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MOTIVATING THE STUDENT

Sport Education Can Be a Framework for Success

DANA PERLMAN

The focus on student motivation is an ever-evolving and interesting area within physical education (Lirgg, 2006). Teachers and researchers have become interested in student motivation due to the strong association it has with meeting a variety of student needs, such as learning (Black & Deci, 2000). In addition, SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators (2014) indicates that a primary goal within K–12 physical education is to motivate students to engage in a lifetime of physical activity. Although motivation can be important, teachers today face students who are less motivated (Ntoumanis, Pensgaard, Martin, & Pipe, 2004) and often implement teaching approaches or instructional models that do not positively influence student motivation (Reeve, 2009). A model of instruction that has been identified to potentially support and enhance student's motivational needs is sport education (SE; Perlman, 2011; Perlman & Goc Karp, 2010; Sinelnikov, Hastie, & Prusak, 2007; Spittle & Byrne, 2009; Wallhead & Ntoumanis, 2004). The purpose of this article is to help physical educators to understand student motivation and how the SE model can develop student motivation within physical education.

Understanding Motivation: Self-determination Theory

A commonly adopted theory for explaining motivation within physical education is self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985). This theory provides a useful motivational framework by explaining the role and influence a teacher can have on the motivation of students (Reeve, 2009). Within a school setting, the teacher can use instructional strategies and behaviors that can influence, both positively and negatively, the internal motives of each student (Perlman & Webster, 2011). The goal for a motivationally focused teacher is to support

three psychosocial needs: relatedness (possessing a sense of connectedness or comfort within a social setting), competence (the perception that you will be successful within the context), and autonomy (being in control or being provided choice; Reeve & Jang, 2006). As a result of different levels of needs support, students' motivational levels can be classified into the three overarching categories of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation is an internal motive influenced by the feeling of enjoyment and/or self-expression. Extrinsic motivation is influenced by some form of external factor, such as a tangible reward or peer pressure. Finally, amotivation is the critically low level of motivation that students display when they have no desire to engage in activity (Vallerand, 2001). Teachers will likely want to move each student toward a more intrinsic form of motivation. A visual explanation of the motivational process espoused by SDT (Vallerand & Losier, 1999) is illustrated in Figure 1.

Sport Education and Self-determination Theory

Researchers have found that using the SE model of teaching can provide support for students' psychosocial needs of relatedness (Perlman, 2010; Perlman & Goc Karp, 2010), competence (Wallhead & Ntoumanis, 2004), and autonomy (Sinelnikov et al., 2007), as well as significant increases in levels of motivation (Perlman & Goc Karp, 2010). In addition, teachers who have implemented SE within their teaching may be more likely to provide more motivationally supportive instruction to their students when compared with other models of teaching

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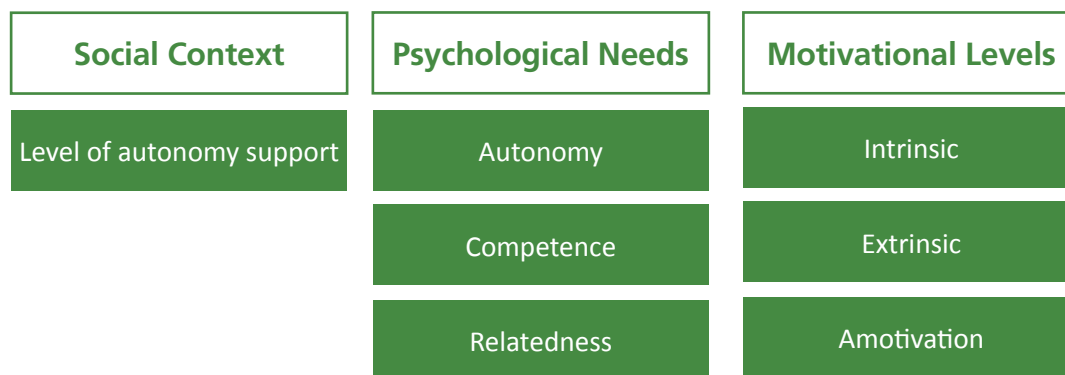


Figure 1.
Linear progression of student motivation

(Perlman, 2012b). The SE model infuses six key features (i.e., seasons, culminating events, record keeping, festivity, formal competition, and team affiliation) within a traditionally longer unit of study or season (15–30 lessons; Siedentop, 1994). An explicit overview with sample lessons of SE can be found in *The Complete Guide to Sport Education* (Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2011), but this article focuses on specific elements within SE that influence student motivation and support psychological needs.

