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A Review of Research on the Potential Value and Realistic Dilemma for Homework in Physical Education

Abstract

Homework in physical education (PE) has become a central strategy of educational reform movements (Novak & Lynott, 2015). A Chinese policy called “the Double Reduction” provides an opportunity for the implementation of PE homework. There are abundant studies about homework in subjects like English, Math, Science, etc., but relatively few studies have been devoted specifically to PE homework. The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the value and dilemma of PE homework, with the goal of identifying the major contributions to the research knowledge base. We followed three parts to conduct the review: a) literature was searched using the following keywords: “PE homework”, OR “active homework”, AND “the value and dilemma”, AND/OR “homework in physical education” or “activity-based homework”; b) A document analysis was conducted regarding the Chinese policy related to homework in PE, including homework’s guidelines, composition system, and cultivation path, etc.; c) A total of 34 highly relevant articles were selected. The main value and dilemma of PE homework were summarized as follows: a) The PE homework appears to be an effective way of promoting policy implementation and renewal, providing a well-rounded approach to help students achieve educational goal, improving youth physical & mental health, and increasing communications with family members. b) The current PE homework has failed to realize the foregoing values due to some difficulties, including the lack of family exercise atmosphere, the absence of community organizations, and the huge amount of negative news in social media. c) Only three studies provided coping strategies to deal with the dilemma from a Social System Theory perspective, such as strengthening institutional construction, building a multivariate framework, shaping the paradigm, integrating online platform, and developing an assessment system. Most studies focused on the micro level about “the value and dilemma of homework implementation” without consideration of the other key factors from macro level. Based on the literature reviewed, a comprehensive theoretical model for PE homework is proposed to provide guidance for future research endeavors and facilitate implementation of the guidelines.

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Homework in physical education (PE) has become a central strategy of educational reform movements (Novak & Lynott, 2015). A Chinese policy called “the Double Reduction” provides an opportunity for the implementation of PE homework. There are abundant studies about homework in subjects like English, Math, Science, etc., but relatively few studies have been devoted specifically to PE homework. The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the value and dilemma of PE homework, with the goal of identifying the major contributions to the research knowledge base. We followed three parts to conduct the review: a) literature was searched using the following keywords: “PE homework”, OR “active homework”, AND “the value and dilemma”, AND/OR “homework in physical education” or “activity-based homework”; b) A document analysis was conducted regarding the Chinese policy related to homework in PE, including homework’s guidelines, composition system, and cultivation path, etc.; c) A total of 34 highly relevant articles were selected. The main value and dilemma of PE homework were summarized as follows: a) The PE homework appears to be an effective way of promoting policy implementation and renewal, providing a well-rounded approach to help students achieve educational goal, improving youth physical & mental health, and increasing communications with family members. b) The current PE homework has failed to realize the foregoing values due to some difficulties, including the lack of family exercise atmosphere, the absence of community organizations, and the huge amount of negative news in social media. c) Only three studies provided coping strategies to deal with the dilemma from a Social System Theory perspective, such as strengthening institutional construction, building a multivariate framework, shaping the paradigm, integrating online platform, and developing an assessment system. Most studies focused on the micro level about “the value and dilemma of homework implementation” without consideration of the other key factors from macro level. Based on the literature reviewed, a comprehensive theoretical model for PE homework is proposed to provide guidance for future research endeavors and facilitate implementation of the guidelines.

Keywords: homework in physical education, homework value, parental involvement