

BREAKING DOWN GENDER STEREOETYPES: INCREASING 5TH GRADE
PHYSICAL EDUCATION PARTICIPATION BY BUILDING SELF ESTEEM

Cindy A. Jeffries, B.A.

An Action Research Study Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of
Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University

Chicago, Illinois

May 2009

Abstract

It has become apparent that in recent years the issue of childhood obesity is becoming the number one health risk among children in the United States. Making sure that children participate in daily physical education class is one way to combat the obesity epidemic. The purpose of this action research project was to improve the active participation and self-esteem of a targeted 5th grade physical education class by breaking down gender stereotypes. The study was conducted at an intermediate school in a suburb of a major midwestern city and included 24 participants. The project took place for ten weeks, during the students' regular physical education classes. The teacher researcher utilized formal data gathering tools of pre-intervention and post-intervention student surveys, teacher observations, and student reflections to gauge the students' feelings and beliefs, both before and after the intervention strategies. The teacher researcher taught two units, floor hockey and dance, where gender stereotyping often occurs. During each unit the students watched a movie clip that showed the non-stereotypical genders' participation in that activity. After watching the clips, the students participated in a round table discussion where they were able to share their feelings and break down their beliefs about gender stereotypes. The results of this study indicate that when it comes to participation in a stereotypically male activity, such as floor hockey, both male and female students will increase their active participation and self-esteem as a result of this intervention strategy, but female students may increase in both areas slightly more. When it comes to a stereotypically female activity, such as dancing, both male and female students' active participation will increase as a result of this intervention strategy and female students' self-esteem will increase more than the male students' self-esteem. Physical education teachers can increase their students' active participation and self-esteem by introducing students to gender-conscious units and by discussing the gender stereotypes associated with each.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1- PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| General Statement of the Problem..... | 1 |
| Immediate Problem Context..... | 1 |
| Local Context..... | 3 |
| National Context of the Problem..... | 5 |

CHAPTER 2- PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Problem Evidence..... | 7 |
| Probable Causes..... | 25 |

CHAPTER 3-THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Literature Review..... | 31 |
| Project Objectives..... | 34 |
| Processing Statements..... | 34 |
| Action Plan..... | 35 |
| Methods of Assessments..... | 36 |

CHAPTER 4- PROJECT RESULTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Historical Description of the Intervention..... | 38 |
| Presentation and Analysis of the Results..... | 42 |
| Conclusion and Recommendations..... | 76 |
| Reflections..... | 79 |
| References..... | 83 |

APPENDIX

| | |
|---|----|
| A. Pre-Sport Student Survey | 89 |
| B. Teacher Observation Checklist..... | 90 |
| C. Floor Hockey Student Reflection..... | 91 |
| D. Dance Student Reflection..... | 92 |
| E. Floor Hockey Lesson Plan..... | 93 |
| F. Dance Lesson Plan..... | 94 |
| G. Round Table Discussion Guidelines..... | 95 |
| H. Parent Consent Form..... | 96 |
| I. Post-Floor Hockey Student Survey..... | 98 |
| J. Post-Dance Student Survey..... | 99 |

CHAPTER 1 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

General Statement of the Problem

The students in the targeted third through fifth grade physical education classes exhibited varying degrees of motivation for active participation in class activities. The teacher researcher had observed a gradual decrease in motivation as the students progressed through grade levels until by fifth grade, students seemed less eager to run around and get sweaty. The third graders seemed, she believed, to be carefree and ran around with no reservation, whereas the fifth graders were starting to worry about what others thought of their actions. This decline in motivation was initially substantiated through observation of students, dialogue with other physical education teachers, and informal student interviews and interaction.

The goal of physical education class is to teach children to love fitness and exercise. Worrying about their appearance and what others think of them is deterring some students from learning what they need to know in order to lead healthy lives. With obesity on the rise, it is a physical educators job to make sure this does not happen.

Immediate Problem Context

A physical education teacher at an affluent suburban intermediate school north west of a major midwestern city conducted this action research project. The research was conducted at the fifth grade level. The physical education teacher teaches seven 3rd through 5th grade physical education classes daily. Each of these physical education classes includes from 24 to 36 students. All the

information presented in this section was taken from the State School Report Card, 2007. This school has a total enrollment of 750 students. The 3rd through 5th grade average class size is 25 students. The average 3rd through 5th grade physical education class size is 36 students. At the intermediate school there are mostly Caucasian students as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Student Racial/Ethnic Background

| | <u>Caucasian</u> | <u>Hispanic</u> | <u>African-American</u> | <u>Asian/Pacific</u> | <u>Native American</u> |
|----------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| School | 78.5 | 6.8 | 2.8 | 8.8 | 0.2 |
| District | 77.1 | 7.2 | 2.2 | 9.8 | 0.2 |

In this district, 5% of the students come from low-income families. This rate is drastically lower than the state rate of 40.9%. Within the district, the limited English-proficient rate is 4.9. This is much lower than the state rate. The attendance rate in this district is high, at 95.2%.

Students at the intermediate school have many opportunities to enrich their learning. Along with their core subjects, students participate in art, music, computer class, health and physical education. Students in the 3rd through 5th grade get physical education four out of five day a week, with health class on the fifth day.

This district had 2046 students enrolled in 2007 with a K through 2nd grade building, a 3rd through 5th grade building and a 6th through 8th grade building. A student-teacher ratio was not available for any of the schools in the district. The teachers in the district consist of 89.1 % female and 10.9% male,

although half of the district's physical education teachers are male. The majority of the teachers are Caucasian at 96.5 %, followed by African-Americans at 1.7%. Thirty eight percent of the teachers in this district have their master's degree, which is slightly lower than the state percent.

Physical education is offered differently at the elementary/intermediate level than at the middle school level in this district. At the elementary and intermediate school levels students participate in physical education four times a week for 40 minutes. On the fifth day of the week they have health class for 40 minutes. The sixth and seventh graders at the middle school level participate in physical education daily for forty-five minutes except for the six weeks they have health class. The eighth graders do not have health class and therefore have physical education daily for forty-five minutes all year long.

This district's salaries are very close to the state's average. The average teacher is paid \$55,567 per year in this district, compared to the state's average of \$58,275 per year. The average teacher in this district has been teaching for ten and a half years, slightly lower than the state's average of 12.9 years.

Local Context

This intermediate school is located in the northwest suburbs of a major midwestern city. The following information about this suburb was gathered from the website, www.factfindercensus.gov, and was dated 2000. The population in this suburb has been reported as 30,935, which was a 44.0% increase from 10 years ago. This suburb has many ethnicities represented, but mostly Caucasian and Hispanics.

Table 2. Ethnicity of Classifications

| | <u>Caucasian</u> | <u>Hispanics</u> | <u>African-American</u> | <u>Other</u> | <u>Asian</u> |
|------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Percentage | 66.5 | 24.2 | 1.6 | 10.7 | 4.0 |

The community has a variety of educational backgrounds. Over the age of 25, the rate for high school graduation is 83.5%. The population with a bachelor's degree is 39.9% and 13.5% have a graduate degree. The median resident age in this community is 31.7 years. The median income for a household was reported at \$69,651 and in 2007 the median value of a house was \$164,300.

The community has many schools. There are two high schools; one is public and the other is private. There are also three public middle schools and six public elementary schools. There are also two private K-8 schools in this suburb. After middle school the students go to different high schools depending on where they live. Two high schools are in the same community, but the third is in another suburb.

This suburb is 5 miles away from a hospital and only 22 miles from a major airport. There are parks and shopping near by. There is also a health club in the town. This community has a park district that offers many programs to get families active. The targeted suburb is only 6 miles from a community college, which has full-time enrollment of 6,973 students.

The growth in this community has been tremendous in the last 5 years. Many new subdivisions are now being completed. The huge growth rate forced the school district to expand and build a new school. This is the second year this

intermediate school has been open. All of the PE classes at this school are overcrowded. There are two PE teachers for 75 students. There is only one gym in this school. Since there are so many students in one area it is a challenge to get everyone active at once. Many times the students must wait in line and take turns participating in the activities in class. When students are waiting for their turn to participate, some of them seem to get unmotivated. Some students continue to talk to their friends in line rather than start their turn.

National Content of the Problem

It is no secret that obesity is on the rise in the United States. According to the National Center for Health Services, the percentage of obese children in the United States increased from 4 percent in 1982 to 16 percent in 1994. In 2002, that percentage rose to 20 per cent (National Center for Health Statistics: Monitoring the Nations Health). The United States Department of Health and Human Services states that in 1999, 13 percent of children aged six to 11 years and 14 per cent of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years in the United States were overweight (United States Department of Health and Human Services). These statistics show that the issue of childhood obesity is becoming the number one health risk among children in the United States.

Daily physical education classes are one way to help beat the obesity epidemic. Unfortunately there is only one state in the United States that requires daily physical education in all schools. Although daily physical education is required in this state, only about 20% of schools actually have physical education daily. Many schools get a waiver allowing them to not have physical education

daily. One of the reasons that many schools do not offer daily physical education is that there just isn't enough room. Many schools only have one gym, which cannot accommodate all the students in the school on a daily basis. Many schools also count recess time as physical education time, even though most students do not get a good workout during recess. Physical Education is one of the first classes that schools cut in tough economic times and this is especially problematic with test scores becoming so important. Possibly test scores would be better if more kids were up moving around and getting exercise. When a person exercises, the concentration of oxygen in the blood is increased which in turn, improves the function of the brain, especially in healthy, young adults (Sousa, 2006). Even though the benefits of exercise are well known, physical education still continues to be cut from schools across the country.

Teacher Researcher Perspective

The main reason I was interested in conducting this action research was to see if my fifth grade students could be motivated to engage more in their physical education classes. Obesity rates have grown to national highs and were predicted to only get worse. It was becoming essential that I taught my students the importance exercise had on their health. I believed it was the job of physical educators to spark an interest in fitness and exercise in their students. I couldn't believe that as early as fifth grade students were already beginning to shy away from exercising because of what their peers thought. It was my goal as a teacher researcher to try to find a way to prevent this decline in motivation and to get all my fifth graders moving.

CHAPTER 2 PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

The purpose of this action research project was to improve the active participation and self-esteem of a targeted fifth grade physical education class by breaking down gender stereotypes. The teacher researcher had observed that as students moved into the fifth grade their active participation began to decrease. At the same time their self-esteem seemed to decrease as well. The researcher believed that gender stereotypes may have something to do with these declines. There are certain stereotypes associated with both boys and girls. If students don't fit into these stereotypes, they feel inadequate. Student surveys, teacher observations and student reflections helped her to establish what the students were feeling.

Pre-Intervention Student Sports Survey

The teacher researcher administered a Pre-Intervention Student Sports Survey (see Appendix A) in class to gauge the feelings and opinions of the students and to provide evidence that the decrease in active participation and self-esteem is related to gender stereotypes in physical education. The teacher surveyed 24 students in a 5th grade physical education class. The data collected from these surveys were compiled to support the existence of the problem. Figures 1 through 12 indicate the opinions of students at the beginning of the research project, before the interventions were introduced.

Figure 1. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 1 of Student Sports Survey

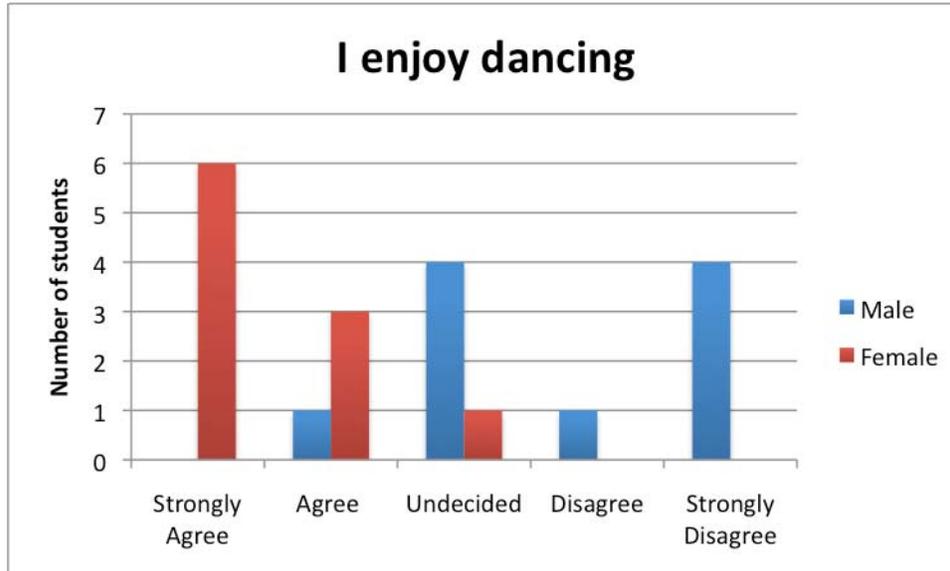


Figure 1 represents the responses to Question 1 “I enjoy dancing” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of male students said they do not enjoy dancing or are undecided about whether or not they enjoy dancing. Five males either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they enjoyed dancing, while one agreed and four were undecided. The majority of female students, on the other hand, said they enjoyed dance. Nine female students either strongly agreed or agreed, while one was undecided about whether or not they enjoyed dancing.

Figure 2. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 2 of Student Sports Survey

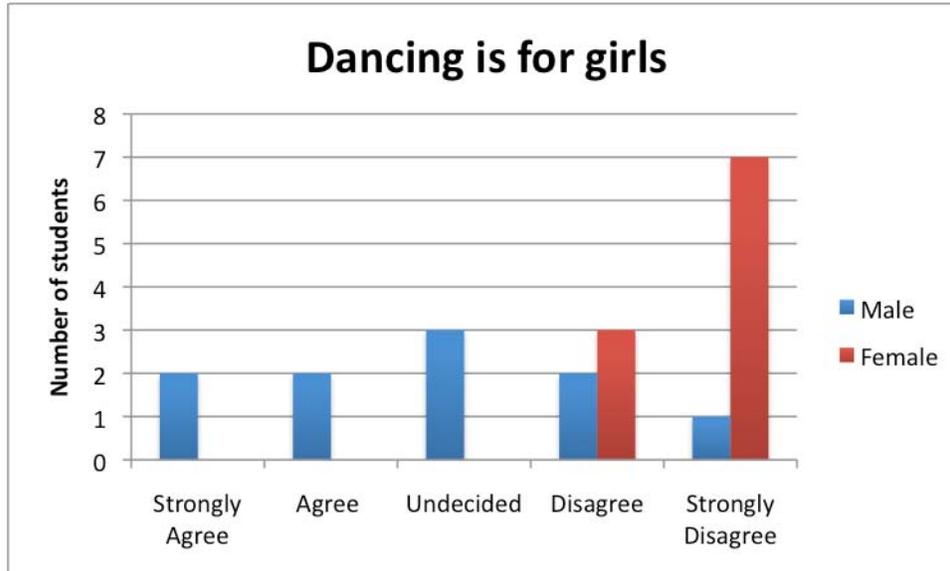


Figure 2 represents the responses to question 2 “Dancing is for girls” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of male students thought dancing is for girls, although there were mixed opinions. Four males either strongly agreed or agreed, three were undecided, and three either strongly disagreed or disagreed that dancing is for girls. The female students on the other hand all felt that dancing isn’t just for girls. All of the female students either strongly disagreed or disagreed that dancing is for girls.

Figure 3. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 3 of Student Sports Survey

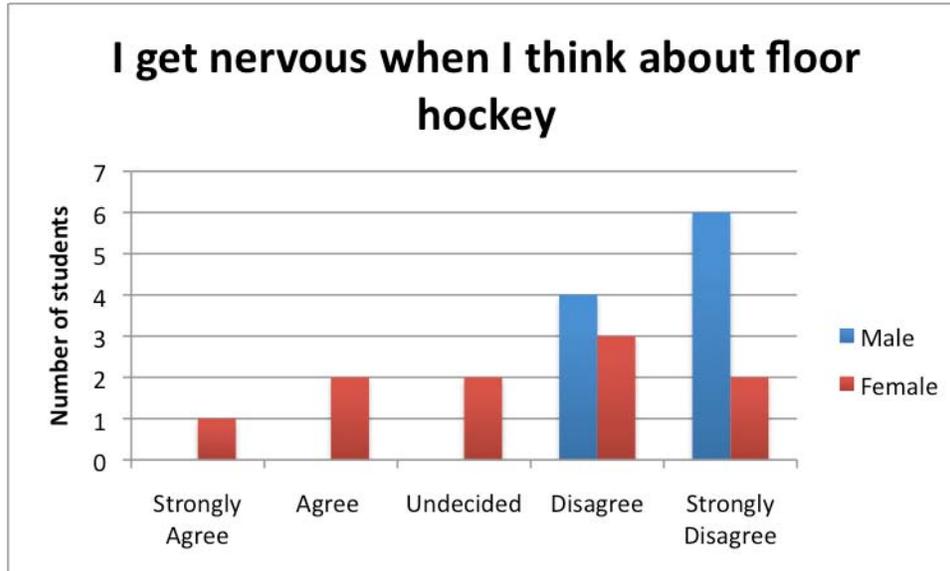


Figure 3 represents responses to Question 3 “I get nervous when I think about floor hockey” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of male students do not get nervous when they think about floor hockey. All of the male students either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they get nervous when they think about floor hockey. The majority of the females also do not get nervous when they think about floor hockey, although there were mixed opinions. Five of the female students either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they get nervous when they think about floor hockey, while three females either strongly agreed or agreed and two were undecided.

Figure 4. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 4 of Student Sports Survey

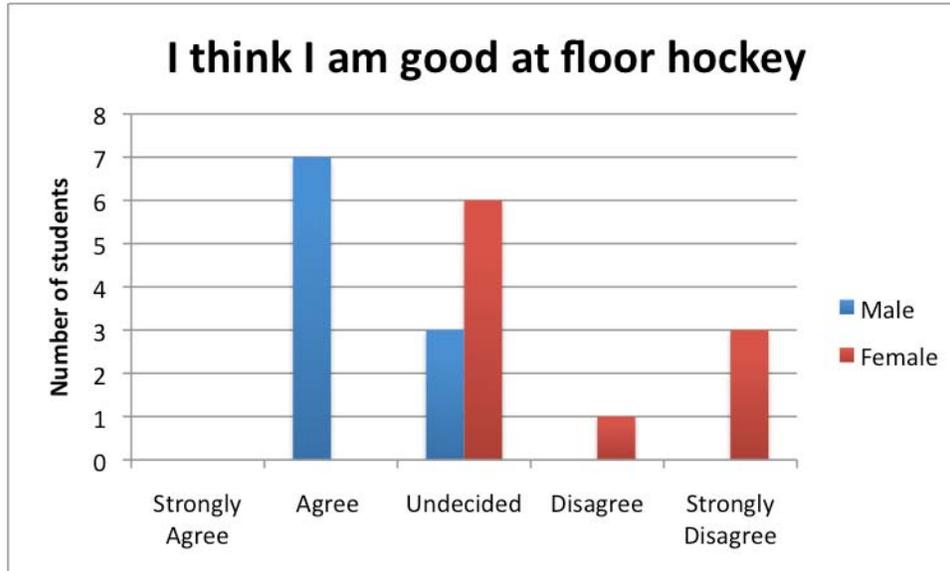


Figure 4 represents responses to Question 4 “I think I am good at floor hockey” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of female students were undecided about whether or not they are good at floor hockey, while the majority of males feel they are good at floor hockey. Six females were undecided and four either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they are good at floor hockey. Seven males agreed that they are good at floor hockey, while three males were undecided.

