
Based on contemporary psychological approaches to attribution and emotions, this paper reports on three groups of pre- and in-service teachers and their preferences for different grading criteria for pupils based on the amount of effort and ability displayed in physical education. Consistent with our hypothesis derived from social psychological theories of social emotion, we found a clear preference for working pupils who show effort. Two primary education student samples preferred students to achieve success in PE through effort rather than ability, whereas a sample of secondary PE teachers had a slight preference for high effort and high ability. This confirms other attributional research where 'effort is virtuous'. As far as grading procedures were concerned, all three groups preferred to use pupil progress and effort the most. Scores on physical fitness tests and the performance of pupils relative to others.