

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION AND GENERAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN GERMANY

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This article will present an overview concerning the development and the current status of special education services in Germany. This description will differentiate between physical education programs for students with a disability attending a special education school for their specific type of disability, and for those attending a general school together with students without a disability. Extracurricular physical activity programs are classified separately in the special education system in Germany. Due to the heterogeneity within a specific type of disability as well as between students with and without a disability, concepts for designing physical activity and sport programs for various types of disabilities in Germany are oriented on the primacy of a “pedagogy of diversity” (Prenzel, 2006), which is particularly reflected in the qualification of physical education teachers. This individualized orientation coincides with the paradigm change in working with people with disabilities – from a deficit to a resource point of view.

KEYWORDS: *Adapted Physical Activity, Inclusion, Extracurricular Physical Activity Programs, Teacher Training, Review*

INTRODUCTION

The education of children and youth with a disability in schools has changed drastically in Germany over the past 20 years. As a result, based on the type of disability and the corresponding support needed, it can be differentiated between 10 various types of special education schools in Germany (see Table 1; also KMK & DOSB, 2008). As early as 1994, however, the “Recommendations for Special Education Services in Schools”, put forth by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK)¹, pointed out the task of general schools to more actively take part in educating children and youth with disabilities and to play a supporting role in the services of special education schools.

Special education schools, which are often all-day schools or partially run as boarding

schools, are structured according to an educational program, i.e. educational level and age group. According to statistics from the KMK², in 2010 485,418 students in Germany required to attend school were in need of special education services (5.5% of all students required to attend school full time), while 20.1% of these students attended a general school. However, the percentage of children with disabilities attending general schools varies considerably with the type of disability and support needed. Overall, students with a learning disability represent the largest group. Attending a general school in Germany is possible when the special education needs can be fulfilled by the personnel and spatial as well as material needs can be met.

This article intends to give an overview regarding the development and the current status of physical activity for students in need of special education in Germany.

¹ The 16 individual states in Germany are responsible for the educational system and cultural affairs in Germany (cultural and educational federalism). Within the scope of the KMK, the Culture Ministers of all 16 states in Germany take a consensus vote concerning educational matters important for all states.

² see www.kmk.org/statistik/schule.html

In this regard, the specific service characteristics of each German state, which are to be viewed in relation to the German educational system, are of particular interest. To close,

possibilities for future further development of physical activity and sports programs will be outlined.

Table 1 *Area of Support and Type of School*

Area of Support	Type of School
Hearing	School for the Deaf
	School for the Hard of Hearing
Visual	School for the Blind
	School for the Visually Impaired
Communication and language	School for the Speech Impaired
Physical and motor development	School for the Physically Disabled
Learning	School for the Learning Disabled
Cognitive development	School for the Intellectually Disabled
Emotional and social development	School for the Behaviorally Disturbed
Students with illness	School for the Chronically Ill

Of particular importance for this article, is the paradigm change in working with people with disabilities – from a deficit to a resource point of view. “In contrast to earlier reports which emphasized the impairment, deficit, limitations and differences and also stressed an alleged ‘otherness’ of people with disabilities, current pedagogical-anthropological views are oriented primarily on the necessities of life and the possibilities of this population and ask which conditions are necessary for their personal development and address how these can be created” (KMK & DOSB, 2008, p. 2). In this regard, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities took effect in Germany in March, 2009 which addressed the existing guidelines for Universal Human Rights. Of particular importance are articles 24 (“Education”) and 30 (“Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport”). Compliance to these articles means that “States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels” (Art. 24) and should strive to allow equal participation opportunities in recreational as well as competitive sporting activities (Art. 30). Regardless of the respective type of school, the population of students with special education needs in the German school system can be described as extremely heterogeneous; ‘managing diversity’ is a necessity (Fediuk,

2008a, p. 330) – a central factor which also determines the program design of physical education for students with a disability. In other words: The key is answering the question, “Under which conditions can the individuality of the participants develop and, therefore, the heterogeneity of the group be managed?” (Scheid & Fediuk, 2002, p. 289). This central question will be addressed in this article.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS IN GERMANY: REVIEW

Determining Factors

The importance of physical activity (through physical education, rehabilitation, recreation, and sports) for people with a disability is undisputed in Germany (for an overview Rieder, Huber & Werle, 1996; Wegner, Scheid & Knoll, 2012 in press). There are numerous studies on the motor development of children and youth with disabilities as well as on motor performance in various age groups (e.g. for intellectual disability: Bös & Knoll, 1989; for an overview Fediuk, 2008b). Overall, it can be stated that motor function within the specific types of disabilities is extremely heterogeneous and therefore requires differentiated support strategies. Based

on this heterogeneity, the aspect of individualization (Kosel & Froböse, 1999) together with the principles of ‘functionality’, ‘purposefulness’ and ‘economy’ give direction of action in the promotion of physical activity and sport of people with a disability (also Fediuk, 2008b).

