



THEORETICAL SUBSTANTIATION OF THE
EFFECTIVENESS OF A METHODOLOGY FOR
CONSCIOUSLY CHOOSING A SPORT BY DEVELOPING
SELF-AWARENESS IN 7- TO 10-YEAR-OLD TRAINEES OF
SPORTS AND HEALTH GROUPS AT A SPORTS SCHOOL

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Abstract: *This study theoretically substantiates a methodology for developing self-awareness in 7–10-year-old children to support the conscious choice of a sport. The methodology includes preparatory, activity-based, stabilizing, and final stages, with active games used to develop physical qualities, social skills, and sustained motivation. The study emphasizes a person-centered approach to helping young athletes recognize their abilities, interests, and potential.*

Keywords: *young athletes, self-awareness, conscious sport choice, active games, physical qualities, person-centered approach, sports education, 7–10-year-old children.*

Globally, sport stands out as the most competitive type of activity, fostering a high level of self-awareness. This issue is particularly relevant for young athletes, as engaging in sports allows a child to express themselves by playing out their life script—that is, determining the direction, purpose, means, methods, and forms of their activity. Participation in sports helps children adopt an active approach to life, enabling them to resolve a number of issues related to their needs, values, and work ethic, and to find the answer to the question, "Who am I?" The broader a child's self-knowledge, the more effective their



self-awareness becomes, expanding the scope for achieving their life goals. Sport is "precisely the realm of values and needs that serves as a driving force to support and develop humanity within a person, shaping the mechanisms of self-awareness, self-development, and self-regulation." Consequently, pedagogy and sports practice are faced with the question of how, and through which tools and methods, to cultivate these personal qualities.

The methodology for fostering a conscious approach in young athletes when choosing a type of sports activity comprises four stages: preparatory (defining the goals and objectives of the young athlete's self-discovery process, and selecting educational methods and formats); activity-based (identifying and developing existing knowledge, motor skills, and abilities); stabilizing (refining the acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies); and final (where the young athlete consciously chooses a sports activity based on their knowledge, skills, and competencies).

Although academic literature examines this process from the perspective of career choice, the process of self-determination in selecting a specific sport has been largely overlooked. Analyzing scientific and methodological literature has allowed us to formulate the concept of "self-determination in sports." Self-determination in sports is the process of developing an individual's readiness to consciously choose a sport to satisfy their needs and align the outcomes of their choice with a lifestyle they value. The structure of a child's self-determination comprises four elements: motivational, activity-based, cognitive, and reflective. The motivational element encompasses the needs and motives behind educational and cognitive activities. The activity-based element includes specialized and general cultural actions. The cognitive element comprises a repertoire of knowledge and cognitive skills for theoretical and practical activities that shape an individual's thinking under changing conditions. The reflective element is defined by how the individual understands their own internal mental processes and states. We have identified the specific





features and potential of a person-centered approach in helping young athletes choose their path within sports institutions. The person-centered approach is a methodological orientation in pedagogy that relies on a system of interconnected concepts, ideas, and methods of action to ensure and support the processes of a child's self-awareness, self-development, and self-expression, as well as the growth of their unique individuality. A person-centered approach helps cultivate a child's readiness to choose a suitable sport. We have found that at the current stage of sports development, the person-centered approach is rarely applied in the educational environments of sports institutions. Even in the initial stages of entering sports, this hinders a child's self-determination in choosing a sporting activity that would help them fully realize their abilities, potential, needs, and interests.

The primary objective of the activity phase was to broaden knowledge about various types of sports activities, as well as to cultivate social skills and sustained motivation.

To foster motivation for sports activities, our work employed a series of measures comprising a set of game-oriented sports exercises (active games and games incorporating technical elements of the sport) designed to spark and sustain interest in the given sport.

In order to comprehensively shape personal qualities and develop physical attributes within the group, the coach-instructors utilized the following types of active games.

Active games used in the training process

Physical quality	Game name	Brief description
Speed	"Day and Night"	Teams stand with their backs to each other. At the signal, one team chases the other to the designated line.

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	"Calling Numbers"	Players with the same number race against each other at the leader's signal.
	"Squirrels in the Trees"	Players run from one "tree" to another to escape the chaser.
	"Three's a Crowd"	Players run around the circle to escape the chaser and can step in front of any pair.
Agility	"Hunters and Ducks"	Standing on the circle line, the throwers eliminate the players jumping inside by hitting them with a ball.
	"Fishing Rod"	Players stand in a circle and jump over a rope being swung beneath their feet.
	"Tails"	Each participant ties a ribbon around their waist. The goal is to snatch someone else's ribbon while protecting your own.
	"Pass the Ball to Your Neighbor"	Players stand in a circle and pass the ball to one another, while the chaser in the center tries to intercept it.
Strength	"Tug of War"	Teams try to pull the rope across the control line to their side.
	"Rooster Fight"	Hopping on one leg, players use their shoulders to push their opponents out of the circle.
	"Pull into the Circle"	Players hold hands around a circle and try to pull the players next to them inside.

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	"Wheelbarrow"	One player walks on their hands while the other holds their legs. The game is played as a race.
Endurance	"Rescue Tag"	A long-lasting game of tag in which a caught player can be freed by being touched.
	"Two Frosts"	Running from one side of the playing field to the other, while two taggers try to "freeze" the participants.
	"Homeless Rabbit"	Players run around the playing field; at a signal, they must claim a "little house," of which there is one fewer than the number of participants.
	"Geese-Swans"	Running away from the "wolf" from one side of the playing field to the other while continuously increasing the distance.
Flexibility	"Go Under the Fir Tree"	Passing under a rope that is lowered at each stage.
	"Pass the Ball Back"	Teams line up and quickly pass the ball either overhead or between their legs.
	"The Little Bridge and the Cat"	Players navigate an obstacle course, alternately arching their backs up and down.
	"The Wave"	Players in a line pass a hoop from one end to the other by stepping through it.

Active games effectively help young athletes realize their potential and abilities. Collaboration in such games helps foster mutual assistance, build teamwork skills, and cultivate the ability to put collective interests ahead of



personal ones. Winning in these games builds self-confidence and the determination to succeed in a young athlete. However, losing can trigger negative emotions in a child. In such cases, only a coach's skillful approach (offering praise and analyzing the child's mistakes) can help the young athlete identify the weaknesses in their training.

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