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Psychological and pedagogical teaching strategies in PE classes to work with vulnerable groups

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Training Course Physical Education (PE) Teachers

INTRODUCTION

PE teachers, after successfully completing this training module, will be able to:

- be more accessible and flexible
- create a safe environment in PE classes free from threat and danger.
- gain a complete knowledge in reducing social tensions and conflicts through physical activity.
- create the conditions and support for students to feel engaged and socially successful in PE classes.
- apply successful teaching strategies entailed avoiding competition in sport games.
- create understanding for students to feel respected.
- know the importance to promote the diversity of cultural heritage (through sport and games centered on traditional skills and culturally-based principles).



The Physical activity (PA) it could be one of the most important things for children who are excluded that children, who find a personal relevance in PA have:

- a positive affective outcomes,
- supports their self-determined motivation,
- focusing on the process of the academic learning, sport and daily physical activity.

Studies show...

PA is effective at **decreasing** symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, which may be pertinent in refugee, asylum seeker and migrant youth populations (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Vancampfort et al., 2017, cited by Purgato, 2021; Farello, Blom, Mulvihill. & Erickson, 2019);.



Who Am I ?



Before starting to work with children from vulnerable groups PE teacher has to ask themselves:

Who am I?

How am I?

How can I help?

If I can't change their behavior, who will? Maybe I need help...

Personality Traits of the Best PE Teachers

- Athletic Ability.
- Teaching Ability.
- Interpersonal Skills.
- Communication.
- Patience and Adaptability.
- Organization.
- Creativity.
- Focus on the Students.
- Use “People First” language



The social and emotional learning (SEL) in PE classes

PE teachers in order to teach students' the aspect of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), need to develop them abilities related to each of the following skills:

- **Perspective-taking;**
- **Empathy** - “put yourself in his/her shoes.”
- **Appreciating diversity;**
- **Respect for others.**



Physical education (PE) is one such subject that is being increasingly tied to the SEL education phenomenon (Dyson, Howley & Wright, 2021).

PE has been presented as a subject where students and teachers can develop emotional wellbeing and build positive socio-emotional experiences (Gagnon, 2016; Lu and Buchanan, 2014, cited by Dyson, Howley & Wright, 2021).

Six important teaching principles (Landmark's Six Teaching Principles, 2021)

1. Provide opportunities for success.



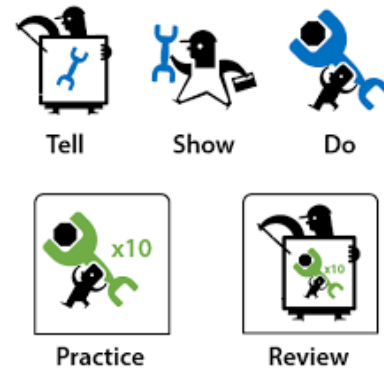
2. Use Multisensory Approaches.



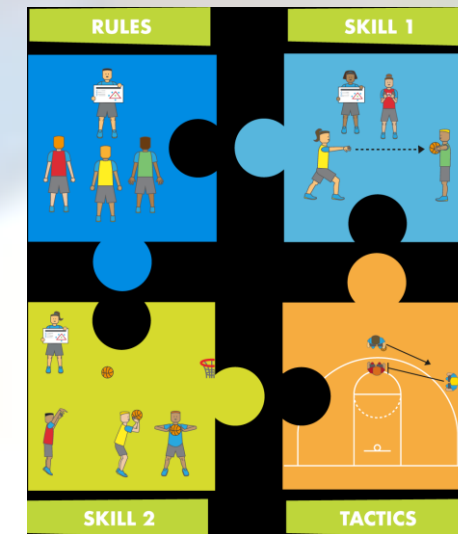
3. Micro-Unit and Structure Tasks (step-by-step to success).



4. Automatization through Practice and Review.



5. Provide Models. It is one of the most effective teaching techniques



6. Include Students in the Learning Process



The best-practice in working with students who have experienced traumatic stress



- Create Safety and Routines.
- Build Connections.
- Foster Emotional Skill Development.
- Do Self Care.
- Learn When to Refer.



If you have **Children with diverse religious beliefs** in your PE classes, you have to:

create a more tolerant, encouraging and accommodating environment in PE classes for children with different religious beliefs.

And should to think about:

- Physical activity days that conflict with religious
- To provide a place or appropriate environment for prayer
- Fasting and other dietary requirements
- To conform to a dress code
- To provide separately change room
- Gender not mixing in physical activity and games



The communication with refugee youth would be subsumed in five themes (Schaeffer & Cornelius-White, 2020):

1. Cultural competence,
2. Linguistic barriers,
3. Attending to re-traumatization,
4. Engagement and attunement,
5. Obstacles to inclusion.



“Making Kids Better People”

(Recommendations (Robert Pangrazi, 2021) to changing behavior in PE classes for children from vulnerable groups)

➤ Reinforce desirable behavior



➤ Be a corrective agent



➤ Children will remember how you made them feel



How are we to create an atmosphere of trust in a PE classes? (1)

(Veck & Wharton, 2021)



- Through body-based approaches: creating safety, ritual, symbolism and metaphor, and embodiment.

- The calm movement quality, ample time, and opportunities for rest in the sessions.



- The physical space between teachers and children as important for establishing safety with individual child.



- Reduce language barriers, through incorporating expression and symbolism through body movement (activate a universal language).



How are we to create an atmosphere of trust in a PE classes? (2)

(Veck & Wharton, 2021)

- Rituals observances is as a way to invite children to activate their cultural and spiritual identities and strengths



- Integrated symbols and metaphors into PE lessons, for example: refugees' transition to a new country through the metaphor of a transplanted tree.



- Traditional or ritual dances could be as therapy for posttraumatic stress in the past.



The following strategies will help child “get hooked” into PE classes:

Maria Corte (2021) (Physical Educator at Mesa High School)

- The activity must be noncompetitive; the child chooses and wants to do it;
- It must not require a great deal of mental effort;
- Choose activities that can be done alone- without partners or teammates;
- Students must believe in the value of the exercise for improving health and general welfare;
- Participants must believe that the activity will become easier and more meaningful if they persist.
- The activity should be accomplished in such a manner that the participant is not self-critical.



Spectrum of Self-Determination

Non-Self-Determination

Self-Determination

Impersonal (Extrinsic)	External (Extrinsic)	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal (Intrinsic)	Personal (Intrinsic)
I see no point in taking action	I take action because of a reward or punishment	I take action because I feel guilty	I take action because I value the goal	I take action because it helps with my self-esteem	I take action because I love what I'm doing
I'll fail	I'm forced	I should	I might	I will	I want to

Summary



-Be careful when using the strategies for children from vulnerable groups.

-At first you must be sure **to ensure a good emotional climate** during the PE lesson and trust each other, avoid bullying and **know each child's abilities**.

-To feel the pulse of the group



Sometimes the enduring the leaving of one's home might signal not vulnerability but rather **resilience and adaptability** (Ferfolja and Vickers 2010; Matthews 2008, cite by Whitley & Gould, 2011).



**What do you like?
What are you able to do?**

Thank you!