Figure 5. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 5 of Student Sports Survey

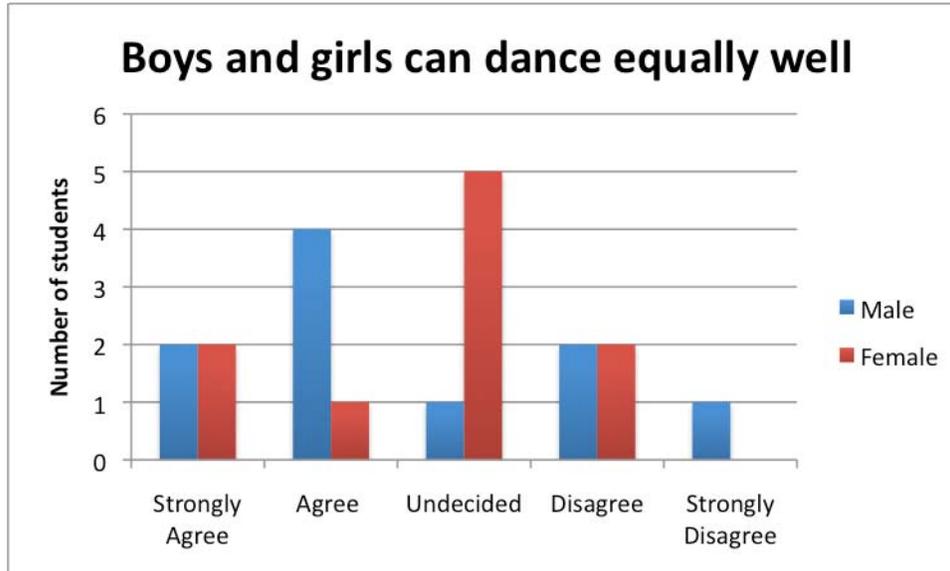


Figure 5 represents responses to Question 5 “Boys and girls can dance equally well” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of females were not sure if boys and girls can dance equally well. Five female students were undecided, while three either strongly agreed or agreed and two disagreed that boys and girls can dance equally well. The majority of males thought that boys and girls can dance equally well, although they had somewhat mixed opinions. Six males either strongly agreed or agreed that boys and girls can dance equally well, while three males either strongly disagreed or disagreed, and one was undecided.

Figure 6. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 6 of Student Sports Survey

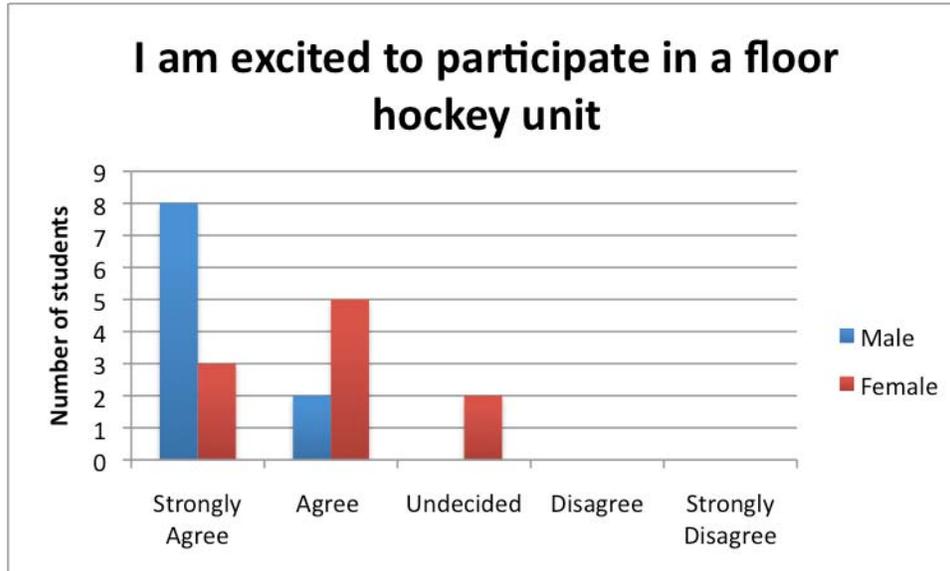


Figure 6 represents responses to Question 6 “I am excited to participate in a floor hockey unit” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of both male and female students were excited to participate in a floor hockey unit. All ten males either strongly agreed or agreed that they were excited to participate in a floor hockey unit. Eight of the females either strongly agreed or agreed that they were excited to participate in a floor hockey unit, while two females were undecided.

Figure 7. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 7 of Student Sports Survey

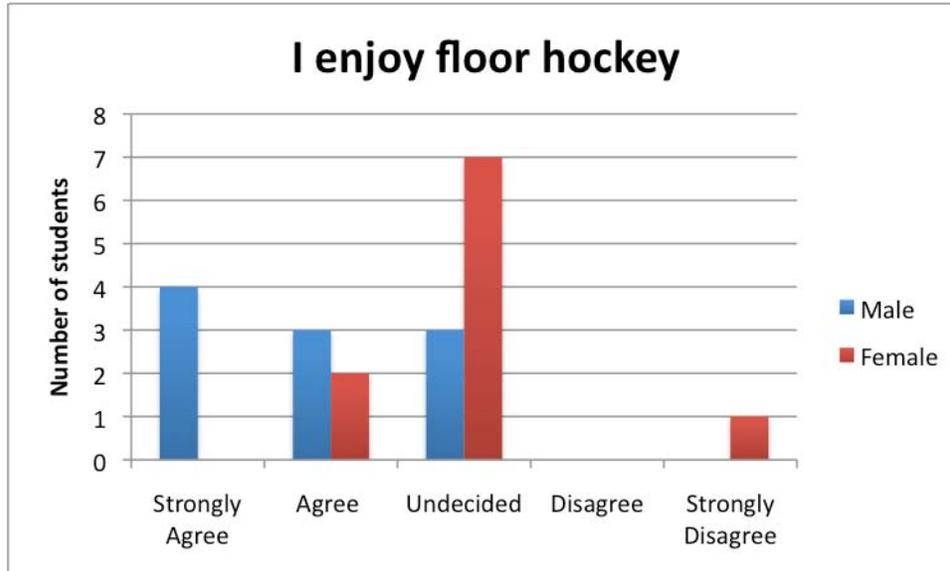


Figure 7 represents responses to Question 7 “I enjoy floor hockey” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of female students were unsure whether or not they enjoy floor hockey. Seven females were undecided, while two agreed and one strongly disagreed that they enjoy floor hockey. The majority of male students on the other hand do enjoy floor hockey. Seven of the male students either strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoy floor hockey, while three were undecided.

Figure 8. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 8 of Student Sports Survey

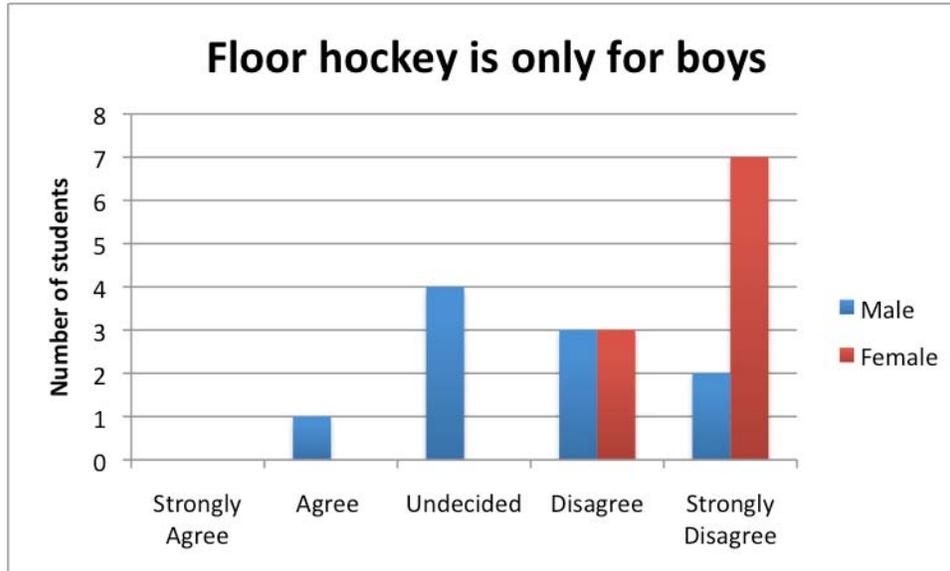


Figure 8 represents responses to Question 8 “Floor hockey is only for boys” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of male and female students did not think floor hockey is only for boys. Five male students either strongly disagreed or disagreed that floor hockey is only for boys, while one agreed and four were undecided. All of the female students either strongly disagreed or disagreed that floor hockey was only for boys.

Figure 9. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 9 of Student Sports Survey

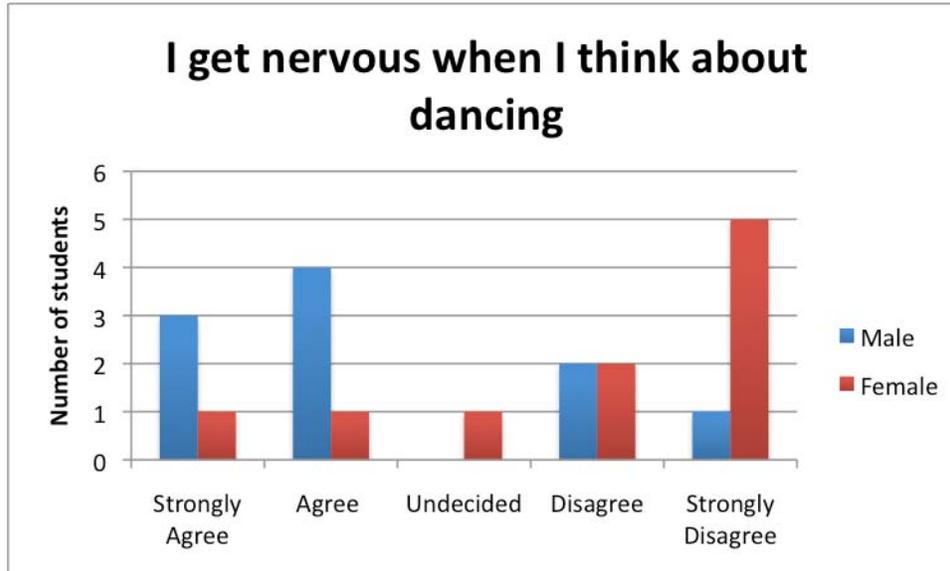


Figure 9 represents responses to Question 9 “I get nervous when I think about dancing” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of male students get nervous when they think about dancing. Seven of the male students either strongly agreed or agreed that they get nervous, while three either strongly disagreed or disagreed. The majority of female students did not get nervous when they thought about dancing. Seven females either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they get nervous, while two either strongly agreed or agreed, and one was undecided.

Figure 10. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 10 of Student Sports Survey

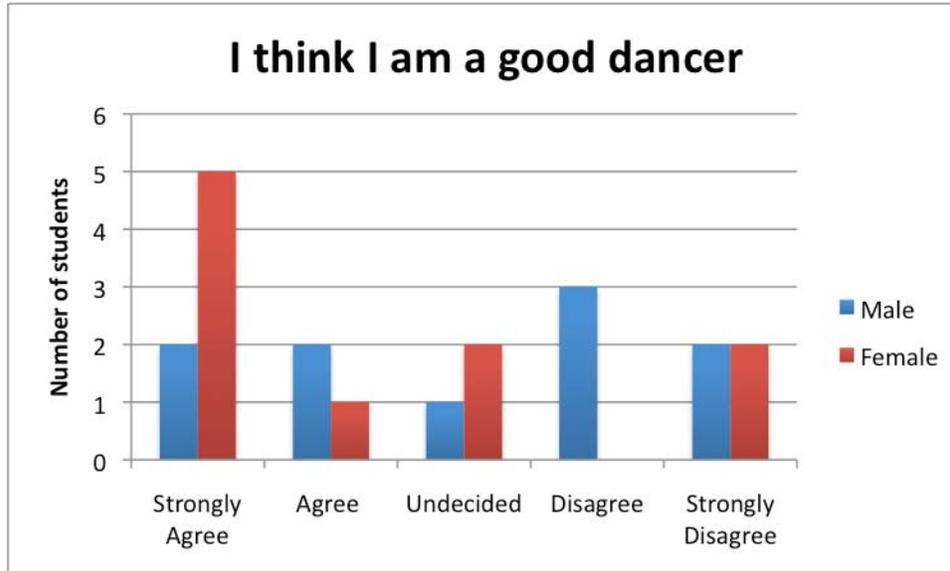


Figure 10 represents responses to Question 10 “I think I am a good dancer” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of female students think they are good dancers. Six female students either strongly agreed or agreed that they are good dancers, while two strongly disagreed and two were undecided. The male students had very mixed opinions about whether or not they are good dancers. Four of the males either strongly agreed or agreed that they are good dancers, while four either strongly disagreed or disagreed and one was undecided.

Figure 11. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 11 of Student Sports Survey

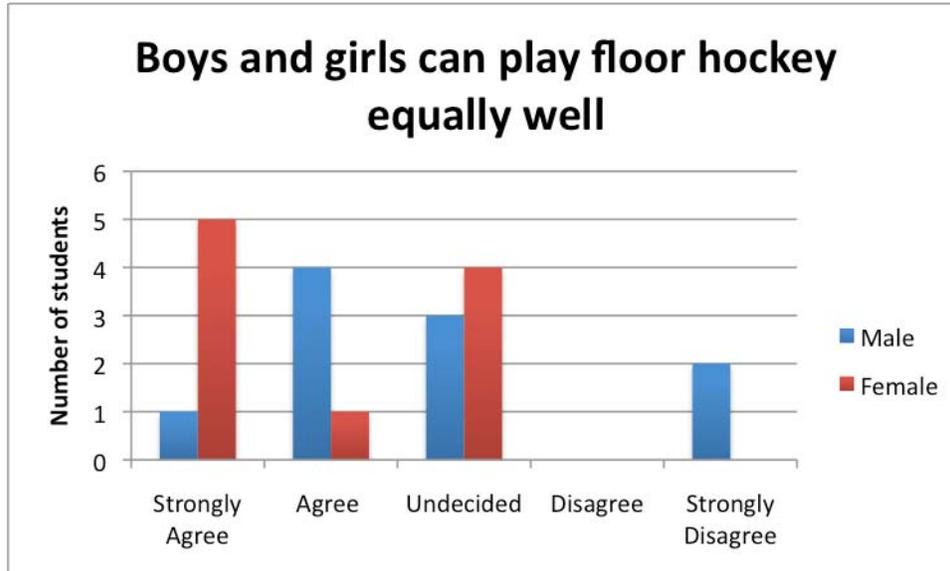


Figure 11 represents responses to Question 11 “Boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of males feel that boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well, although there were some mixed opinions. Five males either strongly agreed or agreed that boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well, while three were undecided and two strongly disagreed. The majority of female students also felt that boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well. Six females either strongly agreed or agreed that boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well, while four were undecided.

Figure 12. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 12 of Student Sports Survey

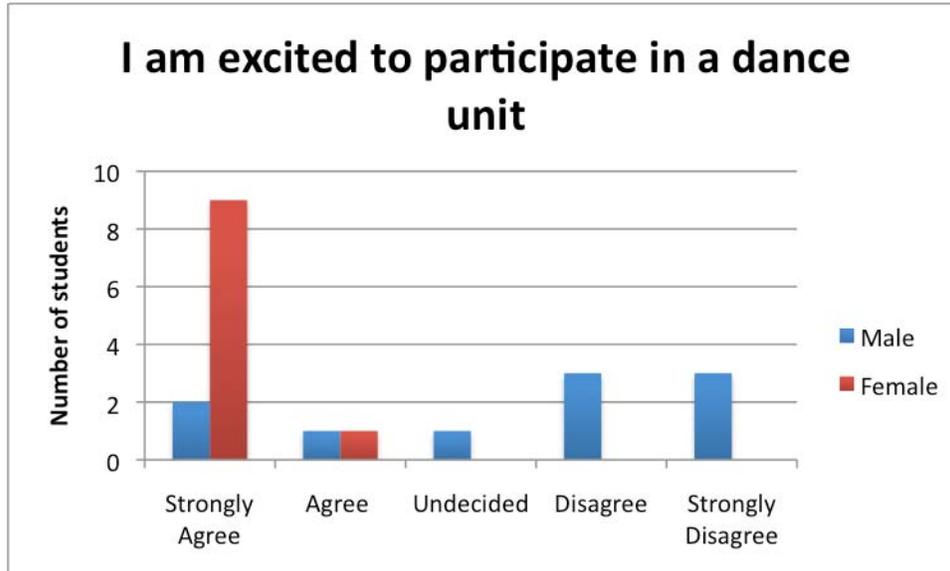


Figure 12 represents responses to Question 12 “I am excited to participate in a dance unit” by the 20 fifth grade students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the majority of male students were not excited to participate in a dance unit. Six males either strongly disagreed or disagreed that that they were excited to participate in a dance unit, while three either strongly agreed or agreed and one was undecided. The majority of female students were excited to participate in a dance unit. All of the females either strongly agreed or agreed that they were excited to participate in a dance unit.

Teacher Observation Checklist

The teacher researcher observed six students a day for four days, for about three minutes each of both the floor hockey and dance units. Students were informed that they would be observed one of the four days, but were not told which day it would be. The teacher filled out the Teacher Observation

Checklist (see Appendix B) for each of the 24 students. The teacher researcher assessed students' active participation by observing if students were following the rules, playing the correct position, getting their heart rate up and moving around the gym. The teacher researcher assessed student's self-esteem by observing if students looked confident, looked comfortable, smiled frequently, and showed sportsmanship. For each category of assessment, the teacher researcher put a checkmark in either the yes, no, or sometimes column, depending on what they observe about that student.

Figure 13. Pre-Intervention Responses to Male Floor Hockey Observation Checklist

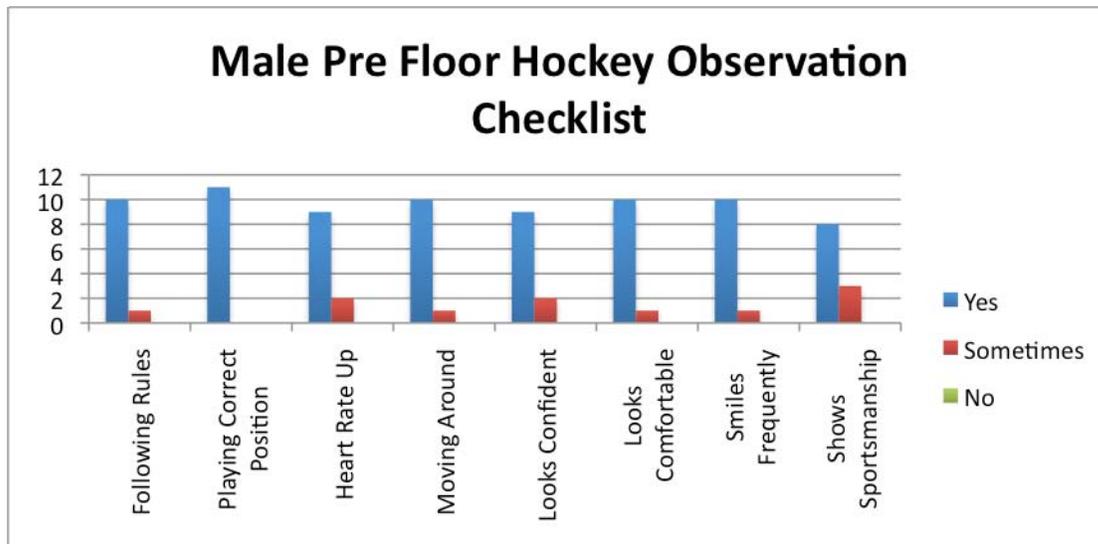


Figure 13 represents the 11 male fifth grade students who were observed during the first four days of their floor hockey unit. The data show that the majority of male students had high active participation and self-esteem when it came to floor hockey. There were eight male students who showed high self-esteem all of the time and three males who only showed high self-esteem some of the time. There were nine male students who showed high active participation all of the time and two males who only showed high active participation some of the time. There were no male students who didn't show high active participation or high self-esteem any of the time.

