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## *Recreational games for the inclusion of students with physical disabilities in Physical Education classes*

*Juegos recreativos para la inclusión de estudiantes con discapacidad física, en las clases de Educación Física*

*Jogos lúdicos para inclusão de alunos com deficiência física nas aulas de Educação Física*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Recreational games encourage psychosocial, motor and cognitive development and promote equal opportunities and active participation of students. When used in Physical Education, they intervene in comprehensive education and training, as they facilitate the development of skills and capacities in students, promote inclusion, respond to diversity and needs, as well as increase participation in this context. The study presented had as the objective to develop a system of recreational games for the inclusion of students with



physical disabilities in the Physical Education classes of the sixth year of basic education, of the "Mercedes de Jesús Molina" Physical-Missional Educational Unit. The research had a mixed approach and a sample of 19 sixth year students was used. Methods such as historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, inductive-deductive and systemic were used to analyze and understand the facts and establish logical relationships; empirical methods were used, such as observation, survey, and specialist criterion method, to verify the validity and reliability of the proposal. For the processing and interpretation of the data, represented in tables and figures, descriptive statistics was used, with percentage calculation. The proposal for recreational games turned out to be a fundamental tool, promoting inclusion, integration and coexistence, regardless of disability, which benefits the present and future of students in society and enhances the scope of the proposal.

**Keywords:** physical disability, Physical Education, recreational games, inclusion.

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## RESUMEN

Los juegos recreativos fomentan el desarrollo psicosocial, motor y cognitivo y promueven la igualdad de oportunidades y la participación activa de los estudiantes. Al ser utilizados en la Educación Física, intervienen en la educación y formación integral, pues facilitan en los estudiantes el desarrollo de destrezas y capacidades, promueven la inclusión, responden a la diversidad y las necesidades e incrementan la participación en este contexto. El estudio que se presenta tuvo como objetivo desarrollar un sistema de juegos recreativos para la inclusión de los estudiantes con discapacidad física, en las clases de Educación Física del sexto año de básica, de la Unidad Educativa Físico-misional "Mercedes de Jesús Molina". La investigación tuvo un enfoque mixto y se utilizó una muestra de 19 estudiantes del sexto año. Se emplearon métodos como el histórico-lógico, analítico-sintético, inductivo-deductivo y el sistémico para analizar y comprender los hechos y establecer relaciones lógicas; se emplearon métodos empíricos, como la observación, la encuesta, el método de criterio de especialistas, para comprobar la validez y fiabilidad de la propuesta. Para el procesamiento e interpretación de los datos, representados en tablas y figuras, se utilizó la estadística descriptiva, con el cálculo porcentual. La propuesta de juegos recreativos resultó



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ser una herramienta fundamental, al fomentar la inclusión, la integración y la convivencia, sin importar la discapacidad, ello beneficia el presente y futuro de los estudiantes en la sociedad y realza el alcance de la propuesta.

**Palabras clave:** discapacidad física, Educación Física, juegos recreativos, inclusión.

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## RESUMO

Os jogos recreativos estimulam o desenvolvimento psicossocial, motor e cognitivo e promovem a igualdade de oportunidades e a participação ativa dos alunos. Quando utilizados na Educação Física, intervêm na educação e formação integral, pois facilitam o desenvolvimento de competências e habilidades nos alunos, promovem a inclusão, respondem à diversidade e às necessidades e aumentam a participação neste contexto. O objetivo do estudo apresentado foi desenvolver um sistema de jogos lúdicos para inclusão de alunos com deficiência física nas aulas de Educação Física do sexto ano do ensino básico, da Unidade Educacional Físico-Missional "Mercedes de Jesús Molina". A pesquisa teve abordagem mista e utilizou-se uma amostra de 19 alunos do sexto ano. Métodos como histórico-lógico, analítico-sintético, indutivo-dedutivo e sistêmico foram utilizados para analisar e compreender os fatos e estabelecer relações lógicas; Foram utilizados métodos empíricos, como observação, levantamento e método de julgamento especializado, para verificar a validade e confiabilidade da proposta. Para o processamento e interpretação dos dados, representados em tabelas e figuras, utilizou-se estatística descritiva, com cálculo percentual. A proposta de jogos recreativos revelou-se uma ferramenta fundamental, promovendo a inclusão, a integração e a convivência, independentemente da deficiência, o que beneficia o presente e o futuro dos alunos na sociedade e aumenta o alcance da proposta.

