

ADAPTING GOLF INSTRUCTION: INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Golf is a very popular recreational activity enjoyed by many people. This is the reason for promoting it among students with disabilities. After receiving instruction, practice, and acquiring the skills of hitting a golf ball, they can take part in one more physical activity with family and friends.

The activity can be adapted for individuals with various skills. With instructional emphasis on personal skill development and a classroom environment that encourages everybody to participate to the best of their abilities, each student can benefit and inclusion can flourish.

It is in physical education at the junior high/middle school level that the foundation of sport skills are established and then applied during intramural and community recreation programs. Whether students with disabilities go on to join a disability sports program in the community or recreate with family and friends, they need the same instructional opportunities as their classmates without disabilities.

Assessment

Evaluate each student's present level of golf skill for probability of success. Assess previous experience, fitness level, motor functioning, attitude toward his/her disability, and willingness to participate.

Safety Considerations

1. Present activities according to the student's physical characteristics and capabilities, as well as his/her mental age.
2. Deafness and hearing impairment: In cases where hearing loss is present, use hand gestures and have student pay special attention to those around him/her.
3. Asthma: Activity should occur in areas that are minimal in dust and allergic substances, if possible.
4. Know the difference between insulin shock and diabetic coma and how to administer first aid. Coordinate activity with food intake and insulin injections.
5. Visual impairment: Use bright colored golf balls when students have limited vision. Also be sure to establish audio signals for when the student begins a stroke.

Instructional Adaptations

The following ideas are designated to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities into general physical education during instruction in golf. Successful participation for some students requires equipment which has been adapted to their particular needs. Requests for purchase or construction of equipment can be facilitated through the Individual Education Program (IEP). If special equipment is necessary to

help a student progress in physical education, then it should be identified at the Case Conference and included on the IEP form.

General adaptations can include:

1. Use kinesthetic teaching.
2. Use longer or shorter clubs.
3. Use larger balls to strike.
4. Use miniature golf course.

Specific adaptations for associated disabling conditions are listed below. The adaptations are provided in categories by disability in order to facilitate easy access to the information. However, each student with a disability is unique and capable and should not be limited within a category.

Cognitive and Sensory Disabilities

Deaf/Hearing Impairment

1. Establish basic hand communications
2. Speak at a normal amplitude, even speed, and always facing the student.
3. Have student wear protective ear gear during windy or cold weather.

Mental Retardation

1. Present instruction slowly and clearly.
2. Use demonstration and emphasize imitation.
3. Give brief instruction and repeat often.
4. Keep the concept of the game simple.
5. If outdoor courses are not available, set up an indoor putt-putt course.

Visual Impairment

1. Have student "feel" someone else perform a golf swing.
2. Allow student to pace off distance to hole on putting surface.
3. Use a golf ball that beeps.
4. Larger golf club head.

Psychomotor Disabilities

Orthopedic Impairment

1. Allow student to use a wheelchair to play from their chair and striking with one arm if necessary.
2. If outdoor facilities are unavailable, set up a putting course.
3. Modify the length of the club.

Other Health Impairment

Asthma

1. Allow student or teacher to carry inhaler with him/her.
2. Modify length of course.
3. Allow student to use a motorized cart.
4. Allow student to take more frequent breaks

Cardiovascular Condition

1. Allow student to play from motorized cart or wheelchair.
2. Do not rush student hitting golf ball.

Diabetes

1. Be sure to watch student closely.
2. Allow student to carry food and eat when needed.

Barriers to participation in golf and other sports by individuals with disabilities are decreasing. More than ever, physical education teachers must endeavor to read professional journals, attend conferences and workshops, and join professional organizations to avail themselves of information on how to teach specific sports to their students of varying skill levels. Being an informed professional is half the battle in allowing students with disabilities to gain access to lifetime sports like golf.

Resources

Byrd, R. C. (2008). *Golf* [On-Line]. Available:
<http://www.hsc.wvu.edu/som/ot/connect/participationSupport/Golf/index.asp>

Dunn, J. M., & Leitschuh, C. A. (2006). *Special physical education* (8th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Schmottlach, N., & McManama, J. L. (2006). *The physical education activities handbook* (11th ed.) San Francisco, CA: Benjamin Cummings.

Additional Web Resources

www.snaggolf.com "Snaggolf" is a modified form of golf. The rules are simplified to aid in ease of learning and playing golf.

www.ncaonline.org This site is a collaborative program of Indiana University and the National Park Service called the National Center on Accessibility (NCA). The NCA helps increase awareness of inclusion of people with disabilities in leisure activities.

www.usagas.org/scripts/rules.asp This site contains modifications for rules to the game of golf for golfers with disabilities.

www.golf-country.com/adaptive_golf/Adaptive_Golf_Club.htm This site is for adjustable golf clubs for use by golfers with disabilities.

www.golfxpress.com This site provides information on adaptive golf carts to be used by a golfer with disabilities as a form of mobility on the golf course.

www.eaga.org/results.html This site provides additional links to golf associations and additional sites adaptive golf information for specific disabilities.

www.usga.org/rules/golfers_with_disabilities.html This website provides the rules of golf for golfers with disabilities.

www.uprightgolf.com This site has developed the most comprehensive line of easy-to-use adaptive golf playing aids in the industry.

This information was compiled by Tyson Gordon,
Adapted Physical Education student at Manchester College, Spring 2008.
The adaptations and teaching strategies contained in this document are only suggestions. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent must be obtained.