Current political factors for the promotion of physical activity for students with a disability in Germany are based on the 2008 ‘Co-operative Recommendations for Action – Sport for Children and Youth with Disability’ of the KMK and the German Olympic Sports Confederation (KMK & DOSB, 2008). Neglecting to include physical education for children and youth with a disability in a 2006 study of the current status of physical education in Germany, the so called DSB-*SPRINT*-Study, exemplifies the low level of importance given to this subject area in Germany (Deutscher Sportbund, 2006). According to the current recommendations of the KMK and the German Olympic Sports Confederation, three classroom hours of physical education at the secondary level and even daily at the primary level are desirable (KMK & DOSB, 2008, p. 5). It is doubtful, however, that the discrepancy, which has existed for years between curricular guidelines in physical education and the actual implementation in schools, has changed a considerable amount.

Physical Education in Special Education Schools – Overview of Research Status

The research on physical education in special education schools (c.f. also Scheid, 2002) is described as the following: In the area of physical education in schools for students with *learning disabilities*, publications appeared in particular in the 1980s on teaching methods of physical education. These publications provided evidence for the possibilities of movement education. The anthology by Bielefeld (1987) gives an overview of the research at that time, but also provides an overview on the variety of concepts. Eckerlein (2000) presents the necessity and meaningfulness of a holistic

approach towards posture and movement education. In the areas of physical activity and physical education with children and youth with an *intellectual disability*, the anthology by Grössing (1981) gives an overview of the anthropological-pedagogical fundamentals, sport pedagogical and methodological aspects as well as insights on international developments at that time. Comparable overview articles have not been published since; however, individual physical education-related aspects for children and youth with an intellectual disability have been addressed. Concerning physical education at schools for students with *physical disabilities*, Rusch and Grössing (1991) published an anthology that not only took the medical, developmental and social-psychological as well as methodical foundations into consideration, but also addressed the variety of sport disciplines. With his recent publication, Schoo (2010) goes beyond the classroom level and shows approaches for a comprehensive physical activity promotion that reaches from physiotherapy to physical education as well as to a taskforce approach. For the area of physical education for students with a *visual impairment*, publications regarding the long-term Marburg Project “Sport with Visually Impaired” should be highlighted (e.g. Bietz, 2001). In 2006, a study on the needs of children in physical education who are *hard of hearing* was put forward by Sturm.

Inclusive Physical Education in General Schools – Current Status in Germany

In the 1970s, so called ‘integration movement’ begun in Germany that promoted teaching all children in general educational schools and not in special schools with its systematic segregation. The approaches to inclusion in Scandinavia were particularly exemplary, as well as in Anglo-American regions (cf. Kniel, 1979) at that time. In Germany, elements of this development were adopted also in the areas of physical activity and sport; countless school trials were carried out in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Wurzel, 1991) which ultimately lead to standard programs in some German states, especially at

the primary level³. In 1991, the Sports Committee of the KMK requested a nation-wide overview on the integration of students with disabilities in physical education at general schools to be carried out. Scheid (1995) summarized the data presenting that there were predominately individual cases of integrative measures being taken. In addition, the potential of integration was considered to vary, depending on the type of disability of the students. More recent records on integrative physical education in the last 20 years are not available from the school board.

In reviewing the current research in physical activity and sports related inclusion⁴ – in particular Fediuk (1999), Wegner (2001), Doll-Tepper and Niewerth (2008) as well as Block and Obrusnikova (2007) – a significant deficit can be observed in research in German speaking regions compared to Anglo-American regions (cf. also Hölter, 2011). On the one hand, this deficit is shown in the notable larger amount of empirically based evidence, but also clearly in the more demanding experimental designs in the Anglo-American regions. In summary, empirical evidence shows that with the proper support, students with a disability can successfully be included in general physical education, that there are no associated negative effects for the students without a disability and that students without a disability tend to have a slightly more positive attitude towards their peers with a disability (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). Overall, it becomes apparent that inclusion can be successful; however, the appropriate conditions are necessary. “Important factors for a suc-

cessful program include; well qualified instructors, an appropriately planned lesson for both students with and without disabilities as well as a positive instructor attitude” (Wegner, 2001, p. 108).

