

# THE EDUCATIONAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS WHO WORK IN SCHOOLS FOR DISABLED IN ANKARA

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## Abstract

**Objective:** The purpose of this study of phenomenology is to examine the educational difficulties and challenges faced by physical education instructors providing education to the disabled students in comparison to the other physical education instructors.

## Method:

The study is of qualitative nature in terms of the techniques employed in resolving the data obtained in relation to the field that the problem is associated with.

The sample group of the study consists of five physical education instructors working at schools catering to the disabled children within the city borders of Ankara. The study data has been obtained by means of the semi-structured interview form that was developed by the researcher and also by conducting face to face interviews (interview techniques) with the physical education instructors concerned.

## Results and Conclusion:

According to the study findings, the physical education instructors are of the opinion that the physical education courses at schools for disabled children are essential and an integral part of the curriculum however, the course content implemented at the subject matter schools is deemed not to be sufficiently suitable for the students concerned.

Consequently it can be deduced that the physical education courses provided at schools for disabled are an important part of the curriculum playing an important role in their socializing as well as their educational process with special needs, however, the subject matter schools do not place the necessary emphasis on physical education, and that there are problems related with sports halls, materials, etc., and moreover, the physical education instructors working at schools for disabled lack the education and training necessary to operate in this capacity.

**Keywords:** Disabled, student, instructor

## Introduction

Physical Education, means being “effective”. In physical education the body is a means to achieve the objective while the objective is to train the entire personality. In a definition that is in keeping with objectives of this kind of education, physical education is; to be healthy, strong and happy while gaining personality, character and moral values in the process of being educated on culture, socialization and citizenship (E.T.C.Günişik, 1973).

The health benefits of physical education and sports activities both in terms of physical health as well as mental cannot be denied, and moreover these are essential especially for the disabled. It can be said that the need of the disabled persons for physical education and sports activities is more as the disabled students taking physical education courses learn how to handle their handicaps. Moreover their social relations and confidence will also improve and develop. Physical education and sports related activities are also effective as a treatment tool supporting the nervous and muscle system, nervous reactions and physiological and metabolic changes of the body. (D.S.Özer, 1998).

A disabled student gains the strength to tackle the challenges in his/ her daily life by means of physical education courses while at the same time deriving more pleasure and fun from life, learn that he/ she can be self sufficient and becomes aware of the fact that he/ she can sustain his/ her life without becoming a burden on others. Physical Education course activities are quite effective in doing something with idle time available. The activities that are initiated during treatment and continued with at sports clubs and

similar venues, play an important role in making something useful out of idle time for the disabled while being an effective means in aiding the establishment of humane relations. (S.Suveren, 1986).

The psychological balance of the disabled kids that participate in physical activity and educational games under the observation of the physical education instructors employed at schools for disabled improve and in spite of all the challenges he or she faces, he/ she learns to accept and come to like his/ her life and circumstances as they are. (Y.Özsoy, M. Özyürek, S.Eripek, 2002).

For the disabled to be oriented towards physical education activities, important sports federations and clubs have been established and it has even been ensured that the disabled people participate in Olympics. Here, the importance of BES activities becomes evident and when the disabled people are considered and analyzed from three aspects, namely society, education and health, the subject gains significance as it provides a vision of what they can gain from this process. (A.Gür, 2001).

In Turkey, Physical Education and Sports instructors that are specially trained to work with disabled people, are not brought up and consequently, any physical education instructor could be attending the physical education courses of the disabled pupils. (F. Gürsel, 2006).

Other than the deficiency in specialized instructors, the physical education lessons are not sufficiently emphasized in many education institutions that provide education to the disabled students. And also it is a known fact that the instructors employed at

these institutions are faced with many challenges in terms of the curriculum, facilities, etc.

On the basis of the foundation laid down above, the objective of this study is to analyze the educational difficulties and challenges faced by physical education instructors providing education to the disabled pupils in comparison to the other physical education instructors.

