

University's care and counseling for students with special needs in special physical education of China

(overview essay)

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Abstract: *This paper explored the current situation of lacking of the care and counseling in China's universities for students with special needs by using the method of literature investigation, and based on the definition of "university", "care and counseling", "students with special needs" and "special physical education". It argues that with the China's economic and social development, there is a growing demand to accept higher education for students with special needs. The problem of lacking attention in university's special physical education will be more serious if it does not receive due attention. It proposes that the key to solve the problem ought to make the value orientation as people-to-people's care and counseling in university special physical education, and then trigger thinking about what kind of concept of individuals with special needs should be set up. It is necessary to explore ways for college students with special needs to find their own places in university campus and society, be better involved into community, gain the respect of people around and live a life with dignity.*

Keywords: *care and counseling, students with special needs, special physical education, higher education, China*

1 Introduction

In the past of China, several studies pointed that people regard the individuals with disabilities as "Can Fei" in Chinese language, which means "nothing he can do and have no value to live in the world" (Ge, 1997; Liu, 2007; Liu, 2013; Liu & He, 2010; Sun & Deng, 2011; Yang, 2006). Although there are some policies issued by China's government departments to protect the rights of higher education for individuals with special needs, the old concept of people with disabilities still has its influence on

the present. However, with the rapid development of social civilization, science and technology, the level of development of special education has become an important symbol to measure the overall strength of the civilization degree of countries and regions, and to some extent reflects the people-oriented spirit of the era.

Physical education carried on a more open field will provide more communication opportunities. According to Tindall B. Allan (1975), one function of participation in physical activities was to display information about one's social identity. The participants in physical education were displaying information to attending members that they belong to the same group. In China, the higher physical education for the students with special needs is mainly carried in regular universities. Therefore, many physical activities for students with special needs happen together with the intact students (Research Group on higher education of disabled in Binzhou Medical University of Shandong province, 2000). Sports provide people with equal chances to involvement, and this kind of 'presence' can help the students with special needs communicate with their companions more easily and find their own places in university campus, especially strengthen the meaning of self-existence and identification in psychological aspect. Recently, the Special Education Enhancement Program (2014–2016) was formulated by the Ministry of Education (MOE) along with China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) and several other departments. Based on this, in addition to the proposal of expanding the size of ordinary schools in regular classes and the gradual recognition on the concept of 'equality, participation and sharing', it will be an inevitable trend that increasing number of students with special needs will enroll in colleges or universities.

However, the equality of starting point does not mean the equality of process (Wu, 2006). Do they receive the education appropriate to their physical and mental characteristics and needs after they get the university admission? Do they get the due care and counseling in university? Physical education is an important part of higher education. The essence of physical education is caring and cultivating the person's life. College students with special needs will be a spectacular contrast when attending physical exercises for their special request.

2 Terminology

Education is necessary for the survival and development of all human beings because it is a process of human life. During the process, the most important thing for people is to learn how to care and counsel each other. Everyone has the equal right to learn – male or female, disabled or abled, old or young, black or white, wealthy or poor. But the phenomenon of educational inequality stays always with us because of the limit of social condition and the shortage of human nature. Special education is

developed just for people with special needs who have not got the equal educational opportunities. The level of special education embodies the degree of awareness of human being for themselves. As a part of education, sports or physical activities have special functions of keeping people's physique, health in body and mind, social relationships and so on. Everyone has the needs and the rights on these aspects. Of course, college students with special needs have the needs and the rights to receive physical education during their campus life. Special physical education in university is specialized to college students with special needs. The purpose of special physical education in Chinese university is to allow almost every individual with special needs to take part in sports equality and thus achieve their values and living with dignity.

In this paper, the "university" refers to the regular university, which includes universities with and without special classes. At present, there are three main university enrollments for students with special needs in China: regular university with regular classes or with special classes, special vocational education, and higher education for adults (Feng & Wang, 2014; Chen & Lu, 2006).

