



Water Safety in Physical and Health Education: Evaluating In-service Educators' use of Dry-land Water Safety Resources

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Abstract

Background: Age is a primary risk factor for drowning, with the highest fatal drowning rates occurring in children under the age of 14 (World Health Organization, 2024; Lifesaving Society, 2024). It is essential for children and youth to have access to water safety education to reduce unsafe behaviours. However, since COVID-19, access to community-based water safety programs has been limited. Physical and Health Education (PHE) classes are an ideal environment to promote water safety knowledge, as all Canadian children have access to this programming (Field & Gruno, 2024). Many P(H)E educators, however, do not feel they have the necessary skills or knowledge to deliver aquatic content (Field et al., 2022).

Study aim: We aim to evaluate in-service PHE educators' experience delivering pre-prepared, dry-land water safety activities. Specifically, we seek to answer the following questions: (1) Were teachers confident in delivering the content based on the information provided in the resource, and (2) Are teachers more likely to incorporate water safety content after having used these resources?

Methods: Participants are in-service P(H)E educators in Canada. Data collection began in January 2025 and is ongoing. Data is being collected via a Qualtrics mixed-methods questionnaire. Descriptive statistics (Means, SD) will be calculated for Likert-scale responses, and thematic analysis will be used for open-ended questions.

Results & Conclusion: Preliminary findings suggest that teachers feel confident delivering these dryland water safety activities in the classroom. Participants indicated they had not previously considered teaching water safety outside of a traditional pool environment, and see opportunities to connect water safety to additional physical and health education curriculum. Further, responses support the continued use of these types of resources.

Keywords: Water Safety; Aquatic Environments; Teacher Preparedness



References

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