Promoting Active, Healthy Lifestyles.

THE CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND DANCE.

e-JOURNAL

Spring 2016
Volume 2 Number 2

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EDITORS MESSAGE

CAHPERD'S strategic mission towards research: Sustainability and Quality

As most of the membership might know over the past several years, CAHPERD has gone through a massive re-building project. There have been numerous goals set and attained by former and current Board of Directors, as well as numerous other dedicated and committed individuals. For the past several years, numerous individuals have spent countless hours restructuring this organization. Some of the major reconstruction that has been conducted includes: budgeting, membership, advocacy, and social media. Further, within this renewal period of CAHPERD there has been a focus on obtaining quality research within the HPERD fields.

One key component to a successful organization is sustainability. Whether a business/association focuses on one main product or constantly evolves with numerous good and serves, the one vital aspect to enhancing growth is quality. All successful companies/organizations have high caliber research and development (design) divisions. Within academics, quality research acts in a continuous, on-going and circular fashion; from the researchers to the teachers to the students All the fields with HPERD should embrace quality research for it has the ability for collaboration.

Specifically, within the two e-Journal articles look how quality research is cooperative. Our first article has two co-authors from the states of Ohio and Illinois. In other words, look at how research effectively creates networking potentials; CAHPERD is reaching other universities and regions outside of California. Secondly, look at the authors of the second article; one a CSU faculty member and the other a current Physical Education instructor from a middle school in southern California. This collaboration exemplifies the quality research circle.

We ALL can produce quality research because we ALL have the ability to work in partnerships with other faculty in different states and practitioners in ALL the fields of HPERD. This is what makes quality research and this is goal of CAHPERDs commitment to a sustainable e-Journal.

Thank you,

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Special thanks to Peer-Review Section Editor - Dr. Jenelle N. Gilbert

Coming Together

In Memoriam

Karen M. Johnson

Long time CAHPERD member Karen Johnson passed away on November 11, 2015 at the age of 77. Karen attended the College of Idaho, majoring in Physical Education, and earning her Bachelor of Arts Degree. Her first teaching job was at a junior high school in Los Angeles County. She then obtained her Master's degree, followed by a Doctorate from the University of Southern California.

During the 1970's Dr. Johnson lived in Washington, DC, where she actively worked for the passage of Title IX, enabling equality and financial assistance in Girls' and Women's sports.
Moving back to Los Angeles, Dr. Johnson taught in the Kinesiology and Physical Education Department at California State University, Los Angeles, where she also coached women's basketball. For several years before she retired, Dr. Johnson served as Associate Dean of the School of Health and Human Sciences at the university. Also, during this time and for many years, Dr. Johnson served on the National Olympic Volleyball Committee. Attending the opening ceremonies for the Olympic Games in Greece was a treasured memory of hers.

Karen was an active member of Western Society for Physical Education of College Women, a professional organization of women teaching and working in physical education at community colleges and four year institutions. She held numerous leadership positions within the organization, including President, and she continued to serve the organization after her retirement.

Karen also spent many years in volunteer service to CAHPERD, most notably as Parliamentarian and Budget Chairperson, along with much work with the Foundation for the Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles. She also held the positions of VP for Girls & Women in Sport, Conference Manager, Unit President and was an active member of numerous standing and ad hoc committees. Karen was the recipient of the CAHPERD Honor Award in 1990, the prestigious Verne Landreth Award in 1998 and the Phyllis A. Blatz Exemplary Leadership Award in 2002. In addition to her leadership in CAHPERD, Karen was also actively involved with AAHPERD and the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport.

A Celebration of Life will take place at 2:00 p.m. on February 27th at the assisted living complex where she had been living, Villa Gardens, 842 E. Villa St., Pasadena 91901. If you wish to attend and honor Karen's memory, please RSVP to Ida Weil, at i.weil@cloud.com, by February 22nd.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

The Nuts and Bolts of Adventure-based Learning: From Brief to Debrief and Beyond

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ABSTRACT

Adventure-based learning (ABL) is a term used to describe a curriculum model that uses experiential activities to help students practice and develop social or life skills (Cosgriff, 2000; Dyson & Sutherland, 2014). This type of curriculum can be used within K-12 physical education (PE) to promote the development and eventual transfer of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship skills (IIRS) for students (Cosgriff, 2000; Dyson, 1995; Sutherland & Stuhr, 2014). Some of the key features associated with ABL are the experiential-cooperative physical activities, the emphasis placed on developing IIRS, and the implementation of a reflective session (i.e., debrief). This paper will provide K-12 physical educators with basic principles and pragmatic methods/examples on how to implement ABL within PE. The authors cover two elements: (a) philosophy associated with ABL and (b) template for designing ABL content.