Supporting the Need for Relatedness. To support the need for relatedness, the implementation of SE should focus on (a) creating a sense of connection with peers and (b) developing a caring and empathic environment. Perlman and Goc Karp (2010) indicated that the team affiliation feature of SE seems to be the most influential in supporting student's need for relatedness. Being affiliated with a season-long team has been identified as a primary way of decreasing inhibitions associated with sharing ideas and thoughts with classmates (Kinchin & O'Sullivan, 2003; O'Donovan, 2003). Teachers can develop this sense of affiliation by having students create a common scoring celebration (e.g., a unique handshake) or a logo that represents all members of the team (e.g., developing a logo that infuses the first names of all team members). In addition, engaging students in teams that last the entire unit and require contributions from all team members creates a more inclusive learning context (Clarke & Quill, 2003; Kinchin, 2001).

When teachers allow students to work together for an extended period of time, it gives them the opportunity to gain an enhanced sense of who their classmates are in terms of strengths and weaknesses, as well as their sport and game preferences. For instance, before creating teams, a teacher may conduct a needs assessment that measures and evaluates each student's game-play ability, as well as aspects such as leadership qualities, effective communication, and problem-solving skills. A teacher who is able to measure and evaluate the holistic abilities of students can create more balanced teams. It is important to note that teachers may develop a caring and empathetic educational environment using SE, if students are placed on season-long teams and are also exposed to learning activities that require the involvement of all students.

In terms of developing an empathic environment, the infusion of fair play and sportspersonship may be necessary. While Siedentop (1994) used fair play as a tool to develop a more educationally focused setting, from a self-determined perspective students begin to learn behaviors that elicit inclusion, rather than the exclusion that is often demonstrated in elite



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Table 1.
Fair Play and Sportspersonship Rubric

Student Behaviors	Target Criteria and Description	Evaluation (0–1)
Demonstrates appropriate behaviors before and after each game	Players will begin and end each game with a handshake. The start of the game and any unresolved disputes by the official will be handled through rock, paper, scissors.	
Uses appropriate language throughout each game	No profanity or teasing will be used throughout the game.	
Follows the rules of the game	Players will follow all rules, both written (e.g., a ball on the line is in) and unwritten (e.g., making an unwarranted play when the official is not looking).	
Demonstrates positive sporting behaviors during the entire game	Students will demonstrate behaviors that are positive and inclusive of all teammates (e.g., helping a player up when they fall).	

sport. For example, in competitive sport it is not uncommon for an athlete to demonstrate behaviors such as arguing with an official or trash talking with an opponent. If these behaviors are allowed within school-based sport, it tends to marginalize some and lower the support for relatedness. With the use of fair play or sportspersonship principles, students will have a framework that can define what behaviors are appropriate within a school-based sport unit. For instance, Perlman (2011) found that students who were highly competitive and focused on winning changed their behaviors to be more inclusive based on the fact that they were guided by a fair play and sportspersonship rubric. When assigned to teams, students can be asked to develop a list of concepts and behaviors that demonstrate fair play and sportspersonship. Students' ideas can be summarized by the teacher to create an evaluation of behaviors considered to demonstrate fair play and/or sportspersonship. Table 1 provides a sample list of fair play and sportspersonship elements created by a class of high school students in a soccer unit.

Supporting Competence. Competence may best be supported when a student is given opportunities to engage in an activity that allows him or her to demonstrate success. From a motivational perspective, engaging students in an SE unit has been found to enhance students' perception of competence (Wallhead & Ntoumanis, 2004), as well as develop actual competence as a sportsperson (Siedentop, 1994). Siedentop (1994) viewed competence as the

Students who were highly competitive and focused on winning changed their behaviors to be more inclusive based on the fact that they were guided by a fair play and sportspersonship rubric.

