



DEALING WITH RISKS – DEVELOPMENT OF SELF ESTEEM WITH A SPECIAL INTERVENTION OF VENTURE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Introduction

The beneficial effect of sport on personality development is a frequently used strategy for the legitimization of physical education lessons. Although various attempts have been carried out to empirically support this claim, no clear relations between physical activity in school and personality development in children and adolescents have been identified. In the last decade, the engagement with cognitive approaches such as the self-concept and the consideration of dynamic-interactional development concepts has led to an improved consistency at the theoretical level (Conzelmann & Hänsel, 2008). Moreover, the relevant conditions of specific sport activities for lasting effects on aspects of self-concept were more often discussed and specified for young persons. The state of empirical research regarding effects on self-esteem with special interventions in school is nevertheless very small. Project adventure traditionally aims at the exchange of experience in self and social competences. It is also a relevant means of intervention for the development of these personality factors (Marsh et al., 1988). Wagniserziehung (Venture education) is a special topic of project adventure in physical education lessons without going into the natural environment (Neumann, 1999). As in project adventures, the point of action is to experience challenge in physical education like a venture. For understanding these processes it's necessary to overcome anxiety and to discuss experiences of fear with the children. In this paper the influence of venture education on the sense of different aspects of self-esteem, especially in dependence of trait anxiety of children, were studied.

Method

In the Bernese Intervention Study of Physical Education (BISS) children of the 5th grade, participated (n=215). A longitudinal study design involving six intervention classes (N=112, 38,4% girls) and five control classes (N=115, 52,2%, girls) was chosen with two time points of evaluation. Teachers in the intervention group worked in venture education with their classes for two lessons per week over a period of ten weeks. During the lessons in the intervention period it was important to give feedback to the pupils in an accurate and kind way. Teachers learned this special way of teaching venture education und how to give feedback during a half-day Training Workshop. The control students in five classes attended physical education classes as usual. The children completed a paper pencil test in their classroom at both measurement times. The questionnaire includes aspects of self-concept (Brettschneider & Gerlach, 2004), trait anxiety (Thurner & Tews, 2000) and sports related anxiety (Valkanover, 1996). All Scales achieved acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's α between .62 and .82).

Results

After the project, the intervention group reached higher values in physical self-esteem in comparison with the control group [F (1,214)=5.66, p<.05]. Scores in global self-esteem were not different. Children with trait anxiety as well as children without trait anxiety show higher values in body related self-esteem after the intervention with venture education [F (1,214)=4.65, p<.05]. At both points of evaluation, the results indicate that children with trait anxiety have lower body related self-esteem [F (1,212)=18.87, p<.001]. Furthermore, there are some indications that children with higher trait anxiety reduce their sports related anxiety through the experiences in venture education.

Discussion / Conclusions

First results of the Bernese Intervention Study of Physical Education (BISS) reveal that especially body related self-perception is improved through an intervention program with venture education during ten weeks.

The 12th ISSP WORLD CONGRESS OF SPORT PSYCHOLOGY
Marrakesh - June 17- 21, 2009

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