A New "Principal Principle" (#14) of Physical Activity Education is Emerging

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There is every reason to believe that a new "principal principle" of physical activity education is emerging. In a recent discussion, Dr. Michael G. Davis, the chief executive officer of AAHPERD, suggested to the author that several new studies reported in *Physical Activity Today* are pointing to the addition of a new "principal principle"(#14) to be added to the list of 13 enumerated earlier by Zeigler (1994). Dr Davis was referring to the several studies affirming the conclusion that there is indeed a "positive relationship between physical fitness and academic achievement" (Chomitz et al., 2009). Two additional studies with similar findings were reported by Co-Editors David F. Stodden and Amelia Mays Wood of *Physical Activity Today* (Ahmed et al., 2007; and Hillman et al., 2008).

Physical activity educators tend to have a built-in inferiority complex no matter how strong the evidence is "out there" pointing to the truly significant contribution our field has the potential to make in the lives of children and young people. Historically, the idea that the organism isn't unified dates back in Western civilization to the thought of Plato that was "divided" on the subject. Then, the influence of the Catholic church compounded the idea that the human is a tri-partite creature. However, researchers in the discipline of psychology made the case in the early 20th century that the human being is a unified organism. This finding has tremendous potential for the field of education. However, whether we can convince the public *and our colleagues* about the urgent need for a quality, required program of physical activity education (including related health education) from kindergarten through Grade 12 is another matter.

The glossary employed by the United States Office of Science Education helps to explain how the relationship might occur between physical activity education and so-called "academic" learning. Learning is defined as "the acquisition of knowledge or skill. It occurs in, and may lead to changes in, the brain." The glossary states further that "the center of thought and emotion is in the central nervous system." It explains, in addition, that "the brain is responsible for the coordination and control of body activities and the interpretation of information from inside and outside the body." (http://science.education.nih.gov/supplements/nih4/self/other/contact.htm

Revisiting a historical milestone in our field's history to explain the origin of the term "principal principle," Dr. Arthur H. Steinhaus, George Williams College, speaking to the former College Physical Education Association in 1951, identified what he termed as the four "principal principles" of physical education. Principles" Nos. 1, 2, 8 & 9 (as one) & 10 below were those offered originally by Dr. Arthur Steinhaus, George Williams College.

This list of four "principal principles" was enlarged to thirteen (13) such "principles" based on Zeigler's analysis of evidence made available by research and scholarship carried out during the second half of the 20th century (Zeigler, 1994). Hence, the present listing below is offered the the field's consideration.

Principle 1: The "Reversibility Principle." The first principle affirms that cardio-vascular conditioning is inherently reversible in the human body;

Principle 2: The "Overload Principle." The second principle states that a muscle or

muscle group must be taxed beyond that to which it is accustomed, or it won't develop;

Principle 3: The "Flexibility Principle." This principle indicates that a human must put the body's various joints through the range of motion for which they are intended. Inactive joints become increasingly inflexible until immobility sets in;

Principle 4: The "Bone Density Principle." This principle asserts that developmental physical activity throughout life helps significantly to maintain the density of a human's bones;

Principle 5: The "Gravity Principle." This principle explains that maintaining muscle-group strength throughout life, while standing or sitting, helps the human fight against the force of gravity that is working continually to break down the body's structure;

Principle 6: The "Relaxation Principle." Principle 6 states that the skill of relaxation is one that people must acquire in today's increasingly complex world;

Principle 7: The "Aesthetic Principle." This principle explains that a person has either an innate or culturally determined need to "look good" to himself/herself and to others;

Principle 8: The "Integration Principle." Principle 8 demonstrates that developmental physical activity is an important means whereby the individual can "fully involved" as a living organism. By their very nature, physical activities in exercise, sport, play, and expressive movement demand full attention from the organism—often in the face of opposition—and therefore involve complete psycho-physical integration;

Principle 9: The "Integrity Principle." The principle of integrity implies that a completely integrated psycho-physical activity should correspond ethically with the avowed ideals and standards of society. (Thus, the "integrity principle" goes hand in hand with desirable integration of the human's various aspects [so-called unity of body and mind in the organism explained in Principle 8 immediately above]);

Principle 10: The "Priority of the Person Principle." Principle 10 affirms that any physical activity in sport, play, and exercise sponsored through public or private agencies should be conducted in such a way that the welfare of the individual comes first (i.e., sport must serve as a "social servant");

Principle 11: The "Live Life to Its Fullest Principle." This principle explains that, viewed in one sense, human movement is what distinguishes the individual from the rock on the ground. Unless the body is moved with reasonable vigor according to principles 1-6 above, it will not serve a person best throughout life;

Principle 12: The "Fun and Pleasure Principle." Principle 12 states that the human is normally a "seeker of fun and pleasure," and that a great deal of the opportunity for such enjoyment can be derived from full, active bodily movement; and

Principle 13: The "Longevity Principle." This recently conceived principle affirms the possibility that regular developmental physical activity throughout life can help a person live longer (Zeigler, 1994).

Principle 14: The "Physical Fitness & Learning–Correlation Principle" affirms that evidence accumulating is showing a positive relationship between physical fitness and what is termed as academic achievement.

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