In Germany, the “development of an inclusive school” (Hölter, 2011, p. 20) connected with this change, leads to a more heterogeneous student body and therefore also changes in physical education. In his review, Hölter (2011, p. 20) indicated that inclusive physical education is “to a large extent already being implemented” at the elementary level, however author noted “massive problems of heterogeneity” at the secondary level I.

From a methodical perspective, Fediuk and Hölter (2003) and Hölter (2011) advocate for a “sport pedagogical variety” that, based on individualized curriculum, takes into account the respective learning level of a child and his or her development perspective as a basis for inclusive learning. In regard to the pedagogical fundamentals of this approach, the special issues of the journals ‘Sportunterricht’ (1/1997) and ‘Sportpädagogik’ (4/2003) should be mentioned. Here, various examples of physical education classes were presented that address heterogeneity in physical education (cf. also the anthology by Fediuk (2008c) on inclusion as a movement pedagogical responsibility).

Extracurricular Physical Activity

In accordance with approaches to reforming school development and, therefore, moving towards increased autonomy of schools, many physical activity programs have been developed for the school system in Germany. These programs are designed to encourage ‘more movement and sport’ in schools, therefore, making so called ‘School in Motion’ possible. Concepts of a so called ‘sport and movement friendly school’ have also been developed for special education schools (e.g. schools for students with a learning disability: Schraag, 2001; for schools for students with a physical disability: Weichert, 2001).

In the past years, numerous school-related sport competitions, games and festivals have been organized. For example, the “National

³ cf. also ideas in the area of extracurricular physical activity programs (e.g. Rheker, 1996).

⁴ In view of the international discussion of education and especially since the UN-Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities took effect in Germany in 2009, which included the resulting right of equal opportunity of participation of people with a disability, the term ‘inclusion’, instead of ‘integration’, is increasingly being used in Germany (Booth & Ainscow, 2000; for the area of sport cf. Doll-Tepper & Schmidt-Gotz, 2008). This change implies a “change of society as a whole” (inclusion) instead of an “addition to society as a whole” (integration) (Fediuk & Hölter, 2003, p. 25).

Youth Games” for students with a disability have been established as an annual event since the school year 2009/2010.

Although the importance of physical activity for improving physical and psycho-social development of children and youth is undisputed, the availability of extracurricular physical activity programs for children and youth with a disability in Germany is not satisfactory (KMK & DOSB, 2008, p. 2). In this regard, providers of curricular and extracurricular physical activities have a special responsibility for cooperation. “Special education schools in particular have the important task of providing information about the available extracurricular activities and preparing people for taking part in integrative extracurricular physical education” (KMK & DOSB, 2008, p. 4). An important instrument for the cooperation between schools and sports clubs are the state cooperative programs set up in all German states (Fessler & Rieder, 1997; Fessler, 2002). The possibilities created through these programs for children and youth with a disability as well as problems associated with cooperation between special education schools and sports clubs, is shown by Fessler (2000) by means of a program analysis and empirical evidence.

QUALIFICATION OF PHYSICAL EDUCATORS

According to statistics from the KMK⁵, 9.1% of all teachers in Germany were employed at a special education schools in 2009. In most German states, there is a teacher education program for preparing future teachers for various types of special education schools. With the exception of the German universities in Cologne, Dortmund and Ludwigsburg/Reutlingen, comprehensive and systematic sport scientific programs with a focus on individuals with disabilities, which are equipped with the proper personnel and curricular foundations, are rare. The consequences for Germany are outlined by Anneken and Schüle (2004) in their overview of teacher qualifications in the area of physical activity and sport

in special education schools. The authors conclude that, regardless of the developments in the field of special education, “an unsatisfactory qualification of teaching staff regarding the possibilities and limitations of physical activity and sport” still exists (p. 26). Especially when given the widely spread home-room teacher principle (i.e. students receive lessons from the same teacher for all subjects) at special education schools, Anneken and Schüle (2004, p. 26f.) call for the incorporation of obligatory interdisciplinary components of physical activity and sport in the first and second education phases for teachers as well as for compulsory additional qualifications through appropriate in-service workshops for teachers already working. The call for increased consideration of physical activity for children and youth with a disability in teacher education programs was also addressed in the recommendations concerning sport for children and youth with a disability of the KMK and the German Olympic Sports Confederation (KMK & DOSB, 2008, p. 7).

