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**Youth Development through Street-Sports:
An Exploration of the Relationship between Learning
Styles and Fear of Failure**

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Abstract

Research has found that being involved with sports can be physically, psychologically and socially beneficial, especially during youth's developmental years (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). Many youth programs advocate sporting activities as a way to foster positive youth development. Within this body of research, the issues of fear of failure and perfectionism have been considered as factors that affect a person's motivation to continue participating in sport (Conroy, 2001). To date, fear of failure and perfectionism have typically been explored in achievement settings, and only in relation to competitive sports (e.g. Dunn, Gotwals, Dunn, & Syrotuik, 2006; Flett & Hewitt, 2005; Sagar, Lavallee, & Spray, 2007). The present research explored these constructs within a street-sports environment, where achievement and success is not a fundamental aspect. Furthermore, because of the unique learning environment that street-sports provide, this study examined whether a relationship existed between learning styles, fear of failure and perfectionism. Participants included youth – aged 10 to 18 years old – who participated in street-sports as their main form of physical activity. The street-sports included in this study were skateboarding, BMX and parkour. Self-report questionnaires were used to measure learning style, fears of failing and perfectionism scores. Correlation and regression analyses were employed to examine existing relationships between the three constructs. Results demonstrated that a relationship did exist between perfectionism and fear of failure, although this was low in comparison to prior research in competitive sports. Confirming previous findings, concern over mistakes was the aspect of perfectionism that showed the strongest relationship to fear of failure. Additionally, the results indicated that street-sport participants were collaborative learners and the more collaborative their learning style, the less likely they were to experience fear of failure. This thesis presents a proposition for better inclusion of street-sports within quantitative studies, particularly with interest to youth development.

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