



# Surveying Students' Experiences and Thoughts Related to Alternative Environment Activities in Physical Education

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## Abstract

**Background:** Alternative Environment Activities (AEAs) are described as physical activities conducted beyond the gymnasium or sport field. These activities are emphasized in Ontario's Health and Physical Education curriculum, yet students' perspectives and experiences with AEAs remain underexamined, thus creating the conceptual foundation for the present research. Specifically, this study investigated Students' AEA experiences and current viewpoints on AEAs in PE.

**Methods:** This study followed a conceptual framework and utilized a quantitative approach. A cross-sectional online questionnaire (34 items; 10-15 minutes) was administered to Grade 9 students in Ontario schools and summer camps (ethics: Brock REB 24-051). A total of 104 participants were recruited for the study of which 94 met the inclusion criteria for whole sample descriptive analysis. An AEA experienced subsample of 57 participants was examined for inferential tests. Analyses (JASP 0.95.3) included t-tests, ANOVAs, and linear regressions.

**Results & Conclusion:** Students reported diverse AEA exposure, with a shift from "no exposure" in K-6 towards monthly or higher frequency in 7-9. AEA participation peaked in spring, followed by fall and winter. AEAs occurred most at school and within walking distance; and dryland AEAs were most enjoyed across grades; snow/ice enjoyment increased in grades 7-9. Students strongly endorsed the value of AEAs in PE and specifically the novelty, contact with nature, fun, and field-trip potential they provide. AEA inclusive lessons were associated with higher enjoyment, willingness to participate, and intention to continue PE than non-AEA lessons. This study holds significance within the PE field as it shows that students view AEAs as valuable and beneficial to the curriculum. AEAs promote greater participation and enjoyment in PE, highlighting their role in keeping programs engaging and meaningful. Practitioners should maintain AEAs as a foundational element and consider which types and settings best support student interests and sustained involvement.

**Keywords:** Physical Education; AEA; Student Perspective