**Palavras-chave:** deficiência física, Educação Física, jogos recreativos, inclusão.

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## INTRODUCTION

Currently, Physical Education (PE) has become a fundamental subject for the comprehensive education and training of human beings, through which students are allowed to develop essential motor, cognitive and affective skills in their daily life, as well as to promote inclusion and ensure that everyone has the same opportunities to participate and enjoy sport.

In the research, it was proven, through an observation guide, that students with physical disabilities are often excluded from participating in the exercises proposed in the PE class because the teacher does not motivate or promote integration. In this case, the student feels discriminated or lowers his self-esteem, and the problem becomes greater when some teachers think that a way to protect them from accidents is to prohibit them from playing sports, for this reason, the lack of their participation in planned activities can be seen.

Given the above, disability affects the student's development in his or her environment from different perspectives, some of them difficult to be noticed or hidden (Delgado, *et al.*, 2019). According to Díaz and Larreal (2021), people with disabilities are object of derision, compassion and charity and are stigmatized due to their physical or mental characteristics such as mental retardation, missing limbs and blindness, among others.

Physical disabilities are bodily deficiencies that can be congenital or acquired, obvious and/or visceral and imply damage to internal organs that can be imperceptible; from them, alterations in movement, manipulation and displacement occur that limit the personal and social development of the person (Saavedra, *et al.*, 2018).

Regarding their treatment in the educational system, Ecuador is responsible for promoting inclusion in all educational levels, breaks the patterns of exclusion and discrimination and promotes democratic coexistence and acceptance of the individual differences of each person with or without special educational needs (Rojas, *et al.*, 2020). This implies generating structural reforms at the educational level, implementing measures that promote equal opportunities, and that respond to the diversity and needs of all students, to break the



ideology and discourse on social practices of segregation and discrimination (Cardoso and López, 2019).

In accordance with Cotán (2019), work must be done on regulations and policies from a vision that responds to the diversity and needs of all students, to guarantee equal opportunities, conditions of access and permanence for all students. Students with disabilities and special educational needs in schools have become the center of attention of national and international policies (Sierra and García, 2020), hence the need for a continuous evaluation that examines changes in the education and take into account the inclusion of all.

Beyond promoting the stay of these students in the classroom, it is necessary to design practical actions that allow the teacher to have the necessary tools and resources to provide quality education, through the design of training plans for the teacher, from an inclusive curriculum that allows the development of relevant pedagogical methodologies and practices, through organization in schools, communities and families (Navarro, 2019). Furthermore, the inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms represents a benefit for everyone in physical, cognitive, emotional, affective and attitudinal aspects (Fernández, *et al.*, 2019).

It is recognized that the practice of PE in students with disabilities is an ideal context for the creation of inclusive learning environments (Muñoz, *et al.*, 2020), where it is favored the transmission of values and attitudes related to normalization, equality and social inclusion (Felipe, *et al.*, 2020). Likewise, physical activity from the area of PE predicts greater self-concept in schoolchildren aged 8 to 12 (Guillamón, *et al.*, 2019), in adolescents and specifically, in students with motor disabilities (Fernández, *et al.*, 2019).

PE favors the implementation of quality inclusive education because in it the student expresses his/her motor potential, sports skills, feelings, values and his capacity for empathy and collaboration (Proenza, 2021). Reasons why the training of educational personnel is important, since studies show that specific training about disability and the previous experiences of PE teachers allow the application of an inclusive model (Fernández, *et al.*, 2019 and Solís and Borja, 2021).



Furthermore, through physical-sports practice and games, they develop attitudes related to fair play and inclusion, value the demands asked of them in the different activities and obtain benefits present in cooperation (Cansino, 2016).

Hence, for Bennasar (2022), one of the concerns of PE teachers, in the learning of students with special educational needs, is the adaptation of objectives, contents, methodologies and evaluations for each one; it forces to generate changes and challenges in the class. The inclusion of these students in the field of PE must enhance their cognitive and physical structure, according to their motivations, interests and needs, to achieve their cultural and social inclusion.

Hutzler *et al.* (2019) point out that, a practical perspective for PE professionals, from educational inclusion must raise awareness about several factors that influence the attitudes of students with disabilities, such as (a) whether or not they have had previous experience and the quality of this, (b) professional and academic training regarding inclusion, (c) individual factors including sex, (d) environmental factors of the school as a process rather than a performance orientation and (e) the type and degree of disability.

