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INCLUSION AND DISABILITIES IN AND THROUGH SPORT

Best Practice #4 - Greece

University of Macedonia

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Key words.

Wheelchair basketball, inclusive sport culture

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.

Physical Disabilities (PD).

2. Organization & Reference

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

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3. Formal/Informal

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

Formal education in connection with informal 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.

"Games for all", is set to be held once a year, preferably on the 3rd of December (International day of persons with disabilities). General and special education schools, as well as sport clubs for people with disabilities jointly worked together to prepare the events (e.g., standing and wheelchair basketball, goal ball, floor ball and sitting volleyball). Games took place in [Alexandreio Melathron Nick Galis Hall](#), where school students, parents and citizen are invited to watch. Main regulation adaptations involved shortened game duration, smaller court dimensions and softer balls. For wheelchair basketball, which serves an example the present good practice, the main measures for modifying/adapting were a) shortened game duration; two periods of 10 minutes, b) prolonged wheelchairs' back wheels, and c) smaller ball. Specific rules were modified too: To dribble, a player may take three pushes on their wheels; The player must bounce the ball to the floor, pass or shoot before taking a fourth push.

Based on the preparatory and –the subsequent– experiential educational activities, students and sport club athletes have the opportunity to form intentions for taking part in wheelchair basketball trainings. Although at

this point of time there aren't any regular wheelchair basketball competitions, where athletes without a physical disability can participate together, the ultimate aim of the present idea is to enable people share common interests, facilitate common basketball practice and thus to initiate an inclusive and mainstream culture.

Note. Photos from the event are presented here: [Παγκόσμια Ημέρα ΑμεΑ: Συναγωνιζόμαστε, συναισθανόμαστε, παίζουμε όλοι μαζί.](#)



Source: <https://www.oseka.gr/en/at-the-alexandreio-for-the-3d-of-december/>

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.

Variations referred not only to the day of the games, where rules and referee calls were adapted in order to ease the participation and to support the idea of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGFU).

Variations referred also to the preparation of the games (here for wheelchair basketball), where general education students had the opportunity to get to know the adapted sports and understand how making changes to regulations and rules of games can enable greater inclusion. Particularly, students were engaged in playing wheelchair basketball in smaller courts and fewer players (e.g., three vs. three). Basketball can be played with players in wheelchairs through a modified version of the sport called wheelchair basketball.

Here's how it works:

1. Wheelchairs: Players use specialized sports wheelchairs that are designed for maneuverability and stability. These wheelchairs have a lower seat position to maintain balance and prevent tipping.
2. Court: The court is the same size as a standard basketball court, but with some modifications. It has no raised boundaries, and there are lines to indicate certain areas and zones.
3. Teams: Each team consists of five players, and the objective is to score points by shooting the ball into the opponent's basket while following the rules of wheelchair basketball.

4. **Rules:** The basic rules of wheelchair basketball are similar to traditional basketball, with a few modifications to accommodate the wheelchair. For example, players are allowed to push their wheelchairs twice before dribbling or passing. Also, a player cannot touch the ball and their wheelchair simultaneously. There are specific rules regarding contact and chair-to-chair contact.
5. **Classifications:** Players in wheelchair basketball are classified based on their level of functional ability, and they are assigned a point value from 1.0 to 4.5. The total point value of the five players on the court cannot exceed a certain limit, ensuring a fair and balanced game.
6. **Adaptations:** Some adaptations are made to ensure the game is played smoothly. For example, a metal frame is placed around the lower part of the basket to prevent wheelchair contact, and the shot clock may be slightly longer to accommodate the wheelchair movement.
7. **Competitions:** Wheelchair basketball is played at various levels, including local, national, and international competitions. There are professional wheelchair basketball leagues and tournaments, including the Paralympic Games.

Wheelchair basketball is a highly competitive and exciting sport, offering opportunities for athletes with disabilities to showcase their skills, teamwork, and athleticism.

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.

Elementary and secondary schools, both from general and special education domain, located in Western Thessaloniki. The event was prepared by physical education teachers and their students; teachers of other disciplines were involved too. Moreover, school principals and education coordinators/executives participated in the organization of the games. A couple of sport clubs for people with disabilities took part too. As to type of disabilities concerned, students and people with cognitive disabilities, autism and physical disabilities were included in these games.

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.