As previously demonstrated, inclusive physical education demands specific responsibilities of the teaching staff. Doll-Tepper, Schmidt-Gotz, Lienert, Döen and Hecker (1994) completed a study on the attitudes of physical educators towards integration of people with a disability in schools and sports clubs. They found that „students, participants and physical educators demonstrate a definite openness and willingness to incorporate participants with a disability in their sport groups; however, the willingness to include people with a physical disability was distinctly higher than for those with intellectual impairments (learning disability)” (Doll-Tepper et al., 1994, p. 21). Teachers with previous experience in inclusive physical education indicated the necessity of proper qualifications and competencies (Lienert et al., 2003). Anneken and Schüle (2004) called for interdisciplinary components of physical education in the first and second phases of teacher education programs should apply to all teachers in Germany, not only to those in the area of special education. In addition, a differentiated qualification system for working with stu-

⁵ see www.kmk.org/statistik/schule.html

dents with a disability for potential teachers at all schools in Germany is highly urged (cf. among others Scheid, 1995; Hölter, 2011) as well as the necessary measures of continuing education for teachers. Hölter (2011) indicated the necessity of the additional incorporation of other physical activity professionals and recognized the growing number of all-day schools in the general school system as a unique chance to implement inclusive programs.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

An independent, scientific discipline of physical activity for people with disabilities within the Sports Sciences field has not yet been established in Germany over the past decades. This topic is still only being addressed within the individual professional disciplines; for example, Sport Pedagogy or Sports Medicine. In addition, there is no specified funding for this area of research in Germany. In this regard, the establishment of subsidy programs that offer incentives for interdisciplinary approaches to research and contribute to building a long term research tradition in the area of physical activity and sport for people with a disability is needed. Also in university education, physical activity for people with a disability plays only a marginal role in educating physical activity

professionals. In contrast, internationally, especially in Anglo-American regions, 'Adapted Physical Activity' has been developed into an independent discipline in education and research since the 1970s (Doll-Tepper & Niewerth, 2008). In view of the developments occurring also in Germany towards a collective school system and away from segregation, therefore also towards collective physical education with children and youth with and without disabilities, steps towards professionalism need to be taken, which take into account the heterogeneity of the school body. That this deficiency has also been recognized by policy makers in politics is demonstrated by the 2008 recommendations for action concerning physical activity for children and youth with a disability by the KMK and the German Olympic Sports Confederation. It is therefore "desirable" (KMK & DOSB, 2008, p. 4) that future research efforts take on the various challenges in the areas mentioned. Explicitly, emphasis is placed on analysis and evaluation of empowerment of people with a disability through physical education and extracurricular physical activity as well as research regarding the accessibility of physical activity programs. As a result of the discussion surrounding inclusion outlined in this article, these future tasks will experience slight modifications and the already begun process of change will have to adapt.

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(Abstract)

SPORTUNTERRICHT FÜR KINDER UND JUGENDLICHE MIT BEHINDERUNG IM SONDERERZIEHUNGS- UND REGELSCHULSYSTEM IN DEUTSCHLAND

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Dieser Beitrag präsentiert einen Überblick über die Entwicklung und den aktuellen Zustand der Sondererziehung in Deutschland. Die Beschreibung wird unterscheiden zwischen dem Programm des Sportunterrichts für Schüler/innen mit Behinderung, die eine Sonderschule (differenziert nach Behinderung) besuchen und denen, die in eine Regelschule gemeinsam mit Schüler(inne)n ohne Behinderung gehen. Außerschulische Bewegungsangebote werden in Deutschland getrennt vom System der Sondererziehung klassifiziert. Wegen der Heterogenität innerhalb einer spezifischen Behinderungsart sowie zwischen den Schüler(inne)n mit und ohne Behinderung sind die Konzepte zur Gestaltung des Bewegungs- und Sportunterrichts am Prinzip der „Pädagogik der Vielfalt“ (Prenzel, 2006) orientiert, die in der Ausbildung von Sportlehrer(inne)n besonders reflektiert wird.

