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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Best Practice #2 - Greece

University of Macedonia

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Key words.

Inclusive short distance running and long jump, Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, athletics

1. Type of Disability

Please describe the type of disability that this practice is focused. If there is an official definition of the disability in European or National documents please provide it.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

2. Organization & Reference

If applicable: Official data of organization, school, club etc. (name, address, email). Please give references such as internet source, homepage etc.

1st E.E.E.E.K. (Workshop for Special Vocational Education & Training) of Aridaia, Tel: +302384022215, Email: eeeekaridaias@sch.gr, Address: Pavlou Mela 26, 58400, Aridaia, Greece, Sites: <https://www.facebook.com/eeeekaridaias>,

<https://blogs.sch.gr/eeeekaridaias/author/eeeekaridaias>

Contact person: Spyros Vrakas, spvrakas@yahoo.gr. As to the sports club involved: Filathlitikos Omilos Aridaias (Sports Club of Aridaia), Address: Megalou Alexandrou 1, Aridaia, Greece, Site: foaridaias.blogspot.com

3. Formal/Informal

Please state if the setting refers to formal or informal education (sport clubs etc.).

Both formal and informal settings

4. Practice summary

Describe what and how was done (regulations of the sport/game/competition/physical activity), please state the specific context of the practice and the sport(s)/game/competition involved.

As to what, how and the context, the present practice refers to the realm of athletics (track and field sports). Actually, it focuses on short distance running and long jumping. These two disciplines offer the opportunity, not only for inclusion, but also for mainstream sport as well, especially for young people who have non-motor difficulties/disabilities. Thus, the aim of including these persons in training and competition is to facilitate physical activity/fitness and social participation. This has many benefits, e.g., it makes tolerance and acceptance possible. More concretely, the present practice is about a case study of a special school, which enables students to take part in athletics. To this end, the school's Physical Education Teacher worked tightly with the local sports club for non-disabled athletes. Based on their cognitive functions (restricted on not), students can then participate to competitions with non-disabled athletes or opt for competition within the Special Olympics framework. To initiate the participation, a strengths-based approach was followed, accompanied by motivational support of the students and their families. Certainly, to keep these project viable, training sessions had to be adapted. Most importantly, the coaching style became more autonomy supportive (offering options, recognizing abilities meeting needs etc.). As to the above mentioned disciplines, the training load was tailored to each person's abilities; Drills were modified to allow optimal technique development for each person. Competition regulations per se weren't changed, as they are defined by each completion event (National events, Special Olympics, School games etc.).

The basic rules of Short Distance Running and long jump are presented:

Short Distance Running (e.g., 100 meters, 200 meters):

1. Starting Position: Runners must start from a stationary position with their feet in contact with the starting blocks or the ground.

2. **False Starts:** Athletes are allowed one false start. Any subsequent false starts can result in disqualification.
3. **Lanes:** Runners must stay in their assigned lanes throughout the race. Stepping on or over the lane boundaries may lead to disqualification.
4. **Finishing:** The first athlete to cross the finish line with their torso (not limbs) is declared the winner.
5. **Timing:** Races are timed using electronic timing systems to determine accurate results.
6. **Fouls:** Certain actions, such as obstructing other runners or interfering with their progress, may lead to disqualification or penalties.

Long Jump:

1. **Approach Run:** Athletes have a designated distance from which they start their run-up, building momentum before the jump.
2. **Takeoff Board:** Jumpers must take off behind a designated takeoff board, and at least one foot must make contact with the ground from behind the board during takeoff.
3. **Flight Phase:** During the jump, athletes aim to achieve the maximum distance by extending their body forward and upward while maintaining a horizontal position.
4. **Landing:** Athletes must land on their feet and maintain control without falling or stepping beyond the designated landing area.
5. **Measurement:** The distance is measured from the takeoff board to the mark made in the sand by the athlete's body closest to the takeoff board.
6. **Fouls:** Stepping on or over the takeoff board, touching the ground beyond the landing area, or making an improper takeoff can result in a foul and a nullified jump.

5. Variations implemented

Please state any kind of useful variations (e.g., concerning settings, age of participants, types of disabilities and adaptations to other sports) of the practice.

A first variation highlighting this practice involves the disabilities of the students taking part in the sport club. Apart from students with Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, usually students with mild cognitive disabilities make it to sport club. In these cases, the track to the Special Olympics is followed, that is, these persons participate in adapted competitions organised by Special Olympics Hellas (<https://www.specialolympicshellas.gr/>).

