

The Role of Physical Education in Health and Fitness

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ABSTRACT: Physical education (PE) plays a vital role in promoting health, fitness, and overall development in students. It encompasses physical activities aimed at improving bodily functions such as strength, endurance, and motor skills, contributing to students' physical, mental, and social well-being. PE is a compulsory subject across educational levels, emphasizing its importance in fostering a physically active lifestyle. Participation in PE enhances aerobic and anaerobic fitness, muscle strength, and coordination. Adapted physical education (APE) ensures inclusivity for students with disabilities, providing them with equal opportunities to engage in physical activities and improve their health. Outdoor activities within PE also contribute positively to students' well-being. PE not only benefits physical health but also supports cognitive function, academic skills, and emotional development. It promotes social values like respect, tolerance, teamwork, and discipline, helping students build character and citizenship qualities. Structured PE programs improve cardiovascular health, flexibility, and muscular power, encouraging lifelong physical activity habits. Inclusive PE practices are essential, especially for students with disabilities and special education needs (SEN). Implementing strategies like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), professional development for teachers, peer support programs, and age-appropriate exercises can foster a supportive and engaging environment for all students. In conclusion, physical education is fundamental for holistic student development, integrating physical fitness, cognitive skills, and social-emotional growth. Ensuring adaptive and inclusive PE practices maximizes its benefits, allowing equitable access and empowering every learner to thrive.

KEYWORDS: Physical Education, Physical Fitness, Physical Activity, Health, Specific Populations,

I. INTRODUCTION

Physical education involves the union of two different words which form 'physical' with 'education'. The word physical means bodily functions in this context. This information refers to human body physical features such as physical strength, endurance, fitness, physical appearance, or physical health. A complete definition of Physical Education consists of two distinct concepts that structured directions which train individuals for particular purposes or activities and physical tasks. Physical education gets its definition from training that teaches essential physical activities and development programs and maintenance approaches for human bodily growth maintenance of the human body or the development of physical powers or activities for cultivating physical skills. According to J.P. Thomas, physical education is education through physical activities to development of total personality of the child and its fulfilment and perfection in body, mind and spirit. Physical Education is also a subject taught in primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. All students are required to attend physical education classes. This indicates that physical education is an important subject among school and university students. Physical education teachers and lecturers need to ensure students benefit from the subject. Based on the physical education syllabus, there are various topics that emphasize activities which can improve health and fitness. This shows that physical education is crucial in contributing to good health and fitness. If physical education teachers and lecturers can implement physical education instruction effectively, students' health and fitness levels will certainly improve.

Physical Health and Fitness : Physical Education (PE) programs are fundamental in enhancing physical fitness, developing motor skills, and fostering a physically active lifestyle. Participation in PE is linked to improved aerobic and anaerobic fitness, muscle strength, and overall physical health. For students with disabilities, adapted physical education (APE) plays a crucial role in promoting physical activity intentions and ensuring access to these benefits. Moreover, outdoor physical activities within PE lessons have been shown to positively impact students' health and well-being.

To ensure a positive health and fitness impact on students, physical education teachers need to play a crucial role. Among these roles is systematically planning and implementing physical education activities. During the planning stage, physical education teachers should consider various teaching-related aspects. For instance, they should plan for learning outcomes, teaching materials, lesson content, instructional strategies, and finally, assessment. For the implementation aspect, physical education teachers should plan the teaching methods to be

used during physical education classes. The planned teaching methods should be those that can attract students' PE provides students with chances to stay healthy, learn new skills and improve their character in addition to exercise. Sports improve health by raising fitness level, motor coordination and muscle strength. As Ramires et al. (2023) explain students enjoy better overall wellness after outdoor PE and adapted PE allows people with disabilities to become more active (Zulkifli & Yussof, 2024). PE boosts your brain's ability to learn and remember things. Researchers Trudeau and Shephard (2008) believe that being physically active in PE often leads to improved academic skills and brain function. Physical education encourages working together, talking to one another and managing emotions. Zulkifli and Yussof (2024) also suggest that it promotes being inclusive and teaches others the values of respect and tolerance. In addition, taking part in PE helps learners to gain discipline, work together and act responsibly which are qualities needed to become a good citizen. Lastly, PE isn't limited to exercise it helps us develop in mind, body and character.

interest in participating in physical education classes and subsequently enable them to perform the various planned physical activities. If all physical activities can be executed well, students' health and fitness levels will certainly improve.