Adventure-based learning (ABL) is a curriculum model that emphasizes a holistic student-centered approach to help students work toward the improvement of personal behavior and social interaction (Dyson & Sutherland, 2014). What makes this curriculum model unique is the sequenced and structured experiential activities (e.g., ice-breakers, cooperative games, trust and problem solving activities) used to improve social development of students (Cosgriff, 2000). One of the key features associated with ABL is the implementation of a reflective session (i.e., debrief), which typically occurs after the physical activities are completed. This type of curriculum can be used within K-12 physical education (PE) to promote the development and eventual transfer of intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship skills (IIRS) for students (Cosgriff, 2000; Dyson, 1995; Sutherland & Stuhr, 2014). There is also good reason to believe that ABL could be used to build community, establish care and positive emotionality, and potentially lessen the likelihood of classroom bullying (Dyson & Sutherland, 2014; Stuhr, Sutherland, & Ward, 2013). This paper will provide K-12 physical educators with basic principles and pragmatic methods/examples on how to implement ABL within PE. The authors cover two elements: (a) philosophy associated with ABL and (b) template for designing ABL content.

Philosophy Associated With ABL

Synergistic Environment Conducive to Learning

PE should be a place where all students feel welcomed and are eager to participate. Through an ABL curriculum, the teacher creates an environment conducive to learning by incorporating cooperative activities that place high importance on physical and emotional safety, social inclusion, and equitable opportunity for all students (Stuhr & Baringer,

2005). The activities used within ABL are goal-oriented rather than competition-driven, and provide maximum opportunity for students to work as a team in order to reach the desired outcome. ABL emphasizes an emotional safe environment that promotes a "we" rather than "me" motto, while de-emphasizing a win-at-all-cost mentality. The curriculum requires students to practice expressive (i.e., what one says to others) and receptive (i.e., what one hears and understands) forms of communication. The use and potential development of IIRS within ABL make this curriculum ideal for teachers wanting to mote community within the classroom.

Embedded Cooperative Learning Elements.

Helping students to work with rather than compete against one another is arguably one key outcome associated with quality PE. The use of Cooperative Learning (CL) within physical education can help students develop social skills associated with teamwork (Dyson, 2001; Dyson & Casey, 2012). There are five elements typically associated with CL (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). These five elements include: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, group processing, use of IIRS, and individual accountability. Dyson and Casey (2012, pp. 3-4) have emphasized the use of the CL elements to promote many of the same processes and goals found in ABL.

- Positive Interdependence: Exists when students perceive they are linked to group members in such a way that they cannot succeed unless other group members do. In ABL the activities are specifically designed so that students can only accomplish the goal as a group, and allow each group the opportunity to be successful in reaching the goal.
- Face-to-Face Interaction: Head-to-head discussions within the group while engaged in the task. When looking ABL, the brief, activity, and debrief portions of the lesson provide opportunity for social interaction.
- Group Processing: Open dialogue related to the lesson content. The brief and debrief portions of the ABL lesson allow students to discuss their experiences and gain deeper appreciation of the IIRS.
- Use of Intrapersonal and Small Group Skills (i.e., IIRS): Student behaviors that allow easy communication between group members. The emphasis in ABL is the IIRS.
- Individual Accountability: Students taking on responsibility for completing their part in the task for their group. A "Challenge with Choice" philosophy embedded within ABL promotes full participation, while encouraging each student to push his or her limit.

Incorporating these elements has been shown to increase student social skills in the school setting (Dyson & Casey, 2012). In addition, using CL/ABL methods can help with group processing, such as a reflective session (Sutherland, 2012; Sutherland, Stuhr, & Ressler, 2014).

Template for Designing ABL Content

ABL Components: the Brief, Activity, and Debrief

Within ABL there are three essential components to consider when planning for and delivering a lesson: (a) brief, (b) experiential activity(s), and (c) debrief. The number, amount of time allocated, and methods used to deliver each of these three components may vary depending on the instructional needs and student learning outcomes of the teacher. Thus, the following tips and examples should be used as a framework in designing an ABL curriculum that works within the reality of each unique school context.

A brief is an anticipatory set designed to help entice or "hook" the student into what can be experienced during the activities. The brief also provides a way to highlight a selected IIRS that the teacher wants to emphasize during the lesson. There are various ways to deliver the brief, such as through a quote, story, poem, picture, or even a video. A teacher can select a variety of mediums to present selected IIRS to students during the brief. In addition, teachers are encouraged to provide time for individual students to reflect on the brief (e.g., alone, paired, or whole class). Using a think-pair-share strategy allows opportunity for students to begin thinking about the IIRS before entering into the first ABL activity. Five minutes is a reasonable amount of time to allocate for the brief.

