Importance of Quality Daily Physical Activity and Understanding the Benefits

Article Submission #2

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Due: November 13, 2018

“The Effectiveness of the Canadian Quality Daily Physical Education Program on School Physical Education” is an article that explores the interpretation of Quality Daily Physical Activity (QDPE). Chad, Humbert, and Jackson (1999) explain that the major focus of physical education is slowly shifting from competitive games to more health-related physical activity goals and instruction. Canada has developed the QDPE program to fit with these changes. The Canadian QDPE program focuses on providing the proper quality (moderate to vigorous physical activity) for the recommended quantity of time (150 minutes per week) throughout the entire school year while encouraging intermural and extra-curricular involvement (Chad, Humbert, & Jackson, 1999). As determined in 1986 by the Canadian Association for Health Education, a quality program requires daily physical activity and results in students having a positive attitude towards activity (Chad et al., 1999). It also requires qualified teachers who enthusiastically approach lessons to have access to the facilities and equipment they need (Chad et al., 1999).

Upon the presence of these elements, the QDPE program is designed to help students achieve athletic success with enjoyment which in turn has been proven to enhance student’s academic success in the classroom (Chad et al., 1999).

The purpose of the study explained in the article is to determine how effective the Canadian QDPE program was after being implemented across the country for ten years. The article explains that the participants in this study consisted of grades K-12 teachers, principals, school board officials, and executive members from agencies and associations. Chad et al. (1999) explain that a package of questionnaires was sent out to each association and it was requested that the executive members respond. From these questionnaires data was then drawn to be used in the study (Chad et al., 1999). It was determined that teachers with a major or minor in physical education had a much greater understanding of the QDPE program (76%) than those without physical education degrees (38%) (Chad et al., 1999). It was also noted that 95% of agencies and associations were aware of the goals of the program (Chad et al., 1999). The agencies and associations also pointed out the positive effects quality physical education programs have on economics such as reduced health care costs (Chad et al., 1999). The common understanding by all who completed the questionnaires was that there is much importance in providing a QDPE program to each student (Chad et al., 1999). Overall the study confirmed that physical education focus in the last 10 years has shifted from competition based activities to more of a health-related focus (Chad et al., 1999). Chad et al. (1999) suggest that there may be benefit in providing more education and information to teachers who do not have a physical education major or minor. If this knowledge can be consistent across school system faculty the idea of thinking about and educating ‘the whole child’ will become more common and the knowledge students learn in gym class will begin to enhance their leaning in the classroom (Chad et al., 1999).

When reflecting on the contents of this article and the findings of the study, I have been exposed to the reality that not all teachers will be equally aware of the importance of daily physical activity. I also will be aware that often school board associations and agencies have a greater understanding of programs being put in place across the country than the teachers themselves do. This is alarming to me in the sense that not enough is being done to help teachers work together to allow the programs in place to reach their full potential. As a result of this, students do not have access to the full 150 minutes of physical activity each week and ultimately, they are missing out on learning about healthy competition, work ethic, and teamwork. My field placement classroom is an example of a group of students who unfortunately do not get 150 minutes of quality physical activity in a week due to limited gym space availability. When the class is behind in a subject the teacher will skip gym class on that day so the students can get caught up on their work. Recess is often taken away from students who do not use their class time wisely and this punishment results in even less physical activity as well as less opportunity to develop social skills on the playground. By taking away these opportunities for self-directed physical activity the teacher may be fueling other problems in the classroom such as bad behavior or difficulty focusing. After reading this article I now see that increased amounts of physical activity may prove to benefit this class academically and that it would align with the idea of developing the “total child.”

Another aspect from this article that stood out to me was the specific criteria the Canadian QDPE program has in regard to physical educators being qualified and enthusiastic (Chad et al., 1999). I believe that having a qualified teacher who brings excitement and positive energy to class each day has the power to encourage students to embrace physical activity instead of resisting it. Ultimately the teacher is the professional who is interacting with the students and therefore they have the ability to promote living a healthy lifestyle. I can remember my high school gym class experience and my enjoyment of the class depended on the quality and energy the teacher brought to class each day. I found myself more engaged and interested in whatever activity we were learning if the teacher was excited about it. This is the type of physical education teacher I would like to be and this is why I completely agree that the quality of physical education teachers is a fundamental component of putting a successful QDPE program in place.

I believe that the teachers should understand the QDPE program the best and not the school board agencies and associations. Teachers are the professionals who are directly interacting with the students every day and if they are unclear about the goal of the Canadian QDPE program then there is flaw in the system. Research shows that increased physical activity levels are related to enhanced performances in the classroom. It is interesting to look at the data collected from the study which indicates a low percentage of teachers understand the goals and methodology of the QDPE program. Overall this study revealed some adjustments that can be made in order to improve the quality of Canadian QDPE program. Perhaps in the future a document can be put in place that can increase teachers’ understanding of the program and how successful implementation can improve students’ academic performances.

References:

Chad, K. E., Humbert, M. L., & Jackson, P. L. (1999). The Effectiveness of the Canadian

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