

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Methodology for Increasing Students' Physical Activity in Physical Education Lessons

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Abstract

The article examines methodological approaches to increasing students' physical activity in physical education lessons. The relevance of the topic is determined by the need to strengthen students' health, reduce sedentary behavior and improve the educational effectiveness of physical education as a school subject. The purpose of the study is to theoretically substantiate and describe a methodology aimed at increasing students' motor activity through differentiated exercises, active lesson organization, game-based methods, motivational strategies and continuous assessment. The study is based on the analysis of scientific and methodological literature, international recommendations and pedagogical approaches to physical education. The article reveals the importance of lesson density, age-appropriate physical load, motivation, safe organization of exercises and the integration of individual and group forms of work. The results show that increasing students' physical activity is possible when the teacher organizes the lesson as a dynamic, inclusive and purposeful pedagogical process. The proposed methodology may be used by physical education teachers to improve the quality of lessons and develop students' interest in regular physical activity.

KEYWORDS

Physical education, physical activity, methodology, students, motor activity, active learning, motivation, healthy lifestyle, school education, differentiated approach.

INTRODUCTION

In modern education, physical education is not limited to the development of motor skills or the performance of sports exercises. It is an important pedagogical process aimed at strengthening students' health, forming a healthy lifestyle, developing discipline, cooperation, willpower and social activity. The problem of increasing students' physical activity in physical education lessons is especially relevant today, because the lifestyle of schoolchildren is increasingly influenced by digital technologies, long periods of sitting, passive leisure and insufficient movement during the school day.

According to the World Health Organization, children and adolescents aged 5–17 should accumulate at least an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, and vigorous aerobic activities, as well as muscle- and bone-strengthening activities, should be included at least three days per week. This recommendation shows that physical education lessons should not be formal or passive, but should become a real mechanism for increasing daily motor activity and developing students' motivation toward movement.

The relevance of the topic is also connected with the fact that the effectiveness of physical education lessons depends not only on the content of exercises, but also on the methodology of organizing students' activity. If a lesson is dominated by long explanations, waiting in lines, insufficient involvement of all students and monotonous exercises, the actual motor density of the lesson decreases. In this case, students may formally attend the lesson, but their real physical activity remains low. Therefore, the teacher should organize the lesson in such a way that each student is actively involved in movement, understands the purpose of exercises and feels personal progress.

International documents on quality physical education emphasize that physical education should be inclusive, development-oriented and connected with lifelong participation in physical activity. UNESCO considers quality physical education as an essential component of education that supports not only physical development, but also social, emotional and cognitive growth. SHAPE America standards also focus on physical literacy, responsible behavior, movement competence and the ability to value physical activity for health and enjoyment.

The purpose of this article is to analyze and substantiate the methodology for increasing students' physical activity in physical education lessons. The main idea of the article is that physical activity increases when the lesson is organized through a combination of methodological conditions: rational planning, differentiated load, active methods, game-based exercises, motivation, feedback and systematic assessment. In this regard, physical education becomes not only a subject of movement, but also a pedagogical environment in which each student learns to consciously manage their physical development.

The methodological basis of the article is formed by the analysis of scientific, pedagogical and methodological literature on physical education, physical activity and school health promotion. The study uses theoretical analysis, comparison, generalization and pedagogical interpretation of international recommendations and methodological approaches. The analysis focuses on the organization of physical education lessons, the development of students' motor activity, the role of motivation, the structure of active lessons and the use of differentiated methods.

The article also takes into account the logic of the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program approach,

which emphasizes that school-based physical activity should not be limited to one lesson, but physical education remains its core component. The CDC guide states that comprehensive school physical activity programs help schools develop, implement and evaluate opportunities for students to be physically active before, during and after school. This position confirms the need to strengthen the methodological quality of physical education lessons as a central element of school physical activity.

The research design is theoretical and methodological. It does not include an experimental intervention, but it proposes a pedagogically grounded model of lesson organization. The main criteria used in the analysis are activity density, inclusiveness, age appropriateness, safety, motivational value, continuity of exercises and the possibility of assessing students' progress. These criteria make it possible to describe a methodology that can be applied in general secondary schools.

The analysis shows that increasing students' physical activity in physical education lessons requires the correct organization of the entire lesson structure. The lesson should begin with a short motivational and preparatory part, continue with a main part based on intensive and purposeful movement, and end with recovery, reflection and brief feedback. The teacher's explanation should be clear and concise, because excessive verbal instruction reduces the time allocated to movement. At the same time, exercises should be demonstrated accurately so that students can perform them safely and consciously.

One of the most important methodological requirements is to increase motor density. Motor density means the proportion of lesson time during which students are physically active. In practice, this can be achieved by reducing waiting time, organizing exercises in stations, using small groups, preparing equipment in advance and involving all students simultaneously. For example, instead of one student performing an exercise while others wait, the teacher may organize several parallel activity zones. In each zone, students perform different but related tasks, such as jumping, throwing, running, balance exercises or coordination tasks. This approach increases movement time and prevents passivity.

The differentiated approach is another important condition for increasing students' physical activity. Students differ in physical fitness, health status, motivation, body coordination and previous sports experience. If all students are given the

same load and the same level of difficulty, some may lose interest because the task is too easy, while others may experience fear or failure because the task is too difficult. Differentiation allows the teacher to offer several levels of the same exercise. For example, in endurance training, students may run different distances or perform the same task at different intensities. In coordination exercises, students may choose a simple, medium or advanced version. In this way, every student participates actively and experiences success.