The experiential activities presented to students provide opportunity to work toward a desired goal and develop IIRS through social interaction. There are a variety of resources where these types of activities can be found (Frank, 2013; Panicucci, Faulkingham Hunt, Kohut, Rheingold, & Stratton, 2002; Rohnke, 2009). For a 50-minute physical education class a teacher could possibly cover as many as four activities or as few as one (including a brief at the start of class and a debrief at the end), depending on the type of activity, student grade and/or developmental level, pacing of the students during the activity, and how well the class is managed.

Though often overlooked, the debrief is arguably the most important component in helping students transfer their con-

structed learning in ABL to areas outside of physical education (Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013: Sutherland, Ressler, & Stuhr, 2011). The debrief should be designed to increase the students' inner awareness of the primary experience that occurred while engaged in the activity. In a 50-minute PE lesson, twelve minutes is a suitable amount of time to conduct a debrief (Stuhr, Samalot-Rivera, Ortiz-Stuhr, & Sutherland, 2013). However, the length of the debrief may vary depending on school context, teaching style, activities covered, and what occurred during the lesson.

The teacher can increase student connection and motivation toward participation in a debrief by making it a student-centered session. Nevertheless, conducting a successful debrief can be one of the most difficult instructional tasks for teachers to complete (Sutherland, Ressler, & Stuhr, 2011; Sutherland & Stuhr, 2014). To help facilitate a successful debrief a teacher can use props or instructional approaches to promote student engagement (Cain, Cummings, & Stanchfield, 2008). Here are three examples of props that could be used during a debrief session to help promote student-centered discussion.

- Web of Ideas – Using a ball of string, each student who responds/speaks holds onto a piece of the string and passes the remaining ball of string to the next speaker. Typically, after 5-7 speakers, the students have created a web with the string. Then, the teacher can ask the class to think about what this web represents in terms of the particular IIRS they are working on for the lesson.

- Pick-a-Postcard (2015). Spread these postcards out on the floor and have each student choose a postcard. Have the students sit down and silently reflect on how their card represents a particular IIRS. Then have students share their response with a partner next to them. Finally, ask for volunteer students to share their response with the whole class.

- Chiji Processing Dice (2015). These novel dice can be used in the debrief process to help students discuss their experience in the activity(s). There are four dice. The control die is rolled to determine which person will speak. The other three dice are used one at a time and answer the what, so what, and now what questions involving the activity and IIRS. The what die helps students process what just happened during the experience. The so what die focuses on how students felt about the experience. While the now what die helps bring attention to how the students might use the lesson(s) learned in the future.

Another method that can help the teacher lead a student-centered debrief is called the Sunday Afternoon Drive debrief model (Sutherland, Stuhr, & Ressler, 2012). This model is an extension of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle and has been found to be a valid tool in helping students value, develop, and transfer the IIRS to other areas of their life (Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013; Sutherland, Stuhr, & Ressler, 2014). The Sunday Afternoon Drive debrief model uses the metaphor of driving a car as a way to explain the debriefing process. When the teacher starts the debrief they take on the role of a co-pilot in helping the students drive the conversation toward a final take home message that is meaningful for the group. The co-pilot represents the teacher's role, as someone who will allow students to contribute significantly to the conversation. Within this model the teacher uses various strategies to help create a more student-centered discussion that leads to a successful debrief.

- Who Sits Where in the Car represents where the students will sit during the debrief session. By having students sit in a complete circle the teacher creates a higher level of comfort, which promotes student-to-student conversation. Sitting in a circle is a non-verbal signal that the students are in control and are encouraged to speak.

- Choice of Vehicle represents the size of the discussion group during the debrief (i.e., pair, triad, or whole group). Having students discuss in smaller groups first, before moving to a whole class discussion increases student opportunity to be heard.

- Start the Car represents the first initial activity used by the facilitator to help participants start the discussion (e.g., crumple paper, quick whip, bouncing ball). Many of these reflection activities can be found in adventure education texts such as Cain, Cummings, & Stanchfield, (2008).

- Follow the Road represents the facilitator's ability to select key words or statements that hold the most potential for further unpacking (i.e., prompting participants to further discuss or explain certain ideas or comments being made during the debrief). For example, after a student has spoke the teacher may want to ask that student to elaborate or provide an example of what they are talking about in order to capture a deeper understanding of what the student is trying to convey.

- GPS Recalculating represents a way to steer the conversation back in

another direction. The teacher should always have back-up questions or other topics ready to use in case the conversation dies down, stops, or even gets off-topic.

