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## **THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPORT EDUCATION MODEL ON AN ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER'S CONCEPTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

Physical education teachers implement model-based instruction as their fundamental teaching framework to provide quality physical education (Metzler, 2005). Siedentop et al. (2004) indicated that the Sport Education curriculum model encourages students to become literate, competent, and enthusiastic players. Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to examine the conceptions of a junior high school physical education teacher using the Sport Education curriculum model to teach students with disabilities during a swimming unit. Data were gathered from videotaping of physical education classes, sixteen informal and two formal interviews, lesson plans, and field notes. The results of the study found that the teacher perceived students to be more enthusiastic and interactive with their classmates when participating in the model. In addition, the physical education teacher spent more time preparing for his lessons and modified his teaching method. Team affiliation was the most challenging aspect of using the Sport Education model with the population.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Sport Education curriculum model is a physical education model that provides “authentic” sporting experiences to students. Wallhead and O’Sullivan (2005) indicated that the Sport Education model allows physical education teachers to provide quality lessons that encourage positive student experiences in physical education. In addition, Siedentop (2002) stated that Sport Education has a significant influence on teachers’ teaching practices such as peer tutoring, teaching games for understanding, cooperative learning, and constructivism. In this regard, Siedentop (1994) developed the Sport Education model to promote active learning for students in physical education using a team-based approach. There are certain features in the Sport Education model: a) seasons including pre-season, in-season, and post-season; b) team affiliation to

plan and practice for team competitions; c) formal competitions lasting at least nine weeks; d) a culminating event including tournament games; and e) recording individual and team achievements. More specifically, Siedentop et al. (2004) pointed out that the Sport Education model is essential to students to become literate, enthusiastic, competent players in physical education.

Researchers examined physical education teachers' conceptions using the Sport Education model in their physical education lessons. Alexander & Luckman (2001) found that the model provided physical education teachers with positive conceptions in terms of teacher self-efficacy. As a result, the Sport Education model has been found to be a useful tool for physical education teachers to develop their pedagogical skills. However, there is no research on conceptions of physical education teachers who implement the Sport Education model to students with physical and cognitive disabilities. Thus, the aim of the current study was to investigate the conceptions of a junior high school physical education teacher using the Sport Education model to teach students with disabilities during a swimming unit.

## **METHODS**

This study was conducted in a junior high school physical education class at a school for students with severe or profound intellectual disabilities. The physical education teacher had been teaching adapted physical education at the school for about six years. At the time of the study, he implemented the Sport Education model during a swimming and diving unit. Two formal interviews were used to collect the teacher's conceptions of teaching students with severe or profound intellectual disability. Semi-structured formal interviews were conducted in the study (Patton, 2002). In addition, informal interviews were collected to clarify the data. The teacher was also observed 16 times. Field notes and lesson plans were also gathered for data analysis, along with analytic induction and constant comparison (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Trustworthiness was completed through triangulation of the data, member checks, and peer debriefing.

## **RESULTS**

The results of the study revealed that the physical education teacher (Steve) modified his teaching practices and spent more time preparing for his sport education units. The teacher said he used indirect instruction for his swimming lessons using the Sport Education model:

They were surprised I let them go work on swimming themselves. Several coaches took over, and they started. I just go around and whisper something into the coach's ear.

In addition, Steve spent a lot of time making sure that students with disabilities understood roles in Sport Education units. In this regard, Steve had to spend more time to organize his lessons. As he said about planning:

I do a lot more planning and getting everything ready for each day of class and then I am waiting for them to learn a little more.

Steve indicated that students with disabilities appeared to show more enthusiasm with their peers when engaged in the Sport Education model. Steve reported that team affiliation was the most difficult part of the model to teach students with disabilities. The sport education curriculum model provided students with disabilities engaging opportunities to be active during class participation. As Steve commented about the increased enthusiasm and social interactions:

At the end of the unit, students cheered each other and gave students sportsmanship points. Most teams realized they needed to be shaking hands before the event with their teammates, as well as cheering with the other team.

Steve found the challenges in terms of team affiliation he faced with teaching swimming lessons using the Sport Education curriculum model. As a student commended about challenges in team affiliation:

Sport Education model works with team sports better than the individual sports. It's hard to get team aspects involved in swimming.

The teacher indicated that students with disabilities understood their roles and responsibilities as the class progressed and as they became familiar with the model.

## **CONCLUSION**

As with a previous study on the sport education curriculum model (Hastie, 2000), students with disabilities in this study enjoyed being a part of the team. The physical education teacher in the study believed that the student roles and responsibilities provided a sense of belonging in terms of the increased class participation. The teacher perceived that his students worked harder in the Sport Education model than in a regular physical education class. Siedentop et al.(2004) stated that involving the students in the Sport Education model provides them a sense of ownership in the lesson. In this regard, the feeling of increased roles and responsibilities helped enhance enthusiasm when participating in the swimming and diving unit.

The Sport Education model works well in a team sport rather than an individual sport because of the importance of team-based learning. In this regard, one of the significant findings of the study was the students' challenges of team affiliation in the swimming and diving unit.

The findings of the study also revealed that the teacher adjusted his teaching style toward more of an indirect approach rather than direct approach and also had to increase his planning time for sport education. Further research is needed to examine teacher conceptions when using various types of physical education curriculum models to teach students with different types of disabilities. Understanding teacher conceptions of teaching students with disabilities will provide additional insights in the development of teacher-preparation programs for physical education teachers.

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