



PODIUM

PODIUM. Journal of Science and Technology in Physical Culture

Volume 16 Issue 1; 2021

University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Scientific
Publications Department.

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Translated from the original in spanish

Original article


Methodological actions for the educational inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities through para-karate

Acciones metodológicas para la inclusión educativa de educandos con discapacidad intelectual mediante el para-kárate

Ações metodológicas para a inclusão educacional de alunos com deficiências intelectuais através do parakarate

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Received: 05/06/2020.

Approved: 31/10/2020.

How to cite item: Pérez Rodríguez, L., Escalante Candeaux, L., & Gómez Valdés, A. (2021). Acciones metodológicas para la inclusión educativa de educandos con discapacidad intelectual mediante el parakarate. *PODIUM - Revista de Ciencia y Tecnología en la Cultura Física*, 16(1). Recuperado de <http://podium.upr.edu.cu/index.php/podium/article/view/958>

ABSTRACT

This research responds to the needs of the National Institute of Sport Physical education and Recreation staff (Inder in Spanish), it is aimed at the process of educational inclusion from the context of sport for all, in students with intellectual disabilities, in the Guanabo sports complex, Habana del Este municipality. The objective is to establish methodological actions as a work tool for Karate-do specialists, who are responsible for the educational physical care of this population. From a materialist dialectical approach to the interpretation of phenomena, the main methods and techniques used were: interview, survey, scientific observation and statistics, which allowed revealing the



causal relationships between the object and the declared field of action. It was found that the system of preparation of the professionals of this activity for the teaching and care of students with intellectual disabilities within the Karate-do class is limited, due to inadequacies in the methodological indications that require such attention, which prevents them from an inclusive process occurs. The methodological actions would benefit the professionals who assist these students, as they are applied with systematicity, allowing inclusion, diversity in participation and learning of the practices of the student; it also reduces exclusion within the training process as required by society in all its spheres of performance.

Keywords: Para-karate; Intellectual disability and educational inclusion.

RESUMEN

La presente investigación responde a las necesidades del organismo Inder; está dirigida al proceso de inclusión educativa desde el contexto del deporte para todos, en educandos con discapacidad intelectual, del combinado deportivo Guanabo, municipio de la Habana del Este. El objetivo es establecer acciones metodológicas como herramienta de trabajo para los especialistas de kárate-do que tienen la responsabilidad de la atención físico educativo de esta población. A partir de un enfoque dialéctico materialista de interpretación de los fenómenos, se emplearon como principales métodos y técnicas la entrevista, encuesta, observación científica y los métodos estadísticos. Estos métodos y técnicas empleados permitieron revelar las relaciones causales entre el objeto y el campo de acción declarado. Se constató que es limitado el sistema de preparación de los profesionales de esta actividad para la enseñanza y atención a los educandos con discapacidad intelectual dentro de la clase de kárate-do, producto a insuficiencias en las indicaciones metodológicas que precisen dicha atención lo cual impide que se produzca un proceso inclusivo. Las acciones metodológicas beneficiarías a los profesionales que atienden estos educandos, al aplicarse con sistemática, permitirá la inclusión, diversidad en la participación y el aprendizaje de las prácticas de este; reduce además la exclusión dentro del proceso de entrenamiento como lo requiere la sociedad en todas sus esferas de actuación.

Palabras clave: Para-karate; Discapacidad intelectual e inclusión educativa.

RESUMO

A presente investigação responde às necessidades da organização Inder; é dirigida ao processo de inclusão educacional a partir do contexto do desporto para todos, em estudantes com deficiência intelectual, da equipa desportiva de Guanabo, município de Havana Leste. O objetivo é estabelecer ações metodológicas como um instrumento de trabalho para os especialistas em Karate-do que são responsáveis pelo cuidado educativo físico desta população. Com base numa abordagem materialista dialética da interpretação dos fenómenos, os principais métodos e técnicas utilizados foram a entrevista, o inquérito, a observação científica e os métodos estatísticos. Estes métodos e técnicas utilizados permitiram revelar as relações causais entre o objeto e o campo de ação declarado. Verificou-se que o sistema de preparação dos profissionais desta actividade para o ensino e cuidado dos estudantes com deficiência intelectual dentro da aula de karaté-do é limitado, devido a insuficiências nas indicações metodológicas que requerem tais cuidados, o que impede a realização de um processo inclusivo. As ações metodológicas beneficiarão os profissionais que frequentam estes estudantes, uma vez



que são aplicadas sistematicamente, permitirão a inclusão, diversidade na participação e aprendizagem das práticas deste; reduz também a exclusão dentro do processo de formação tal como é exigido pela sociedade em todas as suas esferas de atuação.

