LABAN MOVEMENT ANALYSIS AND EXERGAMES

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Background to the topic

Exergames are video-games that inspire participants to be physically active in order to play. Several scholars pay attention to that the games have become popular among young people and may lead to an attractive alternative for promoting a healthy, active lifestyles, not at least in school (Graf et al 2009; Gao et al 2013, Papastergiou 2009; Ennis 2013).

In Sweden, the PE curriculum states that students are expected to develop a number of abilities, and PE should then offer a variety of movement activities and movement qualities. Interesting to explore is then if exergames can be seen as a teaching resource to learn different movement’s qualities, or if the exergames actually restrict students’ use of movement qualities?

Research question

With a new teaching tool that has been introduced in education and new policy documents emphasising development of different movement qualities, this paper aims to explore students’ movement qualities when they use exergames in PE with support of Rudolph Laban’s movement analysis (LMA) and socio-cultural learning theory.

Research methods

The empirical data in this study mainly include video-recordings from three PE lessons where two video-game stations were included during the regular lesson. The games offered were of three different characters, and the recorded material for this study includes a total of eight events of sports games (65 minutes), eight events of fitness games (49 minutes) and eight events of dance games (132 minutes).

Analytical and theoretical framework

In the study, we are inspired by the LMA framework and explore students’ movement qualities on the basis of four aspects; body, - effort - space and relations. Further, with socio-cultural learning theory, recognition of artifacts, other people and the offered content of the exergames are also involved in the analysis. The learning explored is therefore about aspects where the game, the player and the social environment interact in learning of different movement qualities.

Research findings

Our findings show that exergames are creating opportunities for PE teachers and students to pay attention to different movement qualities. When comparing the three games both similarities and differences in movement qualities emerge in relation to the learning of movement qualities that
occurs in the interaction between the game, the learner and the learning environment. In PE the
player is accordingly involved in a complex context of movement qualities, interacting with the game
and with other students.