

Philosophy of physical education



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Each and every person has a different view of what physical education really is. “ Is it education in sport? ” asks Siedentop “ Is it fitness education? Is it social development? Is it development through risk and adventure? Is it movement? Instead,” he says, “ it is all of these things – and maybe more? ” (1998, p. 237). Whereas Wuest and Butcher feel that physical activity is “ a means to help individuals acquire skills, fitness, knowledge, and attitudes that contribute to their optimal development and well-being” (2003, p.

9). I believe that both of these aspects are important when defining physical education. I feel that physical education is a means of movement and social interaction, but also an activity that will help to develop ones skills, fitness and attitudes. Having defined physical education, this paper will now analyse the value that physical activity can have on an individual. Physical Education can be divided into two main areas: the biophysical and the socio-cultural. To begin, the biophysical benefits will be explored which include both the benefits physiologically and motorologically.

Then the three sub categories of the socio-cultural will be explored including the psychological, sociological and educational benefits of participating in regular physical activity. Physiologically, there are many benefits to completing regular physical activity. Children with high blood pressure and cholesterol levels, benefit greatly from participating in physical activity, so encouraging children from an early age to partake in activities of a physical nature will give them the best possible chance at leading a long and healthy life. According to Wuest and Butcher (2003), “ Enhanced cardiovascular function is one health benefit of physical activity”.

(p. 256) They also mention that physical activity will help to reduce the risk of heart disease, help to strengthen the heart muscles, lower the heart rate, reduce blood pressure, increase oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood and improve coronary and peripheral circulation (Wuest & Butcher, 2003, p. 256).

It has also been said that regular physical activity can improve ones muscular strength, flexibility and endurance, and can also develop movement skills, and increase bone density. It also severely lowers the risk of osteoporosis, diabetes, and colon cancer (Nunan & Carter, 2003).

Motorological skills are an important aspect for an individual to have, as they will help to improve ones coordination, skill and self-confidence.

“ Movement is the foundation of a physically active lifestyle” say Wuest and Butcher (2003, p. 135), and Abernethy explains his views on motor skills, explaining that they are “ goal-directed actions that require movement of the whole body, limb or muscle in order to be successfully performed” (1996, p. 64). Motor skills will only benefit a child if they are taught at an early age how to perform them correctly. They are then able to continue to use these skills throughout their entire life. Without the knowledge on how to perform these fundamental motor skills, children will emerge from primary school without being able to perform the skills correctly.

They then become extremely frustrated with themselves and “ experience failure too frequently because they do not have the necessary skills” (Wuest & Butcher, 2003, p. 139). This can then lead to psychological and sociological problems, proving how important it is for one to learn the necessary motorological skills at an early age. Physical activity can also benefit a person’s psychological state of mind.

Individuals are able to manage stress more effectively and “ it may help to alleviate mental illness and reduce stress susceptibility to depression and anxiety” (Wuest & Butcher, 2003, p. 257). I agree with Wuest and Butcher when they say, “ regular participation in physical activity can contribute to the development of a positive self-concept and greater self-esteem” (2003, p. 57), as from personal experience. “ When we exercise we tend to feel more positive and self confident,” (Kirk, 1996, p. 23) and individuals tend to show assertiveness that they didn’t show before.

These psychological outcomes are only a result of good planning and instruction on the teacher’s behalf (Auweele, 1999, p. 75). Sociologically, physical activity is also beneficial to an individual. It is a way that one can express their emotions and relieve tensions and it also gives the opportunity to socialise in competitive and non-competitive atmospheres. Physical activity also provides a feeling of success not only for the person participating, but the spectator too (Wuest & Butcher, 1999, p. 271).

Wuest and Butcher also say, “ To win in sport also is to win in life” (1999, p. 271), and that it has become “ evident that sport...holds many meanings for its participants as well as having a significant impact on our society” (1999, p271). From Wuest and Butchers opinion on the sociological aspects of physical activity, it is obvious of the benefits that it can have on an individual sociologically. There are a number of educational benefits to children also, if they participate in physical activity on a regular basis.

A child’s self confidence is improved, and as a result, they are more likely to socialise with their peers. They have an improved approach to school and

are more likely to want to attend regularly. They have more self discipline and are more likely to set goals that they strive to achieve (Brown, 2005). Wuest and Butcher agree that there are many educational benefits to participating in a well-structured physical education lesson, and one of the main benefits they believe, is an improvement in one's mood.

Mood states influence our outlook on life, our emotions, thought processes, and behaviours" (2003, p. 383). They also state that physical activity offers creative experiences and " opportunities for individual interpretation" (2003, p. 383).

In this essay, it has become obvious the many benefits that physical education has on our society. Physical activity plays a huge part on an individual physiologically, motorlogically, psychologically, sociologically and educationally. Wuest and Butcher, Siedentop, Abernethy, Kirk and Auweele, all feel strongly about the importance for an individual to complete physical activity on a regular basis. After completing this research, I also can see the many benefits, and the impact that it can have on oneself. I feel that if everyone in our society completed regular physical activity, our world would be a much happier place.

Everyone would have a positive outlook on life, and we would become a physically educated society. If everyone were to become physically active in some way, we would soon all be achieving these many benefits that physical activity has been proven to create. References: Abernethy, B. , Kippers, V. , Mackinnon, L. & Hanrahan, S.

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