The "students with special needs" involved in this paper mainly along with *the National College of Physical Education Teaching Guidelines (NCPETG)* issued by MOE in 2002, refers to college students with physical abnormalities, such as disease, weakness, elderly, disability (the visually impaired, hearing impaired, mild mental disabilities not including intellectual disabilities, and physically disabled students), and other special groups (the Ministry of Education, 2002).

The term of "special physical education" in China is not a clear unified definition. The research on college students with special needs is relatively weak mentioning on some vague wording in the field of physical education in colleges and universities (Wu, 2006). In this paper, the special physical education is university physical education for students with special needs, with and without the intact students.

The term of "care and counseling" is a key word in this paper. It means understanding, esteem, confidence between people, and practicing wisdom, which is based on equality of all people. With regards to a person, the person-centered perspective is embodied in orientation on care and counseling. Taking part in sports is a benefit for people's health as it was well known earlier in the general population (Committee of Ministers, 1995; Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Prevention, 2004; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). It is disproportionate about higher education for individuals with disabilities between existing legal norms and the development of society and the current and future trend in China (Wu, et al., 2009). In this paper, it materialized in the policies of recruitment and of university issues related to students with special needs, special physical education curriculum setting, barrier-free accessible venues and sports facilities and psychological counseling for students with special needs and attitude and care about students with special needs.

3 Care and counseling in Policies related issued by government after Cultural Revolution

The equal rights of persons with special needs to be accepted for higher education has been confirmed in law increasingly after 1978 in China, however, there are still many limits in higher education for students with special needs, mostly because of the related law or policies in advocacy and to some extent because of a lack of maneuverability.

The ratio of college-educated individuals with disabilities of all disabled population in China is only 0.3 percent in 1987 reported by national sample survey on the disabled. The ratio is 1.47 percent on the second survey in 2006, while at the same time the proportion of people with university degree in China's population is 5.18 percent (Li, 2009). From the year of 1987, the nationwide college entrance examination in China began to enroll students with disabilities, which intent to contribute to empower their rights to receive equal higher education. Educational revitalization was a key objective of the Chinese government following the Cultural Revolution. The "...massive reorientation of the educational system" as exemplary on the re-ordering that occurred after the Cultural Revolution. Along with other sweeping educational reforms, renewed emphasis was placed on expanding both the scope and number of special education programs" (Zhao, 1992). Generally, the ratio of individuals with disabilities to enter university is low, which is influenced by the family economic status, physical reasons or cultural environment, besides the fact that regular high schools are not willing to accept students with disabilities for the higher graduation rates.

3.1 Care and counseling in policies of college enrollment

To allow or not allow people with disabilities to enter colleges or universities directly related to this group's educational level. There are three types of university enrolling students with disabilities. One is independently established university for the disabled. Up to now, there's only one university like this: Nanjing Technical College of Special Education. The second is regular university with special classes. Such as Changchun University, Zhongzhou University, Beijing Union University, Tianjin University of Technology, Binzhou Medical College, Changsha Vocational and Technical College. The third is regular university with regular classes. But the latter develops strongly (Du, 2010).

China has issued a series of laws and regulations directly addressing or including special higher education since 1985. In this year, the MOE has issued a direction about *the Enrollment and Assignment after Graduation of Individuals with Disabilities in Universities*. There is a clear provision that persons with disabilities have equal rights to higher education. Colleges and universities must not refuse to enroll any

