

## **INCREASING STUDENT MOTIVATION FOR LEISURE TIME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (LTPA)**

One of the major aims of physical education (PE) is to provide adolescents with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to participate in physical activity in their leisure time (Association for Physical Education, 2008). Studies have shown that low levels of physical activity start to manifest during the early teenage years (Armstrong & Welshman, 2006); and PE classes have been identified as a potential solution to counter this worrying trend and promote leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) behavior (Cavill, Biddle, & Sallis, 2001).

Taylor, Ntoumanis, Standage and Spray (2010) examined the extent to which students' psychological need satisfaction and motivational regulation in PE predicted physical activity-related outcomes. In PE, perceptions of efficacy and competence are of central importance (Feltz, 1988). Previous PE-based research has found competence need satisfaction to be the strongest predictor of intrinsic motivation compared with autonomy and relatedness need satisfaction (Ntoumanis, 2001). The study also found that enhancing both intrinsic motivation and identified regulation is important when targeting students' LTPA behavior ( Ullrich-French & Cox, 2009).

We highlight some ways that teachers can, through their PE lessons, encourage students to engage in leisure time physical activity.

- Providing differentiated platforms for learning that challenges students but not overwhelm them. PE students' who were higher in competence need satisfaction showed more effort in PE, intended to be more physically active, and reported more LTPA.
- Present a well-structured environment that gives clear guidelines on tasks, provides optimal challenges, and offers contingent feedback on how to achieve desired outcomes may be successful in satisfying students' need for competence ( Taylor & Ntoumanis, 2007). For example, provide positive feedback by praising students for the effort that they put in instead of just their successful performance.
- Providing an autonomy-supportive motivational environment that emphasizes self-improvement and task mastery is likely to lead to satisfaction of PE students' competence (Ntoumanis, 2001; Standage, Duda & Ntoumanis, 2003). For example, encourage students or design activities for students to focus on learning new skills and improving against their previous performance rather than comparing and competing with others.
- Increases in identified regulation were associated with increases in LTPA. Thus, PE-based physical activity interventions may wish to focus on promoting the value and benefits of physical activity to students. For example, improvement in daily efficacy and functioning due to improved fitness, socializing with friends and prevention of weight related health issues.

## **KEY DEFINITIONS**

**Motivational regulations** guide behaviour based on the degrees of self-determination. From the most self-determined to the least, they are: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation (further broken down into four regulations: integrated, identified, introjected and external) and amotivation.

**Psychological need satisfaction** stems from Self-Determination Theory, which hypothesizes that all individuals strive to satisfy three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the need to self-organize one's behavior and to achieve concordance between the activity and one's integrated sense of self (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Competence reflects the need to achieve desired outcomes and to feel effective in one's efforts (White, 1959). Relatedness is the need to feel connected to and accepted by significant others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

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