

“Judo: An Exciting Addition to School’s Physical Education Curricula.”

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Abstract

As a future educator, my personal philosophy deeply influences my vision of an ideal elementary classroom. I envision children's physical as well as psychological in a state of equilibrium, and believing that learning and acquiring knowledge requires rational and intellectual powers. With the purpose of self-liberation; these, powers harmonize the development of the physical, intellectual, and moral characters. As much as we exercise our mind by making intelligent choices, we also need to exercise our body to become fit, strong and flexible. These aspects of physical, intellectual, and moral development are the foundations of Judo; a complete, well-developed physical activity which originated in Japan.

“Beside (sic) the acquisition of useful knowledge, we must endeavor to improve intellectual powers, such as memory, attention, observation, judgment, reasoning, imagination, etc.” (Kano, 1932, & Ohlenkamp, 2005). Judo helps in developing a healthy body, but also in developing an intellectual and etiquettes.

This research proposes the idea of incorporating Judo, in the elementary school physical education curriculum. I am aware that proposition of this paper might not be appropriate to the current trend of American elementary physical education curriculum. At the moment school curricula only concentrate in the core programs (science, math, reading, and writing). Proposing foreign idea such as Judo might sound idealistic. However, as an educator once said “curriculum

is like a fashion,” these, it’s often changes according to what and who influences our educational system. In the future, I hope this proposal be included for the benefit of all children.

This research explain in logical sequences of how Judo, as a martial could support children’s developments of physical, intellectual and moral behavioral. Its also considers the value of Judo in improving brain developments and learning. In addition, this paper also describes options about how to implement Judo into the classroom and the school physical education’s curricula.

Judo and Education

Judo is a modification of ancient martial art of Japan called jujitsu (the mortal combat of the samurai). In 1882, a young educator and innovator named Jigoro Kano, revised jujitsu and create a new art called Judo. Using the same principle of “JU” (flexible or giving away) as in Jujitsu, and adding “DO” (way of life), Jigoro Kano was able to create a discipline that combined both physical and physiological development.

We can further say that Judo is an art because it is a method of arriving at self- realization and true self-expression. a science because it implies mastery of various laws of nature: gravity, friction, momentum, velocity, weight transmission, and unison of forces. In its most important phase, it constitutes a kind of higher logic developed through practice and the

ascension of the true personality: a realization of the spiritual self in the philosophic rather than the religious sense of the word.... Watanabe, J. & Avakian, L. (1989).

Judo is a physical activity that based on mutual benefit and welfare. Using maximum effort with the mutual benefit as a goal, all practitioners of Judo will benefit. Too often, our physical education and sports in the United States only promotes competition and winning at all costs. Those having Judo as a part of the physical education will enhance cooperation of children in the classroom.

the final aim of Judo, therefore, is to inculcate in the mind of man a spirit of respect for the principle of maximum efficiency and mutual welfare and benefit, leading him to practice them that man individually and collectively can attain to the highest state, and, at the same time, develop the body and learn the art of attack and defense. (Kano 1923, & Ohlenkamp, 2005.).

Two important aspects of Judo training that are crucial to the development both physical and intellectual are *Kata* (forms) and *Randori* (free practice). If *Kata* is the structure and the grammar of the writing, then the *Randori* is the composition. While *Kata* introduces a formal system of pre-arranged exercises, *Randori* is free practice using the *Kata*. Utilizing the condition of maximum efficiency and mutual benefit and welfare (two maxims of Judo), the

practitioner of Judo may use any methods (throwing, pinning, bending the arms and choking), as long as they did not hurt each others and obey the rules of Judo.

Judo is a study and training in (of sic) mind and body as well as in the regulation of one's life and affairs. From the thorough study of the different methods of attack and defense I became convinced that they all depend on the application of one all-pervading principle, namely: "Whatever be the object, it can best be attained by the highest or maximum efficient use of mind and body for that purpose". Just as this principle applied to the methods of attack and defense constitutes Jiu-jitsu, so does this same principle, applied to physical, mental and moral culture, as well as to ways of living and carrying on of business, constitute the study of, and the training in, those things. (kano,1932).