students if the disabled person complied with the national standards. In 1988, it was promoted to develop higher education for the individuals with disabilities in the first meeting of special education. China promulgated *the Protection of Disabled People's Republic of China* in 1991 and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Rules* in 1994, which is the first special administrative regulation about education for the disabled (Pang & Yu, 2011). However, there is no specific legislation about China's higher education for students with special needs, less specific operational rules to regulate and guide the implementation of the relevant law (Zhuang & Zhou, 2014). In the Rules in 1994, article 29 states: "universities, adult education institutions must recruit the candidates with disabilities if they conform to the provisions of the state, shall not refuse to recruit because of their disability." In 2006, the United Nations through *the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities*, emphasized the disabled are a component part of human diversity, also have dignity and autonomy of the individual, should have equal opportunity to actually participate in and be integrated into the society and contribute to the progress of the society. Fifteen years later, in the 2009 National Working Conference on Special Education, it still emphasized that colleges and universities shall not refuse to recruit the students with disabilities when they comply with admission criteria. According to *the Law of Compulsory Education of China, the Law of Protection of Disabled of China, the Regulations of Education of the Disabled, the Opinion of Further Accelerate the Development of Special Education* are jointly proposed by the MOE, CDPF and other related ministries, which is also issued by the State Counsel of China in 2009. It mentioned that the students with disabilities mainly attend high schools based on vocational education, which linked up with the compulsory education phases of the special education. The opinion also required the general high school recruitment of the students with disabilities who have the ability to accept general education. But there are many questions to be solved, such as who evaluates the ability of students with disabilities and how to evaluate it; in addition, there is no uniform evaluation criterion. In China, the regular high schools do not want to receive students with disabilities. On the other hand, the rights to accept higher education for individuals with special needs in the aspect of policy have gained some improvement step by step. Such as the MOE, CDPF and other related ministries jointly canceled the Hepatitis-B checking in physical examination of candidates for regular colleges and universities enrollment through issuing the notice in 2010. This item has been carried out since 2003 the former *Notice of the Physical Examination for Universities Enrollment* issued by the MOE and other related ministries.

From 2007 to 2012, the number of students with disabilities enrolled in higher education is almost increasing step by step although not by a high rate. The following table shows the detail information about the enrollment of students with disabilities and the total students in China's regular university.

Table 1: The enrollment of students with disabilities and the total students in university

year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
disabled	0.6320	0.7305	0.7782	0.8731	0.8027	0.8363
total	282.0971	297.0601	326.1081	351.2563	356.6411	374.0574

Note. Unit is ten thousand people; the data collected from <http://data.stats.gov.cn/workspace/index?m=hgnd>

3.2 Care and counseling in policies of university

With the improving of social civilization and the material abundance, the university's care and counseling for students with special needs is increasing. But it is still not sufficient enough, regarding physical aspect, psychological aspect or mental aspect.

The government began to pay attention to the rights of sport of the students with special needs in 80s of 20th century. Even until 1985, MOE required definitely that university could not refuse disabled students for the reason of their body disability, although the college entrance examination was resumed in 1977 after the Culture Revolution. After that, some universities began to recruit disabled students. MOE carried out NCPETG and pointed out, "the course of health care is a kind of required or elective course that is set up for the students with abnormal body, disease, or weakness; university should relevantly develop the teaching of physical education about health recovery and care." Then, the curriculum of special physical education had a place in higher education of China. And this was emphasized by new NCPETG carried out in 2002, which is the basic requirement of the state of college students in the physical education curriculum, "university should set up health recovery or health care oriented physical education course for the students with special needs, such as abnormal body, disease, weakness, physical disability, and advanced age." So, the old and new Guidance defined the educational object for current special physical education in universities. The educational object became more inclusive and included more students with special needs by comparing the old and new guidance.

To strengthen the status of physical education in higher education and improve the physical health of college students, the MOE issued a *Notice of the Basic Standards of physical education in Higher Education* on June 11 in 2014. The college students are required to learn at least two sports for lifelong participation. But at the same time the monitoring and evaluation result of college students' physical constitution as an important basis for student was rated excellent. How to evaluate students with special needs? It is not mentioned in the basic standard of physical education in higher edu-

cation except for “due to illness or disability, the student will graduate with the proof of the hospital apply to the school” (the Ministry of Education of P. R. China, 2014).

3.3 Care and counseling in careers guidance

In recent years, the government has formulated a series of measures to promote the employment of college graduates with special needs. Although social stereotypes of people with special needs will not reverse in a short time, to some extent, the implementation of these measures can promote social acceptance of people with special needs.

