

## ARTICLE REVIEWED

### ***Why is there so little critical physical education scholarship in the United States? The case of Fitnessgram***

Gard, M., & Pluim, C. (2017). Why is there so little critical physical education scholarship in the United States? The case of Fitnessgram. *Sport, Education and Society*, 22(5), 602-617.

#### THE PROBLEM:

Despite its wide adoption in U. S. schools, Fitnessgram has not been subjected to critical study. Fitnessgram originated from policy, practice and research, and turned into a mandate in some schools and districts, but the fitness-testing program should be evaluated more rigorously.



#### Research Summary:

Discussion and research about Fitnessgram is lacking. Some unexplored issues are related to pedagogy, philosophy and ethics, including efficacy, equity, understanding, funding and profiteering. Implementing Fitnessgram in a PE program can be costly. Furthermore, corporations are using the concept of marketing and mandating products to get them in front of consumers. Fitnessgram is marketed and endorsed widely, leading many schools to adopt it. Positively, this creates a wealth of public data regarding student health. This has been beneficial as researchers have used this data for scholarly work such as journal articles.

Three takeaways from this article:

1. Teachers lack knowledge related to fitness testing;
2. Students lack motivation and knowledge regarding fitness testing; and
3. Fitness testing can be filled with practical errors and ethical issues if done incorrectly.

Teachers can and should research all fitness testing software before they use it. Research has suggested there is the larger issue and that is school-based intervention programs, by and large, have not been proven to make a long-lasting, measurable difference in students' lives.

#### Conclusion:

The aim of this article is to look critically at the use of Fitnessgram and all other fitness assessments. Teachers should research Fitnessgram and all fitness tests before implementing them to ensure that they are appropriate for students.

#### Key Take-Away:

When using Fitnessgram and other assessments, teachers should gather feedback from students. and should explore alternative methods of fitness testing if that is part of the curriculum. Teacher's should also be cognizant of the positive and negatives of all fitness tests that are introduced into the classroom.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Fitnessgram:  
<http://www.cooperinstitute.org/fitnessgram>
- Appropriate and Inappropriate Uses of Fitness Testing:  
<https://portal.shapeamerica.org/advocacy/positionstatements/pe/default.aspx>



SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators is the nation’s largest membership organization of health and physical education professionals. The organization sets the standard for health and physical education in the U.S., and its National Standards for K–12 Physical Education serve as the foundation for well-designed physical education programs across the country. SHAPE America is committed to 50 Million Strong, our ongoing initiative to put all children on the path to health and physical literacy through effective health and physical education programs.