In summary, teachers must be able to make the relevant adaptations in the PE class with the students who need them and use the elements of the curriculum as educational tools, to develop the objectives proposed at the beginning of the course aimed at designing and carrying out integrated activities, with the purpose the student being able to solve any problematic situation in everyday reality (Hernández, *et al.*, 2020). Curricular adaptations have the purpose to adjust objectives and content to those students who have difficulty; to do so, it is necessary to adapt games and sports to any person with or without disabilities (*idem*).

Consequently, recreational activities and the practice of playing contribute to learning and development. Knowledge, benefit the exchange and cause happiness; in short, inclusive recreational play is a tool that contributes to human progress, promotes psychosocial, motor and cognitive development and seeks to encourage equal opportunities, comprehensive development and active participation of these students.



This work is of great relevance, as it provides an alternative to teachers, strengthens the inclusion of students with physical disabilities and provides the possibility of participation and support; furthermore, it offers timely responses to cooperation requirements, thus achieving its integration into the PE class ; for this reason, the objective was to develop a system of recreational games for the inclusion, in PE classes, of students with physical disabilities in the sixth year of the "Mercedes de Jesús Molina" Physical-Missional Educational Unit that minimizes exclusion, generate timely solutions and achieve inclusive teaching that breaks barriers and provides sufficient support to meet your expectations.

### *MATERIALS AND METHODS*

The research has a qualitative-quantitative approach, since both numerical and descriptive data were analyzed; it was non -experimental because value judgments from specialists who provided information, evidence, judgments and evaluations; methods and techniques were used to verify the work, including theoretical-level methods, historical-logical, analytical-synthetic and the inductive-deductive that allowed the analysis and understanding of the facts to establish logical relationships, based on theoretical and methodological precepts that underpin it.

Among the empirical level methods, observation was used to verify if the PE teacher applies strategies for the inclusion of students with physical disabilities in their classes. In that order, it is significant to know the diagnosis of the students, the organization of the group, inclusion, the learning environment, as well as the promotion of activities for students with disabilities.

The survey was applied to 19 sixth year students, to determine the degree of inclusion of students with physical disabilities in PE classes. Three specialists were surveyed with the purpose of verifying reliability, which is defined as an informed opinion of people with experience in the subject and who can provide information, evidence, judgments and evaluations regarding the activities covered in PE classes, if they respond to the likes and needs of students, with emphasis on those who have a physical disability.





Within the statistical-mathematical methods, descriptive statistics were used, with percentage calculation, for the analysis and interpretation of the results.

The research was contextualized in the physical-missional Educational Unit "Mercedes de Jesús Molina", in the city of Loja, the research population was 62 sixth year students and as a sample, 19 who have physical disabilities.

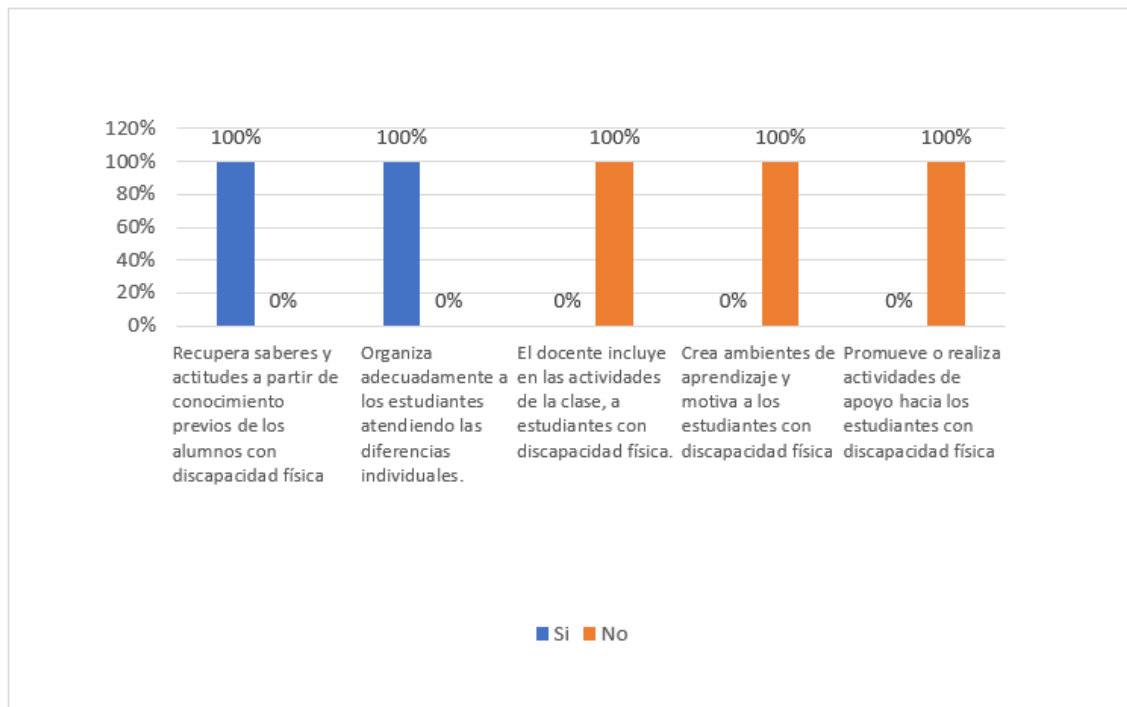
## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The assessment obtained by applying the theoretical methods makes it clear that in Ecuador, inclusion is pronounced in the articles 26, 27 and 28 of the Organic Law of Intercultural Education (LOEI) by recognizing education as a right of people through their life, a guarantee of equality and social inclusion and an essential condition for a good life.

