

## **Physical education teachers' role in the promotion of lifelong engagement in physical activity: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective**

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### **Introduction and objectives**

At a time when there is considerable concern about children's health, the promotion of an active lifestyle has become one of the central aims of physical education worldwide. At the same time, there have been considerable debates about physical education's role in public health. Researchers have not only critically interrogated whether it is valuable, attainable and feasible to try to promote young people's health through physical education, but proponents of health-based physical education also hold distinctive visions about how teachers (and schools and wider communities) can realize it in practice. The first aim of this keynote is to critically review various perspectives on physical education teachers' role in health promotion. Using self-determination theory as a guiding framework, the second aim is to summarize the state of the art regarding physical education teachers' motivating style and how it plays a pivotal role in fostering youngsters' lifelong engagement in physical activity. A final aim is to propose implementation opportunities for physical education teacher education programs and physical education practice.

### **Some highlights**

Based on recent empirical evidence, the motivating strategies that help students to value and enjoy physical activity (i.e. enhance self-determined/autonomous motivation) will be presented. In doing so, I will also present a newly developed vignette-based instrument, that is, the Situations-in-School Questionnaire (Aelterman et al., 2018), which allows to assess different dimensions of teachers' motivating style simultaneously (i.e. autonomy support, structure, control and chaos). The value of this newly developed questionnaire for teachers to self-assess and reflect on their personal motivating style will be illustrated.

### **Conclusions and perspectives**

To promote lifelong engagement in physical activity, it is imperative that physical education teachers help students to value and enjoy physical activity, so that students are autonomously motivated to incorporate these activities into their leisure time.

### **References**

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