

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Educating Students With Severe Disabilities Through an Inclusive Pedagogy in Physical Education

Grenier, M., Patey, M. J., & Grenier-Burtis, M. (2023). Educating students with severe disabilities through an inclusive pedagogy in physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 28(8), 887-900.

THE PROBLEM

Less than 2% of the student population are students with severe disabilities, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) emphasizes the inclusion of these students in the general education program. These students have different learning needs and behavioral characteristics which can be barriers to access. They often require modified curriculum and evaluations. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to design and implement educational programs that support these students. Given the limited knowledge about the inclusive learning environment for students with severe disabilities, it is crucial to examine how teachers organize their teaching to engage these students more effectively.



Research Summary

This study examined the effect of pedagogical practices in engaging the elementary school students with severe disabilities in the physical education program. Focus group interviews with the elementary students and semi-structured interviews with eight educators in the school were conducted. Lesson plan and journal entries were also collected. The findings of this qualitative research indicated that the teacher's intentional way of teaching helped students become more engaged in the classroom activities. The results of this study also revealed that the teachers' pedagogical orientations and innovative teaching practices can support the students with severe disabilities within the general physical education settings.

Conclusion

The educators who participated in this study highlighted the importance of classrooms as the best place to deliver the general education curriculum to students with severe disabilities. This study indicated that for school-based inclusive physical education, factors such as lesson complexity, peer support, teacher collaboration, and student engagement should be considered.

Key Takeaway

Ableism might unfairly lead to the exclusion of some students from educational settings. To avoid exclusion, it is important to design and implement physical education programs that consider students' differences and needs. Physical education teacher education programs can also provide both general and special education knowledge to better support the inclusion of students with disabilities.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Dixon, K., Braye, S., & Gibbons, T. (2022). Still outsiders: The inclusion of disabled children and young people in physical education in England. *Disability & Society*, 37(10), 1549-1567.