CDPF (2013) mentioned that the current national annual average is that approximately 8000 college students with disabilities graduate. The *Notice of 2015 National College graduates employment* suggested that universities should further intensify assistance to help graduates with employment difficulties, according to the specific situation of graduates with special needs, designate a person responsible for providing more targeted support (the Ministry of Education, 2014) for unemployed graduates, continue to provide employment information and services. In addition, some regions also opened a special recruitment for college students with disabilities. CDPF required that local disabled persons’ federations must strengthen cooperation with education departments to give college graduates with special needs better services. For example, Jilin province disabled persons’ federation (2013) registers the employed college graduates with special needs and gives them track service. For those who did not find a job, the disabled persons’ federation will provide special one-to-one services. On the other hand, CDPF (2011) regards university graduates with disabilities as elites and required in *the notice on the employment of university graduates with disabilities* that the college graduates with disabilities among new hiring staff shall not be less than 20 percent of the disabled persons’ federation and directly affiliated institutions at or above the county level.

4 Care and counseling in the curriculum and assessment of physical education

Historically, China is a traditional agricultural country, and comes out the Confucian culture representative of Chinese farming civilization. “It is generally felt that the problem of special education is much more acute in industrialized countries than it is in agricultural ones, this is primarily because in agricultural societies the exceptional child can usually more easily adapt” (Stephan, 1977). There is a gradual process for government to realize the higher education needs of individuals with disabilities. In fact, there are many difficulties for individuals with disabilities to receive higher

education. China's higher education still has the characteristics of the elite education model (Lu, 2004). All of these have some negative influences for college students with special needs participating in physical education in China.

4.1 Care and counseling in the form of participation in physical education

The course of physical education is a type of a two-year's required course in college and universities of China. Currently, this is a very normal phenomenon that universities made some subtractions on the physical education of students with disabilities, such as giving the exemption of PE class, physical fitness test, or reducing learning hours. About 43.7 percent universities with more than fifty students cannot participate in physical education classes normally in China based on an investigation of physical education in thirty universities among ten provinces and cities. Du Yingying (2010) also pointed that all universities in Shanghai with recruiting disabled students decreased lessons of physical education of disabled students. He argued that it looked that the learning burden of disabled student was alleviated but actually the distance of them from intact students was widened artificially, and this really was a "lower expectation" for students with disabilities and had put them into a disadvantaged situation before they entered the society. In addition, most special physical education in universities is in the state of free from school field. Although some universities provide special physical education for those students, it almost became a mere formality (Ma, 2004).

4.2 Care and counseling in the contents of physical education

Currently, there are a few colleges and universities that carried on the special physical education. This exposed the slow development of higher special education in China. Firstly, there is still no teaching guideline, specific course objectives, and targeted teaching content for special physical education course in higher education. So, the course design of it is not serious. Otherwise, the current teaching contents of special physical education course have not met all of the needs of college students with special needs. Secondly, there are no detailed criteria for the classification of special physical education course to meet the classification of special college students. The large difference of different special college students increased the difficulty of special physical education class. We should establish the specific fitness evaluation criteria for different college students with special needs in order to help them clearly understand the development situation of themselves and the next target to pursuit.

4.3 Care and counseling in the assessment of performance

Han Ye (2008) through investigation study regards that guiding college students to take part in physical exercise with purpose to improve their mental health. The current *basic standards of universities' physical education* issued by the MOE (2014) strengthen the requests of college students' health status. It is a remarkable fact that in *the college students physical health standards* issued by the MOE (2007), the students with special needs are exempted from the physical health tests. But is the exemption a real sense of care? Or just send a potential message the students with special needs that they will not be paid the due attention to? For the discipline of physical education, it is a course to help students improve their fitness. Students with special needs should be included in the process of higher education and be given the right of participation in physical education although there is some difference in their body. Because this relates to the principle of education called "teach students in accordance with their aptitude", and the principle of education fairness. Universities should not limit students with disabilities in learning more knowledge for the excuse of disability. This kind of "assistance" in the name of humanitarian not only undermines the confidence of students with disabilities but also reduces their enthusiasm of learning. In fact, students with disabilities are eager to learn more knowledge and skills in order to make up for the defects of their own and adapt to the society (Du, 2010).

The demand of physical education of college students with disabilities has attracted the attention of scholars in China. Jin Mei et al. (2012) argued that physical exercise was placed a lot of importance in campus life by deaf college students. They found that the strongest motivation to participate in physical exercise was to improve their health, the second one was to pass the physical education examination and to make friends. Qi Libin (2007) found that some college students with disabilities had strong awareness of physical exercise, and most of their physical exercise time spent on the physical education class.