Game-based methodology has a strong effect on students' movement activity. Games increase emotional involvement, reduce fear of failure and create a natural need for movement. In physical education lessons, movement games, relay races, team challenges and simplified sports games can be used to develop speed, agility, endurance, coordination and cooperation. However, games should not be used only for entertainment. They must be connected with the educational goal of the lesson. If the goal is to develop speed, the game should require quick reaction and short acceleration. If the goal is cooperation, the rules should encourage students to support each other and make collective decisions.

Motivation is a key factor in increasing physical activity. Students become more active when they understand the meaning of exercises, see personal progress and feel that the teacher evaluates effort, not only sports results. Therefore, the teacher should avoid comparing students only by speed, strength or competitive success. It is more effective to emphasize individual improvement, correct technique, discipline, persistence and participation. When students feel that physical education is a space for development rather than judgment, their willingness to move increases.

The use of modern pedagogical methods also contributes to activity. Circuit training, station work, cooperative tasks, problem-based movement situations and peer support can make the lesson more dynamic. For example, in station work students rotate between different physical tasks. This format allows the teacher to combine strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance exercises within one lesson. Cooperative tasks require students to solve motor problems together, such as creating a safe obstacle route or developing a team strategy for a game. Such methods increase not only physical activity but also communication and responsibility.

Assessment should support movement rather than stop it. Traditional assessment in physical education often focuses only on final results, such as running time or number of

repetitions. A more effective methodology includes formative assessment, where the teacher observes students during the lesson, gives short feedback and helps them correct mistakes. Students may also use self-assessment by answering simple questions: whether they performed the exercise correctly, whether they maintained effort, what they improved and what they should work on next. This makes students more conscious and active.

Safety is an obligatory condition for increasing physical activity. High activity should not mean chaotic movement. The teacher must ensure that the space is organized, equipment is safe, exercises correspond to age and physical condition, and students understand the rules. Warm-up and cool-down parts of the lesson should not be ignored, because they prepare the body for load and support recovery. Safety also includes psychological comfort. Students should not be humiliated for low physical fitness, body shape or mistakes. A positive environment increases participation and reduces avoidance.

The methodology should also be connected with the formation of a healthy lifestyle. Physical education lessons should help students understand why movement is important for health, mood, learning ability and social development. Short explanations about the benefits of physical activity can be integrated into practice without turning the lesson into a lecture. For example, before endurance exercises, the teacher may briefly explain how regular aerobic activity supports the heart and lungs. Before stretching, the teacher may explain the role of flexibility in injury prevention. Such explanations strengthen the conscious attitude toward movement.

Digital tools may also support physical activity if they are used appropriately. For example, video demonstrations can help students understand technique, pedometers or mobile applications can support self-monitoring, and digital portfolios can record progress. However, digital tools should not replace movement. Their function is to support planning, feedback and reflection. In this sense, technology becomes useful when it increases students' awareness and motivation without reducing active lesson time.

The results of the theoretical analysis show that the methodology for increasing students' physical activity should be built as an integrated pedagogical system. It is not enough to add more exercises to the lesson. The teacher must design the entire educational process so that movement, motivation, safety, differentiation and assessment work together. This

approach corresponds to modern views on quality physical education, according to which students should develop physical literacy, understand the value of movement and be prepared for lifelong physical activity.

A common problem in physical education lessons is the dominance of a traditional command-based approach. In such lessons, the teacher demonstrates and gives instructions, while students repeat exercises. This approach may be useful for teaching basic technique, but it does not always ensure high activity and personal involvement. Innovative methodology requires a transition from passive repetition to active participation. Students should not only perform movements but also understand, analyze, choose, cooperate and evaluate their own progress.

Another important issue is inclusiveness. Students with different physical abilities should be involved in the lesson without discrimination. The differentiated approach allows all students to participate at an appropriate level. This is especially important for students who are less physically prepared or have low confidence in sports. If the lesson is organized only around competition, physically strong students become more active, while weaker students may become passive. If the lesson is organized around personal progress and varied tasks, more students become engaged.

The connection between physical education and the broader school environment is also significant. International approaches to school physical activity emphasize that physical education should be supported by active breaks, extracurricular sports, safe school spaces and cooperation with families. However, the physical education lesson remains the main structured opportunity to teach movement skills and form a positive attitude toward physical activity. Therefore, improving lesson methodology is a necessary step in strengthening students' overall physical activity.

The proposed methodology also has practical importance for teachers. It helps them plan lessons more effectively, reduce passive time, select exercises according to students' abilities and use assessment as a developmental tool. For successful implementation, teachers need methodological competence, creativity and the ability to manage the class dynamically. They should also be able to adapt exercises to local conditions, available equipment and the age characteristics of students.

Increasing students' physical activity in physical education lessons is a complex methodological task that requires

purposeful planning and pedagogical mastery. The effectiveness of the lesson depends on motor density, differentiated load, game-based and cooperative methods, motivational support, safe organization and formative assessment. Physical education should be organized not as a formal lesson, but as an active educational environment in which every student participates, develops and understands the value of movement.

The methodology proposed in this article is based on the idea that physical activity increases when students are actively involved in meaningful, age-appropriate and emotionally engaging exercises. The teacher's role is to create conditions for movement, support individual progress, ensure safety and connect physical activity with health and personal development. In this case, physical education lessons contribute not only to physical fitness, but also to the formation of a healthy lifestyle, social cooperation and responsible attitude toward one's own body.

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