In this sense, UNESCO is in favor of strengthening inclusive education and identifying and eliminating all barriers that prevent access to education, from all areas. One of the most important characteristics of inclusive education is that it understands that each student has needs, skills, capacities and traits that make them different from the rest.

By applying observation to PE classes, it was possible to determine the level of inclusion of students with physical disabilities and the application of strategies for their inclusion. The results are shown in Figure 1.





*Fig. 1 - Observation results applied to the Physical Education teacher.*

*Preparation: Jorge Luis Vásquez Guachisaca.*

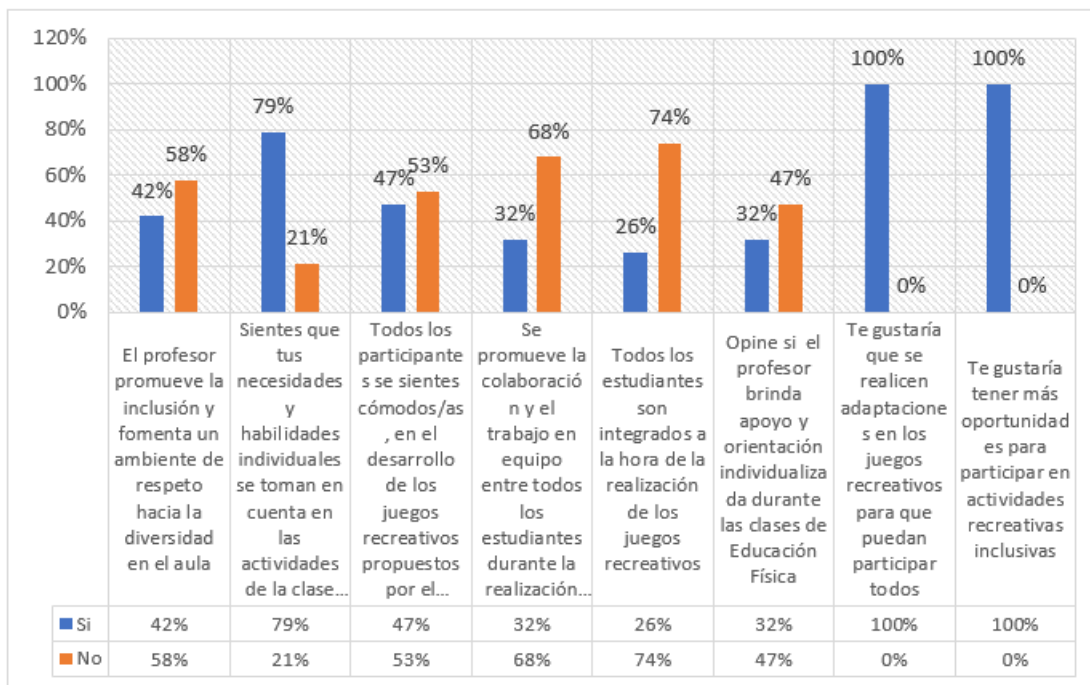
It can be seen that the teacher does have prior knowledge of students with physical disabilities (100%) and this was important to energize and strengthen new learning. Likewise, it was appreciated that the teacher organized the students, based on individual differences, to achieve the success of the pedagogical intervention.

It was determined that 100% of the teachers did not include students with physical disabilities in the activities, which limits their participation, as well as the opportunities to develop their physical abilities and skills.

In this same order, 100 % of teachers restrict the inclusive learning environment and lack tools, strategies and means to motivate students in PE class. There was a lack of support for the students, from teachers and classmates, for successful participation and execution in the activities.