Figure 14. Pre-Intervention Responses to Female Floor Hockey Observation Checklist

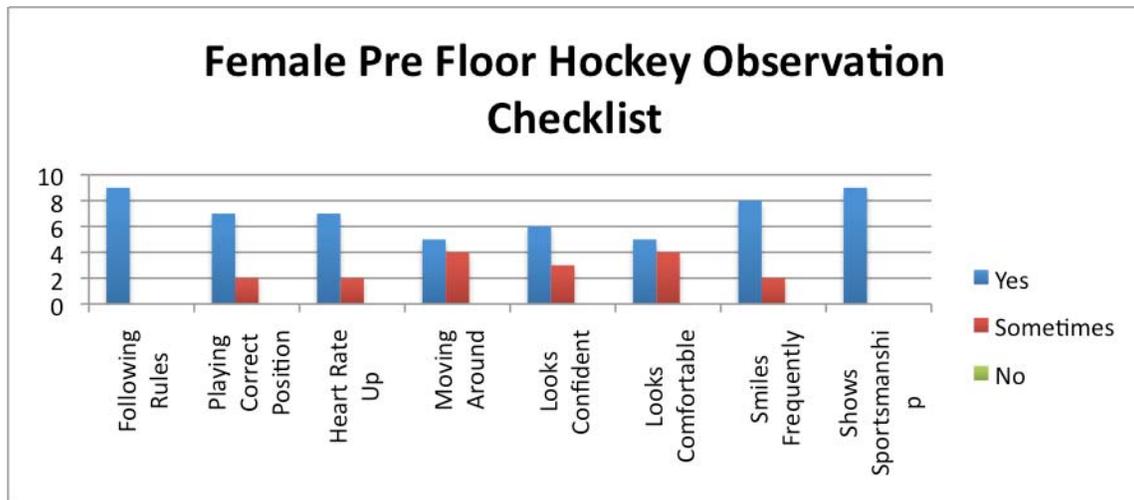


Figure 14 represents the nine female fifth grade students who were observed during the first four days of their floor hockey unit. The data show that the majority of female students have high active participation and self-esteem when it comes to floor hockey. There were five female students who showed high self-esteem all of the time and four females that only showed high self-esteem some of the time. There were five female students who showed high active participation all of the time and four females that only showed high active participation some of the time. There were no female students who didn't show high active participation or high self-esteem any of the time.

Figure 15. Pre-Intervention Responses to Male Dance Observation Checklist

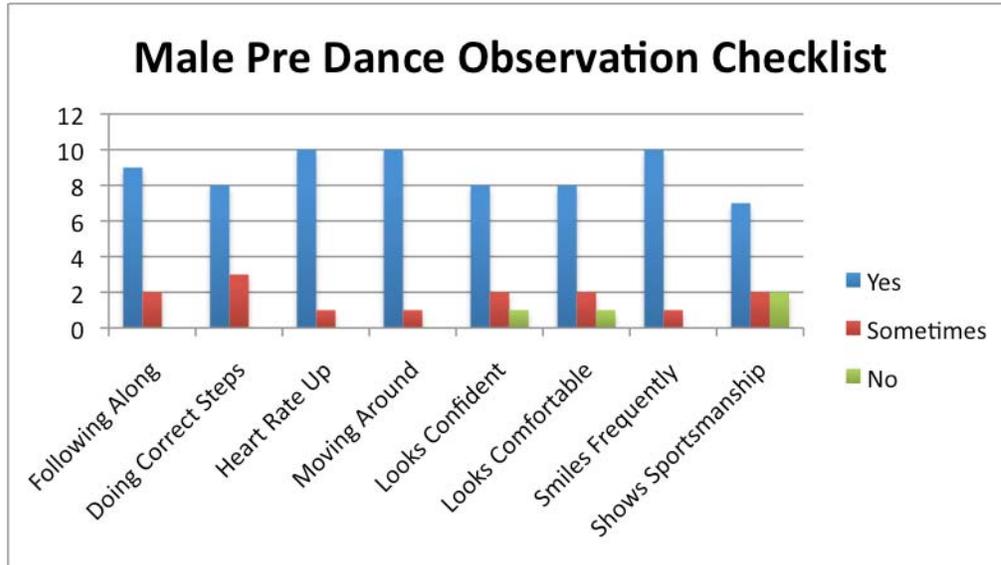


Figure 15 represents the 11 male fifth grade students who were observed during the first four days of their dance unit. The data show that the majority of male students had high active participation and self-esteem when it come to dance. There were seven male students who showed high self-esteem all of the time, two males that showed high self-esteem some of the time and two males that didn't show high self-esteem at all. There were eight male students who showed high active participation all of the time and three males who showed high active participation some of the time.

Figure 16. Pre-Intervention Responses to Female Dance Observation Checklist

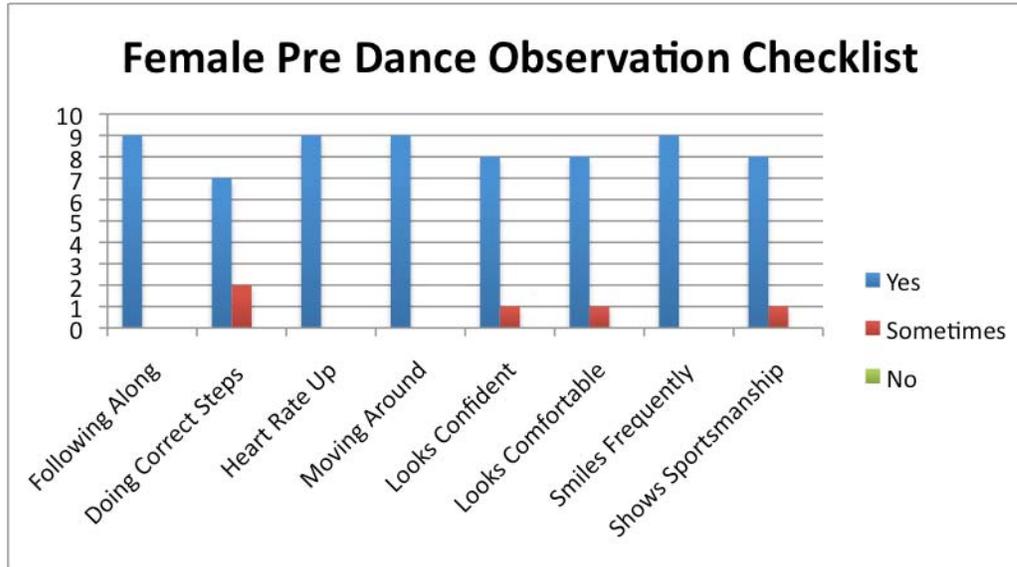


Figure 16 represents the nine female fifth grade students who were observed during the first four days of their dance unit. The data show that the majority of female students had high active participation and self-esteem when it came to dance. There were eight female students who showed high self-esteem all of the time and one females that showed high self-esteem some of the time. There were seven female students who showed high active participation all of the time and two females that only showed high active participation some of the time.

Student Reflection

All 24 students were required to write a brief reflection to a trigger question given to them by the teacher. The trigger questions were in reference to movie clips seen during both units. The reflection question (see Appendix C) for the floor hockey unit was “What characteristics do you admire or dislike about the female athlete in the clip?” The reflection question (see Appendix D) for the dance unit was “What characteristics do you admire or dislike about the male

dancer in the clip?”

Figure 17. Responses to Floor Hockey Reflection

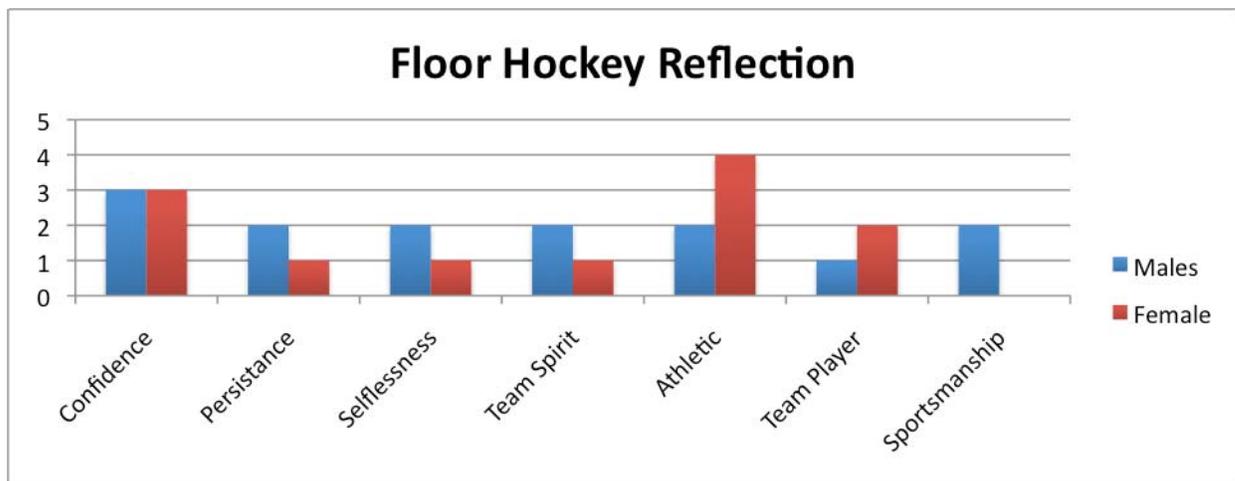


Figure 17 represents the reflections of 20 fifth grade students on the intervention day of the dance unit. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that both the male and female students admired similar characteristics of the female athletes in the movie clip. Both the male and female students agreed that the athlete’s in the clip were very confident. Twice as many female students admired the athletic ability of the female athletes in the clip than male students. The same went for being a team player. Two male students admired the sportsmanship of the athletes, whereas no female students did. Twice as many males students admired the persistence, selflessness, and team spirit of the female athletes, than the female athletes.

Figure 18. Responses to Dance Reflection

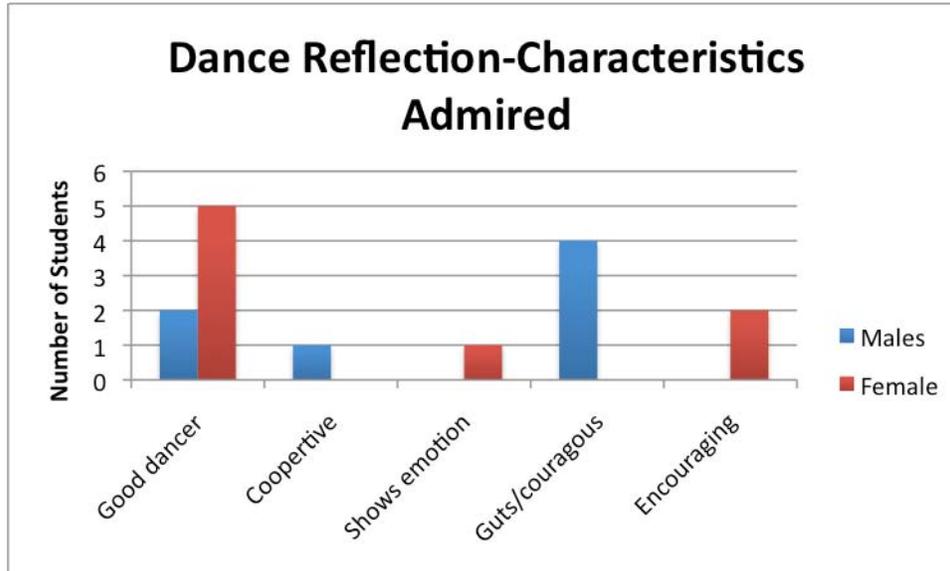


Figure 18 represents the reflections of the 20 fifth grade students on the intervention day of the dance unit. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the male and female students admired different characteristics about the male dancers in the movie clip. Although both male and female students thought the males in the clip were good dancers, three more of the female students thought this than the male students. One male student admired the cooperative skills that the dancers possessed, while four males said they admired the dancers' guts or courageousness. One female student admired that the male dancers showed emotion, while two females said they admired the fact that the dancers encouraged one another.

Probable Causes

The teacher researcher noticed that there has been a decrease in active participation of 5th graders in physical educational classes. The literature reveals that low self-esteem and low confidence levels in co-educational PE classes may

be related to this decrease. Co-educational physical education classes are the norm in U.S. schools because of the implementation of Title IX legislation in 1972. Title IX legislation says that “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Women’s Sports Foundation 2005). Title IX legislation ensures that all students participate in all units, no matter their gender. Unfortunately, socially constructed ideas of gender-appropriate activities have not always reflected this perspective.

Stereotypes

In the United States the socially constructed idea persists that boys should excel in sports, such as basketball, baseball and football and that girls should be good at dancing and gymnastics. Therefore, students hear comments such as, “You run or throw like a girl” or “Boys can’t dance on beat,” and they accepted these claims as true because these expectations are heard so often, and believed. This can be damaging to boys’ self-esteem because the boy that “throws like a girl” may now be deterred from participating in any throwing games in class. Instead, he may hide in the back, talking to his friends instead (Mowling, 2004).

As children grow and develop, gender roles, morals, and values become ingrained in an individual. Attitudes and beliefs are difficult to change. If a teacher chooses boys to demonstrate an activity the majority of the time, the perception is that girls are never good enough to be demonstrators. This may eventually

cause girls to participate less in an activity (Etnier, 2004).

Children are constantly being bombarded with gender stereotypes—the oversimplified ideas about how males and females are “supposed” to act. These messages come from the media—through movies, TV programs, books, and commercials—as well as through things such as children’s clothing and toys and even the way in which parents divide up the household duties (Finello, 2008). Many fifth grade girls come to school dressed in expensive clothes and shoes. They don’t want to run around in their new skirt or mess up their hair. Instead they lag behind and don’t fully participate in physical education. Unfortunately, elementary-aged girls already seem to believe they are supposed to be pretty and that precludes being athletic.

Self esteem

Children who feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They tend to smile more readily and enjoy life. These children, according to Sheslow (2005), are realistic and generally optimistic. In contrast, for children who have low self-esteem, challenges can become sources of major anxiety and frustration. Children who think poorly of themselves have a hard time finding solutions to problems. If they are plagued by self-critical thoughts, such as "I'm no good" or "I can't do anything right," they may become passive, withdrawn, or depressed. Faced with a new challenge, their immediate response is "I can't" (Sheslow, 2005). Children in fourth, fifth, and early sixth grade are beginning to try to figure out where they “fit-in”, and parents, teachers, and peers begin to put restrictions on them to help

them to fit in (Boyde, 2006).

According to L.E. Etiner (2004), many students who aren't considered to be "athletic" found that they disliked physical education class and had the tendency to get lower grades in physical education. Typically, girls fall into this category and shy away from participating in physical education. Girls in the fifth grade are constantly judging and being judged by others. For example, athletic girls who played happily with boys in fourth grade may find themselves judged harshly for doing so in fifth. Even if this girl is hurt by the criticisms of others, it's probable that she has also been saying similar hurtful things to other girls. It is very important for teachers to model empathy in the suffering of others and to remind these girls that other people have feelings too (Etnier, 2004).

Boys too, face problems with self-esteem in physical education. Physical ability and size play a large part in the self-esteem of young boys, and up to age 14. They develop at such varying rates that their coordination and athletic prowess can be quite disparate. Boys who are small or nonathletic often face teasing from their peers (Etnier, 2004).

Physical Differences

At young ages, there is not a big difference in boys and girls in physical skills unless their experiences have been different. The girl who is interested in soccer at the age of six will naturally be just as skilled as a boy. That will change at puberty (9-12 for girls; 12-14 for boys), when boys will begin to develop more strength while girls' strength levels off (Brown, 2005). Boys' gross motor skills (running, jumping, balancing) tend to develop slightly faster, while girls' fine motor

skills (holding a pencil, writing) improve first. This can put girls at an advantage in school, which requires a lot of sitting still and writing. Boys are also more physically aggressive and impulsive, as revealed by studies of their brains. The pleasure center of the brain actually lights up more for boys when they take risks. That's not to say that girls aren't active and risk-taking, only that on average boys are more so (Finello, 2008).

Inactive Lifestyles

According to researchers at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2007), children in the U.S. today lead inactive lifestyles and spend less time participating in physical activity than they did in earlier generations. When they are not watching television, they spend their time on the computer or playing video games. Many people share the fear that these sedentary activities compete with physical activity. There is a 'moral panic' concerning the 'couch kids' culture in modern western society (Biddle, 2005). This lack of physical activity can seriously damage children's health, both physical and mental. It has been shown that children who watch TV or are in front of a computer screen more than four hours a day are at a much higher risk for being overweight or obese. This puts them at risk for diabetes or heart problems in their future. It has also been shown that active children are more confident and less prone to depression and anxiety. They also have higher self-esteem, and are less likely to get involved in unhealthy behaviors like smoking, drinking, and drugs (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007).

Although there are many influences in students' lives that the teacher

cannot control, such as the media, family and peers, there are a few beliefs and ideas that can be changed in the classroom. Chapter 3 will discuss possible solution strategies that can be used.

CHAPTER 3 THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Are boys and girls interested in the same kinds of physical activity? Do all boys like hockey, and all girls like dance? The short answer is no. Although interests and participation in physical activity do tend to differ depending on gender, physical education teachers want to encourage both boys and girls to be more physically active and this teacher researcher believes they need to keep gender differences in mind. The teacher researcher believes it is important to encourage both genders to try new and different activities, while also keeping socially-constructed stereotypes, self-esteem, physical differences and inactive lifestyles in mind.

Stereotypes

Although most boys and girls have gender-specific characteristics and patterns of behavior, all boys are not alike, nor are all girls. The gender-role behavior of children seems to be strongly influenced by their identification with the males and females in their lives. According to Schor (1999), all children pick up characteristics from the men and women around them, incorporating these traits into their own personalities and value systems. They are also influenced by TV and sports heroes and adults in all other activities in their lives. Over time, the combined effect of these many influences may determine many of their masculine and feminine qualities. Perhaps more than any other factor, the subtleties of every child's relationship with his or her father and mother - and the

attitudes of the parents toward each other and toward the child - will influence his or her gender-related behaviors (Schor, 1999).

According to Sever (2005), sports are part of a social and cultural process in which socially constructed views of masculinity and femininity play a key role. Sports are traditionally associated with masculinity. In many societies, it is considered inappropriate for women or girls to engage in sports, and those who do may be perceived as masculine. Conversely, men or boys who do not engage in sports or who are not talented in sports may be labeled as unmanly, Sever (2005) says. He goes on to say that girls tend to engage in less vigorous physical activities than boys. The amount of time girls spend being active tends to take a sharp dive when they hit their teen years, he says. Girls are also less likely to participate in team sports than boys, but are more likely to participate in aerobics or dance. Boys tend to engage in more vigorous physical activities. Like girls, boys' total time being active drops sharply in their teen years (but this happens a little later for boys than girls). Boys may be drawn more to team sports and tend to be more focused on individual, rather than social goals (Sever, 2005).

Self Esteem

According to Drever (2002), most psychologists believe that self-esteem is not innate, but acquired through experience, thoughts and actions. It is learned, and is therefore capable of being changed and developed. He says that school physical education and sport programs can provide children with the highest level of contentment when compared with other school subjects. Children, he explains, have a natural inclination towards physical activity and are motivated to

move, explore and enjoy active participation and social interaction in play. Attitudes toward physical activity are developed through the experiences that children have and it is these attitudes, which shape their health behaviors into adulthood. Although there may be some influence in the teaching of children about health promoting exercise, the most important factors appear to be their perceptions of their own physical abilities and the enjoyment experienced in physical activities. Children with low perceptions of ability or negative experiences tend to avoid physical activities and fail to develop habits of participation that would benefit life-long health (Drever, 2002).

Physical Differences

One of the socially-constructed biases that some people appear to hold is the idea of a "girl throw." Although there are physical differences between boys and girls, obviously, there is no physical reason for different ways of throwing based on gender. So what's the real reason? It comes down to "practice makes perfect." It is culturally appropriate in the U.S. for boys to learn to throw when they are young -- either playing catch in the backyard with their friends or by joining Little League. There are many girls who play baseball and softball at a young age as well, but many never learn to throw well when they are young because it is less culturally necessary for girls to do it well. As Mowling (2004) points out, it is the same reason why kids from France speak French better than most kids from America -- it's because they've been learning to talk that way since they were born. The phrase "throwing like a girl" is really outdated because some boys and girls throw really well, and others don't (Mowling, 2004).

