Self-Recognition and Motor Skill Performance in Vaulting Activities among Elementary School Children

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Abstract

UNESCO emphasizes that quality physical education should be learner-centered and inquiry-based, ensuring that all children are meaningfully involved in the learning process. In this context, students are expected to take initiative in developing problem-solving skills related to their physical performance. This study examined how children recognize their own performance and challenges in vaulting activities during physical education classes. The participants were 80 second-grade students aged 7–8, who performed straddle vaults or straddle mounts and dismounts. Their self-assessments of five key phases—take-off, hand placement, push-off, landing, and overall rhythm—were compared with evaluations made by trained observers, considering the children's skill levels. The results showed a significant tendency for students to overrate themselves in the push-off phase, while underrating their performance in landing and in keeping an overall rhythm, even when these skills were performed adequately. It was also found that children with lower skill levels demonstrated a clear inclination to overrate their push-off and underrate their landing. Children's ability to recognize both the strengths and the challenges of their own movements is important not only for improving motor skills but also for developing thinking skills and a sense of efficacy. Teachers should understand how children recognize each phase of movement and apply this in their teaching. This study provides new insights into how self-recognition relates to learning motor skills in young children, with practical implications for physical education across different contexts.

Keywords

Physical education, self-recognition; vaulting activities; motor skills.