- Nearing the Final Destination represents generalization of key topics of conversation. Here the facilitator wants to highlight the general message that has emerged from the conversations and perhaps get the students talking about possible strategies that helped the group be successful and/or hindered success. The teacher taking a few notes during the debrief process can be helpful in determining what were some of the more salient points of discussion.

- Final Destination represents helping the participants understand how best to incorporate or apply what was learned from the activity/debrief into their own lives. Here is where the teacher takes the general message of the conversation and tries to see if students can apply this topic to some area of their life.

For further ABL props, tips, and other resources related to the brief, experiential activity, and debrief please see Cain et al., 2008; Frank, 2013; Panicucci et al., 2002; Priest & Gass, 2005.

Examples of ABL Activities.

This section includes three example ABL briefs, activities, and debriefs. We used an adapted version of a template created by Stuhr and Baringer (2005) to provide a "blueprint" of the elements that should be considered when designing ABL content. Grade level and other contextual factors at the individual school site should also be carefully considered before designing and implementing ABL content. The example activities we provided are affiliated/aligned with the IIRS themes of communication, cooperation, and emotional trust, yet the teacher can select among a variety of IIRS themes (e.g., helping others, willingness to take risks, increasing self-concept, conflict resolution skills) for students to practice and develop. For additional information regarding IIRS themes please see the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2015) website at http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/. We end this section by providing some ABL assessment examples.

1. Morphing (adapted from Frank, 2013)

IIRS Student Learning Outcome: The student will have an opportunity to demonstrate proper communication skills (speaking with and listening to another classmate).

Brief: Use a quote from Ralph Nichols to help students start to think about the importance of active listening: "The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them" (Leadership Now, 2015, p. 1).

Activity Description: Students try to win at the game rock/paper/scissors in order to morph from one character to another. Determine whether all students know the rules associated with rock/paper/scissors. Demonstrate the following characters associated with the activity: Egg (squatting down in a ball), chicken (hands under armpits squawking like a chicken), dinosaur (arms up, making roaring noises), superhero (flying though the air), supreme-being (arms crossed). Have the students show you their best impression of each character. The object of the game is to advance from the starting character (egg) up through the final character (supreme-being). Everyone begins as an egg. Find another egg and play rock/paper/scissors. The winner becomes a chicken and then goes on to find another chicken to conduct another round of rock/paper/scissors, while the non-winner moves down one character (e.g., chicken moves down egg, dinosaur down to chicken, etc.). Unless you are an egg, in which case you remain an egg if you are a non-winner. Students can only challenge the same character that they currently represent (e.g., chicken versus chicken or superhero versus superhero, etc.). Keep working through all the characters. When you become a supreme-being you can only be challenged by a superhero. If the supreme-being accepts the challenge from the superhero then they will play rock/paper/scissors. The winner will become a supreme-being but the non-winner will become an egg. The teacher may stop the activity once someone becomes a supreme-being and start another round with everyone (except the supreme-being) starting back at an egg.

Equipment: Open space where students can walk/move freely.

Grouping: A class size of 8 or more.

Facilitation Tip: After 1-2 rounds, if you are working with a new group of students, have them start with a brief introduction (name and something about themselves) prior to performing the rock/paper/scissor. The emphasis should be placed on the IIRS of communication, rather than on who wins and becomes the supreme-being.

Potential Debrief Questions: How were you able to communicate effectively with other students? Were you able to actively listen when another classmate was speaking to you? What do you need to do in order to be a good listener? Why is listening important? Where else do you find listening to others important?

2. Marshmallows (adapted from Frank, 2013)

IIRS Student Learning Outcome: The student will have an opportunity to demon-

strate proper cooperation skills (e.g., being responsible for self and others by following the rules of the activity, sharing and listening to ideas/strategies, providing encouragement).

Brief: Short, creative animation on YouTube highlighting the importance of cooperation, found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uL5mHE3H5wE (YouTube, 2015).

Activity Description: Tell the class they are one side of a hot chocolate river (use lines or ropes as boundaries). The hot chocolate cannot be touched. Students need to travel to the other side of the river using marshmallows that float on the hot chocolate. Students must follow these rules:

- If they lose contact with the marshmallow they lose that marshmallow.
- They must get as many marshmallows to the other side as possible.
- If anyone touches the hot chocolate the whole group must start over again.

Equipment: Small 8"x10" foam pads or rubber circle polyspots (one per student, these represent the marshmallows used in the activity).

Grouping: 8-10 students per group – but be careful to stress that they are all working together so it does not become a race between the groups.

Facilitation Tip: Start each group off with 12 marshmallows. After each successful attempt take 1-2 marshmallows away for added challenge.