Inactive Lifestyles

Children's parents play a huge role in whether or not a child leads a healthy lifestyle. Welk (1999) cites the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as saying that the children of active parents tend to be more active. Parental role modeling, as well as encouragement, support and beliefs, are all-powerful influences on their child's activity level (Welk, 1999). Parents may accept responsibility for teaching their children to have good manners and to be considerate of other, but they may not consider the physical domain as part of their responsibility.

Project Objectives

As a result of teaching two gender-conscious physical education units and having a round table discussion for each, during the period of September through December, 2008, the teacher researcher will try to help students change their thinking about gender stereotypes in a 5th grade physical education classroom.

Processing Statements

In order to implement the intervention, the teacher researcher had to accomplish a series of tasks. These tasks were as follows:

- Develop floor hockey (see Appendix E) and dance lesson plans (see Appendix F).
- Gather equipment needed for each unit.
- Choose a movie to be used for each unit.
- Choose a specific clip to be shown in class.
- Create a round table discussion question.

- Create guidelines to be used for the roundtable discussion (see Appendix G).

Action Plan

Week 1= September 2nd-5th

Teacher researcher will copy and send consent forms to the parents (see Appendix H).

Forms are due back September 8th, 2008.

Teacher researcher will copy pre and post-intervention surveys.

Week 2= September 8th-12th

Teacher researcher will make sure all parent forms are handed in.

Teacher researcher will develop lesson plans for floor hockey.

Teacher researcher will give pre-intervention student sports survey to the students.

Week 3= September 15th-19th

Teacher researcher will begin floor hockey unit.

Each day the teacher researcher will fill out observation checklist for four different students.

Week 4=September 22nd-27th

Teacher researcher will continue teaching the unit.

Teacher researcher will show video, round table discussion, and reflection.

Each day the teacher researcher will fill out observation checklist for four different students

Week 5= September 29th- October 3rd

Teacher researcher will give post-intervention floor hockey student survey to the students.

Teacher researcher will tabulate the pre-intervention student sports survey

Week 6= October 6th-10th

Teacher researcher will tabulate post-intervention floor hockey student survey.

Week 7 = October 13th-17th

Teacher researcher will graph the pre-intervention student sports survey and post-intervention floor hockey student survey.

Teacher researcher will combine information from the student reflections.

Week 8= October 20th-24th

Teacher researcher will develop lesson plans for dance unit.

Week 9= October 27th-31st

Teacher researcher will begin dance unit.

Each day the teacher researcher will fill out observation checklist for four different students.

Week 10= November 3rd-7th

Teacher researcher will continue teaching the dance unit.

Teacher researcher will show video, round table discussion, and reflection.

Each day the teacher researcher will fill out observation checklist for four different students.

Week 11= November 10th-14th

Teacher researcher will give post-intervention dance student survey to the students.

Week 12= November 24th-28th

Teacher researcher will tabulate post-intervention dance student survey.

Week 13= December 1st-5th

Teacher researcher will graph post--intervention dance student survey.

Teacher researcher will combine information from the reflections.

Week 14= December 8th-12th

Teacher researcher will begin gathering all surveys and start putting a whole graph together.

Week 15 = December 15th-19th

Teacher researcher will continue working on the chapters.

Methods of Assessment

The teacher researcher conducted three student surveys. A pre-intervention student sports survey (see Appendix A), a post-intervention floor hockey student survey (see Appendix I), and a post--intervention dance student survey (see Appendix J) were given to all students during weeks two, five and eleven, respectively. The purpose of the surveys was to show the change in students' opinions about gender roles in sports before and after the interventions.

The teacher researcher also observed students during class and filled out an observation checklist for each student during weeks three, four, nine and ten. The purpose of the observation checklist was to determine whether or not the students' behaviors and actions changed after the interventions were introduced.

The students wrote a short reflection immediately after each of the interventions, which were introduced during weeks four and ten. The purpose of the reflection was to collect information about how the students felt about the

movie clips seen that day with a focus on gender roles and to see if there was a difference in their attitudes toward gender roles in these particular sports after they saw the films. After the students wrote their reflections they participated in a roundtable discussion where they were able to share their feelings and break down their beliefs about gender stereotypes.

CHAPTER 4 PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The purpose of this action research project was to break down gender stereotypes by building self-esteem and increasing 5th grade physical education participation. During the first week of the action research project, consent forms (see Appendix H) were sent home with students to be reviewed by their parents. The teacher researcher also held an informal classroom discussion with students about the topic the teacher researcher was researching, why they were researching the topic, the value of students' opinions, and the impact on student learning. Students were informed that while their participation in this research study would be voluntary, all students would still need to participate fully in all regular curricular activities. Questions were encouraged to be asked by the students, so that they felt informed and safe.

This same day all students in the research group were given the Pre-Intervention Student Sports Survey (see Appendix A) to assess students' opinions and feelings on both floor hockey and dance. Twenty students participated in the Pre-Intervention Student Sports Survey. The survey was anonymous, except for the gender of the student.

The teacher researcher implemented two interventions. The first intervention was teaching gender-conscious physical education units. The second intervention was to hold a roundtable discussion. These interventions occurred in the same instructional areas, with the same classes, and during regular physical education curriculum instruction. The teacher began with a floor

hockey unit, a stereotypically male activity. The second unit was a dance unit, a stereotypically female activity. The teacher taught each unit for four days with out any interventions. On the fifth day the teacher showed a movie clip. For the floor hockey unit, the teacher showed a clip from “Chak De India.” For the dance unit, the teacher showed a clip from the movie “High School Musical.” The movie clips were meant to be inspirational and motivational for all students with focus on gender participation. After each movie clip the teacher talked briefly about each clip and pointed out a few gender stereotypes that needed to be addressed. The final four days of each unit were taught with the students being reminded to keep gender stereotypes in mind.

The second intervention strategy that the teacher researcher implemented was a round table discussion. On the same day that the movie clip was seen, the roundtable discussion took place. The teacher posed a trigger question to the students. The trigger question for each unit was the same as the reflection questions from Chapter 2. In the round table discussion each student got one minute to state his or her response to the trigger question. For thirty seconds they could not be interrupted by anyone. If they finished before the thirty seconds were up, everyone sat quietly until the minute had passed. The roundtable was intended to give everyone equal time to state their opinion. One person did not have the opportunity to dominate the discussion. This gave the students who were usually too shy to talk, an equal opportunity to state their opinion.

The participation assessment portion of the research involved the teacher filling out an observation checklist (see Appendix B) for each student both before

and after the interventions, for both the floor hockey and dance units. At the beginning of the school year, students were told the teacher's expectations for them during PE class. The students knew they were required to wear proper gym shoes, listen to directions and participate to the best to their ability in each activity. The teacher researcher let the students know they would be observed on one of four days, but were not told which day specifically. The researcher assessed each student to see if he or she were participating and putting forth maximum effort, as well as evaluating if he or she were enjoying themselves. This assessment took place during Week 3 and Week 4, for the floor hockey unit and Week 10 and Week 11, for the dance unit.

The student reflections provided data about how the students felt about the movie clips seen during the intervention day of each unit. The Floor Hockey Student Reflection was written during Week 4. The dance student reflection was written during Week 11. The teacher researcher hoped that by seeing each of these movie clips, and hearing comments from other students, gender stereotypes would be changed. Writing their reflection gave the students a risk-free way to write down their true feelings and opinions. The students knew that their names would not be on their reflection sheet, but their gender would. No other student or teacher would know what comment a particular student wrote.

On the last day of the floor hockey unit during Week 5, the teacher researcher gave the students a Post-Intervention Floor Hockey Student Survey (see Appendix I) to fill out. On the last day of the dance unit during Week 12, the teacher researcher gave each student a Post-Intervention Dance Student Survey

(see Appendix J) to fill out. The questions on both post-intervention surveys were the same as the pre-intervention survey questions. The post-intervention surveys were again anonymous; except for the gender of the student.

Presentation and Analysis of the Results

Figure 19. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 1 of Student Sports Survey

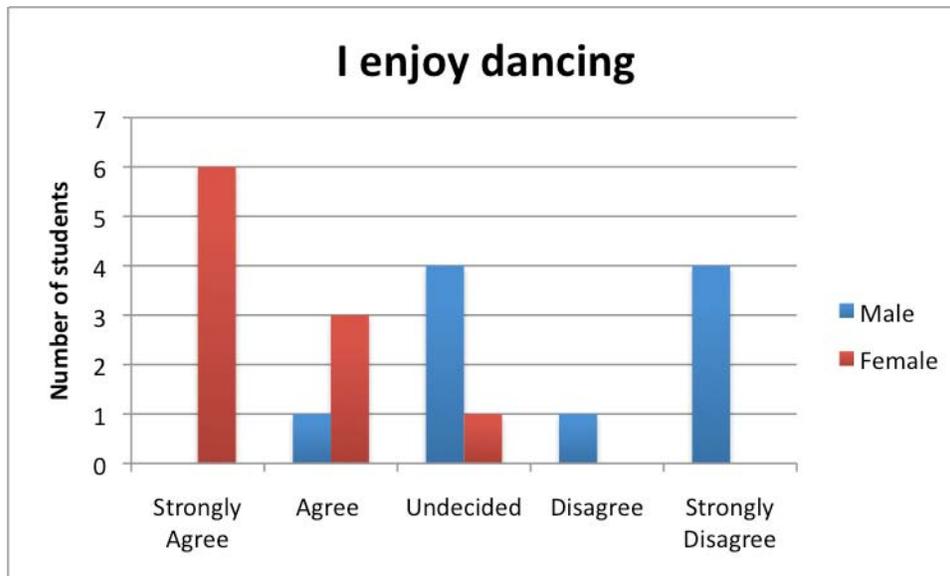


Figure 20. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 1 of Student Sports Survey

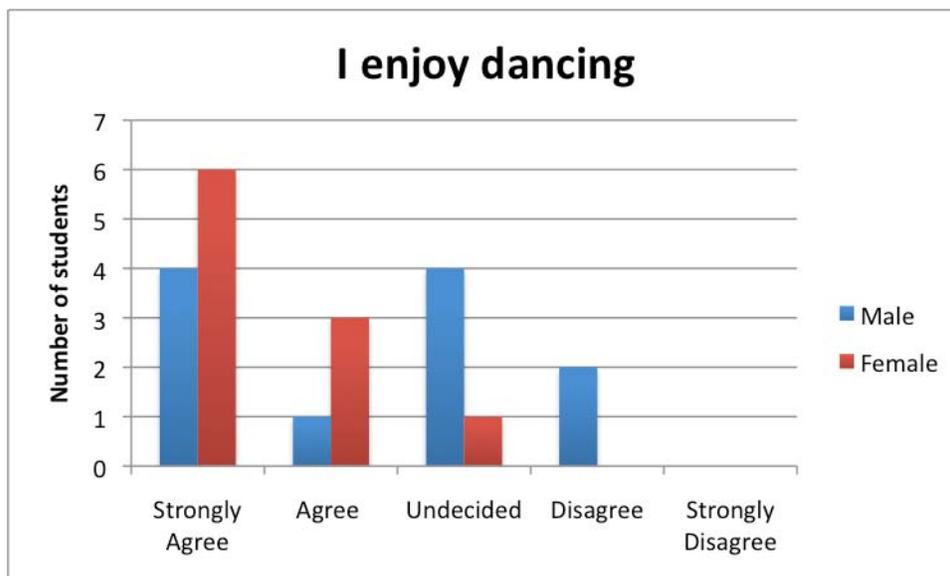


Figure 19 and 20 represent responses to Question 1 “Boys and girls can dance equally well” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students in the class who enjoyed dance increased after the intervention. Before the intervention there was only one male student who said he enjoyed dancing. After the intervention five male students said they enjoyed dancing. Before the intervention there were five male students who said they did not enjoy dancing. After the intervention only two male students said they don’t enjoy dancing. Four male students were still undecided. The females in the class felt exactly the same as they did before the intervention. Nine females still either strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed dance and one female was still undecided.

Figure 21. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 2 of Student Sports Survey

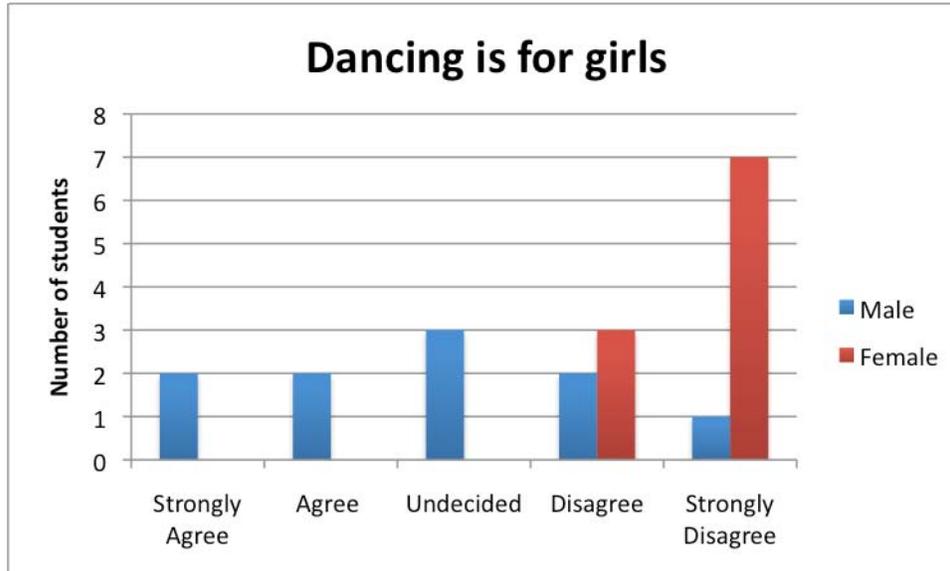


Figure 22. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 2 of Student Sports

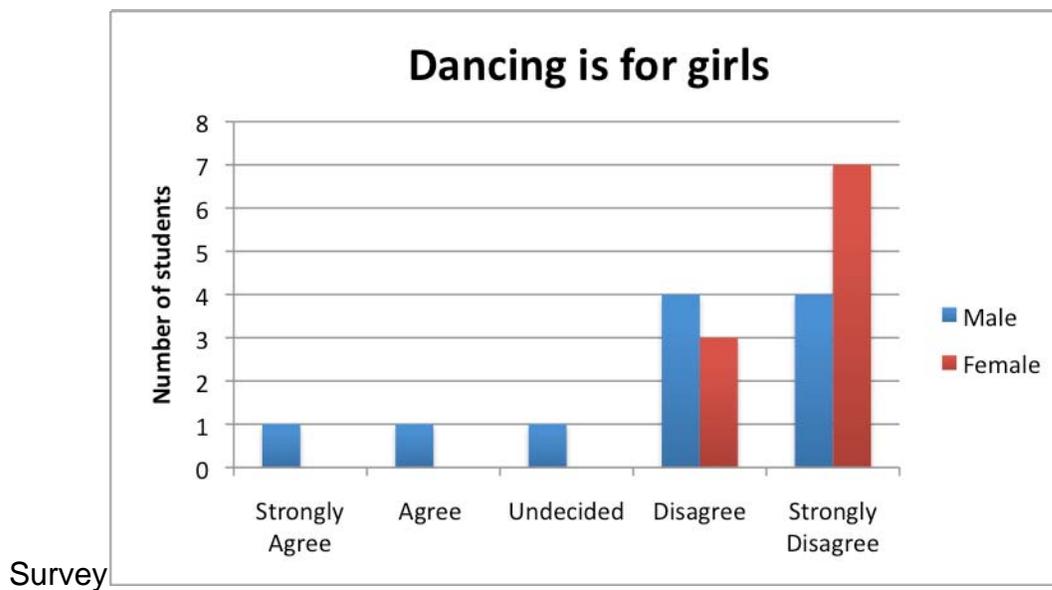


Figure 21 and 22 represent responses to Question 2 “Dancing is for girls” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students in the class that felt dancing was for girls decreased after the intervention. Before the intervention there were only three males that either disagreed or strongly disagreed that dancing was just for girls. After the intervention eight male students either strongly disagree or disagree that dancing is just for girls. The female students in the class felt exactly the same as they did before the intervention. All ten female students still either strongly disagree or disagree that dancing is just for girls.

Figure 23. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 3 of Student Sports Survey

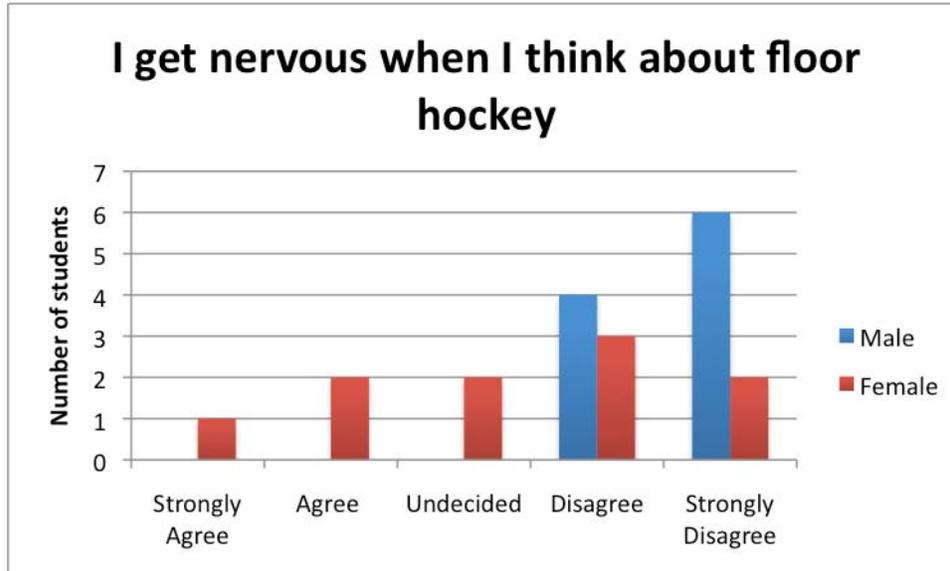


Figure 24. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 3 of Student Sports Survey

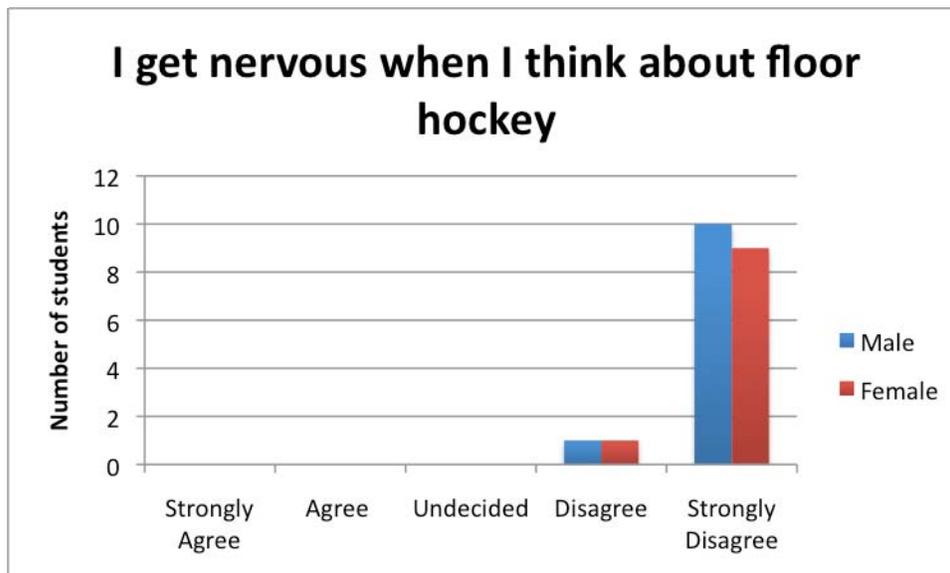


Figure 23 and 24 represent responses to Question 3 “I get nervous when I think about floor hockey” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the male students in the class felt exactly the same as they did before the intervention. All eleven male students still either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they got nervous when they thought about floor hockey. The data show that the female students went from having mixed opinions to not feeling nervous when they thought about floor hockey. Before the intervention five female students didn’t get nervous when they thought about floor hockey, while two female students did get nervous and one was undecided. After the intervention all ten female students either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they got nervous when they thought about floor hockey.

