

Physical activity and School Sport

'Changing it up': The lived experiences of a wheelchair sport intervention amongst secondary school pupils aged 11-12 in Lincolnshire

Bright, J.¹ Brown, L. J.¹ and Evans, A. B.¹

Affiliations

¹*Department of Sport, Coaching and Exercise Science University of Lincoln, United Kingdom.*

Despite recent developments, related to adapted physical activity programs, much is still needed to enhance the contributions these programs make toward rearticulating conceptions of disability (Fitzgerald, 2005). Research often suggests that a superficial belief in traditional, 'normalised' physical education habits is held within schools and is rarely questioned. Sport integration typically focuses on either the inclusion of disabled individuals within traditionally able-bodied sports, or the inclusion of disability sports as separate events within mainstream sport (Nixon, 2007). Based on this, a call to look beyond typical strategies of adaption and integration has been made, with an aim to identifying innovative methods to question dominant conceptions regarding disability and disability sport (Fitzgerald, 2005).

The key aim of this study was to investigate changes in secondary school pupils' perceptions of disability sport during a Lincolnshire County Sports Partnership intervention entitled 'The LSP Wheelchair Sports Project.' The intervention utilised a reverse-integration method of delivery, incorporating wheelchair basketball into pupils PE lessons for a 12 week period. Bourdieu's theoretical standpoint was used to provide theoretical foundation for the study while Chris Shillings work (2003) provided context specific, theoretical foundation to explain potential perceptions of participants prior to the intervention. 50 pupils aged between 11 and 12 took part in this research. All pupils, regardless of physical status, took part in the intervention. Semi-embedded ethnographic observations were made over the 12 week intervention period at one school in the city of Lincoln. This highlighted key behaviour themes among pupils which were then discussed in guided group interviews. Guided group interviews with 40 of participants highlighted pupils perceptions of disability and disability sport prior to the intervention. They also provided pupils with an opportunity to discuss their experiences of the intervention and thus any potential perceptual changes.