

Functional Strategies for Motivating Exceptional College Students in Skills Acquisition for Leisure Time Pursuits

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Abstract: The society generally gives little consideration to recreation, thus leaving the exceptional individuals particularly college students unconcerned about the needs to recreate for qualitative and enjoyable processes of skill acquisition. This study discusses the need for exceptional students to engage in recreational activities so as to improve their concentration and determination to acquire skills that can foster their future.

Key words: Functional strategies, exceptional individual, skills acquisition, leisure time, pursuits

INTRODUCTION

Exceptional students are those with substantial limitations in the present functioning. Characterized by significantly sub average intellectual functioning. Exists concurrently with limitations in 2 or more of the following adaptive skill areas:

- Communication self-care.
- Home living social skills.
- Health and safety leisure.
- Functional academics work.

The exceptional students irrespective of challenges need to enjoy existence such people require special attention and care as well as program of recreational activities.

Osinuga (1990) is of the opinion that parents and teachers observed that exceptional children exhibit poor physical mannerisms such as poor gait, poor manual dexterous experiences, poor movement skills and lack of environmental awareness. These problems result from their inadequate exposure to physical and recreational activities right from early stage of life.

Learners characteristics in secondary school: The major characteristic of learners which are strongly displayed at secondary school can be described with respect to three main areas; affective, cognitive and cooperative (Mulcahy, 1991). Within the affective domain, the self-regulated learner is one who displays feeling of self-efficacy in task performance, as well as demonstrating

persistence in the face of difficult tasks and distracting conditions. Self-regulated learners at secondary school display self-confidence in their learning and attributions for success and failure due to their own effort and strategy selection and application.

With respect to cognitive characteristics, these individuals display the ability to plan effectively and be systematic and strategic in the learning. They demonstrate flexible strategy shifting and monitoring of their learning. They demonstrate the capability to reflect on their learning-thinking and on the knowledge of themselves as learner-thinkers.

The third component involves the ability to function cooperatively within a variety of group contexts. The cooperative learner is skilled in utilizing the knowledge of others to assist them in their own learning as well as cooperative learning.

Though each of these areas is implicated in recreational activities, it may be that particularly the latter one, involving cooperative and social skills, is most potent for students experiencing disabilities especially learning problems.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECREATION FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

The importance of recreation have been said to be a necessary tool needed to be able to function effectively in our daily living as Oloyede (2004) reported Van Huss Wayne (1960) that pleasant recreation exercise not only increase one's energy, productivity and ability to cope with any stress or disability but also add to longevity.

Babalola (2002) describes the following points as importance of recreation to everybody including the disables:

- It helps to develop the physical fitness of citizens: Modern technological advancements have been developed to cater for the fitness level of all and sundry including the needs of the disables.
- Recreation enhances the happiness of the exceptional children through the provision of opportunity for fun, self-expression and social interaction all which leads to more happy moments.
- Many recreational activities help in reshaping postural deformities associated with disabilities.
- It helps to develop leisure skills and interest in individual. Recreation is capable of meeting the interest of people and developing skills that will provide the incentive, motivation and medium of spending free time in a constructive and worthwhile manner.
- It also helps to promote health and body fitness: Exposure to different recreational activities and experiences helps in alleviating in the lives of disable individuals.

METHODS OF TRAINING EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

Although an increasing number of programs is available to meet the needs of students with disabilities, the training of these students is still largely ignored. Training in skill acquisitions may be in academic, intellectual, creative, artistic, sports or leadership abilities. Scelly Cathy *et al.* (2003a) therefore specify the training needs of various disabilities as follows:

- In addition to the traditional practice of allowing academically gifted and talented students to skip classes, the intellectual ability rather than by chronological age and to a lesser extents counseling to support the development of personal and social skills.
- Children who are blind need instruction with visual impairments materials such as large-type books, special type-writers and proper lighting. The deaf ones require language instruction that often combines singing, lip-reading, intensive work in speech production and amplified aural training.
- Children with orthopedic handicaps many need the services of a speech pathologist, physical or occupational therapist, psychologist or social workers. They may also require modifications in their surroundings such as wide doorways to accommodate wheelchairs, toilets at appropriate heights and ramps or elevators.

