

Theme: Dual Career

Sports classes as early preparation for dual career

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In a study of sports classes, we have been interested in how elite sport and school are integrated in the classes and what opportunities it creates for talent development of young athletes (Nielsen et al. 2017; Olesen et al. 2015). This paper discuss how sports classes affects the sport students' engagement in sport and school and their future career orientations. Based on our analysis, we conclude that sports classes could be seen as a new standard for early talent development with a built-in ideology that talent development should be practiced as preparation for dual career (Wylleman & Lavallee 2004; Stambulova & Wylleman 2015). The study consists of both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative part consists of two survey studies (respectively in 2013 and 2015) with the total population of 1170 sports students, which allows us to identify changes in the cohorts orientations towards both elite sport and education over a two-year period. In our qualitative case studies, we followed four sports classes in 8th and 9th grade. We have interviewed the athletes up to three times during this period to identify changes in their commitment to school and sports, and in how they orientate themselves towards a potential future dual career. The study shows that the kind of early talent development, in which sport students participate, resembles elite athletes' life. As with elite athletes, the sport students must constantly prioritize their time and activities, and they too have to plan schoolwork in relation to training and competitions. The sports classes invite young talents to follow a dual development track and thereby gain an early experience of integrating elite sport and education.

(272 words)

References:

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Biographies of the presenting authors

Jens Christian Nielsen, Ph.D. and Associate professor in Youth Research at The Danish School of Education at Aarhus University. He has written extensively on youth issues. His work focusses on young people's learning, relationship and well-being, on their transition and becoming and on individualization and standardization. Currently he is working with research on talent development in sport and school.

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Research Program: Engage: (Dis)engaging Children and Young People

Recent research projects: Idrætsskoler – plads til idrætstalenter i den danske folkeskole (eng: Sports classes – making room for athletes in the Danish public school), Together with Team Danmark, Undervisningsministeriet, Danmarks Idrætsforbund & Elitekommuner i Danmark.