

Innovative and Best Practices in Physical Education



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ABSTRACT

Importance of Physical Education In Higher Education Institutes :- College students are in a phase of development in their lives, where they are attempting to find out who they are and what the future holds for them. Physical education plays an important role in creating a positive self-concept. Social development is also boosted through physical activity. It also contributes to the academic and intellectual growth. The students understand the concept of fitness and importance of maintaining an active lifestyle for life. Best practices are documental ways of achieving results under specific circumstances, in an effective way. The qualities of best practices should be-

* They must be amendable to documentation.

* They should have the potential for replication.

* They should be transparent, accountable, affordable and accessible to all the students.

The physical education at this stage needs innovation in order to attract more students to it. Thus arises the need for best practices in physical education,

Introduction-

Importance of physical education in higher education institutes- Typical college students enter that institution at a critical moment in their formative years, still unsure of themselves and of what the future holds for them. The discipline of physical education is a valuable means of infusing self-confidence and instilling assurance amidst their insecurity. Contrary to the clumsy stereotypes of the discipline and the caricature of it that is often peddled in many institutions, it can also boost academic and intellectual growth, by the simple expedient of impressing upon students the merits of an active, healthy and balanced lifestyle.

Best practices are itemised means of optimally achieving desired results under specific circumstances. The traditional attributes of best practices are transparency, accountability, potential for replication and amenability to change based on results. Where they concern college-going students, the qualities of affordability, accessibility and innovativeness assume paramount importance, for no best practice can thrive without a concerted effort to convince students of its attractiveness and a further effort to make it accessible for those so convinced.

An Exploration of Best Practices In Physical Education In Higher Education Institutions

The designing, implementation and evalu-

ation of the physical education program for sportspersons and others can be done by imbuing the following with innovative best practices-

Designing A Sports Calendar

- Since intelligent planning is the first stage of a successful programme, and execution is seriously undermined by its absence, it is imperative to chalk out a sporting calendar at the beginning of every year.

- It is hoped that the process of chalking out such a calendar will give those drafting it a bird's eye view of the year's programme, and compel them to focus on coordination between the Department of Physical Education and other departments, and the creation of a plan that is holistic in its scope and exhaustive in its detail, as opposed to the current version that leaves physical education teachers to sort out clashes with other subjects on an ad hoc basis.

Awards and Financial Incentives:

- * Merit-based awards feed into our innate need for validation and recognition, and are therefore excellent psychological incentives for students, who typically respond best to such encouragement. The psychological impact of this pride and confidence can be very deep, as is evident to anyone who's seen a student receive his or her first tracksuit with the college logo and insignia.

* The impact of financial incentives and scholarships may tend to vary from institution to institution depending on the financial conditions of those who attend it, but in most cases these are also excellent motivators for students in physical education, particularly given the reputation of the discipline as a costly distraction from academia.

Remedial Coaching

- The widespread belief of physical education as involving mere physical activity belies the fact that sporting endeavour requires intelligence. Game strategy, remediation of one's own technical flaws and coping with pressure all demand the fortitude of a sound mind. More often than not, the academic inadequacies of most athletes can be traced to the lack of dedicated, customised teaching aimed at helping them grasp academic subjects within a short time-span. It is here that the physical education teachers must seize the initiative and proselytise to the other teachers about the holistic benefits of physical education in students' mental development.

- This segues into a wider point about coordination between physical education teachers and the wider faculty. It is imperative that physical education be positioned not as an alternative to academia, but as complementing a student's academic development.

Use of Technology:

- There has been, in recent years, a proliferation of e-coaching websites offering excellent guidance and assistance for self-study.

- Mobile phones with video-recording capabilities, if not more sophisticated video-cameras, are almost universally affordable these days and are an excellent training aid in most sports. They offer students the ability to shoot practice sessions and matches in their entirety and study the footage at leisure, and at slower speeds, to pinpoint technical weakness and common mistakes. A critical mass of face-to-face interaction is, of course, critical to coaching, but in crowded cities with poor transport infrastructure some flexibility in scheduling would be very beneficial to the spread of physical education.

Unusual Methods of Teaching

- Vocational sport must exist to dispel boredom, not to create it, and to this end it is imperative that Physical Education Departments continually try to introduce the wider student body to newer games, perhaps by instituting special, well-publicised workshops and inviting noted coaches to introduce the sport and its rules to the students. The advantages of this are manifold - students find ever newer ways to stay fit and involved in physical education, and it may well be that enough students may be hooked onto a new sport to be able to constitute a team for competitive tournaments and ignite a culture of that sport in the college.