- A variety of training options are available for children with mental handicaps including residential schools, separate classes and regular classes with special training support services. The appropriate option for each child should depend on the child's characteristics and individual abilities.
- Students with behaviour disorders require regular or special classes with support services provided by psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and speech language pathologists.
- Children with speech and language disabilities have speech or language impairments including problems in articulation, language fluency or voice that affect their ability to learn or communicate effectively with others.
- The training treatment provided to those children should depend on the severity of the impairment and may include the services of special education teachers and speech/language pathologists.

SKILLS ENHANCEMENT RECREATION ACTIVITY FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

The body and human mechanism are functionally propelled by effective physiological respiration and nervous system. These systems need to be energized through recreation activities in responding to impulses that enhance learning of various skills.

Adima (1990) prescribed recreational activities that can promote normal circulation, excretion, respiration and nervous systems of the handicapped children for skills acquisition as: Cycling, skipping of rope, push and sit ups, swimming, wheelchair dashes, short put throwing, javelin throwing, discuss throwing, wheelchair slalom, swimming aerobic dancing, aerobic walking, bicycle machine exercises, at and taking deep breathe and releasing it in quick succession regularly, swimming, dart throwing, passive games (chess, scrabbles, draughts, snooker) and watching sporting activities.

Strategies of motivating exceptional children for recreation: Reactive and impulsive behaviors often prelude planning ahead and anticipating undesirable consequences. Thus, participation of exceptional children in recreational activities entails various strategies opined by schelly, Cathy *et al.* (2003) that include the following:

Functional community referenced strategy: A community-based recreation center will assist children with disabilities in identifying strengths, interests, barriers and support needed in their work, school, community, recreation homes and socio-emotional domains. This

approach enhances the use of community based resource for constant learning opportunities. This hand-on experience also creates a greater sense of personal confidence and lower the risk associated with loneliness as a result of disabilities.

Modified support strategy: Many children with disabilities very little help with on-the-job recreation skill acquisition and therefore typically will not benefit from traditional learning model. These group need support with problem-solving, effective communication and demonstration of appropriate behavior (s) in the school. Members of the population may be very concerned about fitting in with mates and peers and not being stigmatized in any way. Hence, a modified version of teaching supported consultant is needed rather than general mode of teaching. Teaching consultants help to educate teachers, facilitate problem-solving and effective communication and provide behind the scenes support.

Career skills preparation strategy: Many disable children respond well to individualize training. Therefore, the recreation consultant should work with this group individually to develop effective awareness, application and practice skills. This combined with an experiential community based strategy is particularly effective (Bullis and Gaylord-Ross, 1991) in preparing with disabilities for skill acquisition through recreation.

Problem-solving implementation strategy: At the time of recreation, the student, parents, recreation instructor and consultants should sign a problem-solving agreement. This agreement helps to facilitate open communication between parties and allows everyone involved to plan ahead for any future occurrences. It will also instill confidence arises; the agreement specifies a list of problem-solving steps. If it persists, the agreement provide for implementation of behavioral contract.

Allowing natural consequences to occur: As noted above, many children disabilities are experiential learners. Some of the most meaningful learning opportunities occur as a natural consequence. For example, if handicapped children who may not like swimming (due to water phobia) continually engage in horse play in the pool area and refuse to take steps to correct their disruptive behavior, the best option may be to experience the natural consequences of mistaking fall into the pool and swim. In this situation, the recreation instructor/consultant can turn an unfortunate circumstance into learning opportunity helping disables to possess their experience and learn what to do differently in future.

Action planning strategy: A disable who passive engages in recreation may be empowered to play leadership role in every aspect of recreational activities. The recreational instructor and consultant are available to help establish a timeline and set realistic recreational goals and objectives. Exceptional individual should be involved to check progress and adjust to goals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER RECREATIONAL LIFESTYLES OF EXCEPTIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS

The recreational needs of the physically challenge are unquestionable given the trend of challenge confronting them in an attempt to be contending with their counterparts at the secondary school level. Hence, since the able student recreate, the disables also can adapt to those recreational lifestyles by following the suggestions below:

- Understanding the heterogeneity of the individual disability.
- Fashioning out a system by which different level and different group of disabilities can cope purposefully with recreation.
- Making available facilities and equipment in recreation center ready for disable to adopt and utilize so as to adapt to them.
- Games activities, rules and guidelines may be modified to suit specific disabilities.

CONCLUSION

The present day exceptional students irrespective of their disabilities need recreation to curb the menace of social ills, sedentary lifestyle and most essentially self-destruction and eventual death through drug addition. Therefore, emphasis on meeting the recreational needs of exceptional children should continue and the information derived from current research should be made to improve special education services even more in the future.

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