Potential Debrief Questions: How did you make sure that people stayed in contact with the marshmallows and that no one fell in? Is this an example of responsibility and How so? What happened when a marshmallow was lost? Was it okay to make a mistake? How can you demonstrate responsibility when you make a mistake in life?

3. Turnstile (adapted from Frank, 2013)

IIRS Student Learning Outcome: The student will have an opportunity to demonstrate proper emotional trust skills (e.g., displaying positive attitude when confronted by challenge).

Brief: Poem on positive thinking and remembering to surround yourself with positive people, by Edgar A. Guest, found at http://www.behappyzone.com/poems.html (Be Happy Zone, 2015).

Activity Description: The entire group needs to solve a problem and each person will take an active role in implementing the solution. Objective is to get everyone from one side of the rope to the other (including the rope turners at some point). There are five progressions/challenges.

- Level 1 – Everyone must get through the rope without it stopping or touching him or her. If the rope stops or touches someone then that person goes back to try again.
- Level 2 – One person at a time runs in, jumps once and runs out. Same consequence for stopping or touching the rope.
- Level 3 – People jump through in groups of two or three – run in together, jump once and run out. Same consequence for not being successful.
- Level 4 – Same as level 2 except that if anyone misses the whole group starts over.
- Level 5 – Same as level 4 except that every time the rope hits the ground a new person must be jumping. Touching, stopping, or no one in the rope means that group starts over.

Equipment: Long 15' to 20' rope.

Grouping: 8-10 students per group.

Facilitation Tip: Be sure to have students slow turn the rope. The rope should turn towards the group going through to allow for more success.

Potential Debrief Questions: How did you feel when you made a mistake? Did you or another student show emotional support when a group member made a mistake? Were you able to be supportive to others and if so, how? Did you say or hear any positive comments during the activity, if so what were they and were they helpful?

Assessment For IIRS.

ABL Assessment includes a combination of informal and formal measures driven by lesson and unit objectives. Commonly used informal strategies include debriefing, direct observation of expected behaviors, and formative checks for understanding during the lesson. Using a debrief session coupled with observation and formative checks allow the teacher to determine how students felt about the overall lesson, whether students worked well with each other, the level of success with a particular activity, or whether students were able to grasp and connect the IIRS to other areas of their life.

Formal assessments used within ABL include: T-charts, Y-charts, Sunday Afternoon Drive reflection rubric, cognitive test for the Hand of Fair Play, and The Body assessment (Dyson & Sutherland, 2014). A teacher can also use a written journal to document evidence of student learning/transfer with the IIRS. A journal is an excellent tool for assessing the learning outcomes associated with SHAPE America National Content Standard 4: The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others (Society of Health and Physical Educators, 2014). Student

journal entries can provide the teacher with deeper insight beyond what might be observable in class, but can be very time consuming for teachers to read and grade. Thus, the teacher may wish to select a few specific entries to read and/or grade to expedite the assessment process.

The use of a 'photo journal' can be a useful way to formally assess student knowledge of the IIRS. A photo journal is a unique way to capture IIRS in the form of a picture and corresponding narrative. This project-based assessment allows students to choose an IIRS that they feel strongly about, and a corresponding picture. Through written narrative the student will describe: (a) the IIRS, (b) how the picture is connected to the IIRS, (c) how the IIRS is related to their experience in ABL, and finally (d) how the IIRS is applicable in their own life. The photo journal can be used as a culminating authentic assessment for the ABL unit.

While assessment is important, it is not within the scope of this paper to go into depth on its implementation. Instead, this section included example assessment ideas a teacher could use within the classroom. For further information regarding ABL assessment see Dyson and Sutherland (2014).

Final Thoughts

PE should provide opportunity for continued development of skills associated with personal and social respect and responsibility (SHAPE, 2014). A case can be made that ABL is a viable curriculum model that teachers can employ in order to promote the opportunity for students to learn about, practice, and potentially transfer knowledge associated with social-emotional learning (Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013). There continues to be a growing body of literature highlighting the practices and social-emotional learning benefits of this type of curricular model (Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013; Sutherland et al., 2012; Sutherland & Stuhr, 2014). This paper adds to the existing literature by providing some of the more salient/basic principles that define ABL, while the corresponding examples and references offer pragmatic ideas of what ABL can look like for PE teachers. If one of the goals for PE is to create a caring culture that impacts positively how students feel about their experience, then ABL can contribute to this outcome.