Figure 25. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 4 of Student Sports Survey

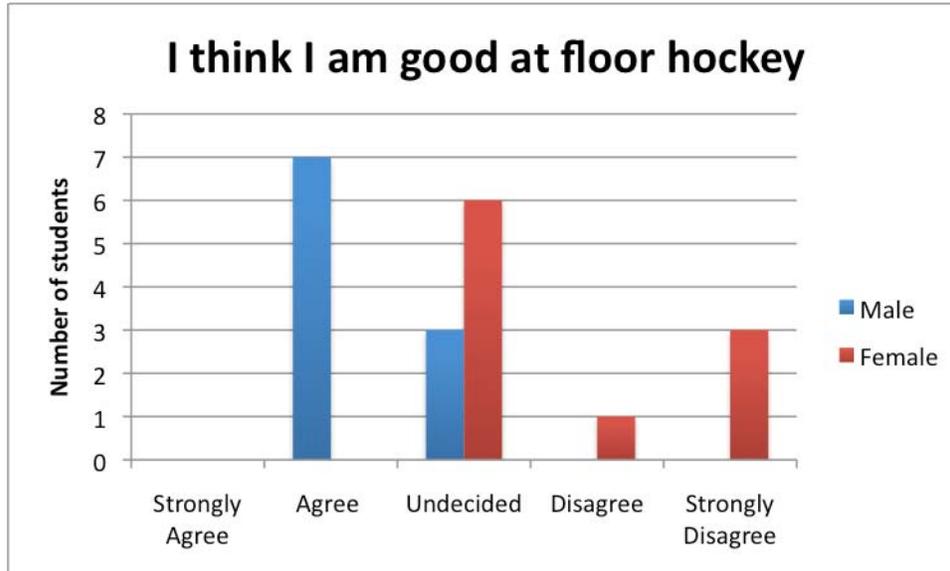


Figure 26. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 4 of Student Sports Survey

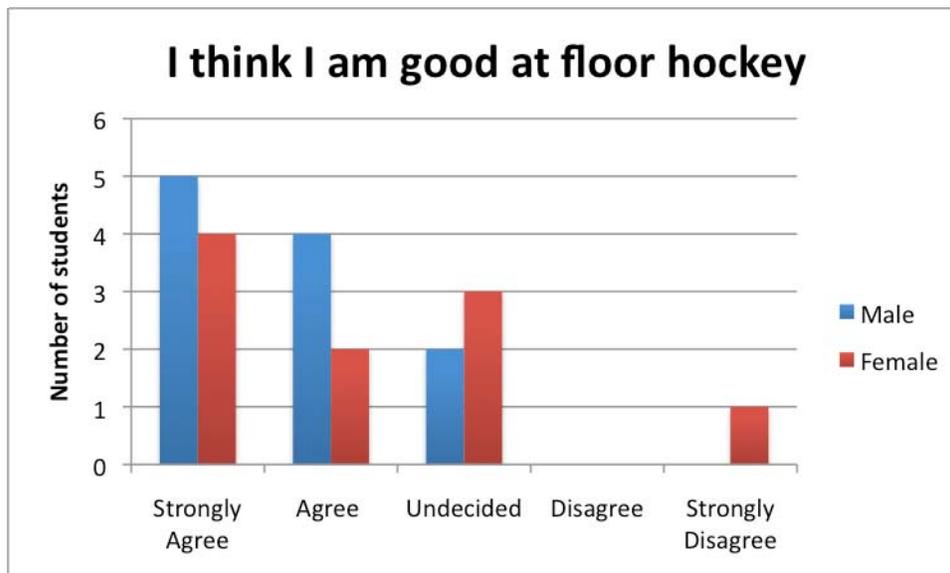


Figure 25 and 26 represent responses to Question 4 “I think I am good at floor hockey” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who thought they were good at floor hockey increased since the intervention. Before the intervention seven male students agreed that they were good at floor hockey and three were undecided. After the intervention five male students strongly agreed and four agreed that they were good at floor hockey. Two male students were still undecided. The data also show that the number of female students who thought they were good at floor hockey increased since the intervention. Before the intervention all of the students were either undecided or disagreed that they were good at floor hockey. After the intervention six female students felt they were good at floor hockey. Three females were still undecided and one felt they were not good at floor hockey.

Figure 27. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 5 of Student Sports Survey

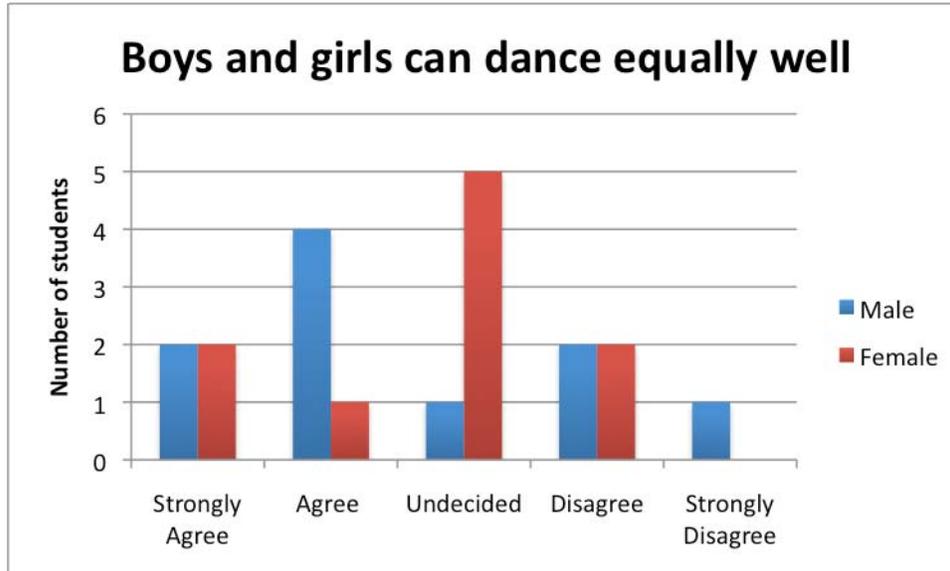


Figure 28. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 5 of Student Sports Survey

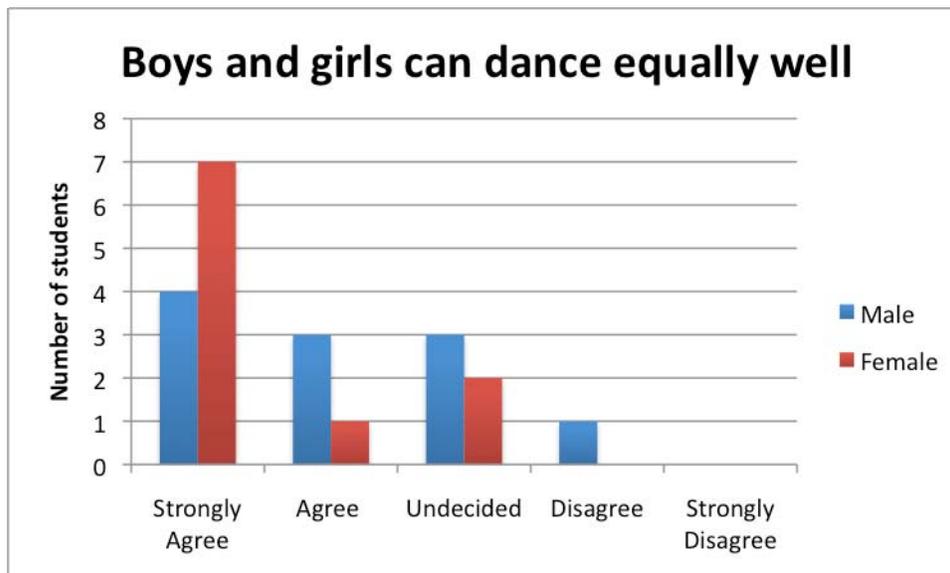


Figure 27 and 28 represent responses to Question 5 “Boys and girls can dance equally well” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that there was a slight increase in the number of male students who thought boys and girls could dance equally well. Before the intervention six male students thought boys and girls could dance equally well. After the intervention seven male students felt this way. Before the intervention three male students didn’t think boys and girls could dance equally well. After the intervention this number decreased to one male student. Two male students were still undecided. The female students went from being undecided about whether boys and girls could dance equally well to agreeing that they could. Before the intervention only three female students agreed that boys and girls could dance equally well, while two disagreed and five were undecided. After the intervention eight students agreed, none disagreed and two were undecided.

Figure 29. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 6 of Student Sports Survey

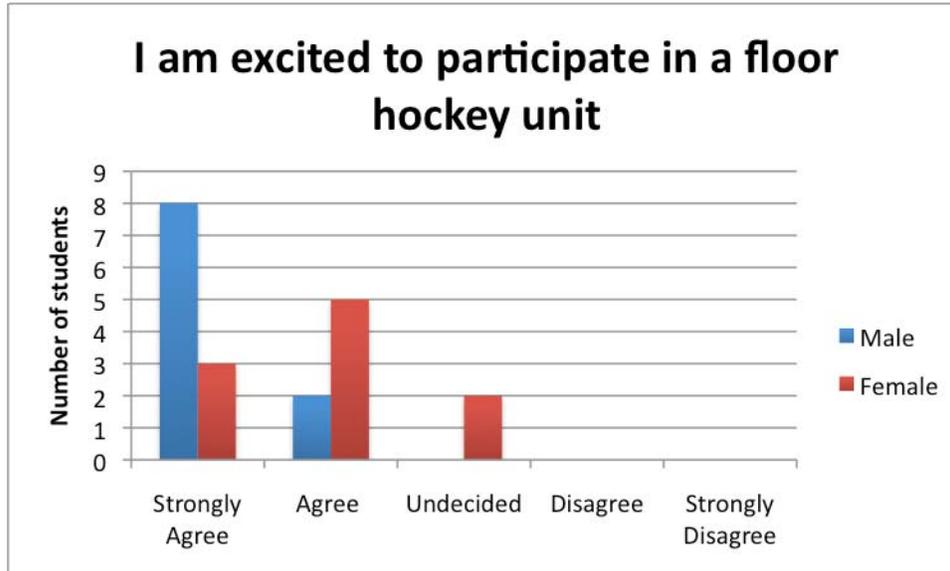


Figure 30. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 6 of Student Sports Survey

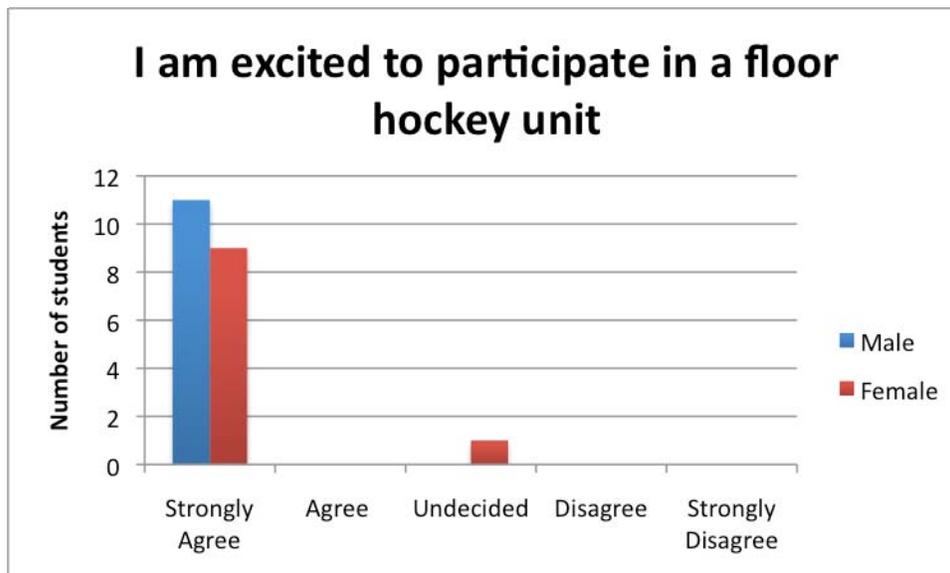


Figure 29 and 30 represent responses to Question 6 “I am excited to participate in a floor hockey unit” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students that were excited to participate in floor hockey slightly increased after the intervention. Before the intervention eight male students strongly agreed and two males agreed that they were excited to participate in a floor hockey unit. After the intervention all eleven male students strongly agreed that they were excited. The data show that the number of female students that were excited to participate in floor hockey has also increased since the intervention. Before the intervention three female students strongly agreed, five agreed and two were undecided whether they were excited to participate in a floor hockey unit. After the intervention nine students strongly agreed and one was undecided.

Figure 31. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 7 of Student Sports Survey

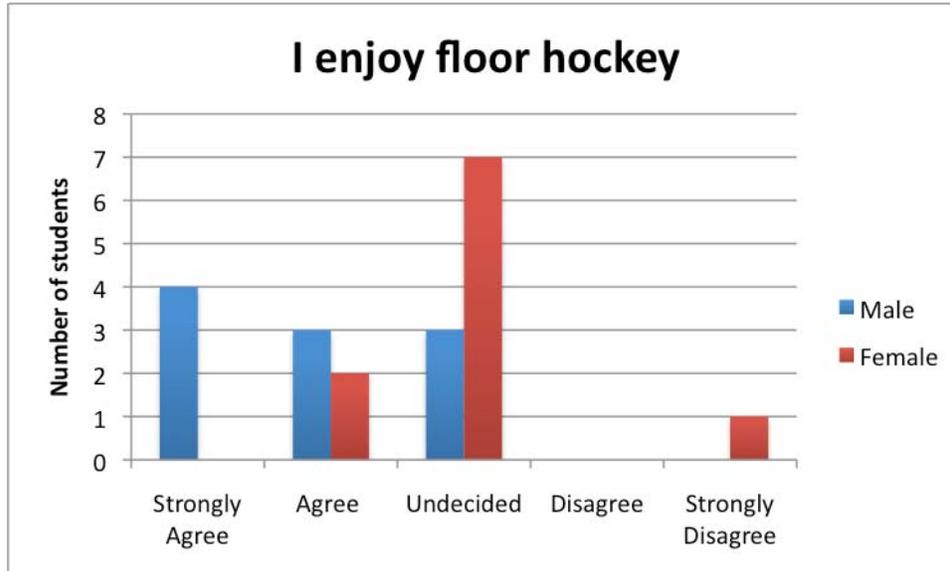


Figure 32. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 7 of Student Sports Survey

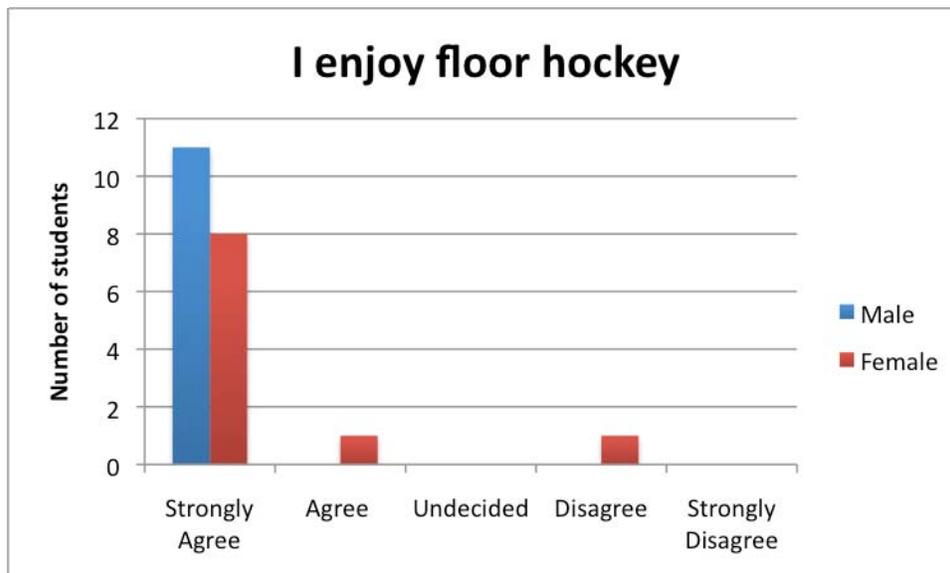


Figure 31 and 32 represent responses to Question 7 “I enjoy floor hockey” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who enjoyed floor hockey increased since the intervention. Before the intervention four male students strongly agreed and three agreed that they enjoyed floor hockey, while three were undecided. After the intervention all eleven male students strongly agreed that they enjoyed floor hockey. The data also show that the number of female students who enjoyed floor hockey increased since the intervention. Before the intervention two females agreed and one strongly disagreed that they enjoyed floor hockey, while seven were undecided. After the intervention eight females strongly agreed, one agreed, and one disagreed that they enjoyed floor hockey.

Figure 33. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 8 of Student Sports Survey

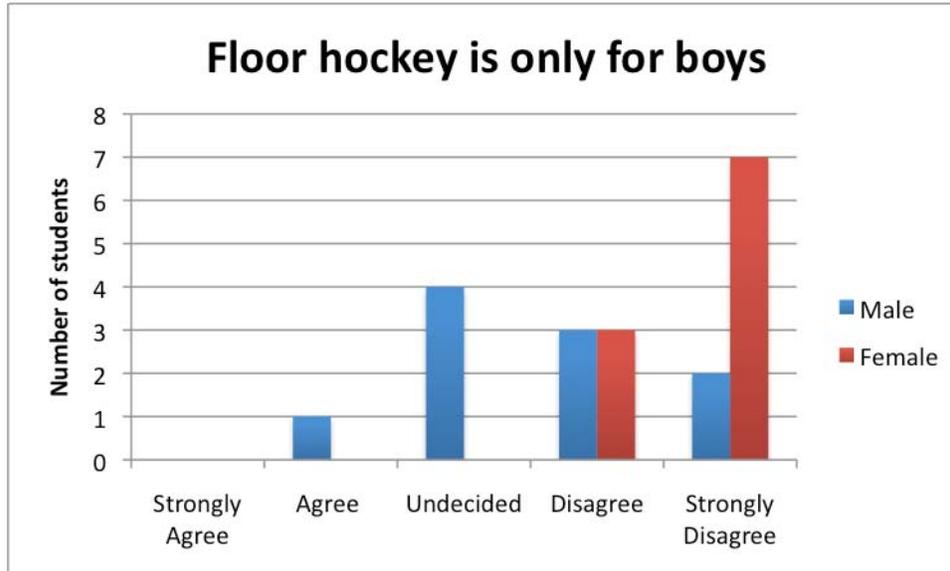


Figure 34. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 8 of Student Sports Survey

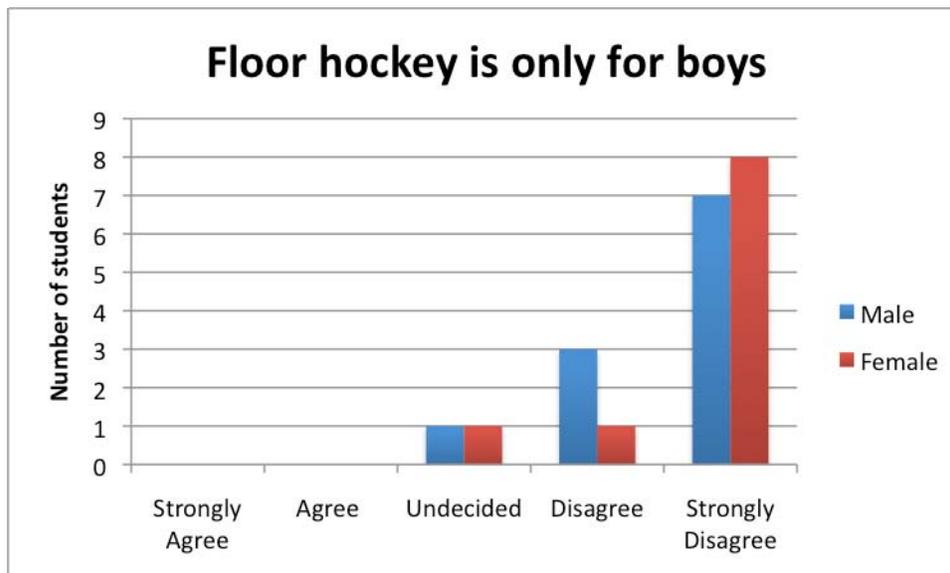


Figure 33 and 34 represent responses to Question 1 “Floor hockey is only for boys” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who thought floor hockey was only for boys decreased since the intervention. Before the intervention one male student agreed that floor hockey was only for boys, while three disagreed and two strongly disagreed. Four male students were undecided. After the intervention one male was still undecided, while three disagreed and seven strongly disagreed that floor hockey was only for boys. The data also showed that the number of female students who thought floor hockey was only for boys decreased slightly since the intervention. Before the intervention three female students disagreed and seven strongly disagreed that floor hockey was only for boys. After the intervention one female student was undecided, while one disagreed and eight strongly disagreed.