The survey carried out with the students shows the following results (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2.** - Results of the survey applied to students in the sixth year of basic education.

*Preparation: Jorge Luis Vásquez Guachisaca.*

When analyzing the figurative items, significant inconsistencies can be seen, since the promotion of inclusion in PE classes is insufficient at 58 %, due to the lack of teaching-learning strategies to ensure that all students are included in the class and although it is not relevant as in the other items, the respondents did not always consider that their individual abilities and needs were developed in the class activities, in 21 %.

53% of students expressed that they do not feel comfortable participating in recreational games during class, since they perceive the collaboration and teamwork of their classmates. 74% of the students stated that they are not integrated into the practice of recreational games, that there was a lack of equality, inclusion and respect among students. 47 % expressed not appreciating individualized support and guidance in class. However, 100% agreed that they would like specific adaptations or adjustments to be made to actively participate in recreational games.



The processing of the information, based on the instruments applied in the diagnosis, showed that the PE teacher does not always apply strategies or activities that include the student with disabilities; for this reason, a system of recreational games was developed for inclusion in PE classes, to achieve a diverse class, with great educational value, based on cognitive, affective, social and inclusive development.

Based on the conceptualization offered by Valle and De Armas (2011), who consider that a system is made up of the objectives, functions, components, structure, forms of implementation and forms of evaluation, the system is structured of recreational games for the inclusion of students with physical disabilities in PE classes, in the Ecuadorian context.

The objective of this game system is defined as: to execute recreational games for the inclusion of students with physical disabilities in PE classes.

The proposal is based on three essential phases: diagnosis and acclimatization, execution and evaluation of the activity. The diagnosis and acclimatization phase is aimed at the characterization of the student with physical disabilities, as well as the knowledge of their likes, preferences and the selection of recreational games that allow the work of motor activity and social intersection; the execution stage is aimed at the practice of recreational games that allow the inclusion of students with physical disabilities and among the recreational games selected by the students are hopscotch, rope, The Blind Man's Chicken and tag; meanwhile, the evaluation phase takes into account compliance in the practice of recreational games and the level of satisfaction of disabled students. Evaluation of E, B and M is granted, according to the games in which they participate and affect the enjoyment and inclusion of students with disabilities (Table 1) and (Figure 3)

*Table 1. - Parameters to evaluate the performance of the games*

Indicators	Evaluation
If they participate in all scheduled games	Excellent
If they participate in 50% of the scheduled games	Good
If they do not participate in any of the scheduled games	Poor



As a derivation of the designed phases, the following actions are outlined:

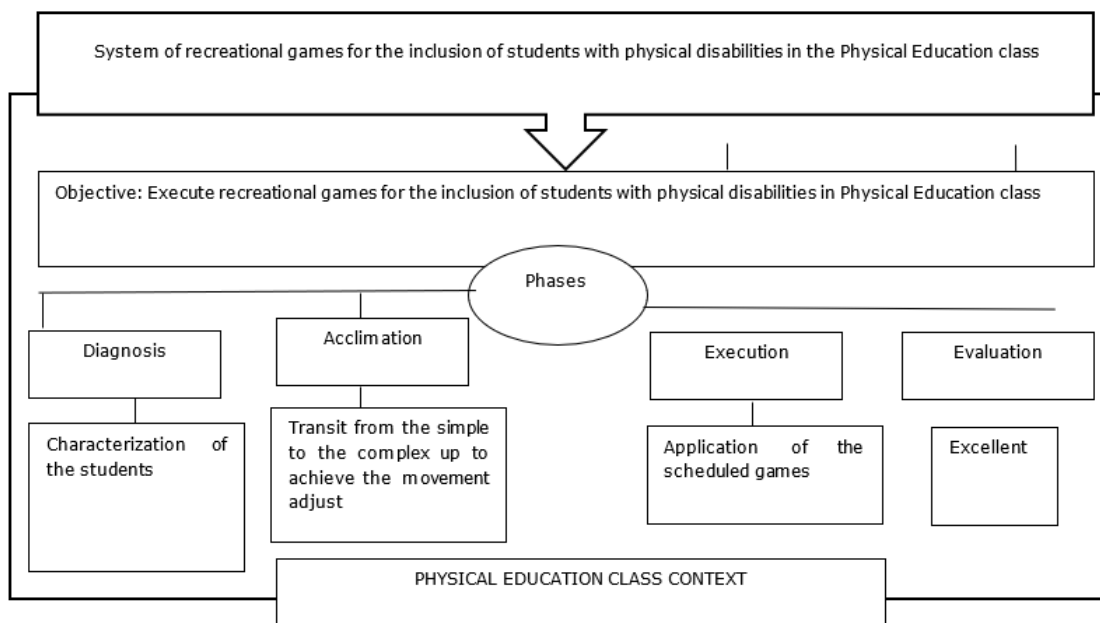
Selection of recreational games that satisfy the inclusion of students with physical disabilities for the PE class, taking into account the individual possibilities of the students.

