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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Best Practice #5 - Greece

University of Macedonia

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Key words. Please insert 3 to 5 key words that best describe the best practice

Sitting Volleyball, Paralympic Sports, inclusive sports

1. Type of Disability

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

This practice focuses on neurological impairments such as spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, stroke, neuromuscular disorders, etc.

2. Organization & Reference

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

Organization: Perpato Association Address: Ter. Leof. Dimokratias 69,100, Komotini, Greece Email: info@perpato.gr Website: <https://perpato.gr/> Facebook: Περπατώ - Perpato

3. Formal/Informal

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

This practice is informal as it involves non-formal educational processes. Perpato Association is authorized by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the General Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education.

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.

The program's primary focus is on students across different educational levels, encompassing primary school, high school, and university. Its objective is to impart knowledge about Paralympic sports, individual variances, and issues related to disabilities. The program comprises a range of activities and actively encourages interaction with Paralympic athletes. It is structured around four key pillars:

1. **Acknowledgement of athletic accomplishments:** Introducing various sports and their adaptations, comprehending the classification and nuances of disabilities within sports, and providing opportunities to engage with elite athletes.
2. **Recognition and acceptance of individual disparities:** Acquiring knowledge pertaining to individuals with disabilities, actively experiencing diversity, and fostering the participation of both disabled and non-disabled individuals in the same initiatives.
3. **Engagement in sports as an inherent human entitlement:** Developing an understanding of inclusive practices within physical education.
4. **Empowerment and social support through sports:** Encountering both setbacks and triumphs, learning effective strategies for motivating athletes with disabilities, and listening to narratives of disabled athletes.

Moreover, the program involves the training of disabled athletes as role models, which yields psychological and physical benefits for all participants.

Sitting Volley

The overarching objective of the activity is to foster students' appreciation for the athletic capabilities of individuals with movement impairments, specifically within the context of sitting volleyball. The specific goals of the activity include: understanding the rules of sitting volleyball, developing an understanding of the specific requirements related to movement limitations, acquiring practical experience in sitting volleyball skills, and exploring the concepts of different movement modalities and differentiation. The activity can be conducted in either an indoor or outdoor court setting.

Initiating the activity involves the session leader dividing the group into pairs, with each pair being provided with a ball. The initial task is for the pairs to play with the ball for approximately two minutes, without any specific instructions. Following this, the session leader gathers all the students and initiates a discussion on how to adapt and modify the activity to accommodate individuals with motor impairments.

The subsequent stages of the activity aim to demonstrate the variations in performance observed in ball handling skills between seated and standing positions. These stages include:

1. Throw and catch over the net: Two students positioned opposite each other throw and catch a ball over the net, marking the furthest distance achieved with a cone. The exercise is then repeated in a seated position, and the distances achieved in standing and sitting positions are compared.
2. Service: Students stand or sit on the service line and practice serving the ball over the net. The differences in performance between standing and sitting positions are compared.

3. Moving skills: Students are divided into two lines—one standing and one seated—positioned on either side of the net. While moving horizontally across the court, the students pass the ball back and forth over the net. The activity’s difficulty level is compared between sitting and standing positions.

4. Two-on-two game: This game resembles volleyball, but instead of traditional volleyball actions, the students are required to catch and throw the ball. Considering the skill level of elementary school students, this game may be more suitable.

5. Four-on-four (or six-on-six) game.

6. Monsterball: An adapted version of sitting volleyball where students are divided into teams of six players and play volleyball from a seated position, either on their knees or bottoms, using a larger ball known as a monsterball.

By engaging in these activities, students can develop a deeper understanding of the unique aspects of sitting volleyball and gain insight into the challenges and adaptations necessary for individuals with movement impairments to participate in sports.

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.

Sitting Volleyball encompasses a sport that is inclusive to individuals with and without disabilities, irrespective of age and gender, and allows for various combinations of players. To effectively achieve the desired

objectives of this activity, it is crucial for the session leader to emphasize, during the reflective process, the specific challenges associated with ball handling in a seated position. Through a group discussion, the session leader guides the conversation towards the realization that individuals with disabilities can engage in a demanding sport like Sitting Volleyball only through the application of physics and skill. This can be exemplified through the presentation of video clips showcasing the required abilities.

To facilitate the discussion, the session leader may pose sample questions such as: How did you experience playing the sport? What actions proved to be the most challenging? What disparities exist between Sitting Volleyball and Standing Volleyball? Is it a straightforward process to become an elite Sitting Volleyball player? What skills and attributes must one acquire to attain elite status in Sitting Volleyball? What difficulties might these players encounter in their daily lives, and how can they overcome these obstacles?

