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The Effect of Active Learning on Academic Performance in a Primary School Setting - the Health-Oriented Pedagogical Project (HOPP)

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Introduction

Active Learning (AL) is an educational strategy designed to integrate physical activity (PA) into the learning process within schools, aiming to address concerns that segregating PA from academic instruction could diminish time for educational activities and potentially impact learning outcomes negatively.

Methods

The Health Oriented Pedagogical Project (HOPP), conducted in Horten, Norway, serves as a case study for examining the effects of school-based PA interventions. This project involved 1545 pupils aged 6 to 11 from seven elementary schools, with two control schools (752 pupils) serving as a benchmark for comparison. Initiated in 2015, HOPP was a 6-year longitudinal study focusing on public health, cardio-metabolic risk factors, and, importantly, academic performance. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Trainings annual compulsory tests, assessing reading, numeracy, and English skills, provided a measure for evaluating the interventions impact.

Results

Results from these tests for 5th graders, spanning from 2015 to 2019, indicated significant performance improvements in English language acquisition, calculus, and reading proficiency among pupils from the intervention schools compared to those in control schools. These findings suggest that integrating PA into the curriculum not only supports physical health but also enhances crucial academic skills.

Discussion

The HOPP projects positive outcomes in areas such as language skills, mathematical reasoning, and reading comprehension underscore the effectiveness of long-term AL programs. These improvements highlight the potential for PA to facilitate better concentration and information retention, thereby enhancing overall academic performance. The studys results advocate for the integration of AL within educational curricula to boost both academic outcomes and physical health, emphasising the importance of long-term interventions and teacher involvement in the development and implementation of such programs. This approach is suggested as a viable method to achieve sustainable integration into school curriculums, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student outcomes across multiple domains.

Topic: Physical Education and Pedagogics

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