- Integration of physical abilities that, according to their possibilities, can be treated through recreational games in PE class.
- Creation of work groups, to stimulate the interaction of the included students, among themselves and with the teacher, in classes.
- That the likes and preferences of the students are respected.

It is important to use methodological indications that will guarantee the success of these games:

- Know the limitations of students, based on their potential.
- Prescribe games that are at the level of development, likes and preferences of the students.
- Amplify basic motor skills and physical capacities, in accordance with their motor possibilities.
- Structure the class in such a way that they play the games and enjoy them successfully and without danger.
- Take advantage of previous experiences (experiences of manipulation, conceptual and movement).
- Propose new situations that represent other problems to be solved.
- Provide trust to reinforce forms of socialization.
- Use clear, simple language for good transmission of information.





*Fig. 3 - Graphic representation of the recreational game system*

The inclusion of students with physical disabilities in the context of the PE class notifies the need for the topic to occupy significant space in the field of the "Mercedes de Jesús Molina" Physical-Missional Educational Unit. Physical activity, recreational play and sport represent "windows of opportunity" for the educational and socialization processes of childhood; However, this requires a better definition of what we understand by alternative training processes and sociability, in the field of physical activity, games and sports (Tuñón *et al.*, 2014).

There is a total agreement with Villacís (2019) when he states that games and recreational practices are presented as an excellent alternative to include all students, without distinguishing race, sex, social condition or disability, as long as the different adaptations are made given the case requires it.

An inclusive education aims to respond to the needs of all the diversity of students that our educational system has, which is why the teacher must ensure that the entire group is integrated into the classes; in the study presented, emphasis is placed on starting with a



diagnosis that guarantees the levels of satisfaction that this disabled student can experience in practice.

Cansino (2016) highlights that in the field of physical activity there are innumerable benefits, not only physical, but also values and tools that are necessary in a society; in this sense, the importance of sports practices, physical activity and PE focused on inclusion is highlighted, and the benefits they provide cannot be only for some. These elements are taken into account to base, from a psychosocial dimension, the proposal presented here with the use of recreational games in the PE class.

The interpersonal relationship and communication sought in this study raise equal opportunities and active participation of students with disabilities, not only in PE classes, but in everyday life. As expressed by Abellán *et al.* (2018), more intimate or frequent contacts related to inclusion (such as having a friend or family member with a disability or playing inclusive sports) are related to a more positive attitude towards disability.

Gomez *et al.* (2021) establish didactic-methodological tools for the incorporation of content related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the PE class that allow their transversality, in the curriculum of the Bachelor of Physical Culture degree; based on a diagnosis carried out it was verified the lack of presence in the course subjects of content related to the topic and its treatment was necessary to comply with the training objectives, the specific professional skills of the graduate and the international educational goals. Interesting topic, which allows taking advantage of methodological indications that can be applicable to the different activities programmed for students with disabilities, where recreational games can be included.

Rendón *et al.* (2018) studied subjects with physical and even intellectual disabilities, compared the variations that may exist in the effect of specific physical activities on a key psychological indicator such as anxiety and made it clear to consider the increase in exposure time to training with the taekwondo in subjects with various physical disabilities, specified the type of disability, an aspect that could vary the results in anxiety levels and elements that can facilitate their social incorporation and quality of life.



## CONCLUSIONS

The recreational game system for the inclusion of students with physical disabilities in PE classes presented, is structured in three important phases that, due to its logic, allow to know the likes and preferences of the student with disabilities and promote their familiarization with systematic practice, until they can issue value judgments about the execution of motor actions that facilitate programmed games, to make their days happy, useful and pleasant.

The recreational games proposal turned out to be a fundamental tool, promoting inclusion, integration and coexistence, regardless of disability; This benefits the present and future of the students, their insertion into society and enhances the scope and validity of the proposal presented.

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***Conflict of interests:***

The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

***Authors' contribution:***

The authors have participated in the writing of the work and analysis of the documents.



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