

# **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN THE TEACHING OF ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The special populations in schools are those students who require special attention as a result of their defective conditions. These deviations in them pose difficulty in the teaching of physical education among them. Adapted physical education has largely provided for this set of students yet their safety is not granted since no concerted effort has been made in that area. The condition of this group calls for special attention in order not to expose them to situations that would aggravate their condition. The application of safety precautions in the teaching of this set of students is very necessary. This paper is focused on safety precautions in the teaching of adapted physical education in primary and post primary schools in Rivers State of Nigeria. This paper highlighted the level of negligence exhibited in schools as far as safety of the students is concerned in spite of the fact that physical education lesson involve physical activities which predispose human body to injury. It has recommendations on safety precautions in the teaching of adapted physical education. It should be accessed by all students. Accident is a major hindrance to the achievement of the objective of adapted physical education therefore it should be avoided by adoption of safety precautions in the teaching of the special population.

**Keywords:** *Special population adapted physical education, safety.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Physical education is a peculiar subject in Nigeria educational institutions especially secondary schools that manifest its excitement outside the four walls of the classroom. The facts that play is one of the characteristics of child-hood makes physical education a choice subject for students since it gives them opportunity of expressing themselves.

Adapted physical education is an area of specialization in physical education or human kinetics which aims at ensuring that the physically challenged in schools participate in physical activities which would encourage them to discover their potentials through sports participation, appreciate themselves and be appreciated by the society. It has the potential of transforming the special population to the pride of the nation (Nwankwo, 2008).

The special populations in schools are those who require attention as a result of their condition which may be temporary or permanent in nature but capable of being improved through organized physical activities. Adapted physical education is an individualized programme that offers direct service to this special population in the school system.

The term adapted is also referred to as modified, remedial, corrective, therapeutic, special, restricted and atypical.

The beneficiaries of the adapted physical education programme who were formally referred to as handicapped, disable and atypical are recently referred to as physically challenged. However, Awosika (1999) described them as students who deviate considerable from their peers on physically, mentally, socially, emotional measures or on a combination of these measures while Salami (2007) referred to them as differently.

The special population derives special satisfaction and successful experience in adapted physical education programs. Hence safety precautions should be consciously taken in the teaching of physical education where these physically challenged are part of the learning process. This is to control complications of their condition.

Safety, according to Williams (2008) is the state of being free from harm or danger. He went further to say that safety comes by hearing (listening to instruction) and doing things in a hazard-free manner (compliance). Safety is emphasizes in industries especially oil and gas industries and road but no emphasis is laid on it the schools. This oversight exposes the students especially the special population to hazardous situations and circumstances.

The most cherished ingredient of Human Kinetics generally is the practical aspect which predisposes every participant to injury if safety precautions are not taken.

In order to reduce incident of injury during physical education practical sessions, both the teacher and student should adhere to safety precautions. The special population is already in a disadvantage position by their condition as such anything that will aggravate the condition should be cautiously guided against. Therefore the adoption of safety precautions in the teaching of this category of student is to ensure that they participate and enjoy physical education lessons like their fellow students without the fear of their condition being aggravated.

Injuries are generally accepted as an obvious risk of participation in physical activities. The most interesting aspect of physical education lessons is the practical lesson which is basically physical activities. The possibility of incidents that result to injuries in physical education lessons is obvious since it involves human body in motion. Ladam and Omoruan (1992) submitted that injuries must always be anticipated in any form of maximal exertion especially when it involves physical contact between individuals or when missiles are thrown or struck.

Injuries during physical education lessons are more pathetic when the special population is involved. Hence control measures should be provided to protect and encourage their participation in physical education. Bolarinwa (1992) state that physical educators must place great premium on injury prevention in order to record success in their various professional callings. Preventive measures in this contest can be referred to as safety precautions.

Safety precautions are steps systematically taken to ensure that the special population participates in physical education lessons with confidence and assurance of safety.