In conclusion, Judo is an ideal physical education because it incorporates both physical and psychological training. In addition, Judo is ideal physical activity because it enhances good moral development of the children. Judo, if incorporated in the physical education of the school curriculum will enhance the harmonious development of both physical and psychological of the children.

The Dilemmas that Hinder Children Learning

One major dilemma children encounter in school is obesity. Society as a whole views obesity negative; "the reality is that the obese are ridiculed, insulted, and victimized on a daily basis (Lewis,

Cash, Jacobi, and Bubb-Lewis, 1997). This problem leads to psychological damage that influences the success of children in school.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, America's youth have never been heavier. In 1980, 7 percent of children aged 6 to 11 were overweight. In 2004, the number more than doubled to 18.8 percent. This major problem children face will affect the future of their adult life. Incorporating a profoundly physical education like Judo, will not only boost their physical health, but will also help improve their academic success.

The many benefits of incorporating Judo as physical education in school include the improvement of self-confidence and self control. Children who are lacking of self-confidence or self-control are often bullied, insulted, and victimized by their peers. Children who are obese often suffered psychological trauma that effects their social and academic achievement. "The obese are considered by some to be the last group of people that can be acceptably discriminated against. (Winkle & Ozmun, 2003.).

Another common problem faced with the ability of children to learn is hyperactivity and short attention span. In the United States, ADHD is diagnosed in 10 percent of school-age children. Children diagnosed with ADHD are typically restless, hyperactive, disruptive or sometimes impulsive, and they often have a difficult time completing a task or focusing on a project and tend to struggle in the classroom (Bolt, 2007).

ADHD has been found to effect behavior and can impair home, school, work and interpersonal relationships because people with the disorder have a hard time keeping their minds on things they don't enjoy, may be intensely restless and fidgety, and may not be able to curb actions or words. Left untreated, ADHD may lead to academic underachievement, social disorder, depression and drug abuse (Heisser, 2007)

What can Judo offer to the development of the children's physical, intellectual and moral development of the children?

Judo as a martial art is a suitable complement to the aim of physical education that incorporates a variety of lifelong fitness activities. Given the dynamic of Judo movements, as well as the creativity and aesthetic values Judo offers, it will be both exciting and stimulating to children. Although martial arts is an activity that is often mentioned as a potential curriculum addition (Bycura & Darst, 2001; Kullina & Krause, 2001), it is offered less frequently than many other activities. Given the focus of safety and mutual benefits of Judo, children will be able to practice what they learn safely. Randori (free practice), offers the children an opportunity to experiment what theory they have learn in lecture. Children will be able to have first hand experience of what techniques works and fails within a Judo contest. This opportunity will enhance the ability of children to use their judgment, meta-cognition, as well as to accept mistakes and failures, creativity, and originality and other. Children will also be able to measure their own improvements and enhance the intrinsic motivation to be more successful in their

lives. *“The executive model of teachers involved in applying their knowledge and skill to achieve maximum student learning....”* (Jarvis, 2001). Those implementing Judo as part of the physical education curriculum will help children to be more productive in their learning.

Ethical Development

According to Jean Piaget, having rules will create an atmosphere of mutual respect with the goals of moral and intellectual development of children. Coherence of physical and moral development is crucial in the development of the education of children. Through the development of respect for others, and stressing the importance of mutual benefit and etiquette children will learn to exhibit good moral character. Judo values *“the harmonious development and eventual perfection of human character.”* (Ross, 2006). As the goal of practicing Judo, this moral development is an important factor in creating a state of balance in the development of the moral character of the children. *“Participants in martial art program has also enhanced various positive psychological variables while reducing some negative factors* (Winkle & Ozmun, 2003).