5 Care and counseling in the supports system about physical education

The physical educational participation of students with special needs is supported by teachers, classmates, and society. For example, peer tutoring had been proven to be an effective method to facilitate inclusive physical education (e.g., Klavina & Block, 2008; Ward & Ayvazo, 2006).

5.1 Care and counseling in the physical education teachers' qualities aspect

The opinion of strengthening the construction of special education teachers (2012) is supported by teachers colleges and teacher majors in regular universities. They offer special education courses and cultivate teacher-students to have the ability to guide the students with special needs. According to the investigation of MOE (2014), there are 66 universities that have opened the special education major nationwide. The universities that are setting up the major of special physical education, as the table 2 shown, are quite few, and their training objectives are not including the cultivation of the special physical education teachers for institutes of higher education. Therefore, the university physical education teachers' concepts of students with special needs play a vital role. Pan Feng (2013) investigated the attitudes of physical education teachers for the students with disabilities participating in physical education classes in universities of Tai'an city. He found that 50 % of physical education teachers let students with disabilities just look, 20.83 % of physical education teachers gave them the exemption of the course, 29.17 % of teachers let them make choices by themselves, and no physical education teachers arranged recovery activities for students with disabilities in the class of physical education.

Table 2: Special physical education training objectives at universities in China

University	Year since	Specialty	Training objectives
Tianjin Institute of Physical Education	2001	Special education	With general physical education and special physical education knowledge and ability, engaged in the practice, research and management in special education or related institutions.
Shandong Institute of Physical Education	2004	Special physical education	Sports education and training for disabled, special education and rehabilitation for children with special needs; Physical education and sports training in special education institutions, rehabilitation agencies, child welfare, disabled persons' federations; special education and rehabilitation for children with special needs.
Xi'an Institute of Physical Education	2006	Sports rehabilitation	Acquire the professional ability of rehabilitation and to serve; engaged in rehabilitation and health guidance, service and management in rehabilitation departments and hospitals affiliated to health departments, disabled persons' federation, civil affairs departments and sports departments.

Liaoning Normal University	2006	Special physical education	Physical education teachers in special education institutions, Special Olympics coaches, researchers on special sports, disabled sports social workers and management staff.
Guangzhou Institute of Physical Education	2008	Special education	Physical education, sports training and competition related work for disabled; guide rehabilitation and physical exercise for disabled in school, rehabilitation institutions for disabled persons and social welfare organizations.

Note. It is collected by the relevant universities' admission brochures for the national regular university entrance examination.

5.2 Care and counseling in the people's opinion about students with special needs

The problems of college students with special needs are not dealt with the class of physical education. Many students with disabilities are unwilling to admit the problem of their body in most situations. But they have to directly face it in physical exercise and physical education class. This kind of experience is painful. So, many students with disabilities have a passive attitude to physical exercise. But they have to worry about the examination and evaluation of their physical education class because it connects with their graduation and employment in the future. So, the situation that disabled students attend the normal physical education class by concealing their disability information is common. But they still do not have active sport participation. In fact, the fundamental reason is that the care and counseling for college students with special needs in physical exercise and physical education situation is deficient. Based on the group counseling for 8 weeks carried out for 11 college students with special needs who have interpersonal relationship disturbance, the author finds that group counseling can effectively improve their interpersonal skills (Wang, et al., 2013).

5.3 Care and counseling in sports facilities and financial support

For college students with special needs, the condition of physical education facilities and equipment plays a very important role in taking part in sports. In order for college students with and without disabilities to participate in the recommended levels of physical activity, universities and colleges should provide opportunities, appropriate environments, and carefully designed instruction for students to participate in various physical activities (Ishonté, Jun-Hyung, & Andrea, 2014). In China, the accessibility to sports facilities is far more lacking not only in universities but also

all over the country. While funds are generally provided for those college students already identified as having special needs, it is readily apparent that, if the needs such as the establishment of accessibility sports facilities of all students with special needs in university are to be met, a major increase in special education funding will be needed. It is well-known that more funds are needed for supporting the higher education for students with special needs than the ordinary. For example, the Beijing municipal finance for higher education of students with disabilities reaches to 30 thousand RMB per year per college students with disabilities, which is 2.5 times of ordinary college students (Ma, et al, 2012).