- Another promising technique is to introduce new variations in existing games to maintain interest - a salient example is of Kwik Cricket, a high-speed version of the game with altered rules that has proved wildly successful at getting children and adults alike to take part in the main sport. The key is to introduce constant variety and make sure Physical Education remains intriguing for students.

- Continuing with the theme of variety, a number of special 'days', could be instituted, where for instance the whole institution would partake of a certain activity on a certain day of the week - 'Walking Fridays' being one example. The key here would be to involve the entire institution in an activity that would benefit from the spirit of community appt 12nd would be entertaining.

Sports Counselling:

- Making the leap to devote one's attention on a particular sport can be a daunting experience, because there is an undeniable opportunity cost in time lost for academic pursuits and the typical athletic collegian is likely to be proficient in a number of sports, which makes choosing any one a further complication in an already thankless task. It is the sad reality of our times that any such decision will almost certainly face considerable parental opposition and may lead those of a weaker disposition to abandon sporting ambitions altogether.

- It is here that a strong mentorship interest must be taken by the Physical Education teach-

ers, to ensure that deserving students don't waver from their goal. The most critical aspect of the teacher's job is often to assess the overall athletic ability of the student and identify the sport where his or her talents will bloom..

- Fortunately, the Physical Education teachers are ideally placed for this counselling role, because they tend to be the closest to students, observe students during various sporting activities and can spot potential problems the quickest.

- Given the tangled web of stakeholders and interests that come into consideration when deciding a student's future course of action, it is imperative that Physical Education teachers become not just sporting counsellors but holistic mentors, keeping tabs on the students' position vis-à-vis their academics, family and monetary condition and referring the matters upstairs to competent authorities where necessary.

Such nuance and sensitivity is key to the mission of the Physical Education teacher to use sport to help students navigate the troubled waters of early college-going age, because it is far easier to instil assuredness in those who trust your discretion and know that, around you, they have a zone where they may voice their thoughts and fears without being judged.

- An absolutely critical element of the physical education teacher's role here lies in regular testing, analysis and evaluation of the students' performance. Scrupulous monitoring of fitness is the only way to gauge a student's fitness and assess what fitness targets he or she should pursue, and indeed what counsel may be provided to him or her on the matter of their future sporting pursuits.

- The burgeoning technology in the discipline of physical education must be deployed for regular testing, analysis and evaluation of the students' performance. Database management software like MS Access, for instance, can be connected to the digital measuring devices and used to keep records of students' performance, and graphing software may be used to chart rises and falls in the performance and to identify what

methods of training work best for each student.

Classroom Teaching:

- The last aspect that needs working on is that of classroom teaching. This may detract from the endeavour to portray physical education as a rigorous but entertaining way to stay fit, but it needs attention due to the lazy tendency among our institutions to restrict physical education to outdoors teaching only. This tends to disregard the fascinating theoretical elements and scientific background of the discipline that are at least as interesting as the correct technique of the correct front-foot defence.

- Physiology, for instance, must necessarily be explored in the classroom, and no amount of outdoors analogies can adequately explain what muscles are used in a throw.

The mechanics and functioning of the human body is a topic best explored in the classroom, with the aid of a screen and a whiteboard, and because this area of study is so crucial to any understanding of physical education as a whole, the idea of classroom education must be made to complement the idea of outdoors education.

Publicity

- In a world where fame and renown are increasingly the measures of one's worth, it makes sense for those promoting physical education to motivate students with promises of recognition and acclaim in the college community, at the very least.

A simple expedient would be to display a photograph and short blurb about high-performing college students, renewed monthly, in a prominent campus location.

- This would achieve the dual purpose of spurring the achiever on to greater heights and prodding the wider community to aspire to similar laurels.

- The ultimate acclaim, of course, is a mention in the press, and so where possible teachers may wish to cultivate contacts in the press and get their wards mentioned in the Sports page, no matter how small the print.

Nutrition

- Proper diet is the key to good health and

so, the college canteen menu could be designed to provide nutritious and wholesome foods to the college students and faculty.

Feedback From The Stakeholders Such As Parents, Students Etc.

- Timely feedback can be collected from the students.

- PTA meetings can be called where feedback from the parents can be collected.

Conclusion

Using such innovative and best practices will widen the scope and reach of physical education and a large number of students will come under its purview.

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