II. THE EFFECT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITY ON HEALTH :

The Effect of Physical Education Activity on Fitness : Physical education significantly boosts physical fitness levels by systematically engaging students in exercises that enhance endurance, flexibility, strength, and coordination. Regular participation in PE builds a strong cardiovascular system, develops muscular power, and improves body composition with all crucial components of physical fitness. According to Pasek et al. (2020), students who engage in structured indoor and outdoor PE lessons demonstrate greater physical well-being compared to their less active peers. Additionally, incorporating varied fitness routines such as aerobic activities, strength circuits, and flexibility training allows students to experience diverse movements that benefit multiple areas of health. Not only does this variety prevent boredom, but it also ensures that students develop well-rounded fitness, increasing their motivation to stay active throughout life. For younger students, engaging in playful yet purposeful movement lays the foundation for lifelong physical literacy. In essence, PE isn't just gym time but it's a science-backed gateway to building the physical stamina and resilience every student needs to thrive.

Considerations for Specific Populations : Physical Education (PE) needs to be open to every student, regardless of what they require or their abilities. Allowing every learner to join in meaningfully supports their own progress and creates a kinder and more caring school environment. PE helps guarantee that students with disabilities have equal chances to move and learn. Zulkifli and Yussof (2024) point out that adapted PE helps students stay physically active, feel supported by their peers and enjoy more successful learning experiences. Likewise, students with Special Education Need (SEN) should be given the same chances in physical education. In their study, Zulkifli and Anal (2023) discovered that using unique strategies in adapted PE and health education is necessary to care for SEN students. Support and resources for these students will help them succeed regardless of the area they are in. Furthermore, children in primary school profited a lot from carefully planned PE classes. Some studies show that training for strength and skills at this age can improve movement skills and set up good fitness habits for later life. Essentially, providing inclusive physical education is not only something we try for, but something we need to do. When PE adjusts for different requirements, all students are encouraged to be active, learn and feel included.

Suggestions: To enhance inclusive in Physical Education (PE), several strategic improvements can be implemented to better support students of all abilities. One essential approach is the integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into PE lesson planning. By applying UDL principles, educators can design activities that are adaptable, accessible, and engaging for students with diverse physical and cognitive needs. This proactive framework ensures that no student is left behind due to rigid teaching methods (Lieberman & Houston-Wilson, 2018). In addition, schools should invest in ongoing professional development for PE teachers, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to effectively manage inclusive classrooms. Training on differentiated instruction, adaptive techniques, and behavioral strategies allows teachers to confidently accommodate a range of learners (Haegele & Sutherland, 2015). Another powerful method for fostering inclusivity is the use of peer support programs, where students with and without disabilities are paired during activities. This not only promotes cooperation and empathy but also reduces stigma, creating a more united and accepting environment (Block, 2007). Furthermore, for younger children, the incorporation of age-appropriate strength and skill-based activities is vital. These exercises should focus on building coordination, balance, and fundamental movement patterns in a way that is enjoyable and developmentally suitable (Faigenbaum et al., 2009). When combined, these strategies can transform PE into a space that not only celebrates diversity but

empowers every student to participate with confidence and joy.

III. CONCLUSION

Students require physical education as their baseline academic subject because it performs an essential function to develop their whole-body integrated growth. The institution functions beyond physical exercise promotion to stand as foundational for developing total wellness along with health. Active involvement in structured physical education programs allows students to boost physical fitness and cognitive abilities together with acquiring essential social skills and emotional strength and ethical principles. A maximized impact requires adaptive physical education while also promising inclusive design because they provide teaching methods that serve diverse student populations with various needs and abilities. Equitable access to all advantages provided by top-quality physical education requires such implementation.

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