SOCIAL INTEGRATION THROUGH SCHOOL GAMES IN P.E. CLASS

© Katalin Kovács & © Zsuzsa Sáringerné Szilárd
(Semmelweis University & Pető András Institute of Conductive Education and Conductor Training College, Budapest, Hungary)

katalin@mail.hupe.hu & sasziszsu@gmail.com

Integrated education is not only favorable for people with disabilities if the necessary circumstances are provided, but also for students studying in majority schools. Teachers are not yet professional prepared for inclusion and are not sufficiently aware of inclusive pedagogy in Physical Education. Physical movement games provide the foundation for the attitudes of individuals to their peers. It is important to propose some educational methodologies and physical education games which do not require special training or experience but provide a solid base for PE teachers in inclusive educational situations.

Keywords: Physical Education, Games, Play Inclusion

“Integration or segregation” is the question heard more and more frequently at different pedagogy forums. Both sides will have enthusiastic opinions for and against, it is however a fact that the need for integration is continuously growing. According to Kőpatakiné Mészáros (2004) was that the approach to issues related to disabilities nowadays considers integration is the solution when discussing the social status of people with disabilities in the active society. However, by today the question is not that children with special needs should be cared for together with their able bodied peers or separately in special institutions? The question has by now changed to: how to integrate? The challenge of inclusion raises a lot of questions. Despite all this, we tend to forget that there are two very important preconditions for the successful social inclusion of people with disabilities as it follows:
- The preparedness of the individual for the social role.
- The preparedness of the society to include the person with the disability.

Our society will frequently try to comply with the second requirement by providing the required assets and conditions for this. The measure of inclusion is the extent to which someone is ready to accept a person with disabilities based on their individual status and the extent to which they are ready to welcome them in the world that we all live in. If a generation grows up by accepting their fellows' disabilities, knowing and supporting the notion of inclusion then we have already come one step closer to building a better society (Dimitriou, 2008). Physical exercise and Physical Education classes can have a very significant role. It is true that Physical Education teachers will have to face the new challenges however, through their approach and attitude they can substantially influence the success of the pedagogical activity.
Even today we will frequently see the approach which says that physical movement only serves the body, that in essence it is a hobby and nothing more, is still prevalent. Exercise as one of the cornerstones of complex education meaning that it is more than what it entails is still not an accepted idea.

Games are one of the fantastic tools and opportunities offered by Physical Education classes both for establishing positive atmosphere and for inducing interest (activation of interest) and maintaining it, since the desire for play is a somatic and psychological demand of children. According to Reigl (1997) games allow the development of valuable intellectual and moral characteristics which will provide the foundation for the attitude of individuals to their peers. Furthermore, games, the process of gathering knowledge which starts with kinesthesis and the related use of sensory organs, which is coupled with orientation in both space and environment through locomotor action. An excellent character of games is that they are easy to change and adapt to the educational aims and the circumstances.

Teachers in Hungary are not professional prepared yet for inclusion, are not sufficiently aware of inclusive pedagogy. Thereby we think it is important to present some educational methodology proposals and physical education games which do not require special training or experience but provide a wide ranging program for adaptation, principles which can help the planning work of PE teachers at the outset. It is important to note that teaching and supervising play requires a unique approach from teachers: the empathic ability open for improvised solutions and playful atmosphere are indispensable for good mood during play.

General education methodology proposals

1. Discuss the situation with the class, call their attention to the circumstances presenting themselves and their possible solutions.
2. Provide time and opportunities for students without disabilities to provide assistance.
3. Reduce the amount of individual competitive exercises or game. In case of individual exercises the challenge should be ourselves and not our “opponent.”
4. Strive to perform teamwork in pairs or small groups.
5. Clear cut and simple rules and framework will help children join the game and the activity. It is important to keep in mind one of the basic pedagogical methods. Only one maximum two goals should be set for our students at the time.
6. Shake hands at the end of the competition. At the end of every national or international competition participants should shake hands with one another regardless of the result. Celebration of the victorious and brooding over loosing can only start after a friendly handshake. We can introduce this habit during PE classes also.
7. After the game itself, it is important to digest the play experience, to summarize the conclusions and draw the lesson. Enough time has to be allocated for this.
Possibilities of team formation

Teamwork has an outstanding role in the case of inclusive groups, thus in many cases it is important to form teams. Thus, already when forming a team the selection of team members will substantially define the atmosphere and outcome of play later. When forming a team, we can also emphasize that we are not selecting players with a view of victory but because rules require this (Orlick, 1989). The benefit of having permanent teams is that team members will get to know each other better which can greatly improve the success. However, when forming permanent teams joined play will only encompass certain students, thus for smaller play activities or in other cases it is necessary to organize ad hoc teams. We find it important to note that we do not favor spontaneously team formation. However we do neither consider the method widely used during physical education class for team selection where the most skilful become captains who then “exploiting” their power will only allow one or two students at the end of the selection process because rules require this. An important criteria for “spontaneous” team formation is that it should only seem to be a playful idea for students however it supposes a certain extent of attention and preliminary knowledge from the Physical Education teacher. We can use the following ideas or options to form teams of close to equal strength in a playful way without having uncomfortable moments.

