

Title: A Descriptive Study of Florida Virtual School's High School Personal Fitness Course

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Abstract:

Distance education continues to grow at staggering rates. Online K-12 physical education is no different. National Association for Sport and Physical Education's (NASPE) 2006 Shape of the Nation Report confirms that one-fourth of states allow required physical education credits to be earned through online physical education courses. Florida Virtual School's (FLVS), one of the largest supplemental virtual schools, most popular class is the high school Personal Fitness (PF) course. It should also be noted that in July 2007, NASPE put out a position paper indicating initial guidelines for high school online physical education. In this position paper, online physical education is seen as a viable option when designed and implemented appropriately. To this point in time, there has been virtually no empirical research in K-12 online physical education. The purpose of this study will be to investigate the course quality of the PF course offered by FLVS as measured by the Initial Guidelines for Online Physical Education Checklist set forth by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).

The research question is as follows:

To what extent does the PF course offered by FLVS meet criteria set forth by the NASPE Initial Guidelines for Online Physical Education Checklist?

A descriptive approach was implemented to provide a rich understanding of the PF course at FLVS as measured by the Initial Guidelines for Online Physical Education Checklist. The researcher used multiple data sources to provide depth and breadth with respect to the understanding of the PF course offered by FLVS. Specifically, interviews, course assignments, and archival records from FLVS were collected and analyzed. To enhance trustworthiness of the data, the researcher used cross data triangulation. This allowed the researcher to provide a more complete picture of the course as well as a means to crosscheck all data gathered.

Overall, the FLVS PF course is a viable option for students who choose this course. Its limitations are countered by its strengths. Curriculum specialists, administrators, and teachers efforts to provide meaningful curriculum with excellent instruction are evident by student, parent, school, and district evaluations. FLVS has been a leader in online physical education and has the ability to set the tone for quality online physical education.