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PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

The Relationship Between Physical Fitness Levels, Physical Activity Levels and Academic Performance in a Hispanic Middle School

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between FitnessGram test results, self-reported physical activity levels (PAQ-C), CST scores, and cumulative GPAs of Hispanic middle school students in a large, inner city middle school. It was hypothesized that students who scored higher on the FitnessGram and reported higher levels of daily physical activity would also achieve higher academic performance levels. The results partially support the hypothesis because positive associations were found between fitness scores and academic performance for some of the subgroups. Similar to previous studies, the association between fitness and academics appeared to be stronger for females than males. Results varied by grade level with students in the 7th grade having a strong association between FitnessGram scores and academic performance, whereas there were only partial associations between those variables for the 6th and 8th grade students. In contrast with studies involving students in high socioeconomic areas, the results did not reveal a positive association between reported physical activity (PAQ-C results) and academic performance. This may be partially because academic performance was hampered by limited language skills. Higher levels of reported daily physical activity were positively associated with higher FitnessGram test scores.

Note: all tables cited in article can be viewed on pages 17—19.

It can be argued that students with high fitness levels tend to also perform at high academic levels (Dwyer, Sallis, Blizzard, Lazarus, & Dean, 2001). Studies have consistently shown there is a positive relationship between physical fitness test scores and academic achievement (Field, Diego & Sanders, 2001; Taras, 2005). Castelli, Hillman, Buck, and Erwin (2007) compared physical fitness test scores of 3rd and 5th graders and found them positively correlated to such academic achievement measures as math and reading standardized test scores and total Grade Point Average (GPA). A study conducted by Coe, Pivarnik, Womack, Reeves, and Malina (2006) also found a positive relationship between vigorous physical activity and higher grades in school. A study conducted by the California Department of Education (CDE, 2001), focused on 900,000 students enrolled in the 5th , 7th and 9th grades found another positive correlation between fitness test scores and academic accomplishments. Grissom (2005) compared the 2002 California FitnessGram scores of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders with their reading and mathematics scores on the Stanford Achievement Test and found a consistent, positive relationship. Further, Grissom (2005) found a higher correlation between physical fitness and academic test scores for females than males. Chomitz, Slining, McGowan, Mitchell, Dawson, and Hacker (2008) found, when examining the fitness, math, and English scores of 4th, 6th, and 8th grades in Massachusetts, the odds of passing both the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Mathematics test (MCAS) and the MCAS English test increased as the number of fitness tests passed increased ($p < .0001$ and $p < .05$, respectively). The results of these studies provide strong evidence regarding the potential of quality physical education programs to provide benefits for other academic subjects. Additionally, numerous studies have found differences in other demographic factors such as ethnicity and socioeconomics (Fahlman, Hall & Lock, 2006; Grieser, Neumark-Szteainer, Saksvig, Lee, Felton & Kubiki, 2008; Pangrazi & Corbin, 2008; Yoo, Lounsbery, Bungum & Gast, 2010).

In a study conducted by Johnson, Brusseau, Graser, Darst, & Kulinna (2010) adolescents in lower socioeconomic areas, have been shown to

be less physically active, in part, because they have less access to play and recreation areas than adolescents who live in more affluent areas). In addition, higher percentages of Hispanic adolescents are English Language Learners (ELL) than the statewide average and, as a group, Latino adolescents achieve below the state averages in California Standards Tests (CST) for English and Math (CDC, 2013). Consequently, while statewide studies have consistently shown a positive relationship between FitnessGram scores and other academic indicators, it appears to be important to determine whether that is also true for students at a predominately Hispanic, low socioeconomic school. In this study, FitnessGram test scores were compared to CST results in math, English, and GPA by self-reported physical activity levels using the Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children (PAQ-C) (Kowalski, Crocker & Donen, 2004). Fitness test scores were also compared by grade level and gender. Comparing results based on gender and grade level should provide a better understanding of the link between physical fitness, physical activity level, and academic performance for a predominantly Hispanic adolescent group.

Methodology

Participants: The data for this study was collected at a middle school (grades 6-8) located in Southern California. This particular middle school has an approximate enrollment of 2400 students and over 99% Hispanic. Approximately 24% were classified as ELL students and approximately 80% qualified for the free or assisted school breakfast/lunch program. Specifically, 232 middle school students, 119 boys and 123 girls ranging from the ages of 11-15 were evaluated and the sample size per grade level were as follows: 83 students in the 6th grade, 92 in the 7th grade and 57 in the 8th grade. One male physical education instructor taught all students and their scores were compared for the FitnessGram PAQ-C survey, CST-Math, and CST-ELA tests. Permission to utilize this data was provided by the school district IRB. Permission to complete the PAQ-C was achieved through a parent mailing that was sent to parent/guardians as part of a program information packet at the beginning of the school year. The FitnessGram scores were initially computed as part of the student assessment process.

Measurements: A total of four measurements were used to gather data for the study.