## **2. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN TEACHING ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS**

Awosika (1999) positioned that the atypical students in physical education class present challenges categories. Each of these groups needs a strong and well planned physical education experience. He further stated that it is up to the teacher to study the subject matter with regards to safety, size of class, objective of the lesson, nature of the students, the activities involved and the available materials and method that gives the best result.

The above imply that the special population requires special attention and the teacher should adopt a method that best suits the class making good use of his or her initiatives at all times. Despite the choice of method, the safety of the students should be paramount.

The following factors should be considered in application of safety precautions for effective teaching of the special population.

**2.1 Medical Records-** Medical records of the students should be the basis for the planning of their physical education programmes. The physical education teachers should work with medical personnel who would provide and interpret the records of the students in relation to physical activities. They should also provide information on the fitness of the students for physical activities to ensure safety.

**2.2 Pre-Assessment of the Skills/Lesson-** The skills in every adapted physical education class should be assessed before the commencement of the lesson. This assessment should be carried out at the various phases of the skill to identify the hazards associated with the skill. Then determine the safety precautions based on the level of risks before teaching the lesson. These should be no clash of personality between the teacher and the medical personnel.

**Reporting of incidents-** Every incident during adapted physical education lesson should be promptly reported. The incidents should be duly reported to the school authority. Such incidents should include injuries; damage to equipment, unsafe acts, near misses, even unsafe conditions should also be reported.

**2.3 Use of Equipment-** Student should be advised to use equipment they are familiar with. Prescribed equipment should be used under the supervision of the teacher. They should never use any equipment they have not been taught how to use.

**2.4 Monitoring and Exposure Control-** The teacher should monitor the students closely during lessons to ensure that instructions are strictly adhered to and corrections are properly effected. He should also ensure that the students do not exceed their exposure limit to avoid being prone to injuries.

**2.5 Teachers' Training-** Physical education teacher should be one who is professionally prepared for the job. For safety purposes, he should be one that is suitably trained and qualified to teach the special population, he should be one that has gone through a prescribed programme of training to obtain a minimum qualification to satisfactorily handle this group of students.

**2.6 Maintenance of Equipment-** Maintenance culture should be adopted to ensure that every facility and equipment is maintained in an efficient manner by effecting repairs to ensure compliance with the manufacturers' prescriptions. It should be understood that any form of negligence may translate to complication of condition of the affected student.

**2.7 Adaptation of Human Kinetics Lesson-** This ensures that lessons are properly modified to suit the condition(s) of the learner. For effective teaching and learning, adaptation should focus on equipment. Environment, instruction and the rules

**2.8 Equipment-** Equipment for adapted physical education class should represent the present skill level of the Student.

**A** They should vary in size, shape, colour, weight, etc. depending on the nature of the challenge.

**B** Environment- Practice area should be restricted when movement capabilities are limited. These should be designated area for equipment. It is also advisable to keep the equipment away from the students when they are not in use to avoid distraction. The nature of the students' disability should determine how the environment would be adapted.

**C** Instruction- The adapted physical education teacher should employ variety of instructional strategies to achieve expected result. The selection of these strategies should be dependent on the ability of the students.

**D** Rules- This is another area to be modified for adapted physical education class. The whole rules of the sports to be taught should be modified to encourage the students to be more active in class. This area of adaptation is very important for the students' safety and success in the lesson.

**E** Provision of Safety Equipment- Variety of safety equipment should be provided. The provision should be in accordance with the lesson to be taught. Virtually every sports equipment has its adapted equivalent. These equipment should be well designed in spite of the type and quality. The teacher should ensure that the equipment for every sport is in useable condition. Those that need further modification should be modified before use. The students should be made to be conscious of the risk involved in being reckless with equipment.