Figure 35. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 9 of Student Sports Survey

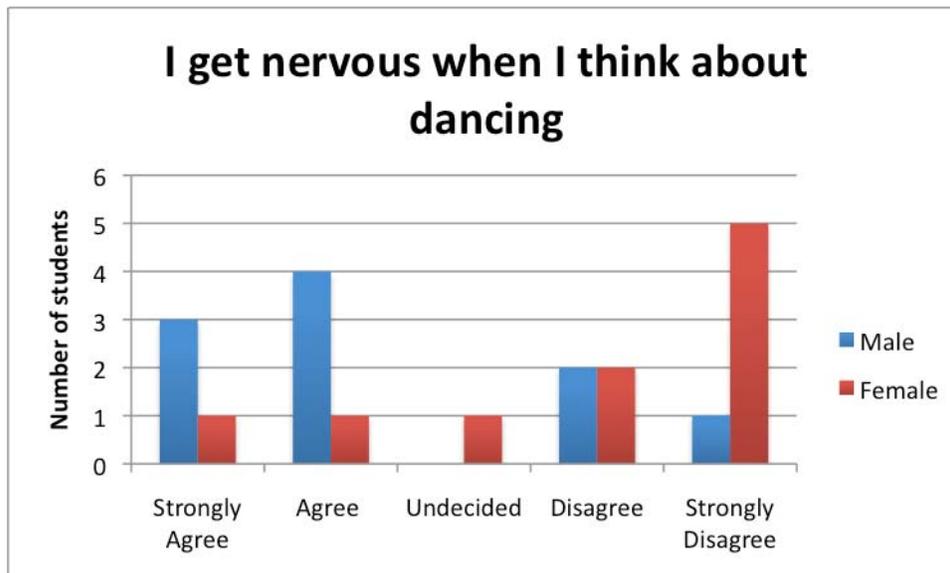


Figure 36. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 9 of Student Sports Survey

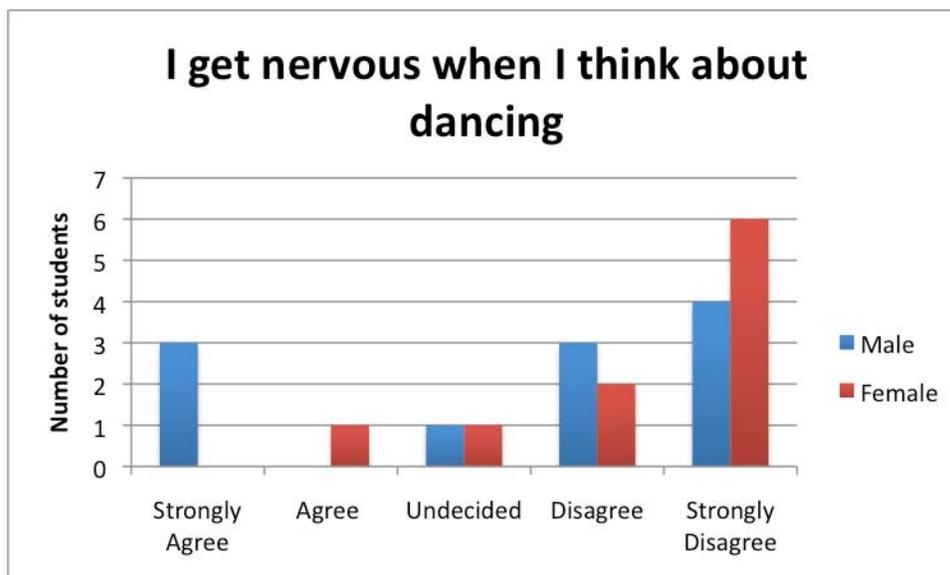


Figure 35 and 36 represent responses to Question 9 “I get nervous when I think about dancing” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who get nervous when they think about dancing has decreased since the intervention. Before the intervention seven male students either agreed or strongly agreed that they got nervous when they thought about dancing, while only three students either disagreed or strongly disagreed. After the intervention only three male students got nervous, while one was undecided, and seven did not get nervous when they thought about dancing. The data also showed that the number of female students who got nervous when they thought about dancing slightly decreased since the intervention. Before the intervention two female students got nervous when they thought about dancing, while one was undecided and seven did not get nervous. After the intervention, only one female got nervous, one was still undecided and eight did not get nervous.

Figure 37. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 10 of Student Sports Survey

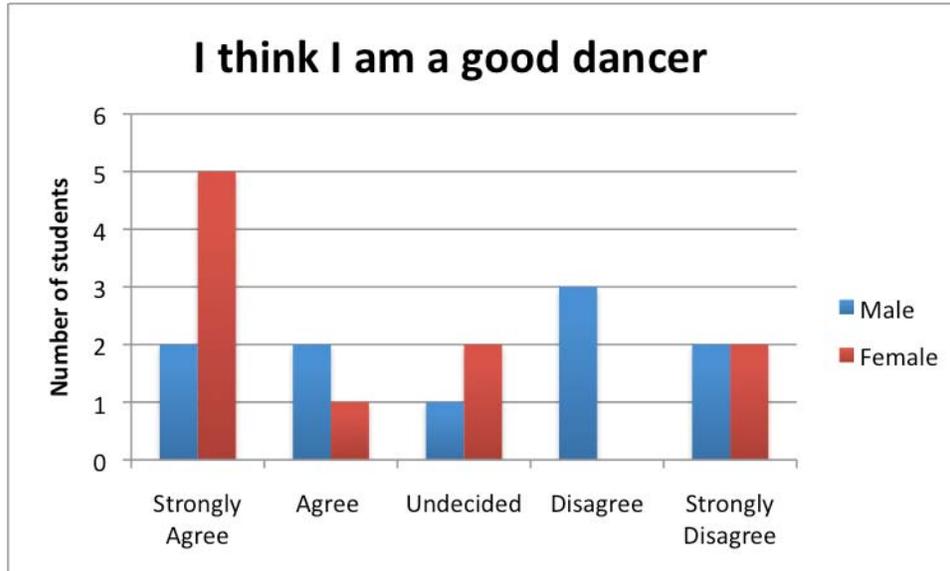


Figure 38. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 10 of Student Sports Survey

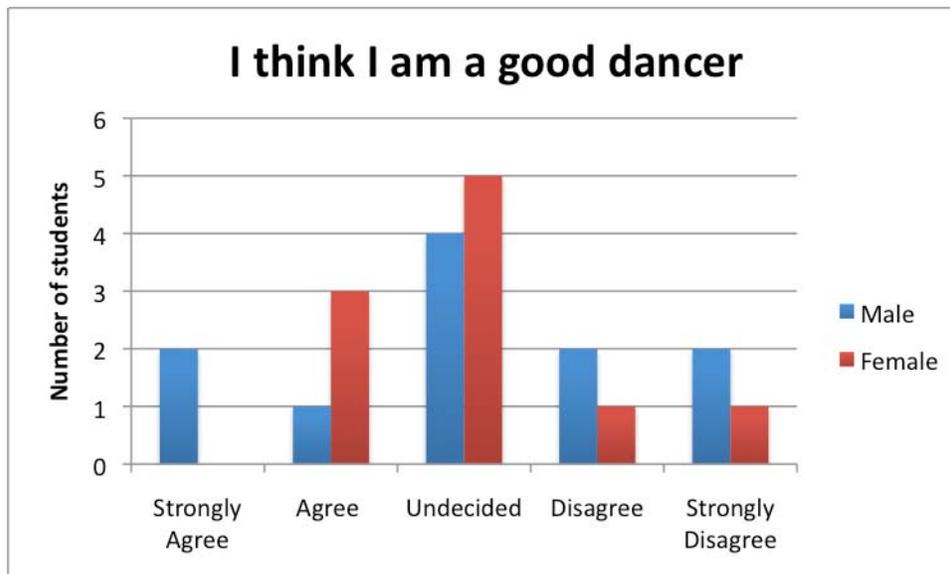


Figure 37 and 38 represent responses to Question 10 “I think I am a good dancer” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who think they are good dancers has slightly decreased since the intervention. Before the intervention four males thought they were good dancers, while five didn’t and one was undecided. After the intervention, only three male students thought they were good dancers, four didn’t and four disagreed. The data also showed that the number of female students who thought they were good dancers decreased since the intervention. Before the intervention six females thought they were good dancers, while two didn’t and two were undecided. After the intervention only three females thought they are good dancers, while two didn’t and five were undecided.

Figure 39. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 11 of Student Sports Survey

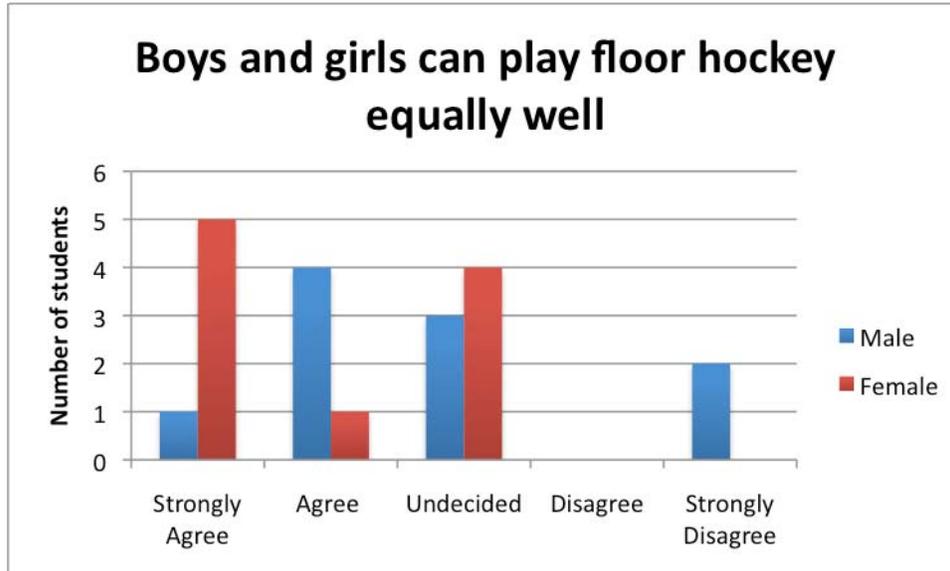


Figure 40. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 11 of Student Sports Survey

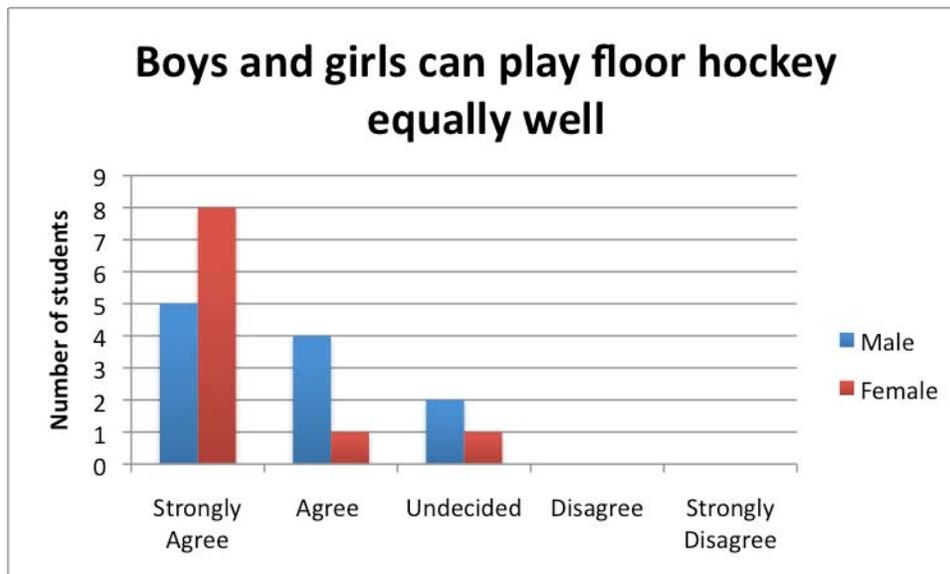


Figure 39 and 40 represent responses to Question 11 “Boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who think boys and girls can play floor hockey equally well has increased since the intervention. Before the intervention five male students thought that boys and girls could play floor hockey equally well, while two didn’t and three were undecided. After the intervention nine male students felt boys and girls could play floor hockey equally well, while two were undecided. The data show that the number of female students who thought boys and girls could play floor hockey equally well also increased since the intervention. Before the intervention five female students thought that boys and girls could play floor hockey equally well, while two didn’t and three were undecided. After the intervention nine of the females thought boys and girls could dance equally well, while two were undecided.

Figure 41. Pre-Intervention Responses to Question 12 of Student Sports Survey

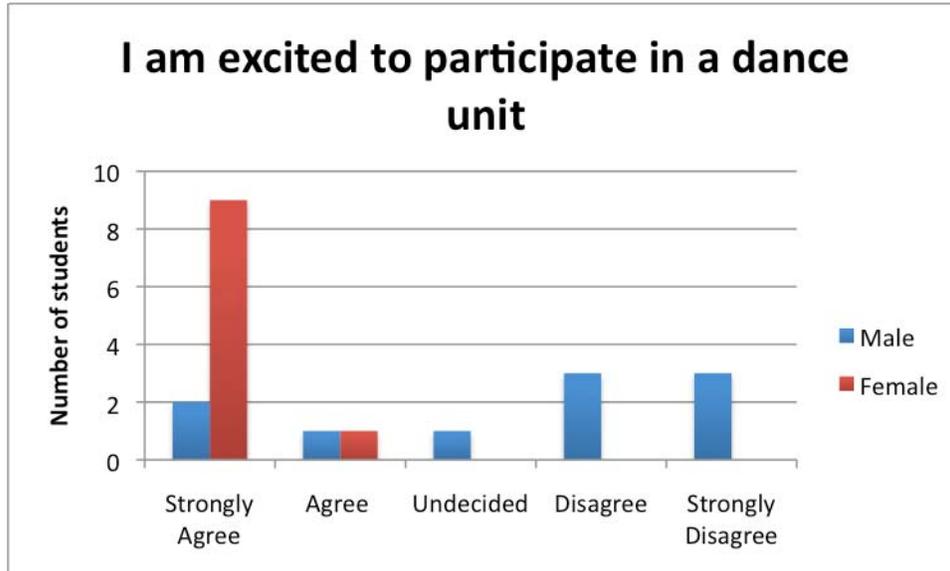


Figure 42. Post-Intervention Responses to Question 12 of Student Sports Survey

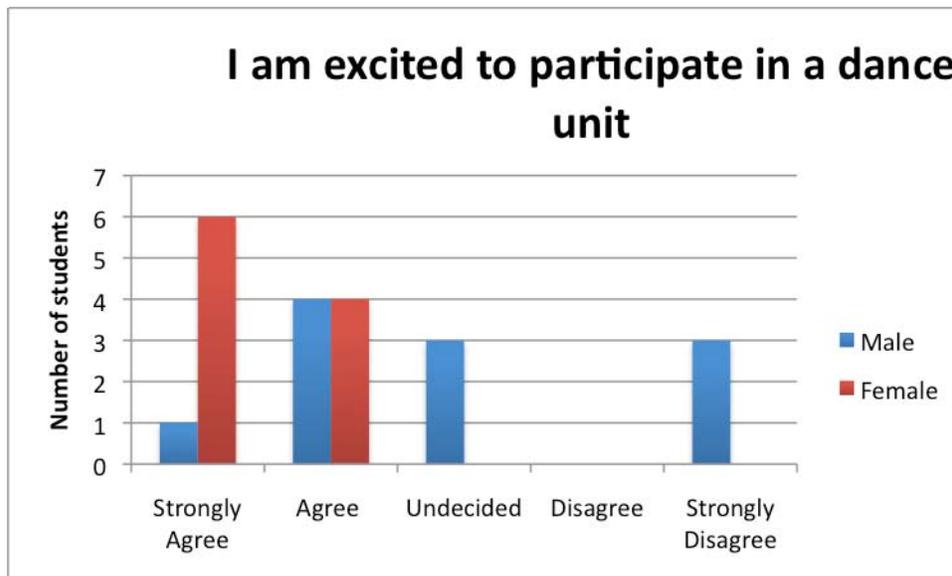


Figure 41 and 42 represent responses to Question 12 “I am excited to participate in dance unit” by the fifth grade students surveyed. The Pre-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 20 students surveyed. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The Post-Intervention Survey represents the responses of the 21 students surveyed. Eleven of these students were male and ten were female. The data show that the number of male students who were excited to participate in a dance unit increased since the intervention. Before the intervention three males were excited to participate in a dance unit, while six weren’t and one was undecided. After the intervention five male students were excited to participate in a dance unit, while three weren’t and three were undecided. The data also showed that the number of female students who were excited to participate in a dance unit slightly decreased since the intervention. Both before and after the intervention, all ten female students were excited to participate in a dance unit. Before the intervention nine female students strongly agreed and one agreed that they were excited to participate in a dance unit. After the intervention only six strongly agreed and four agreed they were excited.