Self Concept

“The self concept improves when we gain greater control and mastery over ourselves. It improves when we have specialized skill and can get along with peers.” (Jansen, 2001). Self concept includes the confidence and self-image Judoka (practitioner of Judo) embody. With the

eventual development of strong body, and good moral character, children will be able to maximize their time learning; instead of worrying about what peers might think about them.

Personal Mastery

Judo will allow children to express their emotions, control their fears and channel their aggression. Many times during Rondori (free practice), Judo practitioners will be called upon to control their personal emotions. Negative emotions such as fear, self doubt, anger, and frustration will have to be mastered in order to be successful in free-practice. Lacking control of emotions will usually result in defeat of Judoka by their opponent. This development of skill is important to children. Uncontrollable classroom climates are often due to the lack of personal mastery and control of the students. Judo would contribute much of those controls and help student control and master themselves.

Social Skills

Judo involves physical contact and cooperation with others. The tenet of *mutual benefit and welfare* of Judo promotes social interaction between Judoka. To be able to practice with fellow Judoka, good social skills are needed. Person who is not sensitive to the needs of other may injure themselves or their partner and eventually lose their practice partners. In classroom context, Judo contributes to the development of social skills of the students. Students are taught to be sensitive, caring and to respect their partners.

How to Incorporate Judo in school curriculum

Considering the limitations and support the government funding for extracurricular programs, it is necessary to find alternative outlets to incorporate Judo in school curricula. The requirement for Judo setting involves provision of gym space with a padded area. Most elementary schools usually have a gym facilities and gym mats. Space and material would not be hindrance to providing a space to accommodate Judo program in most schools.

Another element to consider in the incorporation of Judo into the school curriculum is the instructors. It is necessary to provide a qualified teacher (sensei) that can support a Judo program specifically designated for the development of children. It is essential to provide a Judo teacher that is competent and understands the values of Judo as a martial art incorporating physical, intellectual development.

Considering the many variations of the physical capabilities, age, development, and cultural back grounds of students, it is important to divide Judo activities accordingly. For younger children, it is important to introduce Judo as creative movement and play. In classroom setting for example, Judo could be as a transitional activity or for recess.

While younger children will experience Judo in context of play, in more advanced children, grades one through six, Judo could be introduced in more formal setting. Each school year, grades from one to six could practice Judo as a part of their extra physical education

activities. The benefits of Judo training are not limited by the progression of grade level. Judo discipline is functional and beneficial and can be continuously implement throughout the school years. Early elementary will experience Judo through play and recess activity, and grade level three to six could enter more serious training in the gym. The possibilities of incorporating Judo as an extra curricular activity and the benefits to the children would be tremendous.

Alternative ways to fund Judo as part of the curriculum in school would be through the cooperation of parents, teachers and the school administrators. Organizations such as PTA (parent and teacher association) have big influence in student activities. Judo could easily be incorporated into one of the after school programs, given that the school provided a Judo instructor that could be hired from the local martial-arts academy.

Another way to provide a Judo program for students is by making Judo training available to student at a local martial arts school that teaches Judo. This alternative would eliminate the stresses of providing space and supervision for students at the school itself.

Conclusion

Success in bringing freedom to children's minds manifested through soundly physical as well as intellectual education. Judo, with its universal idea of mutual benefit and welfare for all, with maximum use of ones physical and mental power, will develop human beings with good physical health and strong moral character.

Success in school requires many elements of physical, mental, environment, cultural, and behavioral development. Proposing Judo as an alternative way to bridge the gap between disciplinary and physical capabilities is logical because it enhance the well development of the children. Trend of modern society tends to imbalance the activity of the children, both physically and mentally. Obesity, hyperactivity, problem solving difficulties is just a few important problems that Judo practice can help to remedy.

A well functioning society needs a body of knowledge that balances both body and mind. Only through the balance of physical and mental development I believe that we can truly enjoy the wealth of life. Judo, if incorporated as a physical education not only offers elements that that develops children's well being, but ultimately will offer welfare of the world society.

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