

ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION
FOR THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED
INDIVIDUAL

by

4871
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B.S., McPherson College, 1947

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1970

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LD
2668
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1970
M362
C.2

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INTRODUCTION

"The first goal in education for democracy is the full, round and continuing development of the person."¹ For many years education in the United States emphasized solely the intellectual development of the individual and neglected other phases of his personality.

In accord with modern educational psychology, however, the concept of the whole personality has been recognized as the desired goal. Thus, educational objectives of today are directed toward both the intellectual development and the social, emotional, physical, and psychological needs of the student.

The physically sub-par and the physically handicapped students in our schools today desperately need the advantages which result from careful program planning and inspired teaching. They need these advantages far more than does the natural born athlete on whom the attentions of the high school and college are frequently concentrated.

Those individuals who profess a democratic philosophy and believe in the inherent worth of each individual and his rights to full development have an obligation to provide a physical education program for all students in our schools. This tremendous challenge is not being met in many high schools and colleges.²

In physical education classes, where there are both individual and group

¹President Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education for American Democracy (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 9.

²George J. Stafford and Ellen D. Kelly, Preventive and Corrective Physical Education (New York: The Roland Press Company, 1958), pp. iv, v.

participation in selected activities, influence is exerted not only on the physical growth and development, but also on social adjustment, emotional stability and self-realization of value gained by participating individuals.

In the total development of the handicapped student, participation in physical activities plays just as important a role as in the development of the normal individual.

The importance of physical education to the developmental progress of the handicapped student has long been recognized. Frequent mentions have been made in histories of physical education concerning the use of exercises and physical activities for remedial purpose. This phase of physical education has had many different titles such as remedial and individual gymnastics, therapeutic exercises and corrective physical education.

During World War II added impetus was given to reconditioning and rehabilitation programs by the greater emphasis that was placed upon the hospital programs of the Armed services. It was found by adaptation and modification of physical activities to individual needs and conditions that most of the handicapped men were able to participate in varying degrees, thus facilitating their conditioning or total rehabilitation.

Observation and study of the conservation of human resources have resulted in a realization by educators of the need for increased emphasis on rehabilitation programs for the handicapped student. Ideally democratic educators recognize that any student who has been out of school for any length of time because of ill health is assisted in his rehabilitation or total development, socially, physically and intellectually, by adapted physical education.

Although rehabilitation of the handicapped individual is dependent upon many interrelated factors, his participation in physical activities with his