

Miss Byrn He kicked higher than anyone else in the class, didn't he? He expended twice as much energy manouvering his foot in the prescribed direction. There is no doubt in my mind that he was getting all the exercise possible, which was a great deal more than necessary, out of the activity. When the class had finished the routine, he still had two measures of pattern to do - which he did - apparently blissfully unaware that he was guilty of any invention over the original theme.

Miss Bell Well, you certainly can't say that he wasn't having a good time.

Miss Byrn Yes, Virginia, he was having a wonderful time. I happen to know that it took no small amount of effort for this boy to muster up enough courage to enroll in this class. If he had from the beginning been openly criticised for his mistakes and made to feel ridiculous, it would take just about three times as much courage for him to elect to take another activity in which he might meet with the same difficulties. In his case, to have demanded that he perform perfectly or even meet the average performance of the class would have been asking the impossible. He may never learn to tap dance, but he is not being punished or ridiculed for seeking to know. Another time he may happen to choose an activity that fills his needs and conforms to his abilities so well that the activity might become a life-long hobby.

Miss Bell You believe, then, Miss Byrn, that we encourage physical illiteracy by demanding a standard of performance often beyond the capacity of the student to perform, thereby making the whole business so distasteful that we defeat our own purpose.

Miss Byrn Yes, Virginia, that is my belief, and it seems to me that we have failed in our job if we have not helped each individual in our class to attain the maximum perfection of skills of which she is capable, without killing her interest by insistence upon detail. We have failed if the student does not leave the class having had such a good time that she is anxious to come back for more of what we have to offer. We have failed if we have not made the experience of learning the activity being taught so pleasurable that the student is anxious to explore other unknown areas of experience. We have failed if we have not made her aware of the values of continuing physical activities - after leaving school - and the possibilities of enriching her hours of leisure.

It is small wonder that we find America sitting on the sidelines - at the races - at the games - at the movies. There they can buy the thrill of competition without having to know personal defeat or accept the responsibility for failure. There they can be a success. We have been the merchants of failure. We need to remember, we need to teach, that not to win, not to fail -- but to play the game is the thing. Let's have physical education for dubs. Let's have physical education for fun.....