Diese individualisierende Betrachtungsweise deckt sich mit dem Paradigmenwechsel in der Arbeit mit Menschen mit Behinderung – vom Defizit zu einer Perspektive der persönlichen Ressourcen.

SCHLÜSSELWÖRTER: *Adapted Physical Activity, Inklusion, Außerschulische Bewegungsangebote, Lehrerbildung, Überblick*

(Аннотация)

ФИЗИЧЕСКОЕ ВОСПИТАНИЕ ДЕТЕЙ И МОЛОДЕЖИ С ОГРАНИЧЕННЫМИ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЯМИ В СПЕЦИАЛЬНОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ И ОБЩЕЙ ШКОЛЬНОЙ СИСТЕМЕ В ГЕРМАНИИ

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В этой статье мы представляем обзор информации о развитии и текущем состоянии специального образования в Германии. В данной работе будут представлены различные образовательные программы для учащихся с ограниченными возможностями, как для тех, кто посещает специализированные школы для их конкретного вида инвалидности, а также для тех, кто посещает общеобразовательную школу вместе с учениками без инвалидности. Внешкольные программы физической активности классифицируются отдельно в специальной системе образования в Германии. Из-за неоднородности в конкретных видах инвалидности, а также между студентами с и без инвалидности, концепции проектирования физической активности и спортивных программ для различных групп инвалидов в Германии ориентируются на приоритете «педагогике разнообразия» (Prengel, 2006), что особенно отражается на квалификации учителей физкультуры. Так их индивидуальные ориентации совпадают с парадигмой изменений в работе с людьми с ограниченными возможностями.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: *Адаптивная физическая активность, включение внешкольных программ физической активности, подготовка учителей, обзор*

(Resumen)

EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA PARA NIÑOS Y JÓVENES CON DISCAPACIDAD EN ESCUELAS DE EDUCACIÓN ESPECIAL Y EL SISTEMA GENERALES EN ALEMANIA

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En este artículo se presenta una visión general sobre el desarrollo y el estado actual de los servicios de educación especial en Alemania. Esta descripción permite diferenciar entre programas de educación física para los estudiantes con discapacidad que asisten a una escuela de educación especial para su tipo específico de discapacidad, y para los que asisten a la escuela en general, junto con estudiantes sin discapacidad. Los programas extracurriculares de actividad física se clasifican por separado en el sistema de educación especial en Alemania. Debido a la heterogeneidad dentro de un tipo específico de discapacidad, así como entre alumnos con y sin discapacidad, los conceptos para el diseño de la actividad física y los programas deportivos para los distintos tipos de discapacidad en Alemania están orientados en la primacía de una "pedagogía de la diversidad"

(Prengel, 2006), que se refleja particularmente en la capacitación y formación de profesores de educación física. Esta orientación individual coincide con el cambio de paradigma en el trabajo con personas con discapacidad - desde el punto de vista del déficit al de los recursos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Actividad Física Adaptada, Inclusión, Programas extracurriculares de Actividad Física, Formación del Profesorado, Revisión

(Resumo)

**EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA PARA CRIANÇAS E JOVENS COM DEFICIÊNCIA NA
EDUCAÇÃO ESPECIAL E NO SISTEMA ESCOLAR GERAL NA ALEMANHA**

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Este artigo apresentará uma retrospectiva relativa ao desenvolvimento e ao estado actual dos serviços de educação especial na Alemanha. Esta descrição irá diferenciar entre os programas de educação física para estudantes com uma deficiência a frequentar uma escolar de ensino especial para o seu tipo de deficiência e aqueles que frequentam uma escola regular em conjunto com outros estudantes sem deficiência. Os programas de educação física extracurriculares são classificados separadamente no sistema de educação especial na Alemanha. Devido à heterogeneidade num tipo específico de deficiência bem como entre estudantes com e sem deficiência, os conceitos para elaboração de programas de desporto e actividade física para vários tipos de deficiência na Alemanha são orientados sobre o primado de uma "pedagogia da diversidade" (Prengel, 2006), a qual se reflecte particularmente na qualificação dos professores de educação física. Esta orientação individualizada coincide com a alteração do paradigma no trabalho com pessoas com deficiência – de um deficit para uma visão centrada nos recursos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Actividade Física Adaptada, Inclusão, Programas Extracurriculares de Actividade Física, Formação de Professores, Retrospectiva*
