The Effects of Music Types on Physical Activity and Enjoyment in Middle School PE

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The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of three music conditions on the physical activity rates and level of enjoyment of middle school PE students. Four hundred and sixty-two, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade physical education students participated in this study. Participants were members of intact PE classes and were exposed to two days of three different music conditions (no-music [NM], classical music [CM], and popular music [PM] to assess the effects on physical activity rates and level of enjoyment. Physical activity was measures as (a) pedometer step counts, and (b) time in activity both using Digi Walk LS2525 pedometer. Level of enjoyment was measured using a single item and five-point Likert scale (1=not enjoyable, 2= mostly not enjoyable, 3= neutral, 4= somewhat enjoyable, and 5= very enjoyable). Means for all participants showed an average of 2889 steps, 30.6 minutes in activity, and rated their enjoyment as 3.8. When examined by gender, males were generally found to be more active and enjoyed PE as compared to the females. Females showed virtually no change in the number of steps they took across conditions, males increased significantly from NM to CM and to PM. Males spent significantly more time in activity across all conditions than females. Levels of enjoyment increased significantly from CM to PM similarly across all grades. Gender effects in this study were consistent with the body of literature; males consistently are more active, motivated and enjoy physical activity than females. The distressing trend is evident across grade levels, particularly the drop off in the ninth grade for both males and females. Anecdotal evidence and spontaneous utterances may provide a hint: girls, on average, work hard enough to not sweat.