1. The FitnessGram test was administered to all the students using the standard testing procedure. The state of California requires that all students in the 5th, 7th, and 9th grade be tested using the fitness gram test. The FitnessGram uses criterion-referenced standards to determine whether a student is in the healthy fitness zone (HFZ) for aerobic capacity, body composition, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility. A student scoring in the healthy fitness zone achieved one point for each of the six tests that were passed. Overall PFT scores ranged from zero (none of the standards met), to six (all standards met or exceeded).

2. The Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children (PAQ-C) was filled out by all the students to determine their levels of physical activity. The PAQ-C was created to assess physical activity in school-aged children in grades 4-8, approximately ages 8-14. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions that require students to recall the amount of physical activity they performed in the past seven days. A score of 1 indicates the students' recent physical activity level was very low and a score of 5 indicates that students' recent physical activity level was very high.

3. Students in grades 2-11 are required to take the CST-Math and CST-English Language Arts portion of the STAR test. The CST-English Language Arts portions consist of 75 multiple-choice questions and the CST-Math consist of 65 multiple-choice questions. The test is scored by the state of California and scores range between 150 (low) and 600 (high).

4. Grade Point Averages (GPA's) were collected for the first semester of the school year. The GPA's calculations were based on all six classes the students took for that same semester. The scores have a possible range of 0.0 (lowest) to 4.0 (highest).

Procedures: The FitnessGram data was obtained by the physical education teacher testing all of the students during the month of March and then evaluating the results using the guidelines specified by the Cooper Institute (Cooper Institute, 2014). The physical activity levels of the students were collected by having all of the students complete the PAQ-C questionnaire. The questionnaire was calculated by hand, using the specifications required by the PAQ-C (Kowalski, Crocker, & Donen, 2004). The CST and GPA data were collected for the school by logging into a program known as "My Data". All of the data was then uploaded into an Excel spreadsheet.

Data Analysis: The data was analyzed using Excel and SPSS. One-way ANOVA was used to determine the significance ($p < .05$) between the means of the variables involved in the study.

Results

Table 1 shows a comparison of the mean scores of male and female students who passed and did not pass the FitnessGram. In addition, the means scores of

CST-Math, CST-ELA, GPA and PAQ-C are compared by gender. The results indicate that boys and girls who passed five or more subtests had higher mean scores in every academic category compared to the students who did not pass the Fitness gram test. The difference was significant ($p < .05$) for seven of the 12 categories. Compared to the boys, the girls FitnessGram scores had a stronger association with their academic scores for all four variables. The results also revealed a positive significant relationship between FitnessGram scores and PAQ-C scores for both boys and girls.

Table 2 shows the mean scores for the CST Math, CST ELA, GPA and PAQ-C by grade level between the students who passed at least five subtests of the FitnessGram test compared to the students who passed less than five subtests. While the 7th and 8th grade students who passed five or more FitnessGram subtests had significantly higher mean scores on all three academic variables compared to the students who passed less than five subtests, no significant differences were found at the 6th grade level. Self reported physical activity scores (PAC-Q) were significantly higher for students who passed five or more FitnessGram subtests.

Student mean scores for the CST-Math, CST-ELA, GPA and the FitnessGram are shown in Table 3. The scores are divided into three categories, depending on their PAQ-C results. The PAQ-C scores are divided into three categories: students who scored between 1-2.4, students who scored 2.5-3.4 and students who scored between 3.5 and 5. The results indicate that students who reported higher levels of daily physical activity scored significantly higher on the Fitness gram test, however there was no association with their scores on the academic indicators.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between FitnessGram test results, self-reported physical activity levels, and academic performance of Hispanic middle school students in a large inner city middle school. It was hypothesized that students who scored higher on the FitnessGram and reported higher levels of daily physical activity would also achieve higher academic performance levels. The results partially support the hypothesis because positive associations were found between fitness scores and academic performance for some of the subgroups. Similar to the studies by Grissom (2005) and Coe et al. (2006) the association between fitness and academics appeared to be stronger for females than males. Specifically, girls who passed five out of six subtests of the FitnessGram had significantly higher scores for the CST-Math, ELA, and GPA than girls who passed fewer of the subtests (see Table 1). It is interesting that the results varied by grade level. Specifically, students in the 7th grade had a strong association between FitnessGram scores and academic performance, whereas there were only partial associations between those variables for the 6th and 8th grade students (see Table 2). These results contrast with those of statewide studies (CDE,2001; Castelli, 2007). A possible reason for the grade level differences may have been that group dynamics and motivation within specific classes affected the scores (Domangue & Solmon, 2010).