- Those born in the same month. We can group months as required, ie: those born in the first or second half of the year; born in even or uneven months; winter-summer or autumn-spring. We can create numerous subgroups of the twelve months based on the number of teams required.
- Students put one of their shoes in a pile. The teacher will select them to the right or left (if needed in more piles) in an arbitrary manner. Everyone looks for their own shoe thereby their own team. The teacher will have earlier studied (observed) the shoes of students who he/she wanted in one and or different teams.
- We can group teams according to favorite subjects, food, colors, or any other current topic. We can select (or more) colors. We can ask students to line up behind their favorite colors.

Practical education methodology proposals

The games are discussed in our study can be used for both regular and inclusive The objective of games is presentation of inclusive behavior, with the objective of overcoming barriers to studying through the inclusion of every student, which we had learned” from those with impaired sight, movement, and hearing.

For children with mobility disabilities who do not require any specific aid for executing safe and stable movement the most important factor is time. Let us leave enough time for the execution of the movement and or exercise. Time pressure can not be one of the major factors in planning a class.
However, when exercises do not have to be performed standing (on two feet) children with disabilities will feel much safer, their disability will be much less apparent. We can use a skate board specially adapted for pe class as an accessory. The board can be driven by sitting and/or lying on it, thus every favorite game can be adapted from catch to tag.

For warm-up we can use exercises in pairs or races, with different types of movement from the animal world: Spider and crab crawl, seal walk, lame fox, etc. For group tasks we can use, wheelbarrow, and other exercises that our students know from earlier occasions.

For team games boys will be overjoyed to play spider football whereas girls will prefer sitting volleyball. However goalball such us target shooting games are also excellent for ability development in a seated position.

Children with sight (visual) impairment studying in integrated classes are not blind, they are visually impaired who can be barred from certain activities because these endanger their remaining sight. Thus they can not perform any movement which involves shaking or bouncing of the head, any forced expiration lasting longer time, upside down positions, and can not lift and carry heavy weights. However they have not been bared from adaptive games, in fact they will be capable of processing information with the help of accessories just like people with normal vision do. Children with impaired vision will move sometimes even run in an environment well known to them, however an object appearing suddenly on a well known route can also cause an accident. Beside demonstrating the required movement, verbal instructions, it is also important that an optimal observation situation be established. Exercise and tasks to be executed in pairs is very beneficial for children with impaired vision, where they can even be the leading party. We have to strive to allow peers to demonstrate the simplest exercises and games, to perform them: in order to allow children with impaired vision to recognize and mimic characteristic expressive movement from what they saw.

In the case of children with vision impairment, gymnastics will have a significant role because due to the constant leaning close to objects, spinal deformities are a larger threat than for children with normal vision. Many catcher games can be used by holding hands or shoulders. Also a lot of the dodge ball games are even more exciting when having a partner. These children can best be included in ball games using bell balls. Almost all types and sizes of balls can be bought equipped with bells which will greatly help the orientation of those with impaired vision. We prefer ball games because forced posture also has an unhealthy effect on blood circulation.

In the case of children with hearing impaired there can be on the one hand aural communication problems since both hearing and balance are in the same sensory organ, thus hearing impairment will be often accompanied by lack of balance. In an integrated environment children with hearing disabilities will almost have to rely on their peers. Therefore they continuously look for the opportunity to return this gesture and of helping their peers. However, during the PE class, children with hearing impairments will pose the least difficulty. The PE teacher will demonstrate the exercise (task) several times, which allows these children to more easily understand them. They will prefer tasks requiring good observation and manual skills which are easy to establish in the framework of a PE class. During warm-up it is easy to provide skillful exercise with different size and material of balls (table tennis, tennis, handball etc.). Fittballs (large size) are excellent equipment for both strength and stretching exercise. The fitball, because of it
size will assure a great atmosphere in the class. Rhythm exercises, stomping with the feet, clapping with the hands are easy to follow visually and provide the joy of common action. For team games the strategy games and variation of town games are suggested.

We share the view (Coppenolle, 2006), that integrated education is not only favorable for people with disabilities, if the necessary circumstances are provided, but also for students studying in majority schools. Integrated education will multiply social interdependencies and through the formation of new forms of cooperation can help develop new moral values. Health as a value also grows in significance.

Why do we propose to do this through play? Because the primary motive for play is not pedagogical. It would be a misconception of play if we wanted to deduce it from pedagogy and educational tasks and wanted to make its essence dependent on their effects (Biróné, 2004). According to Huizinga (1990) play is an indispensable value for humankind, ie: it embodies a natural, unbiased and easy atmosphere and carries trust and conviction. Through the Homo Ludens, Huizinga also signaled that man is about more than his own existence.
References