To adapt the rules of short distance running and long jumping for students with ADHD, consider the following strategies:

1. **Simplify Instructions:** Break down the rules into simple and concise instructions. Use visual aids, diagrams, or step-by-step demonstrations to enhance understanding. Provide both verbal and visual cues to reinforce important information.
2. **Adjust Timeframes:** Set realistic timeframes and goals for students with ADHD. Consider providing more time for practice or allowing for additional attempts during competitions, understanding that they may require more time to focus and perform their best.
3. **Modify Distances:** Adapt the distances based on the individual capabilities of students with ADHD. Allow for shorter running distances or adjust the jumping distance to match their abilities and attention span. Gradually increase the distances as they progress.
4. **Provide Visual Timers:** Use visual timers or countdown clocks to help students manage their time effectively. Display the remaining time for a particular activity or task to increase awareness and promote self-regulation.
5. **Break Tasks into Smaller Segments:** Divide the activities into smaller segments or checkpoints. This approach allows students to focus on one step at a time and provides a sense of accomplishment as they complete each segment.

6. **Incorporate Structured Breaks:** Include regular, structured breaks during practice sessions or competitions. Short breaks can provide opportunities for students to release excess energy, refocus, and maintain engagement throughout the activity.
7. **Use Positive Reinforcement:** Offer frequent positive reinforcement, praise, and rewards to motivate students with ADHD. Recognize their efforts, progress, and achievements, which can boost their self-esteem and encourage continued participation.
8. **Provide Clear Expectations:** Clearly communicate the rules, expectations, and consequences associated with the activities. Students with ADHD often benefit from explicit instructions and consistent guidelines, as it helps them understand what is required and encourages them to follow the rules.
9. **Encourage Peer Support:** Foster a supportive and inclusive environment by promoting peer support and cooperation. Pairing students with ADHD with understanding and patient partners can provide additional guidance, encouragement, and motivation during practices or competitions.
10. **Individualize Strategies:** Recognize that each student with ADHD is unique and may require individualized strategies. Collaborate with the student, their parents, and educational professionals to develop personalized approaches that address their specific needs and challenges.

It's crucial to maintain open communication with students, their families, and relevant support networks to ensure the adaptations effectively support their participation and success in short distance running and long jumping activities.

A second variation concerns the school's community and the local community. To promote awareness and to spark the interest among all participants two actions are regularly held. They serve as appetizing actions.

a) In context of the "World Day of Persons with Disabilities" a large sporting and cultural event takes place with the participation of general education schools the town. In the arena/gym of Aridaia, mixed groups of students

with and without disabilities participate in adapted sports such as volleyball, basketball and badminton. At the end, all the students in mixed groups dance Greek traditional dances.

- b) In the context of the Panhellenic Students Meetings "Education and Folklore" organized by the Directorate of Secondary Education of the Prefecture of Pella and the Municipality of Almopia, 20-25 general and special education schools participate. The EEEEEK Aridaias presents the traditional folklore event "Ganotzis". At the end, our students dance three traditional Greek dances, with the participation of non-disabled students from the 1st High School of Aridaia.

6. People involved

Please state organizations and people involved, provide types of disabilities participated in this specific good/best practice. If applicable, be concrete about the different roles of the people involved.

This practice particularly involved the Physical Education Teacher of EEEEEK Aridaias (special secondary school) and also the coach of Filathlitikos Omilos Aridaias (Sports Club of Aridaia). This practice addresses predominantly students with ADHD from EEEEEK Aridaias and their parents. However, the students' accomplishments were disseminated to the rest schools' and local communities.

7. National guidelines adopted

Please refer to the national guidelines that are met through the practice. Give basic legislation frameworks that can help teachers understand their legal-driven responsibilities towards their students.

As far as the responsibilities of the trainers/coaches are concerned, Greek legislation and related regulations describe the requested professional profile and further administrative, ethical etc. functions (e.g., <https://www.segas.gr/kanonismos-ypsilo-athlismoy/>). The physical education provided in Workshops for Special Vocational Education &

Training (special secondary schools) is guided and supervised by the [Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs](#) and [Institute of Educational Policy](#). At the same time, the official site [Prosvasimo](#) provides teachers' guides and resources for special and inclusive (physical) education. The following links give the basic framework for aims, curricula and resources, on which the present practice was based. In sum, they propose full educational and social/societal inclusion for all students.

- <https://prosvasimo.iep.edu.gr/el/>
- http://www.pi-schools.gr/special_education/aps-depps-eeeeek.pdf
- <http://iep.edu.gr/el/programmata-e-a-link/analytika-programmata-aidikis-agogis-kai-ekpaidefsis>

8. Implications for teachers/practitioners etc.

Please write any useful implications (what teachers/coaches/physical educators should take into account: safety considerations, equipment needed, support needed) that the practice might have. This may include focal points of the types of disabilities included and how these points were addressed, in terms of the participation in sports.

Most important implications for implementing projects like this one may include: a) Consider theory and educational and /or training guidelines referring directly to the disability of the student/athlete and his/her related conditions, e.g., restricted vocabulary, conduct disorders etc. b) Refer to national and international trainer/coach guidelines, especially those stemming from Special Olympics (Coaching Guide Athletics), c) Predict and ensure all safety and hygiene measures required; inspect and monitor conditions for safe access to sports venues and sports clubs, d) Assistive and/or special equipment is often needed, such as soft running truck, acoustic timing devices, metronomes, loudspeakers and large foam mats, and e) Have in mind that trans-contextual connections can be accomplished through motivating and mobilizing people from/at multiple levels, i.e., from schools, sports clubs and local community.