It is worth noting that Standing Volleyball was introduced as a Paralympic Sport in 1976, but was subsequently removed in 2000 due to insufficient global participation. On the other hand, Sitting Volleyball made its debut on the Paralympic Programme during the Arnhem 1980 Paralympic Games.

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.

Teachers, coaches, trainers, disabled athletes, nursing staff, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, social workers, students, the

Hellenic Paralympic Committee, the General Secretariat of Sports, the Democritus University of Thrace, and all Greek Paralympic athletes who are being trained as role models.

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.

This practice is aligned with National Guidelines.

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.

Physical educators are presented with several implications when incorporating Sitting Volleyball into their curriculum:

1. Adapted Instruction: Physical educators must possess knowledge and understanding of the rules, techniques, and adaptations required in Sitting Volleyball. They should be able to modify and adapt traditional volleyball activities to suit the needs of students with movement impairments. This includes adjusting equipment, rules, and strategies to create an inclusive and engaging experience for all students.

2. **Inclusive Environment:** Physical educators have a responsibility to create an inclusive environment that promotes participation and engagement of students with diverse abilities. They should encourage teamwork, respect, and acceptance among all students, regardless of their physical abilities. By fostering an inclusive environment, physical educators can promote empathy, understanding, and appreciation for individual differences.

3. **Skill Development:** Physical educators should prioritize the development of fundamental skills specific to Sitting Volleyball, such as effective sitting techniques, ball handling, serving, and positioning. They should design progressive and developmentally appropriate activities that allow students to acquire and refine these skills over time. By providing opportunities for skill development, physical educators can empower students to participate fully in Sitting Volleyball and enhance their overall physical literacy.

4. **Safety Considerations:** Physical educators must prioritize the safety of all students during Sitting Volleyball activities. They should be aware of any specific safety guidelines, equipment requirements, and modifications necessary to ensure a safe and inclusive experience. This includes providing appropriate padding or support for students with physical vulnerabilities and implementing strategies to prevent injuries during gameplay.

5. **Awareness and Education:** Physical educators should educate themselves and their students about disability awareness, Paralympic sports, and the accomplishments of athletes with disabilities. By incorporating discussions, guest speakers, or multimedia resources, educators can broaden students' perspectives, challenge stereotypes, and promote a more inclusive and accepting attitude towards individuals with disabilities.

6. Collaboration: Physical educators can collaborate with local disability sport organizations, coaches, and Paralympic athletes to enhance their understanding of Sitting Volleyball and access additional resources. By establishing partnerships, educators can create opportunities for students to interact with experienced athletes, observe demonstrations, and gain insights into the world of adaptive sports.

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.

Resources, materials, and methods required for Sitting Volleyball include the following:

1. Court and Equipment:

- Indoor or outdoor court with appropriate dimensions (10 meters by 6 meters for international competitions).
- Volleyball net and antennae, adjusted to the appropriate height for Sitting Volleyball.
- Volleyballs specifically designed for Sitting Volleyball, which are slightly larger and softer than standard volleyballs.

2. Chairs and Seating:

- Volleyball-specific chairs designed for Sitting Volleyball, which provide stability, mobility, and support for players.
- Chairs should have a low center of gravity, sturdy frame, and adjustable features to accommodate individual player needs.
- Optional padding or cushions to ensure comfort and safety during gameplay.

3. Protective Gear:

- Knee pads: Provide additional protection for players during floor movements and dives.
- Elbow pads: Offer support and reduce the risk of injuries during dives and falls.

4. Whistle and Scoreboard:

- Whistle: Used by the referee to signal the start and stop of play, fouls, and violations.
- Scoreboard: Helps track and display the score during matches.

5. Training and Educational Materials:

- Rulebooks and regulations specific to Sitting Volleyball, including classification guidelines and adaptations.
- Video resources demonstrating Sitting Volleyball techniques, gameplay, and strategies.
- Educational materials on disability awareness, inclusion, and the Paralympic movement.

6. Methods and Instructional Strategies:

- Skill-based instruction: Employing progressive teaching methods to develop fundamental skills such as serving, passing, setting, blocking, and spiking in Sitting Volleyball.

