

MOTIVATION OF SELF-TESTING ACTIVITIES

One of the most satisfactory objectives of self-testing activities is body manipulation. There is nothing so satisfying to a boy as to be able to manipulate his body in as many good forms as possible. In the introduction to McClow's "Tumbling Illustrated", Martin A. Foss has shown 666 different exercises, and around 20,000 combinations of muscular feats. The McClow study is one of the most exhaustive in the field of tumbling, and yet he does not cover all the territory.

Another objective of self-testing activities that should be mentioned is the development of leadership. Physical abilities are individual, and a boy's skill can quickly be noted. The gifted boy is soon discovered and becomes an inspiration to his fellows, and is immediately given the place as leader.

At West Junior High School practically all the leaders in the physical education classes are in the upper one-half of the classes in tumbling. There is no doubt that tumbling is a great strength builder and one of the best forms of activity to reach all the muscles of the body. Tumbling gives much gratification to the performer, especially as he feels himself increase in skill and grace. This physical success builds up confidence in himself and gives him poise to meet his fellows in the regular school classes. Tumbling exercises can be used all through a person's life. It is not uncommon to hear a man in his 70's brag about how far he can walk on his hands, and I have read that some famous movie actor claims that his entire program of exercise is handwalking. Most stunts, once learned, are never lost but are practiced throughout life.

I think the greatest problem in physical education today is the need for graded material. At the present time, the physical education classes are large and composed of heterogeneous groups made up of children ranging in size from midgets to giants with all types of mentality, as well as various levels of skill. Each level requires a suitable adaptive form of work. This condition makes it difficult for the teacher of physical education to satisfy the needs of the various groups found in the average physical education class. Some of the boys are completely unskilled and physically illiterate, others are gifted and highly skilled, moving at a very high rate of speed.