### Material and Method

The study is of a qualitative nature in terms of the techniques employed in resolving the data obtained in relation to the field that the problem is associated with.

The sample group of the study consists of five physical education instructors working at schools catering to the disabled children within the city borders of Ankara. The study data has been obtained by means of semi-structured interview form that was developed by the researcher. In the preparation process of the subject matter semi structured interview form;

- Literature scanning and analysis in relation to the field of the study was conducted
- Within the scope of the study the participants have been asked questions under 7 main headings,
- The interview form that has been prepared was examined by three specialists who also provided their opinions with regard to the form,
- It is believed that a comprehensive interview process can be conducted with the form that has been prepared and given its final format. The opinions of the five physical education instructors on the physical education lessons given at private education institutions have been obtained in face to face interviews. (Interview Technique)

The data collected has been analyzed by using descriptive analysis technique.

In the study, to be able to eliminate the reliability issues with regard to the internal and external validity issues of the qualitative findings; different opinions of field specialists in the structuring of the interview forms and determination of the participants have been taken advantage of. The findings have been defined by direct quotations and the results have been explained based on these quotations. The data obtained from participants was recorded in recording device to prevent any loss of data.

### Findings

In the first question that was posed to the instructors it was asked "how they rate the importance of physical education lessons at schools for the disabled". The physical education instructors that participated in the study emphasized the fact that the physical education classes have a very important place among all the lessons taught at schools. Some of the things stated by these instructors to underline the importance of physical education lessons are as follows;

*"I believe that the physical education classes are very important in terms of leading the children to socialize, helping their physical development, making them known and aiding the development of teacher-student relations in special needs schools (needless to say it is important in regular schools too)." (Ö1)*

*"Especially from the point of view of my school physiotherapy and exercising are very important activities where the disabled is concerned. Many of these students need a wheelchair to move around and just for this reason physical education carries great importance for them. We try to satisfy the physical and bodily requirements of the children by means of sports related activities and exercising oriented towards physiotherapy." (Ö5)*

When the physical education instructors asked whether "physical education lessons are emphasized in schools for the disabled", they indicated that on paper the physical education lessons are considered as important while in application such is not the case. Some instructors expressed their opinions as follows;

*"Within the framework of the curriculum, each instructor by using his or her materials, tries to provide physical education classes in compliance with the physical limitations and conditions of the school concerned. However, there is always more room for improvement." (Ö1)*

*"It is important on paper, but in application I don't think that is the case. The curriculum is not appropriate for the level of the children." (Ö2)*

One of the questions asked to the instructors participating in the study, in relation to the elements that play a role in education, was whether "the actors playing a role in education place sufficient importance on the physical education lessons" and they were asked to;

- Evaluate their colleagues in other branches,
- Evaluate the school managements.

Accordingly the instructors replied as follows;

*"The other instructors watch the physical education classes together with the children and they enjoy the activity and lend us a helping hand." (Ö1)*

*"They think of the physical education classes as important and they provide their support. They provide support both in terms of student activities and materials. There is no general problem." (Ö2)*

*"We receive the major support from school management which we are thankful for." (Ö5)*

Another question was related to the opinions in regard to the "level of interest, participation in sports activities and general attitude towards the lesson of the disabled students" and some of the replies were as follows;

*"The students show great interest in the physical education classes and they say that they would be even happier if the number of hours is increased." (Ö2)*

*"... students race with each other to participate in the physical education classes and activities. And this pleases the instructor too." (Ö1)*

When they were asked to "Evaluate the school for the disabled in terms of the facilities for the

physical education classes” some of the replies were as follows;

The physical education instructors participating in the study emphasized the fact that there are deficiencies where the sports hall and materials of the school they work for are concerned.

