

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILL OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG

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INTRODUCTION: The phase of fundamental movement abilities represents a time in which young children are actively involved with exploring and experimenting with the movement capabilities of their bodies. The development of fundamental movement skills, which is believed to form the foundation for more complex sports and game skills, should be essential teaching content in the lower form, kindergarten and primary school curriculum (Gallahue and Ozmun, 1998). However, in Hong Kong, there is no specific school teaching syllabus aimed at developing students' fundamental skills in primary school physical education lessons. Moreover, there is currently a lack of information about the standards of children's abilities in this area. The aim of this study is to evaluate the current level of students' fundamental movement in different age groups using field tests and then comparing the results with the norm in USA samples.

METHODS: The pilot sampling for this research included 39 girls and 64 boys, ages to 6-9 years old, who attend two schools, located in two main districts in Hong Kong. All samples participated in the Test of Gross Motor Development Second Edition (TGMD-2)(Ulrich, 2000). The field tests were conducted by trained research assistants in the samples' school playgrounds. A trained rater observed and assessed the samples' performance by using an observational checklist. The TGMD-2 includes twelve fundamental movement skills. These are running, hopping, leaping, sliding, galloping, jumping, stationary dribbling, underhand rolling, catching, throwing, kicking, and striking. The test includes quantitative (relating to distance, accuracy and success) and qualitative measures (bio-mechanically correct performance).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: The inter items reliability coefficients (alpha) among six locomotor test items for different ages ranged from .80 to .97, and among six test items for the object control coefficients ranged from .68 to .96. Apart from the items of dribbling and catching, the findings showed that students' development on the other items did not display positive growth correlating to age. The skill performances of the elder sample (ages 8 and 9) were not better than the younger sample. This result is different to the norm in the USA (Ulrich, 2000). Compared with the norms of TGMD-2, the test results of the Hong Kong samples in the subset items of locomotor and object control displayed delayed development over 52.7% and 69% among age differences when compared to children in the American samples. With regard to each item, the items of dribbling and running were most serious in this aspect. This on-going research will increase the sample size and the age range in order to develop a normal reference for Hong Kong children, and will investigate how and why the differences have been found when compared with findings in other countries.

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