- Modified games and drills: Creating activities that focus on sitting techniques, movement patterns, teamwork, and strategy development specific to Sitting Volleyball.
- Peer coaching and role modeling: Encouraging collaboration and mentorship among players, including both disabled and non-disabled participants.
- Inclusive practices: Implementing strategies to adapt activities and rules to ensure all students can actively participate, regardless of their physical abilities.
- Progression and differentiation: Adjusting the complexity and challenge level of activities to accommodate individual skill levels and promote continuous improvement.

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.

Paralympic School Day is an educational program established by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) with the aim of fostering awareness and understanding of individuals with disabilities in schools. The program offers a comprehensive Paralympic School Day kit, consisting of engaging activities and informative materials, designed to educate children and young people about Paralympic sports, individual differences, and disability issues in an enjoyable and interactive manner. Developed by experts in Paralympic sport, disability studies, and pedagogy, the kit equips educators with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to successfully implement a Paralympic School Day event.

The concept of disability awareness is integrated into lesson plans throughout the year, and the IPC strongly encourages teachers to

participate in the Paralympic School Day program. By doing so, teachers join schools worldwide in promoting awareness and fostering positive attitudes among their students towards individuals with disabilities, while also advocating for the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the classroom. Association Perpatu implements the program in accordance with IPC guidelines.

Paralympic School Day is a flexible program conducted globally within school facilities, aiming to raise awareness among children and adults alike. It offers a diverse range of activities and information about Paralympic sports, individual differences, and disability issues within an engaging and entertaining environment. Schools provide an ideal setting for cultivating a more inclusive and accepting society. Children, with their open-mindedness and lack of preconceived biases, are particularly receptive to learning about topics such as disability, making this age group especially suitable for introducing such subjects.

The Paralympic Movement, with its focus on sports for individuals with disabilities, serves as an excellent tool in this endeavor. Sports act as a powerful motivator for children, encouraging their active participation and enabling them to embrace diversity in a positive and empowering way.

This specific good practice, in combination with Paralympic sports, disability, and diversity, aims to foster a positive attitude towards disabled people. This is achieved through students' participation in various Paralympic sports and the overcoming of challenges, leading to a deeper level of understanding. Additionally, it promotes substantial knowledge based on existing and applied Paralympic sports, highlighting the difficulties arising from each disability and the adaptation and utilization of their strengths.

Through this program, the school addresses contemporary challenges and needs, promoting awareness of disabled people and acceptance of differences. It aligns with the principles of modern pedagogy, as it is a

flexible program that allows all students to participate in experiential and exploratory exercises through sports activities. The program is specially designed to enable all students to participate and learn through a combination of theoretical information accompanied by practical exercise in Paralympic sports. Simultaneously, it provides inspiration and knowledge to children, combining learning with entertainment.

Within the framework of the "Fair Play" spirit of Paralympic sports and activities, respect, cooperation, and acceptance are emphasized. In this way, students communicate, interact, and collaborate harmoniously, developing attitudes and perceptions of coexistence. Educators participating in the implementation of the program, in collaboration with responsible specialized professionals, should be informed and ensure the provision of the necessary equipment for each activity.

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.

Following each activity, the Association Perpató initiates communication with the school's educators for an assessment conducted via a telephone interview. While immediate change may not always be achievable for individuals with disabilities, its impact will gradually manifest as they become integrated into society as a whole in the future.

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.

1. **Adapt Activities and Equipment:** Modify traditional volleyball activities to suit the needs of Sitting Volleyball players. Adjust equipment, such as the net height and ball size, to accommodate the seated position. Create variations of drills and games that focus on sitting techniques, movement patterns, and skill development. Ensure that the environment and equipment are accessible and inclusive for all participants.
2. **Promote Inclusion and Collaboration:** Encourage the participation of both disabled and non-disabled students in Sitting Volleyball activities. Foster an inclusive environment that promotes teamwork, respect, and acceptance among all participants. Provide opportunities for peer coaching and collaboration, allowing students to learn from and support each other.
3. **Individualize Instruction:** Recognize that students may have varying levels of ability and experience in Sitting Volleyball. Adapt your teaching approach to meet the individual needs of each student. Provide modifications, additional support, or challenges based on their skill level and physical abilities. Offer feedback and encouragement to foster growth and improvement.

4. **Emphasize Skill Development and Fun:** Prioritize the development of fundamental skills in Sitting Volleyball, such as serving, passing, setting, blocking, and spiking. Structure sessions to provide ample practice and repetition, allowing students to improve their technique and build confidence. Ensure that the activities are engaging, enjoyable, and age-appropriate, creating a positive and motivating learning environment.