Topic Exploration Article Submission #1

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The first article I choose to relate to the topic of physical activity in the classroom is “Increasing Students Physical Activity during the School Day: Opportunities for the Physical Educator” by Joan D. Brewer, Paul E. Luebbers, and Shawna D. Shane. The article highlights the struggles we continue to see in society as children are continually becoming less active. By focusing on statistics early in the article it becomes incredibly apparent that these numbers are trending in the wrong direction and changes must be made to rectify this problem. With obesity rates on the rise as the minimum daily exercise suggestions continue to be ignored, the time has come for the educational system to lead the charge towards changing this course. The article states that “children are more likely to be more active following an active day at school versus a more sedentary day at school” (Dale, Corbin & Dale, 2000). This reinforces how important physical activity in the classroom is because the impacts stretch beyond the classroom walls and the school day. The article provides many useful resources that all teachers could implement in their classroom from ideas on how to incorporate physical activity in the classroom to cross-content integration suggestions.

Technology continues to evolve before our very eyes and improves the daily lives of many from increased safety measures to endless amounts of information being only a few clicks away. While the concept of having infinite knowledge only a few key strokes away has unmeasurable benefits, it should also shoulder some of the blame for the increased sedentary lifestyles that increasingly has become the norm. In what feel like “a galaxy far far away” (Kurtz & Lucas, 1977) there was a time when not having the answers to every question was acceptable. If you wanted to know something such as what colors are the wings on a butterfly, you would go outside and run around until you were lucky enough to see one. This inquiry-based learning has since been replaced by the sedentary luxury of having this knowledge within arm’s reach. According to the article, 60-68% of the world’s population does not engages in the daily physical activity needed for good health and this contributes to the World Health Organization’s statistic of two million deaths associated with lack of physical activity each year (Brewer, Luebbers & Shane, 2009). Helping to reverse these numbers is something that can start immediately with healthy habits formed during school years.

Cross-content integration stood out as being paramount in physical activity requirements being successfully met for children. Studies show that children who participate in recommended amounts of physical activity show increased cognitive abilities and improved concentration. It also increases the quality of relationships between peers. This means that physical activity in schools is not the sole responsibility of the physical education teacher because the benefits extend past the gym. As found in the article, there are a number of different things that can be done to promote getting children up and moving no matter what the subject area may be. Anything from moving around in group work, active learning scenarios, or brain breaks filled with movement activities would help fulfil the physical activity requirements in which we are so often failing.

There are many examples that could be used to convey the message that today’s children need to take the playground back and explore their surroundings as opposed to sitting on electronic devices while information is being delivered to them. We cannot lay the sole blame at the feet of these children who, at a young age, are not taught physical literacy and therefore do not have the understanding or ability to make educated choices as they progress through their daily lives. Furthermore, the hustle and bustle lifestyles that increasingly seems to becoming the norm has to take a seat at the table of blame as well. As the school bell rings and children pour out of the doors in dead sprint for the playground, far too often we see parents doing all things possible to herd these children full of energy into car seats as opposed to taking the time to interact and play. The responsibility of our children’s future falls in the lap of everyone from parents to educators. As stated in the article, we as teachers have the opportunity to be the leaders in providing our children with the basis to make informed decisions by “taking the lead to meet this initiative through innovative ways of increasing students’ physical activity during the school day” (Brewer, Luebbers & Shane, 2009).

References

Dale, D., Corbin C. B. & Dale, K.S. (2000, September). Restricting opportunities to be active during school time: Do children compensate by increasing physical activity levels after school? *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 71.*

Kurtz G. (Producer), & Lucas, G. (Director). (1977). *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope* [Motion Picture]. United States: 20th Century Fox.

Brewer, J.D., Luebbens, P.E., Shane, S. D. (2009, Jan.Feb.). *Increasing Student Physical Activity during the School Day: Opportunities for the Physical.* 22, 3, pp. 20