ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Self Reported Benefits of Aikido: A Phenomenological Study of Aikido Training in High School Students
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ABSTRACT: Aikido is a non-violent Japanese martial art emphasizing conflict resolution through redirection with respect and compassion for the aggressor. Aikido training focuses on self awareness, connecting with others, concentration, centering and discipline, all of which should be of value to adolescents. In a previous phenomenological study looking at families in five different popular martial art programs, the families consistently reported that martial arts facilitates family development (Lantz, 2002) Individual self-reported benefits raised its own positive themes separate from the entire family, yet close in content and nature. Very little research has been done on the effects of aikido training on its own, but given that aikido focuses more on the psychological and philosophical aspects of the sport in a non-competitive format, aikido participants identified closer to coping effectiveness rather than physical dominance (Nicholls, Nicholls, Polman, Levy, & Borkoles, 2010). The current study was part of pilot program in La Plata County, Colorado, wherein high school students selected physical education (PE) classes either with aikido or standard PE curriculum for the academic year. Eleven aikido students volunteered for an interview to discuss class procedure and personal thoughts about the program. Coding themes were decided between the two interviewers after conducting, recording, and transcribing the process. The participants were interviewed in private, yet the themes of their experience mimicked each others' self-reported benefits. Nine themes and reported benefits were categorized: intention to continue Aikido education (100% of participants), awareness for self and others (82%), einforces respect for others (64%), peacefulness (64%), safe zone (45%), confidence (45%), self efficacy (45%), and a positive outlook (36%).