Palavras-chave: Parakarate; Deficiência intelectual e inclusão educacional.

INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology has had a positive influence on the materialistic conception of the world, which allows us to know the social and cultural evolution of human diversity. The interest in inclusive education is growing progressively in the international and national educational context, so there are many authors who have defined it.

In 1990, which was declared "International Literacy Year," the World Conference on Education for All was held in the city of Jomtien, Thailand, and the idea of inclusion was born. As a result of this meeting, at the so-called Salamanca Conference in Spain in 1994, the UN (United Nations Organization) adopted this idea almost universally as a principle and educational policy, which is assumed in a particular way in each country.

Puente, J. L. B. de la., (2009) refers to the term inclusion as the feeling of belonging that comes from feeling respected, valued and supported by others. That is, there has to be an acceptance of the difference regardless of the characteristics of each one. In addition, he points out that it is a great project that tries to build an education that rejects any kind of educational exclusion that promotes participation and equitable learning.

Inclusive education "is a means of realizing the right to quality education without discrimination and with equal opportunities" (**Blanco, 2008, p. 9**). This vision is transferred to all spheres of action in society, and in the area of sports, inclusion aims to adapt sports and physical activities, both individual and team, so that all types of learners, regardless of their physical, economic and/or social characteristics, can perform them as part of the group. This recognizes the importance of modifying some aspects of both the activities and the work team (**Overton, Wrench and Garrett, 2017**).

Wickman, Nordlund, and Holm (2018) note that sport for many learners can have a major impact on their identities and that sport is seen as preparation for life as an adult. Therefore, despite the fact that certain deficits (physical, psychological or sensory) lead to certain difficulties in the motor learning necessary for sport activity, these can be achieved if educational actions are adjusted to the particularities of the learners (**Palacio, Ruano and González, 2020**).

Portel and Towell (2017) also point out that inclusive education is about ensuring that all children and young people can realize their human potential and have the opportunity to play their role as citizens, in order to realize the widespread phrase that a better world is possible. Hence, the attention is directed to the students with intellectual disabilities and their incorporation to the realization of sports, specifically to para-karate, that make possible their social inclusion; being the "Sport for All" the ideal mechanism to implement these changes within the community context.



The term of persons with disabilities is in force since the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities concluded at the United Nations; it includes physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, described in its article one, (UN, 2016). Intellectual disability (ID) is defined in relation to mental impairments, and has had several names throughout history that are closely linked to the experiences of care for this group.

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2001), defines it as the slow and incomplete acquisition of cognitive skills during human development, which implies that the person may have difficulties in understanding, learning and remembering new things, which are manifested during development, and that contribute to the level of general intelligence, for example: cognitive, motor, social and language skills.

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities AAIDD Verdugo M. Á., (2011), formerly known as the American Association on Mental Retardation, defines that are significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior that manifests itself in adaptive, conceptual, social and practical skills"; also, that originates before 18 years of age.

This definition leaves behind those who took into account the results of intelligence test measurements to reach the diagnosis which determines the eligibility of a person to be considered with ID; this identifies the strengths and weaknesses of each individual in a number of dimensions or areas, in order to establish support needs (Verdugo and Schalock, 2010).

In the position of these researchers, it is assumed that the ID in its broadest concept as expressed in its evolution, are the subjects who do not have the capacity to adapt to different social, family and work environments and to do so require community and individual support to promote their autonomy, being a product of the failures in meeting the standards of socio-cultural development.

Related to the previous ideas, Vigo's thinking follows an optimistic path, advocating for an education that promotes development and at the same time, the compensation of the alterations that can be produced when a positive social and cultural influence is not provided.

The authors of this research specify that, on the basis of the above ideas, para-karate becomes a mechanism to promote and develop the personality of these students, facilitating their social inclusion, since it will allow them to leave their family confinement and relate to others through the recognition of their particularities, physical and psychological potential.