Surprisingly, the results did not reveal a positive association between reported physical activity (PAQ-C results) and academic performance. This may be partially due to the fact almost a quarter of the students at this school were reported as being ELL students and the average CST Math and English-Language Arts scores for these students were approximately 30 points below the statewide average (CDE, 2013). Consequently, regardless of their level of physical activity, their academic performance may have been hampered by limited language skills. It is important to note, however, that FitnessGram results were significantly associated with scores on the Physical Activity Questionnaire for Children (PAQ-C). That is, higher levels of self-reported daily physical activity were positively associated with higher FitnessGram test scores (see Table 3). These results contrast with Morrow & Freedsom (1994) who found a low relationship between fitness scores and physical activity among youth.

Limitations and Recommendations

A limitation of the results of this study may be student motivation. Higher or lower levels of student motivation may have impacted the scores for all of academic tests, the PAQ-C reporting, and the FitnessGram. In addition, the socioeconomic status may have impacted the results; other studies, based on state wide data, show that students with higher socioeconomic status generally perform better academically (Evans, 2004). Since many of the students were classified as being ELL students, their academic performance may have been hampered by limited language skills. In the future, examining other factors related to physical fitness such as aerobic capacity or body composition might result in more specific knowledge as to which components of physical fitness are most specifically related to higher academic performance. Identifying these specific components physical education programs may be able to provide more relevant and specific help to students who typically do not perform well on the FitnessGram test.

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TABLES

Table 1. Table 1 CST Math, CST ELA, GPA and PAQ-C Means by Gender for Middle School Students Who Passed 5 or More Fitness Gram Sub-Tests vs. Students Who Passed Less than 5 Subtests.

Academic score Variable (N)	Mean scores of students who passed less than 5 tests	Mean scores of students who passed 5 or 6 tests
CST-Math		
Boys (109)	327 (51)	339 (58)
Girls (123)	336 (60)	346 (63)
Total (232)	332 (111)	343 (121)
CST- ELA		
Boys (109)	314 (51)	327 (58)
Girls (123)	332 (60)	347 (63) *
Total (232)	324 (111)	337 (121) *
G.P.A.		
Boys (109)	2.22 (51)	2.26 (58)
Girls (123)	2.63 (60)	2.85 (63)*
Total (232)	2.44 (111)	2.57 (121) *
PAQ-C		
Boys (109)	2.57 (51)	2.95 (58)*
Girls (123)	2.40 (60)	2.62 (63) *
Total (232)	2.48 (111)	2.78 (121)*

*significant differences, $p < 0.05$

Table 2. Table 2 CST-Math, CST-ELA, GPA and PAQ-C Means by Grade Level for Students Who Passed 5 or More FitnessGram Sub-Tests vs. Students Who Passed Less than 5 Subtests

Academic Variables	Mean scores - passed less than 5 subtests	Mean scores – passed 5 or 6 subtests
CST-Math		
6th graders (84)	342 (50)	336 (34)
7th graders (92)	343 (35)	355 (57)*
8th graders (57)	301 (27)	326 (30)*
Total (232)	332 (112)	343 (121)*
CST-ELA		
6th graders (84)	323 (50)	326 (34)
7th graders (92)	341 (35)	352 (57)*
8th graders (57)	301 (27)	322 (30)*
Total (232)	324 (112)	337 (121)*
G.P.A.		
6th graders (84)	2.42 (50)	2.47 (34)
7th graders (92)	2.61 (35)	2.86 (57)*
8th graders (57)	2.27 (27)	2.10 (30)
Total (232)	2.44 (112)	2.57 (121)
PAQ-C		
6th graders (84)	2.49 (50)	2.76 (34)*
7th graders (92)	2.51 (35)	2.80 (57)*
8th graders (57)	2.42 (27)	2.75 (30)*
Total (232)	2.48 (111)	2.78 (121)*

*significant differences, $p < 0.05$

Table 3. A Comparison of CST-Math, CST-ELA and G.P.A. Mean Scores with Self-Report Physical Activity Level (PAQ-C)

Academics	PAQ 1-2.4 n=98	PAQ 2.5-3.4 n=109	PAQ 3.5-5 n=25
CST-Math	335	341	331
CST-ELA	332	330	329
GPA	2.34	2.68	2.45
FitnessGram	3.80	4.70	5.12*

*significant differences, $p < 0.05$

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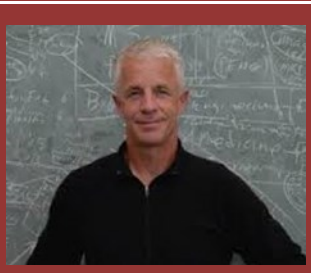

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A physical education teacher from Montreal, Canada and Founder of ThePhysicalEducator.com: an online resource for physical education teachers. He has been instrumental in building the online #physed community.

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