

# Improving Art-of-Living Trainings: Implication of Art-of-Living Trainings for Primary School Students

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This commentary is referred to the studies by Lang and Schmitz (1) entitled “Art-of-Living Training: Developing an Intervention for Students to Increase Art-of-Living”. Art-of-living is described as a mindful and self-determined way of dealing with one’s self and way of life (2). Since art-of-living is based on strategies and attitudes which can be learned, it is possible to influence art-of-living by interventions. Lang and Schmitz (1) developed a training method for primary school students (8 - 11) to improve art-of-living in them. A pre- and post-comparison showed improvement of the overall art-of-living as well as single components (3) and quality of life (4) in the case group, compared to the control group. Successful training enhanced art-of-living; but, there are still some limitations. The current letter aimed at translating the described limitations into specific implications to develop a new training for primary school students (5).

The training was conducted only in 3 components, but it is unclear if this selection can describe the complicated structure of art-of-living including 17 components. There are strong correlations between the components (6). By training one component, others can be affected too. And also as it is not possible to extend a school training so much to train each component, it was decided to use a selection of 3 components for training with primary school students. It was decided to select different components for another training (savoring, self-determined way of living, and self-efficacy). Base on the study by Hone et al. (7), the current investigation also tested different combinations of multiple components.

The original study was based on a 2-session training and pre/post comparisons. One suggestion was to increase the number of training sessions and also have a follow-up-measure to make assumptions about the stability of the measured effects. Hence it was decided to have another training group who gained the same training as the experimental group (2 sessions), but it was divided into 4 sessions over 4 weeks. Also, the 3rd point of measurement was made after 3 weeks.

In the original study by Lang and Schmitz (1), the training was only conducted with a few students to evaluate the

first effects. The current study was conducted on 385 primary school students of different classes and schools to control social biases.

A main limitation of the original study was that the employed questionnaire was a modified version for adults developed by Schmitz and Schmidt (3). A version for children and adolescents should be validated based on all important components (not only a selection of them). This process is currently under way. The pilot study was completed and the validating data are available for analysis.

The effects could be shown by comparison between the experimental and control groups. For the progression of the original study, various control conditions had to be considered. It was not very easy because art-of-living should be observed as a holistic model including a lot of important components. Three different control conditions were developed in this regard: 1) One group received creativity training; 2) Participants were trained presentation skills; and 3) Meditation tasks. It is clear that some aspects of art-of-living are also included in such conditions; for example, doing meditation can affect physical care, presentation skills can affect components such as optimization, and creativity can influence openness. However to avoid conflicts, it was tried not to focus on the transfer.

The investigation on art-of-living trainings is currently under way. All collected data should be analyzed. But there are still some methodological suggestions such as comparing art-of-living training to the existing intervention programs (eg, (8)) and adapt trainings to individual needs, which should be explored in future studies.

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## Footnote

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declared no conflict of interest exist

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