9. Innovative resources, materials, methods etc. used

Please refer to the resources, materials, methods etc. have been employed. Strategies for creating an inclusive environment, prioritizing accommodations for students with disabilities, forming/refining accessible facilities, equipment, and assistive technology. Please include techniques for adapting sports activities to meet the needs of students with disabilities, such as modified rules, specialized equipment and assistive devices.

Besides the already mentioned guidelines, coaches used metronomes linked to a portable speaker for matters of rhythm and speed training. The underlying concept is termed "Rhythmic Auditory Stimulation". Regarding the special/adapted physical education class the [Institute of Educational Policy](#), at the official site [Prosvasimo](#) provides teachers' guides and resources for special and inclusive (physical) education.

10. Communication and collaboration strategies

If applicable, describe strategies for collaborating with other educators, parents, and students to ensure that everyone is working together to create an inclusive environment.

As previously stated, students with ADHD successfully joined a sports club for individuals without disabilities. This achievement was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the school director, the Physical Education Teacher, the students themselves, their parents, and the coach from the local sports club.

11. Evaluation and/or reflection methods

If applicable, state how teachers planned to know, to what extent basic goals were met. That is, give any kind of evaluation practices, self-reflection methods, forms of data collection, post-event documentations and follow-

ups. Also, report any positive feedback and reinforcement given to students with and without disabilities to encourage and motivate them to continue participating in sports.

The evaluation methods rest upon an array formal an informal educational assessments within the realm of adapted physical education and informal evaluations, such as descriptive comments, reviewing the student's portfolio and targeted discussions with the core of this project (school director, the physical education teacher, the student, his parents and the coach of the sports club). According to these methods and the attitudinal/behavioral criteria used, the following improvements were detected. For example, in the case of students with ADHD, several aspects of physical condition, motor skills and sport skills were enhanced. Students managed to achieve their goals in the special/adapted physical education course. They discovered how to use their excessive energy to their advantage and learned to love sports. This resulted in being actively involved in athletics, specifically running and jumping. There were some gains in the academic domain (initiated by elevated engagement) and noticeable positive changes at the behavioral level too (both in school and at home). In sum, these results may depict improvements in more general aspects of life like autonomy, socialization and quality of life of students (and now athletes) with disabilities.

12. Training pathway for teachers for integrating this good practice

Please provide 5 to 15 practical tips to teachers of sports for implementing the proposed good practice. Ensure that tips: 1. refer both to formal and informal settings 2. contribute to the awareness of educators for the needs of students with disabilities 3. take into account the environmental/architectural and attitudinal barriers (such as inaccessible sport spaces, equipment needed, support provided), 4. provide individualized adaptations 5. Provide social and emotional support by encouraging social interaction and peer support 6. Provide positive

reinforcement to motivate them to continue participating in sports and to develop their skills and abilities.

The following tips are meant to pinpoint the contents of practice already presented. To summarize and perhaps to extend on this practice, Physical Education Teachers and coaches/trainers may take the following topics into account:

1. Keep in mind that every student has different set of personal, motivational, emotional and social characteristics, along with a different degree of disability. Thus, not only an individualized approach is needed, but more a personalized learning approach.
2. Plan and carry out actions with other schools, sports clubs and local organizations with the aim of interaction and awareness among students. Expand events to tournaments.
3. Teach a variety of sports, even those not covered by official curricula; Students need a variety of stimuli, many motor/movement experiences and a wide sports repertoire to eventually choose their favorite sport.
4. As to the instruction methods, coaches should give simple and clear hints/instructions. Descriptive and constructive feedback is of great importance. Rewards and other positive reinforcements, play a role too. Further significant considerations refer to breaking large tasks into smaller ones, giving written instructions and providing cues for self-control.
5. Boosting students' self-confidence in a context of an unconditional social and emotional support, along with practicing autonomy and gradual responsibility release, will encourage a robust connection between schools and sports clubs.
6. Keep yourself informed about trends in physical education and physical training, here in athletics. For example, trust evidence based practices for students/athletes with ADHD and/or cognitive impairment. Select carefully assistive technologies and devices, such as metronomes. Evaluate their use and refine them.
7. Try to understand the nature of ADHD. Most importantly, keep in mind that ADHD interferes with the executive functions of a

student/athlete and it has a wide range of comorbidities like behavior disorders and accident dangers.

8. Students with ADHD, especially when presenting cognitive restrictions too, are in need of experiential learning, broken down to concrete and simple steps (i.e task analysis). To make this happen, reach assistive equipment is required (e.g., optical cues like buntings, flags and banners).