Examining the Effect of “Hands-on” Experiences of Volunteers in a Physical Activity Program for Children with Disabilities

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Introduction
• Individualized Movement and Physical Activity for Children Today (IMPACT) provides “hands-on” learning experiences for undergraduate volunteers working directly with children with disabilities in fostering physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

• As self-efficacy is known as a strong predictor of behavior, an increase in IMPACT volunteers’ self-efficacy towards working with people with disabilities may encourage their future engagement with the disability community through future jobs and recreations.

• Additionally, it is anticipated that results from this study will contribute to informing best practices for “hands-on” service learning experiences.

SELF-EFFICACY: Self-efficacy is best defined as a person’s belief in their ability to succeed in a specific situation. It is dependent upon four constructs: mastery experiences, physiological state, verbal persuasion, and vicarious experiences.

• Mastery and vicarious experiences serve as indicators of a person’s perceived ability to carry out tasks.

• Verbal persuasion is a result of feedback from others and serves as an indicator of a person’s confidence to perform.

• A person’s physiological state, or body language, has been found to reflect their perception of their ability to perform a given task.

Results
• Results from the paired t-test showed a significant increase in self-efficacy after participation in IMPACT (M = 7.66 to M = 8.15; p = .04).

• The multiple linear regression did not return any significant factors related to changes in self-efficacy.

• This null result may be attributed to the small sample size. As this is an ongoing study, we expect to find future significant results as our sample size grows.

Purpose
• The current study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of participation in the IMPACT program on increasing undergraduate volunteer’s self-efficacy towards working with children with disabilities.

• A secondary aim of the project is to identify potential factors influencing changes in volunteers’ self-efficacy.

Methods
• At this time, 11 IMPACT volunteers chose to participate and submitted 8 weekly surveys.

• Surveys administered during the first and last weeks served as pre and post-tests collecting self-efficacy and demographic information. Surveys given during weeks 2-7 included items measuring four constructs of self-efficacy.

• A paired t-test was used to examine changes in self-efficacy. In addition, demographic information and weekly self-efficacy construct scores were examined using multiple linear regression to determine what factors influence self-efficacy.

Conclusion
Preliminary results suggest that the current structure of IMPACT fosters an environment in which volunteers’ self-efficacy toward working with children with disabilities is positively influenced.

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Reference