6 Conclusions and Suggestions

Values are the source of individual words and deeds. College students are in different situations of need, motivation and others reflect their value orientations (Liang, 2002). What kind of concept of individuals with special needs should be set up? It is necessary to explore ways for college students with special needs to find their own places in university campus and society, better involved into community, gain the respect of people around and live a life with dignity.

6.1 Legislation of the University for Special physical education

The continued improvement of special education legislation is needed. Various levels of educational administration should be encouraged to consider the most appropriate curriculum for students with various special needs in university. Receiving education is a kind of basic human right. Equal education opportunity is the guarantee of the basic right. We should pay attention not only to the right of receiving physical education in legal sense but also for every person to be able to experience the right in reality. Among them, an important thing is that every individual should get the equal opportunity for development. But the current problem is that the physical education of college students with special needs was neglected by institutions of education and government, even educators. Professional evaluation has lacked to match it and many kinds of work reports and development plan about college physical education rarely mentioned it, although the “*Guidance*” and other policies have carried out. The solution of this problem does not only depend on the hard work of educators but also on the need to support policies and regulations, the supervision of society, and the evaluation of college physical education.

6.2 Recognition on the needs for special physical education

The progress of the disabled concept highlights the understanding of human beings for themselves and it is a symbol of the progress of human civilization. Disability was defined as an individual problem and people with disabilities were considered to be deviating from the standard in traditional society (Ma, 2012). Actually, disability was imposed totally on the disabled by society, and the constraint including individual prejudice, institutional discrimination, transportation restrict, isolated education, and exclusive job. All these are still hindering the development of special physical education in colleges and universities. Because of the lack of understanding of the needs and rights of college students with special needs, many universities have not paid more attention to the care and counseling to students with special needs from people's central value orientation. As a result, special physical education often becomes a low priority at the university level.

The supportive attitudes of university teachers play a key role for students with special needs cultivating positive self-esteem (Liang, 2012). At the same time, it also conveys a positive opinion about individuals with special needs in society, so that the peers of students with special needs acquire the right view of the people with special needs in the process of socialization. Special physical education at universities has shown a remarkable growth in recent years, and has in the last century faced some great challenges. China is showing a strong desire to accelerate the development of special education. Further work must be done in improving the recognition of sports needs of college students with special needs by all levels of higher education. The early detection of serious psychological problems should be encouraged, along with a comprehensive system of inspecting and upgrading special education services and service providers.

6.3 The value orientation of special physical education

Understanding, respecting, caring, and assisting citizens with disabilities are traditional virtues of China's society (Xu, et al., 1995). While thinking of people with disabilities as of absolutely disabled, the offered help may not fit the real need of people with special needs. Although we understand the phenomenon is from humanism, is it fully understood that the people with special needs are also real persons? In my opinion, the ideal of taking care of each other should establish a rational value orientation of person including the persons with special needs. "Since the traditional cultural emphasis has been on the family and not on cooperative groups, the development of social agencies to provide supplementary services to persons at risk has been quite slow. In a family that has a handicapped member, the parents assume

lifetime responsibility for him. If no longer in a position to support him, siblings or other close relatives are committed to his care” (Stephan, 1977).

Currently, the higher special education of China pays excessive attention to the superficialities of handicap of college students with disabilities, while neglects their hobby and proficiency and lacks the overall acknowledgement for the development of their life (Liu, 2013). Special physical education is in the same situation. This kind of “care” denies the right, value, and proficiency of college students with special needs in essence, and attributes to the cultural isolation and participation restriction in the circumstance of sport. The fact that many people with disabilities can face their defect and pursue the value and significance of life by sport is really positive for the whole human society. All human beings including the disabled have the potential to change the situation. Society should give a chance to people with disabilities for releasing their potential ability. So the care for life should be the value orientation of higher special education including physical education.

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