In the review of different documents, it has been possible to verify the nonexistence of a specific program for the practice of this sport adapted, therefore, the present article shows the necessity to establish methodological actions that serve as tool to teachers of Karate-do to facilitate the inclusion of students with DI inside their classes.



MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the research, it was worked with a population of twenty-five students and three teachers involved from Havana province; as a sample, four students with mild DI, and the three karate-do teachers were intentionally selected.

The general approach of the research is the dialectical-materialistic one, which allowed revealing the causal relations of the object of study and the way of research, and it also conditioned the selection of theoretical, empirical and statistical methods, which allowed revealing the essence of the object.

Theoretical methods

Historical logical: it made possible to identify, analyze, systematize and integrate with a logical sequence, the background, evolution and main trends of educational care through the practice of para-karate in students with DI.

Analytical-synthetic: it was used in the theoretical-methodological study of the educational inclusion process. The phenomenon was analyzed in a general way, in order to specify the specific aspects in relation to the educational inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities, through para-karate.

Inductive-deductive: facilitated the specification of the essential aspects in relation to the psycho-pedagogical particularities of the students researched and the process for their inclusion.

Empirical methods

Documentary review: to obtain information about the current state of the object of research, considering the normative documents. Among the documents reviewed are the programs for the preparation of the athlete, the analyses that govern the styles of karate. Through this method, it is intended to verify how the attention to people with disabilities in sport should be carried out.

Interview: to obtain opinions from teachers and families about the process of educational inclusion in learners with ID from the context of adapted sport, specifically in para-karate.

Observation: it allowed to collect the information about the performance of the trainers in the direction of the teaching-learning process of the para-karate in students with DI, to make a record of results during the practical sessions established for the process of adaptation of the techniques of the katas. The information collected is about the attitude of the teacher and the student with a disability and the use of the curricular adaptations within the process.

Statistical methods: they were used in the processing of the data that allowed the description of the process of the research.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Franco (2009) in his work reveals that physical activity for people with disabilities is located at approximately 2700 A. C. in China, where Kung Fu was practiced for the prevention and relief of physical disorders. Later, in Greece in 500 B.C. C. it was practiced to prevent some ailments. Later, in Roman times, a physician named Galen (2nd century), carried out treatments with therapies through physical exercises. This was a starting point for the emergence of Karate-do in Japan.

Reynés (2019) points out Pereda, as a multifaceted martial artist and man of science, considered the father of Karate-do for people with disabilities, creator of the style called Garyu Ryu, and of a method of physical rehabilitation that he called karate therapy, when in Barcelona 1992, within the framework of the Paralympic Games, he carried out a demonstration as an exhibition in the Olympic village, with people in wheelchairs in a formal and structured way, adapting it to their reality.

In addition to being a method of therapy for other patients, this sport was then exhibited for the first time as an inclusive sport, now practiced by a large group of people in the world. Its content includes eight katas adapted for people with disabilities, adopting the name of para-karate, a term derived from adapted karate which is used by more than 200 countries.

This change of name was adopted, when in 2015, the *World Karate Federation* (WKF) achieves to be recognized by the International Paralympic Committee and begins to be part of the program of the Special Olympics, where its fundamental incidence is the students with DI (Díaz *et al.*, 2018). Since then, it has spread worldwide for all people with disabilities.

This practice is carried out with the objective of achieving multilateral development, contributing significantly to the formation of values, personality development, autonomy, integration and social interaction and mainly the strengthening of health and increase of physical capabilities that translates into quality of life.

The research carried out reveal that there is insufficient information regarding the practice of para-karate for students with disabilities, mainly for those who have ID, elements that can be seen in the results of the empirical methods used.

The initial searches were aimed at obtaining information about the contextual conditions of para-karate to undertake it. Firstly, a documentary review of scientific works of national and international character and of official programs elaborated by karate-do teachers in different stages was carried out, that have made the attempt to give a logical order to these contents that allowed to consult structures, contents and methodological orientations of existing programs in the scope of this sport specialty.

