

Inclusive Health and Physical Education Instruction

Inclusive education in health and physical education is based on the same philosophies and policies that govern teaching in any other discipline. A broader atmosphere of inclusion is based on legislation, policy, and children's rights and demands that teachers take action to ensure that they celebrate diversity and differentiate to meet the needs of all children. This broader policy may not, however be based on the particular needs of individual children or learning outcomes and new teachers are not always prepared for the implementation of this policy into day to day physical education lessons (Coates & Vickerman, 2009).

Preparation for teaching inclusive physical education classes begins with knowledge of general inclusive practices—assessing needs of students, creating a warm and caring classroom environment, encouraging students to take risks, following Individual Education Plans, utilizing differentiation strategies and universal design, etc. Beginning with Universal Design will often eliminate the need to differentiate for individual students as the lesson and environment are already considering a wide range of abilities and experiences.

Universal design “means that the physical, social, and learning environments are designed so that diverse learners are supported through powerful possibilities for teaching and learning” (Lieberman & Houston-Wilson, 2009, p. 67). What does that look like in your instruction?

Instructional Methods that Employ the Principles of Universal Design (p. 68)

1. Inlusiveness: the environment and teaching styles respect and value diversity
2. Physical Access: the instructional field (e.g., gymnasium, playing field, facility) are clear and easily accessible; a wide variety of equipment is available and utilized
3. Delivery Modes: a variety of methods are used to instruct, multiple methods in a single lesson (e.g., posters, explanations, discussions, videos, hands-on activities, etc.)
4. Interaction: time and opportunity for interaction is included at a variety of levels (e.g., teacher-student, student-student, expert-novice, etc.)
5. Feedback: specific feedback is given promptly and in an encouraging manner, effective prompting and cues are used to ensure success
6. Assessment: students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways

Modification in Physical Education

Even with universal design, some modifications or accommodations may need to be made for specific learner needs, particularly physical needs in the Health and Physical Education context. Just as in general teaching situations, differentiation can happen at a number of stages and contexts.

Modifications can be made to:

- Equipment
- Rules
- Instructions
- Environment

The Health and Physical Education Curriculum document (2010) suggests that students may require *accommodations* and/or *modifications*. Accommodations do not alter the curriculum but can be changes in how it is delivered, the amount of support provided, and how the student demonstrates learning. Three types of accommodation are:

- Instructional accommodations: teaching strategies in terms of presentation, organization, technology or multimedia
- Environmental accommodations: alterations of environment such as type of equipment used, size of playing field, etc.
- Assessment accommodation: changes in the assessment procedures, time or method, amount, etc.

Before the lesson or unit is planned, a number of questions about your students will help to insure that the activity is adapted to the student, rather than the student having to adapt to the activity. Refer to the Individual Education Plan and follow the recommendations there. Also consider the following (as suggested in Lieberman & Houston-Wilson, 2009, p. 66):

- What can the student see? Hear?
- Does the student have additional disabilities?
- How does the student ambulate?
- Are any activities contraindicated (i.e., not recommended) based on the student's disability?
- What is the student's previous experience in physical activity?
- What can the student do?
- How does the student perform?
- What does the student like?

Guidelines for meeting Special Education Needs in Health and Special Education are listed in the curriculum on pages 50 – 51. Students who are new to Canada and/or learning English may need accommodations as well but the social and physical aspects of physical education can be an outlet for students to learn social conventions and demonstrate their learning without language. Additional considerations for inclusion are described in the Daily Physical Activity in Schools documents (Grades 1 to 3 and Grades 4 to 6) pages 11 to 15.

Specific disabilities or conditions may require accommodations that address particular needs. Examples are included in the chart below: (Pangrazi & Gibbons, 2009)

Disability/Need	Modifications
Limited strength and endurance	Lower or enlarge size of the goal Modify tempo of the game Reduce size or weight of projectile Reduce distance a ball must be thrown Reduce number of goals required to win Modify striking implements
Coordination difficulties	Increase size of target Offer protectors (additional safety equipment) Allow opportunity to throw without concern for accuracy When striking, hold object stationary When catching, use soft, slow moving objects
Balance and agility challenges	Increase width of lines, rails and beams Increase base of support (e.g., spread feet) Increase surface area of body parts in contact with floor Ensure floor has friction Provide balance support (e.g., wall, chair) Offer practice in falling
Intellectual disability	Set challenging yet attainable goals Provide additional time Use demonstration rather than verbalization Reward trying and be aware of small increments
Epilepsy	Recommendations from physician May need extra precautions such as not exercising alone and avoiding activities that would be dangerous if consciousness was lost, e.g., swimming
Visual impairment	Take part in group fitness activities with assistance where needed Individual movement activities in safe environment, e.g., rope jumping

	<p>Brightly coloured balls against contrasting background in good light</p> <p>Clear verbal explanations</p> <p>Physical guidance</p>
Hearing impairment	<p>Reduce ambient noise when giving instructions</p> <p>Ensure student can see person giving instructions</p> <p>Arrange for buddy to repeat instructions</p> <p>May be balance difficulties—provide additional support where necessary</p>
Physical disabilities	<p>Focus on what child can do</p> <p>Provide minimal assistance and encourage independence as much as possible</p> <p>Create least restrictive environment</p> <p>Children with wheel chairs need activity to strengthen upper body muscles</p> <p>Cushion surfaces is falling is possible</p> <p>Provide extra time after physical activity for personal hygiene</p>
Fetal Alcohol Syndrom	<p>May have difficulty with listening and observing activities—give frequent and effective prompts and cues</p> <p>Monitor environment and avoid sensory overload</p> <p>Direct, very structured teaching, repeated</p>
Autism Spectrum Disorders	<p>Familiarize student with any new situation</p> <p>Use student’s preferred method of communication</p> <p>Direct, structured teaching</p> <p>Prompting with verbal and visual cues for motor tasks</p> <p>Give advanced warning before physical contact</p> <p>Use sensory preferences, e.g., give cue with demonstrate to draw attention to movement</p>
Asthma	<p>Check medical information for background information and know how to recognize symptoms of attack</p> <p>Take immediate action if student is coughing, wheezing has difficulty breathing or feels tightness in chest—have student stop activity, follow management plan, help student with medication and observe response, call for help immediately if student is straining to breathe or speak</p>

References

Lieberman, L. J., & Houston-Wilson, C. (2009). *Strategies for inclusion*. Windsor, ON: Human Kinetics.

Pangrazi, R. P., & Gibbons, S. L. (2009). *Dynamic physical education for elementary school children*. Toronto: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

Vickerman, P., & Coates, J. K. (2009). Trainee and recently qualified physical education teachers' perspectives on including children with special educational needs. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy, 14*(2), 137 – 153.