

Addressing the issue of social damage / neglect through PE.

Motivating Dropout Students Through Physical Education

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Education systems all over the world are facing complex social challenges towards the next century. The decline of the “family cell” as an educational and social agent, and the isolating social effect of technology gadgets and communication, emphasize the importance of schools as social agents. It seems that during the last decade, schools have gone astray in their attempt to meet the technological needs of Western societies. In many cases this trend has resulted in a lack of accountability regarding social skills, learning skills, motivation towards learning and other individual qualities of their students. The program presented here is based on Physical Education as a context for presenting and promoting such social and personal skills (Eldar, 1991,1993,1996). Physical education lessons can be characterized by intensive activity, short and long term teacher-student and student-student cooperation, stress situations, frustration, waiting, joy, etc. All these characteristics are presented in a natural highly reinforcing context of movement and game. This is in essence, a highly controlled framework, which can be molded to achieve pedagogical and clinical goals. Thus, this concept offers the situation design, analogous to other contexts in the behavior of the target population. A lesson tailored for achieving educational goals is termed a script. The Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Program at the Zinman College has developed a series of stages implemented in a yearly Physical Education program. The program supported the development of students with special needs who acquired basic skills and emotional capabilities. Such a practical program is also being promoted, and ran at the Idraetshojnskolen in Brondby, Denmark, in full cooperation with the (ABA) Program at Zinman College.

The program requires reaching proficiency in each step in order to proceed to the following one:

1. Complying - Adhering to teacher's instruction.
2. Attending - Focusing on relevant stimuli. Effective use of all senses.
3. Rules and routines - Learning to cooperate with class procedures.
4. Waiting - Practicing patience.
5. Demand - Confronting cognitive tasks.
6. "Don't give up" - Persisting in task fulfillment.
7. Activity termination - Coping with termination of a favored activity.
8. Cooperation - Collaborating in a team / **Social sphere**.
9. Self-control - Coping with aversive and unpleasant situations.
10. Self-management - Assuming accountability for one's own learning.
11. Peer-teaching - Assuming accountability for a peer's learning.
12. Generalization – Performing appropriately in contexts different than the clinical one.

This paper describes a unique project based on this model. Fourteen middle-school students from a religious institute (Yeshiva) participated in the program. All students were dropouts who quit their schools due to various reasons and were referred to the Yeshiva based on their interest in sport. The program was a collaboration between the Yeshiva and the ABA center at the college. It presented basic learning and personal skills through an American Football course. Students learned English as a second language, improved their learning skills and self esteem and produced Academic projects. They showed a high level of motivation for course assignments which required self-management, reading, writing and **inquiry skills**. The paper presents, the project rationale, the model implemented, and initial results from students' progress in the program and in other related academic, social and personal areas .It offers

recommendations for implementing the model in different cultures and contexts. The presentation will be followed by video examples from the program.