Next, an exploration was made to know the level of preparation that the coaches of Karate-do have, to develop with effectiveness their pedagogic intervention, specifically referred to the work with the students with DI that train the para-karate, from the observation to classes in areas of training of the Guanabo Sport Complex and the Santa Fe Sport Complex; the first one located in the municipality Habana del Este and the second one in the municipality Playa, both of Havana, with the purpose of obtaining information about the attention that the teacher gives them, as well as their behavior inside the class.



The observations made were direct, non-participatory and structured. An observation protocol was used for this purpose, the results of which can be summarized as follows: shortcomings in the pedagogical experiences about how to carry out inclusion within the group of learners with ID, for the teaching-learning of para-karate.

Interviews were also conducted with karate-do teachers and relatives of DI practitioners in which it was found that:

- Only one teacher has had previous training experience with people with disabilities, not intellectual but sensory (moderate hearing).

The 100 % of the teachers interviewed stated:

- The inexistence of concrete methodological indications for the attention of students with ID in this sport.
- The lack of courses that provide theoretical and practical elements on inclusion in sport, as well as the psychomotor characteristics of students with ID.
- Recognize the need for methodological tools that allow effective inclusion in the teaching-learning process, mainly related to curricular adaptations.
- They have a positive attitude towards inclusion in para-karate.
- Family members generally consider that the practice of para-karate is beneficial for the psychological and social wellbeing of their children, since it allows them to socialize, follow orders, strengthen their bodies, and acquire skills that serve them in their adult lives.

A review of official documents shows that:

- In the programs of preparation of the athlete (2013-2016) and (2017-2020), as well as the analytics that govern the styles (Shito Ryu, ShotoKan, Jyoshimon Shorin Ryu); precise methodological orientations are lacking to adapt the technical elements of Karate-do, for these students.
- The programs present insufficient methodological orientations to attend to individual differences adapted to the characteristics of those who receive them.
- Currently, there is not a specific program for the population under study, so it deserves an educational attention through the practice of this sport, since it constitutes an important group within Cuban society.

In summary, there are theoretical-methodological shortcomings that make it difficult to attend to and include students with ID who practice para-karate in the context of this sports class. Thus, it is necessary to establish methodological actions that facilitate their educational inclusion; these actions are based on the psycho-pedagogical and motor characteristics of students with ID; they take into consideration the means with which they work, the space for practice, interpersonal relationships, the rules to follow according to international guidelines and the behavior of the practitioners, that is, adaptations of access to the curriculum:



Methodological actions

1. To initiate the teaching-learning process based on previous experiences related to the student's daily life.
2. To plan motor tasks that involve obstacles to be overcome by sessions or by stages of the process.
3. To make previous demonstrations of everything that is indicated to be done by the student, dividing the movement by sequences.
4. To use playful activities as strategies to learn the technical elements, which implies their elaboration or selection with the consequent adaptations; those that should have few decisions to make.
5. To offer the opportunity to choose the activities that will be carried out in each session.
6. To use didactic means that encourage the process of teaching the basic elements of karate-do.
7. To avoid the presence of unnecessary materials so as not to create dispersion of learners in the classroom.
8. To adjust the spaces for the practice of para-karate, based on the psychopedagogical and motor characteristics, establishing mainly safety zones with very flexible delimitations.
9. To adapt the organizational procedures in order to achieve better socialization processes in which the student's active participation is implied.
10. To keep in mind the use of a concrete language using visual aids that guarantee a better understanding of what is being taught.
11. To provide confidence to reinforce the teacher-educator; educator-educator forms of socialization.
12. To use manual supports as required by the activity and the disabled practitioner.
13. To link the family with the para-karate coaches inside and outside the sports area.
14. To make strategic alliances with the schools where the students receive their academic formation that includes the Physical Education teacher, providing links with the para-karate teachers.
15. To encourage the participation of teachers in training programs, courses, lectures, diplomas, among others, inside and outside the gymnasium to facilitate the inclusion of these students who attend the sports area.



The above actions must be adjusted considering each component of the process. They imply creativity in the planning, organization, execution and evaluation of each class in the context of Sport for All, since para-karate as a sport modality allows the elaboration of different methodologies in correspondence with the types of disabilities, in particular the ID; when conceiving the pertinent curricular adaptations for each student or sport group as well as for the Karate-Do styles, in correspondence with the forms of technical execution.

