

Summary Information from Gillis and Speelman's (2011) Meta-Analysis

Gillis, L. H., & Speelman, E. (2008). Are challenge (ropes) courses an effective tool? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 31(2), 111-135.

Abstract

This study reports the results of a meta-analysis of 44 studies that examined the impacts of participation in challenge (ropes) course activities. Overall, a medium standardized mean difference effect size was found ($d = 0.43$). Effect sizes were calculated for various study characteristics, including demographics and outcome. Higher effects were found for adult groups ($d = 0.80$) and for studies measuring family functioning ($d = 0.67$). Studies with therapeutic ($d = 0.53$) or developmental foci ($d = 0.47$) had higher effect sizes than those with educational foci ($d = 0.17$). Higher effect sizes for group effectiveness ($d = 0.62$) affirmed the use of challenge course experiences for team-building purposes. Implications for further research include the importance of recording detailed program design information, selecting appropriate instrumentation, and including follow-up data.

For a list of the following, click [here](#):

- Studies initially accepted for analysis but rejected from meta-analysis because of lack of control group (N=14)
- Studies rejected for use in meta-analysis due to use of interventions in addition to challenge course, lack of useful quantitative data, lack of quantitative data, use of qualitative data, or unavailability (N=89)

Author/Year	Focus	Client Group	No. of Studies	No. of effects	No. of Participants	ES Baseline (Base-pre)	ES Program (Pre-Post)	ES Follow-Up (Post-FU)
Gillis & Speelman (2008)	Challenge (Ropes) Course	All	44	390	2,796	-	.43	-

Studies Included in Meta-Analysis (N=44)

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