Table 2.
Game-play Evaluation

Game Performance	Role Completion	Fair Play/ Sportspersonship
1 = Win .5 = Tie 0 = Loss	1 = All .5 = Most 0 = A few Roles were completed to the set standard	1 = All .5 = Most 0 = A few Players on the team followed the guidelines

development of a holistic set of skills that goes beyond the traditional focus on game- or sport-specific skills. Students engaged in SE are provided opportunities to learn all the skills associated with game play. For example, students are taught aspects such as officiating, record keeping, and field/court setup. In addition, students might be placed in a coaching role and asked to develop a strategic game plan based on either a team strength or an opponent's weakness. As students learn and apply the pedagogical approach toward sport in physical education, they may find areas that they excel in and, as a result, feel they are successful or competent.

For instance, a student may feel that he or she can be more successful when helping a team develop a strategy (e.g., which demonstrates cognitive learning). Perlman (2010) utilized a game-play evaluation form to score game performance, role completion, and fair play/sportspersonship (see Table 2). By using a multifaceted assessment tool, such as a holistic game-play evaluation rubric, students were provided additional opportunities to demonstrate success as more than an effective game player. It should be noted that when designing a game-play rubric with the idea of allowing all students to be included, it may be best to align measures of learning within the learning domains (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective). This technique may provide a more robust avenue to allow each student to be included.

Supporting Autonomy. The concept of autonomy support goes against most of the commonly adopted principles in the school setting. Students come to class and are prescribed most of the learning activities throughout the day. Instead of swinging the pendulum from one extreme to the other (e.g., giving students

Figure 2.
Practice-session template

Practice Day:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Type of Practice:	Individual									Partner		
Strokes Emphasized:	Forehand stroke									Backhand stroke		
	Lob serve									Drive serve		
	Smash									Volley		
	Lob									Combination strokes		
	Other _____											
Narrative Description of Practice:												

complete control), supporting autonomy is possible if students are provided with a higher level of choice and control over their learning. Within SE, students are given a certain level of control through the use of team roles, such as captain, and by having a voice in the development of elements of the unit. For example, when a student is placed in a leadership role (e.g., captain or coach), a novice player may benefit from a framework for developing a quality practice session (see Figure 2). As students are more able to be self-directed the items that prescribe student actions can be decreased (e.g., less guidance when asking a student to develop a practice session).

As a result of SE, students have reported higher levels of perceived control within the learning context (Siedentop, 1994; Siedentop, Hastie, & van der Mars, 2011; Wallhead & Ntoumanis, 2004). From a practical perspective each student should be knowledgeable about the requirements for being in control of their learning, as well as able to handle a level of responsibility. These aspects (knowledge and responsibility) should be taken into consideration when designing and implementing learning experiences. For example, a commonly utilized approach within SE is to use one role in the initial units to assess the level of appropriateness and gradually

increase the responsibility of the group. It is important to note that students are placed in a controlling context during most of the school day and their school career, so they cannot be expected to be able to handle or completely understand how to take control over their learning on the first day.

Conclusion

Sport education, if implemented with a focus on certain features, can be motivationally supportive. Instruction that focuses on student motivation provides multiple and diverse opportunities to demonstrate success, exposes students to a team environment that is inclusive and focused on all member contributions, and gives students a higher level of control and choice within the unit. Students come to physical education with diverse experiences and motivational levels.

Intrinsically motivated students will tend to try the majority of what is asked of them. From a teaching perspective, intrinsically motivated students tend to be the easiest to facilitate during lesson activities and can be influenced by autonomy-supportive tasks (e.g., allow them to take a certain level of control during a lesson). Extrinsically motivated students will need some form of external motivation, and this can be achieved through aspects that align with competence (e.g., allowing and acknowledging success with a reward). Amotivated students will tend to be the most difficult to help and motivate. Perlman (2012a, 2012c) found that demonstrating a level of caring and empathy (i.e., relatedness) is the most influential motivational aspect of SE when working with amotivated students. Thus the inherent support for relatedness within SE can help the amotivated student within a physical education setting. When designing learning activities and units based on SE, teachers may need to align or focus their instruction based on the motivational needs of their students.

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