The national Institute for Educational Policy (<https://iepx.iep.edu.gr/>) supports mainstream education, inclusive actions and Universal Design for Learning. Among other curriculum goals, national analytical Study Programs for Physical Education (2021) and for Adapted Physical Education (2004) endorse the life-long benefits of physical activity and participating in inclusive sport events.

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.

Enhancing inclusion and embracing diversity is actually a long-term process, which is based on understanding and experiencing disability. Inclusion practices flourish through well designed physical activities. In this case, teachers paid attention to the differentiation principle, that is, they created equal opportunities for all court participants to feel competent and experience acceptance. To accomplish this, teachers devoted time to introduce wheelchair basketball and to design introductory activities under the principle of TGFU. What is more, they cared for a safe environment through the modification of the game rules and by adjusting the equipment. For example, in wheelchair basketball, the rear wheel was regulated to provide extra safety while manoeuvring. If needed, personal assistants were in the field to help persons with disabilities with transferring and positioning. Regarding the athletes with disabilities, the court and its structures (e.g., dressing rooms and toilets) were accessible and appropriate.

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.

The preparation methods for students without disabilities were largely based on group learning and experience-based learning, along with Teaching Games for Understanding (TGFU). Apart from standard equipment, commonly employed for wheelchair basketball, prolonged wheelchairs' back wheels and smaller balls were used (for further information, see paragraph 4). Resources for creating activities for inclusion were located in the internet. According to them, modifications should aim to easing the activity for students (with and without disabilities), e.g., allowing more ball bounces. Another method is to encourage students to actively bring their own adaptation ideas into the game, e.g., lowering the baskets.

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.

The Group for Physical Education of the Directorate for Secondary Education of Western Thessaloniki serves as chain link between the school community (schools) and the sport clubs that regularly take part at the annual games. People who take part are students, teachers, parents, athletes with disabilities and other citizens/spectators. The local municipalities are informed about this action.

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 three main contributors, i.e., the group, schools and sport clubs, evaluate the project on their own. All parts and the local municipalities as well are informed about the results of the practice. At the same time, results are uploaded to the group's homepage (Group for Physical Education, (<https://omadafadthes.blogspot.com/>)). Taken altogether, atypical forms of evaluation, self-reflection and feedback prevail.

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. Understanding of Wheelchair Skills: Educators should have a good understanding of wheelchair mobility and skills specific to wheelchair basketball. This includes teaching proper wheelchair pushing techniques,

manoeuvring, stopping, turning, and maintaining balance. Educators may need to consult with wheelchair basketball coaches or players with experience to gain a deeper understanding of these skills.

2. Individualized Instruction: Each player may have different abilities and mobility levels, so it's important to provide individualized instruction and adaptations based on their needs. Some players may require additional assistance or adaptations to fully participate in the game. Educators should work closely with the players to understand their capabilities and limitations.

3. Rule Modifications: Educators should be familiar with the specific rules and adaptations of wheelchair basketball. This includes rules related to wheelchair contact, pushing, dribbling, and chair-to-chair contact. Understanding these modifications is crucial to ensuring fair play and enforcing the rules correctly.

4. Safety Considerations: Safety is paramount in any physical activity, including wheelchair basketball. Educators should ensure that the playing area is free from obstacles or hazards that could pose a risk to the players. They should also provide guidelines on proper warm-up exercises, stretching, and conditioning specific to wheelchair basketball to prevent injuries.

5. Inclusive Environment: Physical educators should create an inclusive and supportive environment for all participants. Wheelchair basketball players may have different needs and abilities, so it's important to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, and equal opportunities for everyone to participate and excel.

6. Skill Progression: Like traditional basketball, wheelchair basketball skills can be taught in a progressive manner. Educators should start with basic skills such as wheelchair maneuvering, passing, and shooting, and gradually progress to more advanced techniques and game

strategies. Providing clear instructions, demonstrations, and practice opportunities will help players develop their skills effectively.

7. Equipment and Facility Accessibility: Physical educators should ensure that the sports wheelchairs used for wheelchair basketball are properly maintained and appropriate for the players. It's also important to have an accessible facility with suitable courts and amenities that accommodate wheelchair users, including accessible entrances, ramps, and restroom facilities.

By keeping these considerations in mind, physical educators can provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging experience for participants in wheelchair basketball, promoting skill development, teamwork, and enjoyment of the sport.