

Adolescents Affected by Poverty using Physical Education as a Means to Develop Life Skills

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Low SES Effects on School Behavior and Performance

Children with low socioeconomic status (SES) have increased chronic exposure to stressors than their affluent counterparts. This puts these individuals at risk for hopelessness, depression, and suicide (Woan, 2013).

Chronic stress...

- Is *linked to over 50 percent of all absences* (Johnston-Brooks, Lewis, Evans, & Whalen, 1998).
- Impairs attention and concentration (Erickson, Drevets, & Schulkin, 2003).
- Reduces cognition, creativity, and memory (Lupien, King, Meaney, & McEwen, 2001).
- Diminishes social skills and social judgment (Wommack & Delville, 2004).
- Reduces motivation, determination, and effort (Johnson, 1981).
- Increases the likelihood of depression (Hammack, Robinson, Crawford, & Li, 2004).
- Reduces neurogenesis (growth of new brain cells) (De Bellis et al., 2001).

Low SES Effects on Life Skills

Studies show children with low SES may lack the development of

- **Interpersonal skills**
social skills, respect, leadership, and communication (Jones, 2009)
- **Personal skills**
Organization, discipline, self-reliance, goal setting, managing performance outcomes, and motivation (Jones, 2009)

These are essential developmental factors that could be influenced through physical education (Jones, 2009).

Benefits of Physical Education on Stressors

Physical activity has been shown to significantly reduce ailments of stressors especially in subjects with a history of anxiety and depression (Guszkowska, 2004).

- Enhances cognition (Sibley, 2003)
- Increases academic outcomes (Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005)
- Raises graduation rates (Newman, 2005)
- Reduce behavioral problems (Newman, 2005)

The Role of a Physical Education Teacher

Intentional efforts on behalf of effective physical educators can support the development of students with low SES and increase positive life skills (Gould, 2012). Parent student relation is ideal but a teacher can act as a buffer to support life skills (Jensen, 2009).

- Allow students to be placed into leadership roles. Peer teaching of skills
- Take advantage of teachable moments.
- Provide feedback and reinforcement when positive behavior is observed
- Always be a model demonstrating appropriate life skills

Carl Dweck's Philosophy of Growth mindset (Dweck, 2014)

Growth mindset is when students believe their abilities can be developed. If kids engage deeply and effectively in a learning process, positive natural byproducts occur. Mentors should focus on enriching the mindset by *praising the process; not accomplishments.*

Strategies + Ideas + Focus + Perseverance = Ingredients of Success

When students learn the value of the ingredients for success they will be able to apply them when life task become difficult.

Curriculum Models to Consider Implementing

Adventure Education

Involves activities that encourage holistic student involvement (physical, cognitive, social and emotional) that can influence life skills and help instructors meet national standards (Lund & Tannehill 2010).

Activities may be...

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| - Uncertain | - Mysterious | - Explorative |
| - Inquisitive | - Interesting | - Curious |
| - Analytical | - Surprising | - Motivating |

** Important to carefully structure activities and introduce students into the process through briefing and debriefing sessions to foster a smooth transition from teacher-directed to student directed learning** (Lund & Tannehill 2010)

Key Concepts of Curriculum Models

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Self-discovery | Positive risk taking | Problem solving |
| Self Reliance | Decision making | Trusting |
| Goal setting | Cooperative dialogue | Builds confidence |

Cooperative Games

Society values teamwork that promotes cooperation and cohesiveness (Trent, 2007). Cooperative games provide instructional format in which students work together in small, structured groups to master the content of the lesson (Lund & Tannehill, 2010)

Outcomes

- Individuals achieve simply by experiencing the process of team building
- Most physically skilled may find themselves in unfamiliar roles, perhaps dependent on their teammates
- A successful experience may be contributing an idea and being listened to



Sequence to Selecting Appropriate Activities (Trent, 2007)

1. Ice breakers. Activities where individuals can become acquainted
2. Do unorthodox activities to help the group let-go and foster a fun supportive atmosphere.
3. Trusting/spotting activities
4. Activities that involve initiatives of life skill

Curriculum Outcomes linked to National Standards.

- Increase participants sense of personal confidence (SHAPE-NPES 4)
- Increase mutual support within a group (SHAPE- NPES 4 & 5)
- Develop an increased level of agility and physical coordination (SHAPE-NPES 1)
- Develop an increased joy in one's physical self & in being with others (SHAPE – NPES 5)

Curriculum Assessment Questions:

Increasing higher order thinking and transference into daily life

- What was your first impulse when given the challenge? Why did you feel this way?
- If you were to try this again what might you do differently?
- What did you learn about your group? About yourself? How could you apply what you've learned to other areas of your life?
- If you had access to all resources how would you deal with...?
- How many and which team members used praise phrases or positive encouragement? How did they make you feel?

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