Figure 43. Pre-Intervention Responses to Male Floor Hockey Observation Checklist

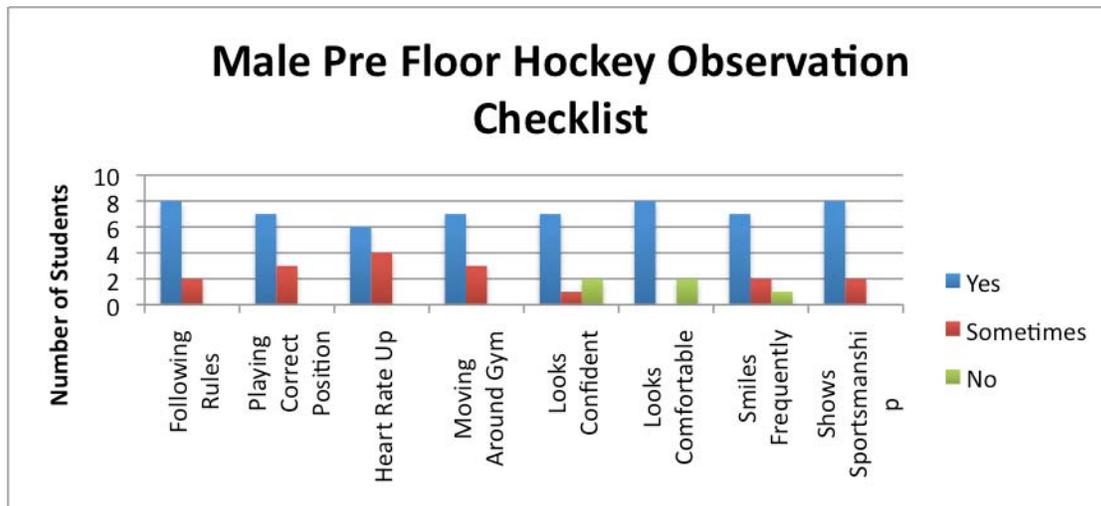


Figure 44. Post-Intervention Responses to Male Floor Hockey Observation Checklist

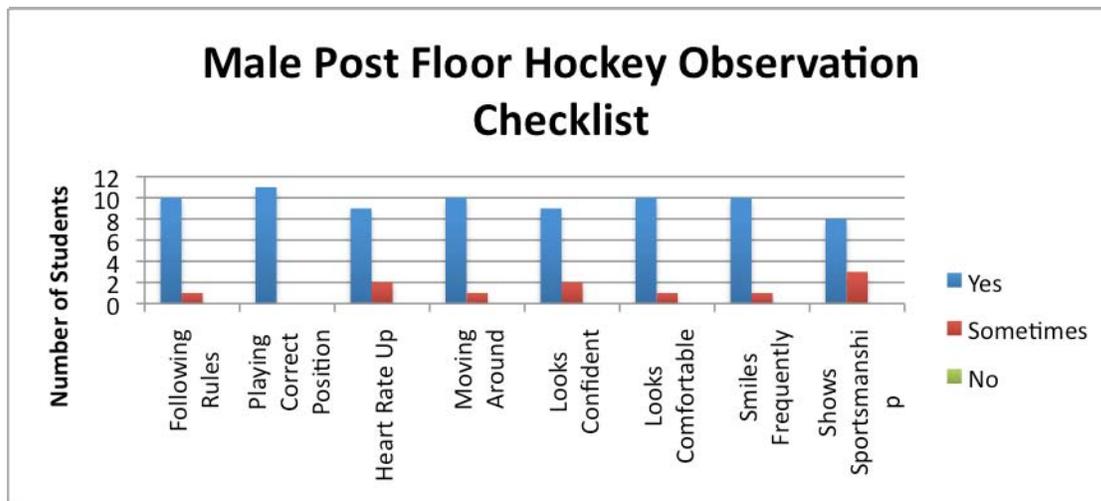


Figure 43 and 44 represent the data collected from the Pre and Post-Observation Checklists. The Pre-Observation chart represents the ten fifth grade male students that were observed during the first four days of their floor hockey unit. The Post-Observation chart represents the eleven fifth grade male students that were observed during the last four days of their floor hockey unit. The data show that the active participation of the male students in this class increased after the intervention. Before the intervention about six male students were actively participating all of the time, while four were only actively participating some of the time. After the intervention, nine of the male students were actively participating all of the time and only two were participating some of the time. This data also suggests that the self-esteem of the male students in this class increased since the intervention. Before the intervention seven male students exhibited high self-esteem all of the time, while two only did some of the time and two didn't any of the time. After the intervention eight males exhibit high self-esteem all of the time, while three did some of the time.

Figure 45 . Pre-Intervention Responses to Female Floor Hockey Observation Checklist

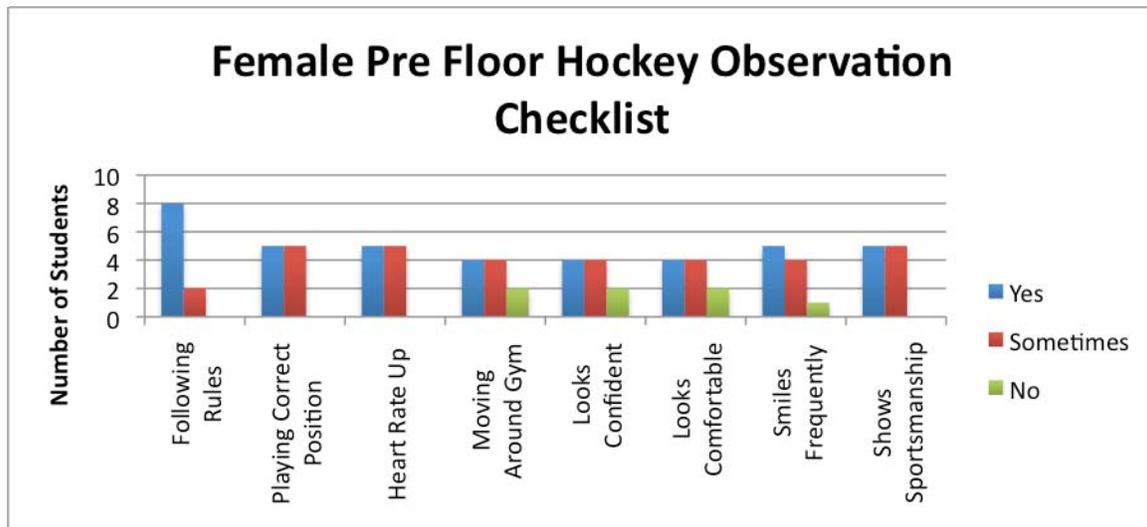


Figure 46 . Post-Intervention Responses to Female Floor Hockey Observation Checklist

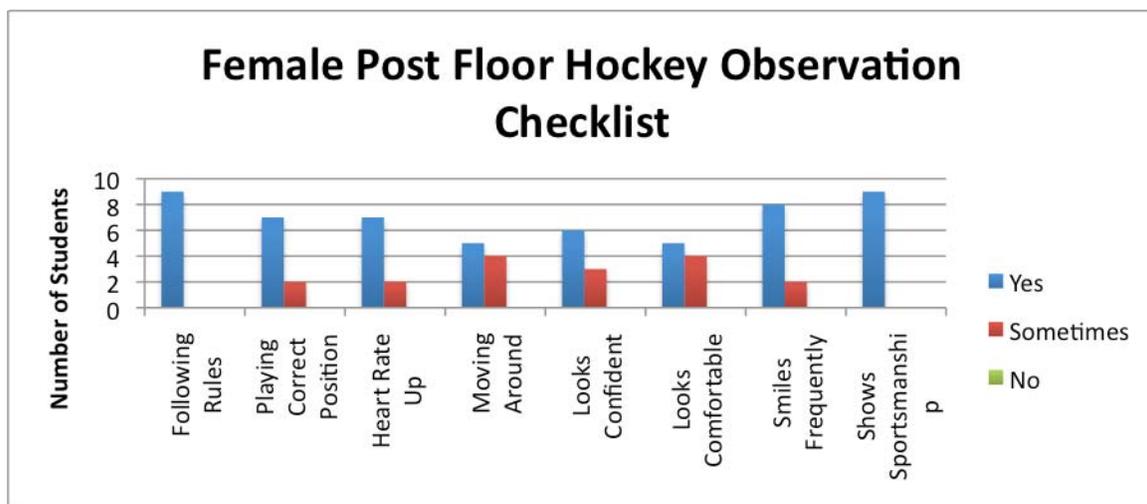


Figure 45 and 46 represent the data collected from the Pre and Post-Observation Checklists. The Pre-Observation chart represents the ten fifth grade female students that were observed during the first four days of their floor hockey unit. The Post-Observation chart represents the nine fifth grade female students that were observed during the last four days of their floor hockey unit. This data also suggests that the active participation of the female students in this class increased after the intervention. Before the intervention about four female students were actively participating all of the time, while four were only actively participating some of the time, and two weren't any of the time. After the intervention, seven of the female students were actively participating all of the time and only two were participating some of the time. This data also suggests that the self-esteem of the female students in this class increased since the intervention. Before the intervention four female students exhibited high self-esteem all of the time, while four only did some of the time and two didn't any of the time. After the intervention five female students exhibited high self-esteem all of the time, while four did some of the time.

Figure 47 . Pre-Intervention Responses to Male Dance Observation Checklist

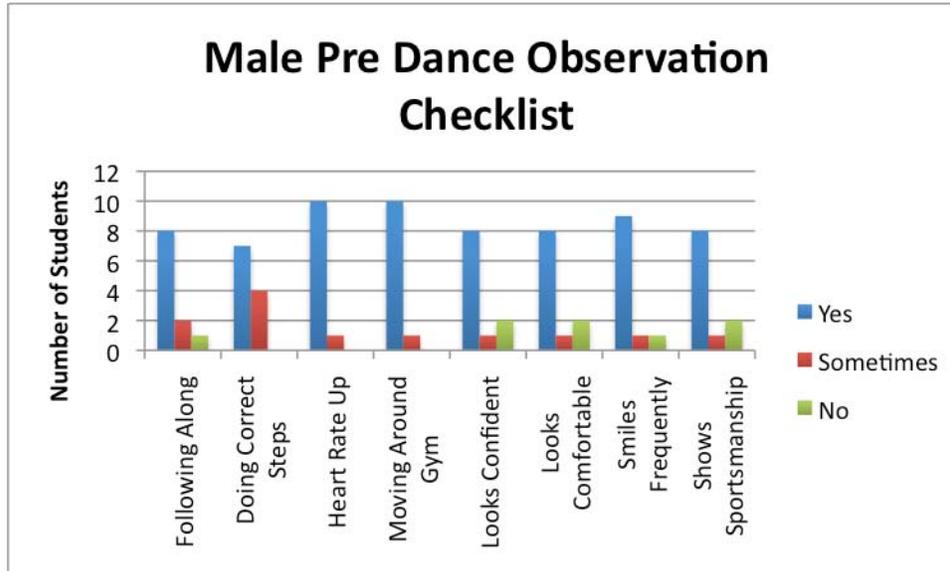


Figure 48 . Pre-Intervention Responses to Male Dance Observation Checklist

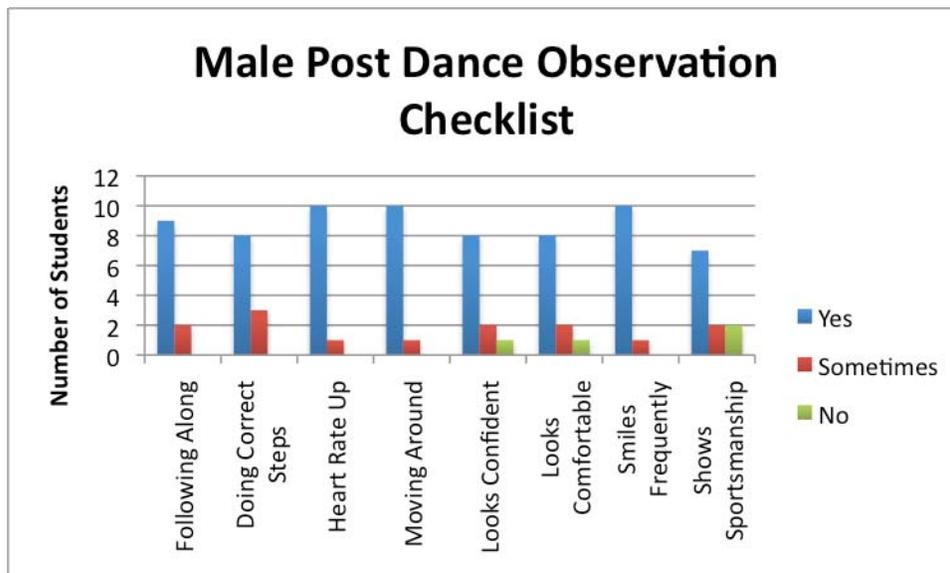


Figure 47 and 48 represent the data collected from the Pre and Post-Observation Checklists. The Pre-Observation chart represents the ten fifth grade male students that were observed during the first four days of their floor hockey unit. The Post-Observation chart represents the eleven fifth grade male students that were observed during the last four days of their floor hockey unit. This data suggests that the active participation of the male students in this class increased after the intervention. Before the intervention about eight male students were actively participating all of the time, while two were only actively participating some of the time, and one wasn't participating any of the time. After the intervention, eight of the male students were actively participating all of the time and three were participating some of the time. This data also suggest that the self-esteem of the male students in this class stayed the same since the intervention. Before the intervention eight male students exhibited high self-esteem all of the time, while two only did some of the time and one didn't any of the time. The results after the interventions were exactly the same.

Figure 49 . Pre-Intervention Responses to Female Dance Observation Checklist

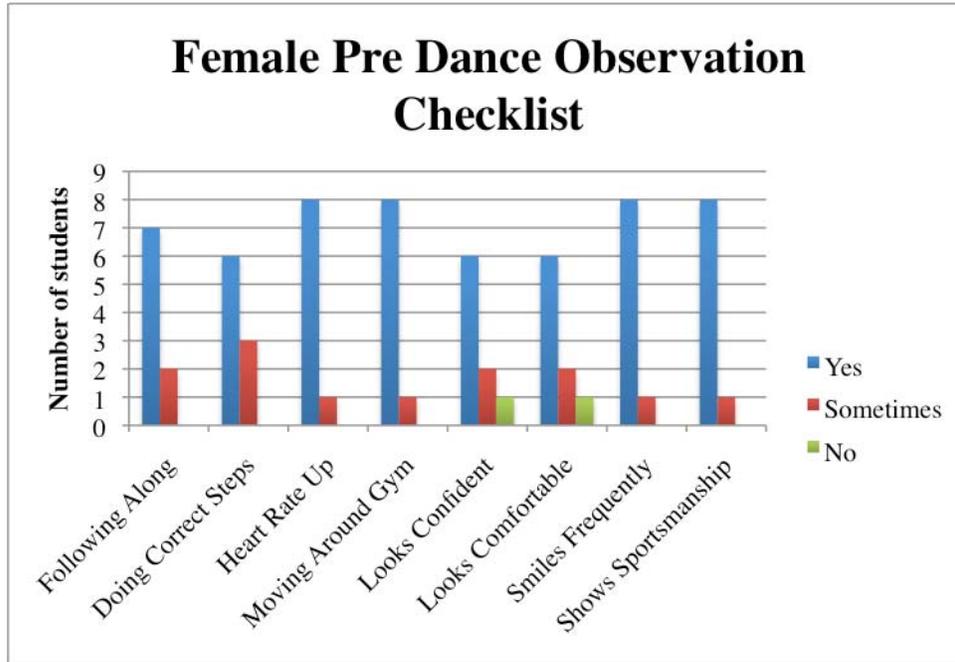


Figure 50 . Pre-Intervention Responses to Female Dance Observation Checklist

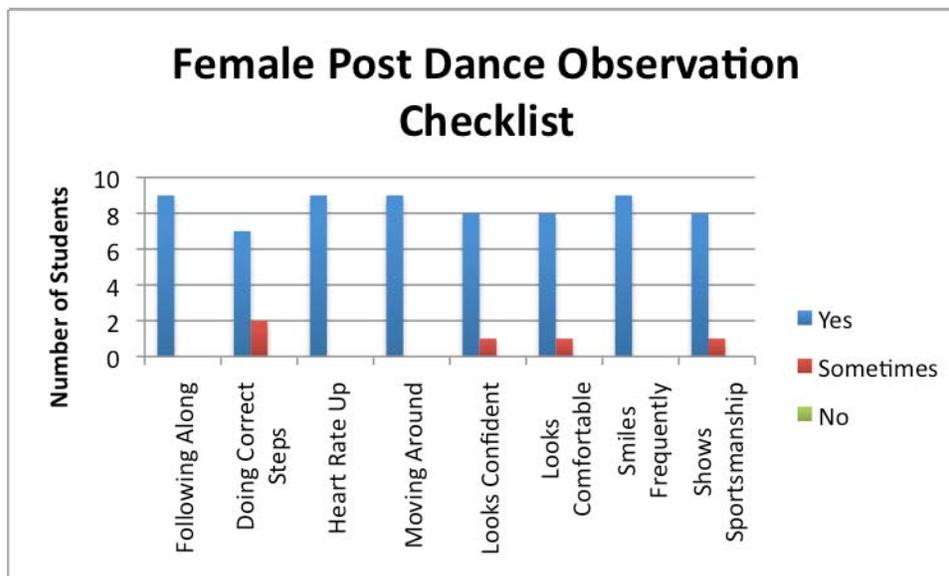


Figure 49 and 50 represent the data collected from the Pre and Post-Observation Checklists. The Pre-Observation chart represents the ten fifth grade female students that were observed during the first four days of their floor hockey unit. The Post-Observation chart represents the nine fifth grade female students that were observed during the last four days of their floor hockey unit. This data suggests that the active participation of the female students in this class increased after the intervention. Before the intervention six female students were actively participating all of the time, while three were only actively participating some of the time. After the intervention seven female students were actively participating all of the time, while two were only actively participating some of the time. This data also suggest that the self-esteem of the female students in this class increased after the intervention. Before the intervention six female students exhibited high self-esteem all of the time, while two only did some of the time and one didn't any of the time. After the intervention eight female students exhibited high self-esteem all of the time, while one did some of the time.

Figure 51. Responses to Floor Hockey Student Reflection

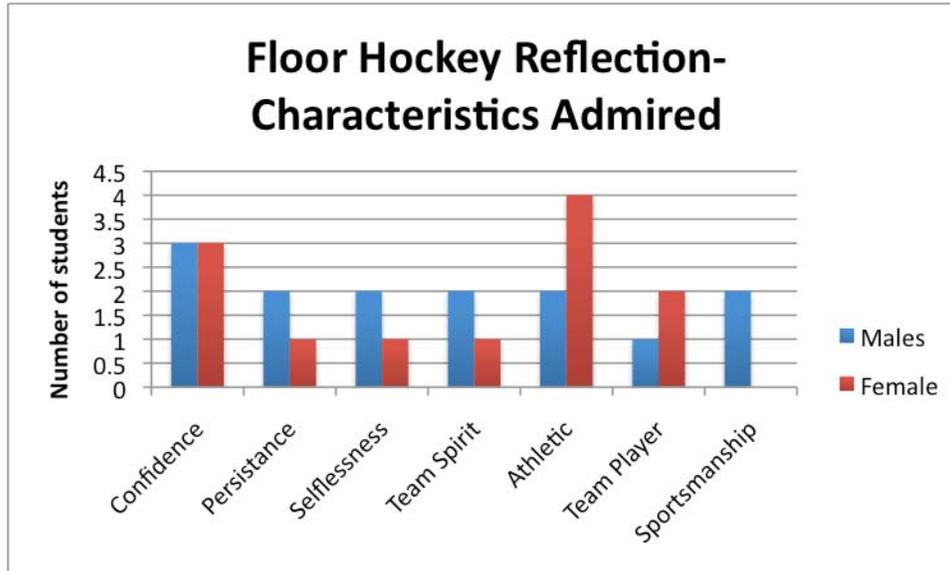


Figure 51 represents the reflections to the question “What characteristics do you admire or dislike about the female athletes in the clip?” by the 20 fifth grade students present on the intervention day of the dance unit. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data suggest that both the male and female students admired the confidence, persistence, selflessness, team spirit and being a team player equally well in the female athlete. The female students admired the female athletes athleticism more than the males, although the males did as well. The males admired the sportsmanship of the female athlete. No female student mentioned sportsmanship in their reflection.

Figure 52. Responses to Dance Student Reflection

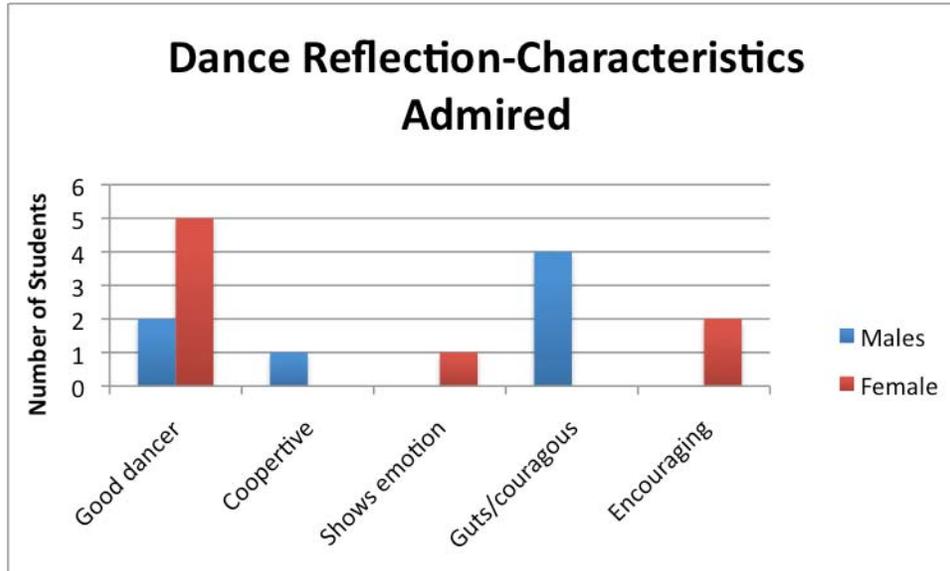


Figure 52 represents the reflections to the question “What characteristics do you admire or dislike about the male dancer in the clip?” by the 20 fifth grade students present on the intervention day of the dance unit. Ten of these students were male and ten were female. The data suggest that the male and female students had very different opinions on what they admired about the male dancers. There were many more female students than male students who thought he was a good dancer. One male student admired his cooperation while four male students admired his guts/courage. No female students mentioned either of these characteristics. One female student admired that he showed his emotions while two female students admired his encouragement. No male student mentioned either of these characteristics. Many of the male and female students agreed that the male dancer was not a good dancer. Four male students and three female students felt this way.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The data gathered show that raising consciousness of gender stereotypes in 5th grade physical education classed can change the participation level, as well as the self-esteem of the targeted students. The Pre- and Post-Intervention Student Sport Survey, Teacher Observation Checklists, and Students Reflections were all used to draw this conclusion.