*“... Our school has a very small sports hall. Actually we need a bigger space and more tools to properly conduct the physical education classes. The classes will become more interesting and active if better means are provided.” (Ö2)*

*“... It would be much better if we had larger sports halls. We do not have the necessary tools. We try to cope with what we have but of course the circumstances can be better.” (Ö3)*

When we asked to the physical education instructors participating in the study whether “the physical education classes are at the sufficient level to meet the objectives of the curriculum” the instructors were divided into two groups in terms of their opinions. The following are some of the quotes made in favor of or against the subject.

*“If you ask me it is a good cleverly prepared curriculum. If it is adhered to, I believe that it can help put the students into shape” (Ö3)*

*“I am not of the opinion that the curriculum is in keeping with the objectives. If you ask me the curriculum can be made more suitable. It is not suitable for the level of the students.” (Ö2)*

When the study group is asked whether “the training they received with regard to the education of the disabled was sufficient to carry out their jobs as physical education instructors”, majority of the replies indicated that the training they received was rather insufficient.

*“The training and education provided to the physical education instructors must be different for each disabled student. The training for hearing impaired must be different then the training for intellectually challenged students. The instructors must be trained based on the disabled group to be addressed. Otherwise the education provided would not be effective.” (Ö3)*

*“If you ask me, we must be trained better to teach at the schools for the disabled. More emphasis must be placed on the institutions teaching physical education instructors along with the branches taught. To be able to provide the necessary care, the number of courses, seminars and similar training tools with regard to the disabled students must be increased.” (Ö2)*

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

According to the study findings; physical education instructors who participated in the study indicated that the physical education classes at schools for the disabled are very important and that these classes constitute an integral part of the education provided. In the post graduate study conducted by Keskin (2008) on the reaction times of the visually impaired it has been stated that besides the physiological benefits that sports provides human beings regardless of the times concerned, it also contributes to the individuals by enabling them to

express themselves, instilling a desire to win, leading them to establish a team acting to achieve a common goal, making possible for them to experience the excitement of a victory and sadness of a loss, teaching them to respect authority, guiding them to accept defeat in other words helping them to incorporate social elements of life in their individuality. It can be said that these properties of sports are more important for the visually impaired that lack the capability or the drive to display many actions independently (S. A. Keskin, 2008). The importance of physical education lessons for the student at the schools for the disabled has been emphasized.

Another finding of the actual research performed is the fact that sports provided physiotherapy characteristics to the disabled student. These findings are also supported in a research of C.Özyiğit, (1992).

C.Özyiğit, (1992), the superiority of sportive activities to that of classic therapy is due to its entertaining the person, and committing him/her to life. Both psychosocial pressures will diminish and healing and recovery will be achieved in a section of disability types with physical activities and educational games. As games and movement activity turn into a habit, strength, endurance and coordination in the child will also increase, and it may even prepare the medium for the creation of a new philosophy of life in the disabled person (C.Özyiğit, 1992).

Opinion has been expressed according to the conclusions of the study that physical fitness course curriculum implemented in schools for disabled is not sufficiently suitable for students. When research performed in this subject is considered:

In the study S. Akdoğan, (2009) undertook with regards to the opinion of primary school physical fitness instructors in the subject of new physical fitness program of primary school physical fitness course, it becomes evident that it is extremely difficult to have a program prepared with the aim of complying with the modern world implemented, while there is still an infrastructure issue in our country, which does not even allow the implementation of previous programs. A program prepared as an annex to this one will lose its validity, no matter how perfect it may be. While a very important program such as educational program is being prepared, it should be enquired as to whether it complies with the conditions of the country in order to avoid such experiences. This conclusion also attests to the fact that curriculum program of disabled students is not suitable, and shows similarity to our findings (S.Akdoğan, 2009).

As a result it can be concluded that physical fitness courses are extremely important in schools for disabled, that physical fitness course has a great importance and place in socializing of disabled children as well as special education processes, that in spite of this, physical fitness course is not attached sufficient importance in our country’s schools for disabled, that there are issues related to sports halls, materials, etc. and that there is a lack of training with regard to the physical fitness instructors assigned to schools for disabled.

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