Castellanos (2002) (cited by Aldana and Fonseca, 2020), proposed that educational diversity constitutes a solution to educational attention with the purpose of achieving quality in learning and education, in such a way that it promotes educational excellence. This has been demonstrated by Special Pedagogy, which has exposed the possibility of educating and teaching students with disabilities by applying a special active, differentiated, methodological and organized pedagogical work system that takes into account the particularities of their biological and psychological maturation process.

Currently, according to **Gómez, Planes and Gómez (2019)**, from a pedagogical point of view, we are talking about educational inclusion or inclusive education; a term that refers to the way in which diversity should be responded to and is based on the guidelines set forth in different legislations and international congresses on educational issues and human rights that have been held since 1948 (p.94).

Inclusive education aims to transform educational centers and their contexts, with the purpose of responding to the emerging educational diversity, both from a social and individual perspective based on equal opportunities (**Castillo, 2015**). In other words, inclusive education, above all, is conceived as a human rights issue with equal conditions for all; a criterion that is the theoretical basis from which methodological actions were established (**Gómez et al., 2019, p. 94**), in such a way that they contribute to an active participation of students with disabilities in sports classes.

The practice of sports must reach all the population that wishes to do so, without exclusions. Para-karate offers the possibility of accessing this right to students who in normal sporting conditions would not be able to, and allows them to practice physical and sporting activity, both in the recreational and competitive fields. This type of sport is adapted to all disabled athletes with different motor, sensory and intellectual manifestations. There is evidence that the number of people with disabilities who start practicing para-karate has experienced an exponential growth in recent years. Examples of this are countries like: Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Brazil.

The para-karate as an inclusive sport is characterized by being an integrating discipline directed to sportsmen of all ages and conditions, it is declared by many that it can change the life of its practitioners because the kindness and virtues that it offers are reflected even more in this population. In addition to contributing to the socialization and psychomotor development needed for an independent life (**Ocete, 2016**).

The authors of this article mean that the educational inclusion within the context of the sport class, specifically in the para-karate, is the active and conscious participation of all the students that present some type of disability and especially intellectual whose objective is to propitiate a process of quality education having in mind the potentialities and individualities of each one for this form to facilitate the comprehension of the contents.



Developing physical education and sports programs, aimed at satisfying the specificity of students with disabilities through adapted curricular proposals, have been carried out by different authors. From the field of inclusive sport; these adaptations are designed for students who, for whatever reason, cannot participate in it; all of which is influenced by inclusive education, so it is based on including students with disabilities in sports classes.

Therefore, it is important, as *Gómez et al., points out (2019), quoting Gomendio (2000)*, to answer four questions: What to teach: What collects the information about the objectives and contents of teaching. How much to teach: It is a matter of deciding how to order and sequence these objectives and contents. How to teach: It is necessary to plan the teaching and learning activities to achieve the objectives set. What, how and when to evaluate: The evaluation will allow us to judge whether the desired objectives have been achieved. This will allow to make an adequate proposal to the educational needs in the sports class, so adaptations must be made so that everyone can participate (p. 95).

In this way, the established methodological actions are a starting point for the establishment of a methodological concept that, for its implementation, requires aspects related to its structure, methods, procedures, contents and specific methodological orientations, using a language that facilitates the understanding of the fundamental technical elements of this sport.

CONCLUSIONS

It is thus concluded that the systematic practice of para-karate as an inclusive sport has as a fundamental premise, to grant great harmony, physical, cognitive, affective, moral and social development to the students who present some type of disability and especially those who present DI, as well as to improve their mental health, taking into account their needs and potentialities; which implies to adapt the teaching-learning process of this sport modality.

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Conflict of interests:

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

Authors' contribution:

Luís Alberto Pérez Rodríguez: Conception of the idea, literature search and review, instrument making, instrument application, compilation of information resulting from the instruments applied, statistic analysis, preparation of tables, graphs and images, database preparation, drafting of the original (first version).

Leidys Escalante Candeaux: Conception of the idea, literature search and review, instrument making, compilation of information resulting from the instruments applied, statistic analysis, article correction, authorship coordinator, translation of terms or information obtained.

Annia Gómez Valdés: Literature search and review, statistic analysis, general advice on the topic addressed, review and final version of the article, article correction, translation of terms or information obtained, review of the application of the applied bibliographic standard.



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