space they use (from small to large), and apply movements with the appropriate amount of force, speed, and space for each particular situation. Examples of relationship skills in games include being in the appropriate positions to receive passes, guarding and adjusting one's position when defending an opponent, and appropriately backing up a defending teammate.

DISCUSSION

Physical education or PE, also known in many Commonwealth countries as physical training or PT, is an educational course related to the physique of the human body. It is taken during primary and secondary education and encourages psychomotor learning in a play or movement exploration setting to promote health Physical education trends have developed recently to incorporate a greater variety of activities besides typical sports. Introducing students to activities like bowling, walking/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. For example, while teaching a unit about lacrosse in, for example, the Southwestern United States, students can also learn about the Native American cultures of the Northeastern United States and Eastern Canada, where lacrosse originated. Teaching non-traditional (or non-native) sports provides a great opportunity to integrate academic concepts from other subjects as well (social studies from the example above), which may now be required of many P.E. teachers. The four aspects of P.E. are physical, mental, social, and emotional.

Another trend is the incorporation of health and nutrition to the physical education curriculum. The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 required that all school districts with a federally funded school meal program develop wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity.

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.

Research has shown that there is a positive correlation between brain development and exercising.

Incorporating local indigenous knowledge into physical education can lead to many meaningful experiences and a way of learning about other cultures. For example, by incorporating traditional knowledge from varying indigenous groups from across Canada students can be exposed to a many concepts such as holistic learning and the medicine wheel. A unit could be focused on connecting to a place or feeling while outdoors, participating in traditional games, or outdoor environmental education. These types of lesson can easily be integrated into other parts of the curriculum and give Aboriginal students a chance to incorporate their culture in the local school community.

Studies have been done in how physical education can help improve academic achievement. In a 2007 article, researchers found a profound gain in student's English Arts standardized testing students who had 56 hours of physical education in a year compared to like students who had 28 hours of physical education a year.

In Brazil, the physical education curriculum is designed to allow school pupils a full range of modern opportunities, half a dozens of sports. They said they offer martial arts classes, like wrestling in the United States, and Pencak Silat in France, Indonesia, and Malaysia, are taught to teach children self-defense and to feel good about themselves. The physical education curriculum is designed to allow students to experience at least a minimum exposure to the following categories of activities: aquatics, conditioning activities, gymnastics, individual/dual sports, team sports, rhythms, and dance.

In these areas, a planned sequence of learning experiences is designed to support a progression of student development. This allows kids through 6^{th} grade to be introduced to sports, fitness, and teamwork in order to be better prepared for the middle and high school age. In 1975, the United States House of Representatives voted to require school physical education classes include both genders. Some high school and some middle school PE classes are single-

sex. Requiring individuals to participate in physical education activities, such as dodge ball, flag football, and other competitive sports remains a controversial subject because of the social impact these have cases physical education programs have been cut.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

New technology in Physical education is playing a big role in classes. One of the most affordable and effective is a simple video recorder. With the use of a video recorder students can see the mistakes they're making in things such as a throwing motion or swinging form. Studies show that students find this more effective than having someone try to explain what they are doing wrong, and then trying to correct it.

Educators also found the use of other technologies such as pedometers and heart rate monitors very successful, using them to make step and heart rate goals for students.[21] Using heart rate monitors in physical education is important because it helps students understand how exercise affects their body.

Other technologies that can be used in a Physical Education setting would include video projectors, GPS and even gaming systems such as Kinect, Wii Fit and Dance Dance Revolution. Projectors can be used to show students things such as proper form or how to play certain games. GPS systems can be used to get students active in an outdoor setting and active games can be used by teachers to show students a good way to stay fit in and out of the classroom setting.

Another type of technology that is commonly used in Physical Education is the use of pedometers. Pedometers do not necessarily track how far a person is going, but it lets them know the number of steps they are making. It will let them know how many steps on average they are making.

In a movement-framework approach, we can think of the content areas - games, gymnastics, and dance as three lanes that set children in motion on the physical fitness highway. Health and skill-related fitness concepts and health-enhancing

physical activity are blended into all games, gymnastics, and dance lessons. For example, the aerobic activity present in most games offers the opportunity to teach cardio-respiratory endurance concepts. Gymnastics provides opportunities for building muscular strength and endurance through climbing, hanging, or bearing the body’s weight on one’s hands. Dance brings together muscle fitness, flexibility, and cardio-respiratory endurance in one performance.

Well-planned fitness experiences help students to begin to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness (standard four) and to understand the concepts of physical fitness, the benefits of regular exercise, and the purpose of fitness assessments.

Through thoughtful application of the movement framework, we can provide

meaningful, enjoyable skill-building activity and go a long way toward creating a lifelong mover (standard three).

CONCLUSION

The extent to which the student can gain from movement framework learning experiences largely depends on the physical educator's capacity to understand, interpret, and implement the learning experiences derived from the movement framework.

First, the physical educator within a quality curriculum based on the movement framework must be able to organize learning from top to bottom. This is done by identifying realistic program outcomes and organizing movement aspect themes, unit goals and plans, and lesson objectives and plans in a way that will differentiate each student's learning experience.

The physical educator must be able to employ the movement framework to continually observe, analyze, evaluate, and communicate with the student in order to improve the student's movement responses. Understanding the language of the movement framework is essential since it provides a common vocabulary for communication between the teacher and the student.

The teacher must also know how to use the movement framework to change, extend, or refine learning experiences. In addition to the movement framework, the physical educator must also understand children's motor development, growth, and learning styles. He or she must also understand teaching methodologies, class management, and assessment techniques and continually reflect on ways to improve the overall program.

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