Pre and Post-intervention Student Sports Survey

The goal of the pre and post surveys was to gauge the feelings and opinions of the students both before and after the intervention strategy. Generally, there was a slight increase in male self-esteem after the floor hockey intervention. There was an even greater increase in female self-esteem after the floor hockey intervention. These results indicate that when it comes to a stereotypical male activity like floor hockey, the female students' self esteem will benefit the most from this intervention strategy.

The results from the dance unit were a little more complex. There was a noticeable increase in male self-esteem after the dance intervention, in all but one area. There was a slight decrease when it came to the male students thinking they were good dancers, although there were increases in their enjoyment and excitement and decreases in their nervousness. Generally, the female students' self-esteem stayed the same after the intervention with a few slight fluctuations up and down. There was also a slight decrease in the excitement about dance after the intervention. It is possible that the dance unit didn't live up to their expectations, but that question was not asked. It appears

that when it comes to a stereotypically female activity, like dance, the male students' self esteem will change the most from this intervention strategy.

Teacher Observation Checklist

The teacher observation checklists were the second way in which data was drawn. One of purposes of the teacher observation checklist was for the teacher researcher to assess changes in the students' active participation by observing if they were following rules, playing the correct position, getting their heart rates up and moving around the gym. Another purpose was to assess student's self-esteem by observing if students looked confident, looked comfortable, smiled frequently and showed sportsmanship.

The teacher observation checklists were used for both the male and female students in the floor hockey unit and indicated that both the active participation and self-esteem of the students increased after the interventions were introduced. These results indicate that when it comes to a stereotypically male activity, like floor hockey, both male and female students' active participation and self-esteem will benefit from these intervention strategies.

The teacher observation checklists were also used during the dance unit and indicated that the self-esteem of the female students increased, while the males' self-esteem stayed the same after the interventions. This indicated that when it comes to a stereotypically female activity, like dance, both male and female students' active participation will change as a result of these intervention strategies and that female students' self-esteem will change more than male students' self-esteem.

Student Reflection

The student reflection was the third and final way that data were used to see if student attitudes toward the activities changed. The purpose of the student reflection was for students to reflect upon what they had just seen in the movie clip and the gender stereotypes they experienced.

During the floor hockey unit, all the students were asked what characteristics they admired about the female hockey players in the movie “Chak de India.” The male students seemed to admire the self-esteem characteristics, such as confidence and persistence, more than the physical characteristics, such as being athletic. On the other hand, the female students seemed to admire the physical characteristics more than the self-esteem characteristics.

During the dance unit, all the students were asked what characteristics they admired about the male dancers in the movie “High School Musical.” The male students said they admired the self-esteem characteristics, such as having guts and being courageous, more than the physical characteristic of being a good dancer. On the other hand, the female students seemed to admire the physical characteristic of being a good dancer, more than the self-esteem characteristics. These results indicate that whether students are in a stereotypically male activity like floor hockey or a stereotypically female activity like dance, the male students admire the self-esteem characteristics such as being confident, persistent, and courageous, more than the female students. The female students admire the physical characteristics, such as being athletic or a good dancer, more than the male students.

Physical education teachers can increase their students' active participation and self-esteem by introducing students to gender-conscious units and by discussing the gender stereotypes associated with each.

Reflection

While I would say that my research project went fairly smoothly, there were a few things that did not work out exactly how I had expected. Although I feel that my interventions were worthwhile and successful, I feel that the simple fact of participating in the floor hockey and dance units also impacted the students. Both of these units were new to these students. I think that by both participating and practicing each of these activities increased their active participation and self-esteem in these areas.

Initially, I was planning to include 24 students in my research. On the days of the Pre and Post-intervention Surveys a few of the students were absent. Since the surveys were anonymous, I was not able to have the absent students make up the surveys without risking revealing their identity. This is why there are only 20 students included in the Pre-Intervention Survey and 21 students included in the Post-Intervention Survey. The same goes for the Teacher Observation Checklist and the Student Reflection. If a student was absent on the day that I was supposed to observe them or the day we wrote our reflections, I did not gather information on that student. I do not feel that my results would have been much different even if I had included all 24 students in my results. The information I gathered from my students was pretty strong and I don't think the opinions and actions of a few more students would have changed them

significantly.

If I were to conduct this research project again, I would change the wording in a few of my Pre and Post-intervention Surveys. One of the questions states “Dancing is for girls.” I would change this to “Dancing is only for girls.” I think this change makes the questions more specific and easier to answer. Another question states “Floor hockey is for girls.” I would change this to “Floor hockey is only for boys.” I would add the word only again to make the question more specific and easier to answer. I would change the girls to boys, because floor hockey is stereotypically a male activity.

I will have to say that this research paper was one of the hardest things academically that I have ever had to do. Before joining this masters program I don't think I would have ever imagined myself doing research like this. Although I am very happy and proud to have done this research, I do not foresee myself doing it again. It was a lot of work. When I started this program I planned to do my research with two other physical education teachers. For unforeseen reasons I had to switch cohorts and finish the program and research on my own. I ended up changing everything from my research topic to the interventions I implemented. I found out a lot about myself and realized that I could do this on my own. All along I told myself to take it one step at a time. I tried not to look too far ahead, and just concentrated on the things that needed to be done in the present. It was very hard at times to see other groups flying by so quickly because they had three group members to do the same work that only I could do. Although it was very hard to work on my own there were some perks! I was able

to work on my research when I had time and didn't have to worry about getting together with my group members outside of class. I also got to make all of the decisions myself. I didn't have to compromise on anything that I wanted to do. At the same time this was hard, because I didn't have anyone to bounce ideas off of. Luckily my research teacher was very helpful in this area. She was the one who helped me revamp my topic and come up with my interventions. I am very grateful for her help.

I learned a lot about my students through this experience as well. I learned that they are very open to trying new things. I learned that even when they are unsure or have negative feelings about something, they usually give it the benefit of the doubt and at least try it. I was expecting my male students to give me a harder time about the dance unit I taught them. I knew they would eventually dance, but I really thought I would have to pull teeth to get them to start. Even though the majority of the boys were nervous and didn't enjoy dancing they gave it their all. I think they were really surprised at how much fun they ended up having. I don't think dancing was anything like what they expected. I bet them from the beginning that if they gave dancing a try they would have at least a little bit of fun. Many students told me that I was right and they did have fun. Getting this unexpected response from my students definitely made me feel good as a teacher.

I would hope that my students learned a few things from me through this experience. I really hope that they look at gender stereotypes in a different way now. I hope my students will share some of the lessons they learned by treating

others with respect, especially when it comes to gender. I also hope my students stay true to what they believe and don't follow others just because it is the "cool thing to do." I hope that the boys who now enjoy dance continue to dance and the same with the girls who enjoy floor hockey. I hope that my students continue to take risks and try new things throughout their lives.

My plan is to continue to break down gender stereotypes in my physical education classroom. I feel this is one way I can help my students build their self-esteem. I will continue to teach a wide range of activities even if they are stereotypical of one gender over another. I will also try to have more discussions about these activities and see how the students feel about them. I do not know for sure to what extent my intervention affected my students, but my goal was to help change the thinking of at least one students. I think I did at least that.

REFERENCES

- Alderman, B., Beighle, A., & Pangrazi, R. (2006). Enhancing motivation in Physical Education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, 77*, 41-45, {51}.
- Biddle, S. (2005). *Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviors in Youth: Issues and Controversies*. Retrieved June 23, 2008, from www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pubmed/14971190
- Boyd, H. (2006) *Gender Differences: 5th Grade*. Retrieved June 19, 2008, from www.education.com/magazine/article/Gender_Fifth_Grade/
- Brown, J. (2005). *Developing Boys Versus Developing Girls*. Retrieved June 16, 2008 from <http://www.southern.usta.com/sportscience/fullstorysp?iNewsid=185330&itype=3919&icategoryid=395>
- Byrd, J. (2007, March 30). *The Impact of Physical Activity and Obesity on Academic Achievement Among Elementary Students*. Retrieved on June 18, 2008 from <http://cnx.org/content/m14420/1.1/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007). *Active Children, Active Families* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 90-1679). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved June 23, 2008, from http://www.cdc.gov/YouthCampaign.marketing/adults/hispanic_version.htm

- Daniels, S. R. (Spring 2006). The consequences of childhood overweight and obesity. *The Future of Children*, 16, Retrieved March 21, 2008, from <http://www.futureofchildren.org>
- Drever, P. (2002). *Self Esteem Through Sport*. Retrieved June 18, 2008 from http://www.bluearth.org/articles_drever.cfm
- Etnier, L.E. (2004). *Gender Equality as the Evaluating Tool for Middle/Junior High School Physical Education Curriculums, Facilities & Equipment*. Unpublished Manuscript, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.
- Finello, K. *Avoiding Gender Stereotypes*. Retrieved June 18, 2008 from www.parents.com/toddlers/development/behavioral/avoiding-gender-stereotypes/
- Henning, B., & Stark, T. (2001). *Gender equity in a physical education Classroom: A Look at Achievement and Engagement in a Heterogeneous Coeducational Classroom*. Abstract retrieved from EBSCO Host database on June 18, 2008.
- McCullough, L. (2001). *Does learning come in pink and blue?? Gender and Learning*. [Powerpoint Presentation]. Retrieved June 18, 2008 from <http://physics.uwstout.edu/staff/mccullough/PERCJul01GenderLearn.pdf>
- Mowling, C. M., Brock, S. J., Eiler, K. K., & Rudisill, M. E. (2004). Student motivation in physical education: Breaking down barriers. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 75, 40-45, 51.

- Schor, E. (1999). *Caring for your School Aged Child: Age 5-12*. New York: American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Sever, C. (2005) Gender and Sport. Retrieved October 10, 2008, from http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/docs/sport_englisch.pdf
- Sharpe, W. (2000, April 17). Single-gender classes: Are they better. Education World. Retrieved June 21, 2007, from <http://www.education-world.com/a-curr/curr215.shtml>
- Sheslow, D, & Lukens, C.T. (2005). *Developing you child's self esteem*. Retrieved June 19, 2008, from kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/self_esteem.html
- Sit, C., & Lindner, K. J. (2006). Situational state balances and participation motivation in youth sport: A reversal theory perspective. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*. 76, 369-384.
- Singh, M. (1998). *Gender Issues in the Language Arts Classroom*. Retrieved from Eric Digest on June 18, 2008. (ED426409)
- Sousa, D. A. (2006). *How the Brain Learns*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
- Status, J. (1996, May 2). Same-sex classes used to build discipline, self-esteem: Teachers say there are fewer distractions and less teasing in these classrooms. *The Virginian-Pilot*. Retrieved June 21, 2008, from <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/VA-news/VAPilot/issues/1996/vp960502/04300130.htm>

United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). *The surgeon general's call to action to prevent and decrease overweight and obesity* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 91-1764). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved March 21, 2008 from http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_adolescents.htm

Women's Sports Foundation. (2005). *Title IX Q&A*. Retrieved June 18, 2008 from www.womenssportsfoundation.org/Content/Articles/Issues/Title

Welk, G. (1999) *Promoting Physical Activity in Children: Parental Influences*. Retrieved June 18, 2008 from www.ericdigest.org/2000-3/activity.htm

Appendixes

Appendix A
Pre-Student Sports Survey

Gender _____ Date _____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and thoughtfully. Using the following scale, please circle the response that matches how you truly feel. Remember, there are no right and wrong answers. It is your opinion and feelings that count!

SA - Strongly Agree

A - Agree

UD - Undecided

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

1. I enjoy dancing. SA A UD D SD
2. Dancing is for girls. SA A UD D SD
3. I get nervous when I think about floor hockey. SA A UD D SD
4. I think I am a good at floor hockey. SA A UD D SD
5. Boys and girls can dance equally well. SA A UD D SD
6. I am excited to participate in a floor hockey unit. SA A UD D SD
7. I enjoy floor hockey. SA A UD D SD
8. Floor hockey is for girls. SA A UD D SD
9. I get nervous when I think about dancing. SA A UD D SD
10. I think I am a good dancer. SA A UD D SD
11. Boys & girls can play floor hockey equally well. SA A UD D SD
12. I am excited to participate in a dance unit. SA A UD D SD

Appendix B

Teacher Observation Checklist

Floor Hockey/Dance

Gender:

Date:

Put a check mark in the column that best describes the student.

| <u>Active Participation</u> | <u>Yes</u> | <u>Sometimes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------------|-----------|
| Following rules | | | |
| Playing correct position | | | |
| Getting heart rate up | | | |
| Moving around gym | | | |
| <u>Self-Esteem</u> | | | |
| Looks confident | | | |
| Looks comfortable | | | |
| Smiles frequently | | | |
| Shows sportsmanship | | | |

Appendix C

Floor Hockey Student Reflection

Gender _____ Date _____

Reflection Question: What characteristics do you admire or dislike about the female athletes in the clip?????

Appendix D

Dance Student Reflection

Gender _____ Date _____

Reflection Question: What characteristics do you admire or dislike about the male dancer in the clip?????

Appendix E

Floor Hockey Lesson Plan

Day 5

Objectives: Students will learn about and reflect on the gender stereotypes they see in the video and hear from other students. They will learn what a roundtable discussion is and participate in one.

Materials: Video, TV, DVD player, trigger question, reflection paper, pencils.

Procedure:

1. Show Video "Girls in Sports". This video will be used to motivate everyone, but especially the girls.
2. PE teacher points out main topics from video.
3. Teacher poses a trigger question. (What characteristics do you admire/dislike about the female athlete in the clip?) Using this trigger question all students will now participate in a round table discussion. For the round table discussion all 24 students will sit in a circle, so that they can see each other. They will each get one minute to answer the trigger question. During their minute they can't be interrupted and they must talk for the whole minute. If we run out of time, we will continue our round table the next day.

Assessment:

At the end of class the students will be asked to write down their response to the trigger question on a piece of paper. They will turn in this paper at the end of class.

Appendix F

Dance Lesson Plan

Day 5

Objectives: Students will learn about and reflect on the gender stereotypes they see in the video and hear from other students. They will learn what a roundtable discussion is and participate in one.

Materials: Video, TV, DVD player, trigger question, reflection paper, pencils.

Procedure:

4. Show Video clip from High School Musical. This video will be used to motivate everyone, but especially the boys.
5. PE teacher points out main topics from video clip.
6. Teacher poses a trigger question. (What characteristics do you admire/dislike about the male dancer in the clip?) Using this trigger question all students will now participate in a round table discussion. For the round table discussion all 24 students will sit in a circle, so that they can see each other. They will each get one minute to answer the trigger question. During their minute they can't be interrupted and they must talk for the whole minute. If we run out of time, we will continue our round table the next day.

Assessment:

At the end of class the students will be asked to write down their response to the trigger question on a piece of paper. They will turn in this paper at the end of class.

Appendix G

Round Table Discussion Guidelines

Our Purpose: In the Roundtable we are exploring a new way of coming together as a class to think about and shared our opinions and ideas. We are doing this in a way that we can be fair and respectful of each and every student

Our Format: Today's Roundtable is designed to take **20** minutes. Five minutes are allotted for the reviewing the Roundtable Guidelines and to allow for the facilitator's role. This leaves fifteen minutes for individual comments with the time distributed equally among all present.

Guidelines for Speaking: After the trigger question is posed, signal when you are ready to speak or you may pass until you are ready. Take only one turn to speak and limit your comments to about **thirty** seconds the first round. State your response to the trigger question going into as much detail as you feel comfortable with. Talk only about what YOU are thinking and feeling, not responding directly to what anyone else said. Support your comments with specific details, examples or experiences.

Guidelines for Listening: As we listen to each other's comments we move from mindless hearing to mindful listening and thinking about the other person's point of view. We reflect on what is said as it applies to our lives and we become conscious mindful listeners, open to the speaker's point of view.

Guidelines for Responding: As a matter of course, we support the person who spoke with "Thank you." We will save any other responses until after the Roundtable.

Adapted from D. Ryan's model used in Saint Xavier University MATL-68, Fall 2007.

Appendix H

Parent Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Breaking Down Gender Stereotypes: Increasing 5th grade Physical
Education Participation by Building Self Esteem.

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am currently enrolled in a master's degree program at Saint Xavier University. This program requires me to design and implement a project on an issue that directly affects my instruction. I have chosen to examine gender stereotypes in physical education.

The purpose of this project is to examine gender discrimination with students in physical education. It may help your child by increasing their active participation in class, as well as improve their self-confidence.

I will be conducting my project from September 15, 2008 until November 15, 2008. I will be selecting two units of study, floor hockey and dance. Throughout each unit we will be talking about the gender stereotypes associated with each activity. These activities will take place in your child's regular physical education class. Your child will take a brief survey prior to each unit and will take a similar survey at the end of each unit. I will be journaling my observations daily during the two units. The gathering of information for my project during these activities offers no risks of any kind to your child.

Your permission allows me to include your student in the reporting of information for my project. All information gathered will be kept completely confidential, and information included in the project report will be grouped so that no individual can be identified. The report will be used to share what I have learned as a result of this project with other professionals in the field of education.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate, your child will still participate in these two activities and be involved in the discussions. The only difference is that the information gathered about your student will not be included in my report.

If you have any questions or would like further information about my project, please contact me at (847) 388-3700 x3303.

Sincerely,

Cindy Jeffries

PLEASE RETURN THE ATTACHED STATEMENT TO ME BY September 8, 2007.

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Breaking Down Gender Stereotypes: Increasing 5th grade Physical
Education Participation by Building Self Esteem.

I, _____, the parent/legal guardian of the minor named below, acknowledge that the researcher has explained to me the purpose of this research, identified any risks involved, and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my child's participation. I freely and voluntarily consent to my child's participation in this project. I understand all information gathered during this project will be completely confidential. I also understand that I may keep a copy of this consent form for my own information.

NAME OF MINOR: _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Appendix I
Post-Floor Hockey Student Survey

Gender _____ Date _____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and thoughtfully. Using the following scale, please circle the response that matches how you truly feel. Remember, there are no right and wrong answers. It is your opinion and feelings that count!

SA - Strongly Agree

A - Agree

UD - Undecided

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

1. I get nervous when I think about floor hockey. SA A UD D SD
2. I think I am a good at floor hockey. SA A UD D SD
3. I am excited to participate in a floor hockey unit. SA A UD D SD
4. I enjoy floor hockey. SA A UD D SD
5. Floor hockey is for girls. SA A UD D SD
6. Boys & girls can play floor hockey equally well. SA A UD D SD

Appendix J
Post-Dance Student Survey

Gender _____ Date _____

Directions: Please read each statement carefully and thoughtfully. Using the following scale, please circle the response that matches how you truly feel. Remember, there are no right and wrong answers. It is your opinion and feelings that count!

SA - Strongly Agree

A - Agree

UD - Undecided

D - Disagree

SD - Strongly Disagree

1. I enjoy dancing. _____ SA A UD D SD

2. Dancing is for girls. _____ SA A UD D SD

3. Boys and girls can dance equally well. _____ SA A UD D SD

4. I get nervous when I think about dancing. _____ SA A UD D SD

5. I think I am a good dancer. _____ SA A UD D SD

6. I am excited to participate in a dance unit. _____ SA A UD D SD