**2.9 Proper Rating of Students-** The ability of the students should not be over-estimated. Proper rating of the students would enable the teachers to rightly group them and assist them adequately. Even the distribution of safety equipment should be based on the student's ability

**2.10 Provision of spotters-** Spotters are those who support and guard others during performance of physical activities. The special population needs spotters more than other of persons during physical activities.

The essence is to watch and support them during performance to avoid any form of accident that may occur as a result of their involvement especially in complex physical activities.

**2.11 Adequate Accommodation** – Adapted physical education lessons should take place a spacious accommodation for easy and free movement during performance. Students should be well spaced out so that each child would maintain a taught in an environment where students would be opportune to express themselves at their own pace to avoid accident.

**2.12 Good Health Condition-** Good health is a requirement for effective performance in every human endeavour. The special population should be made to understand this fact. The physical education teacher should ensure that the students are always in good health to avoid complications after participation in physical activities. A weight regulation enhances performance in physical activities and maintains body weight that would be easy for them to manipulate during physical education practical lesson.

**2.13 Inspections of Learning Environment-** To ensure safety in adapted human kinetics class, the learning environment should be free from all categories of hazards. This can be ascertained through regular inspection of the class environment and any identifies hazard should be adequately controlled to achieve expected result. Safety provisions should be made available right from the construction sage of the learning environments to establish safety consciousness.

Knowledge of the Subject Matter- Generally, proper knowledge of the subject matter by the teacher makes both teaching and learning effective. Adapted human kinetics is not exception. The teacher should have perfect knowledge of the skills to be taught and should be able to demonstrate them.

The students should be taught the skills in phases and guided by spotter till the skills are mastered. The ability of the students should be give adequate consideration hence they should allowed to perform at their pace.

The teacher should emphasize concentration and repetition especially with those who are of performance rate. Students should be taught to wait for instruction before practicing any skill.

Adapted human kinetics teacher should be made to go through organized training to equip him for above job. Seminars, workshop, that are safety oriented etc. should form important part of adapted physical education teacher preparation to acquaint him with the safety trends in his job.

### **2.14 Learning Experiences-**

The learning experience in adapted physical education should be similar with the regular programme to encourage the special population. The similarity would spur them to improved performance.

li Learning experience should be selected based on the recommendations of medical personnel. Therefore adapted physical education lesson should reflect medical recommendations for safety purpose.

lii The learning experience should be regularly reviewed to ascertain its authenticity. Constant evaluation may reveal the hazards of the programme which could enable the teacher to put the appropriate control measures for every phase of the lesson.

lv Physical education learning experience should be adapted to students rather than the students to the learning experiences. Students should be instructed to participate in physical activities that would not aggravate their condition and adapted physical education activities should be individualized for positive results.

**2.15 Teacher student relationship-** There should be cordial relationship between students and the teacher. This would create an atmosphere which fosters safety in the class. The teacher and the students should maintain an acceptable level of relationship for effective teaching and learning to take place. Safety instruction can only be adhere to, in an atmosphere of understanding and co-operation therefore, cordial relationship between the teacher and students is inevitable.

**2.16 Teaching Procedure-** Adapted physical education lesson should be modified to suit the group it is meant for. The lesson should be organized in smaller units of same ability with leaders. The teacher should stand where he can see the class but they must not face the sun, devise means of transferring students efficiently from one activity to another.

Avoid manual correction (forcing students to move beyond their body limit by pressing, pushing or twisting) and encourage the students to be safety conscious.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Physical education is an exciting subject that should be accessed by all students. Safety is also the right of every student. Considering the condition of the special population, one may be tempted to say that they are already at disadvantage by their disposition. In light of the above, safety precautions should be followed to the letter in their lessons generally and physical education in particular.

The condition of the special population “unsafe condition” if proper safety precautions are not adapted in teaching them that would amount to an “unsafe act” which would expose them to

accident. It is a common knowledge, that when this group of people is involved in an accident, there is the tendency for their condition to be aggravated.

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