



Creating active environments

Module 3 – University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences



Educational modules:

1. The whole-school/system approach in promoting HEPA
2. Creating active societies
- 3. Creating active environments**
4. Creating active people
5. Creating active systems
6. Interdisciplinary teaching and physical activity





The learning objectives of this module

- The aim of this module is to introduce the importance of promoting active environments as a prerequisite to enhance students' participation in physical activity
 - Understand the role of the environment in physical activity
 - Receive basic guidelines of how active environments can be created in a school setting
 - Receive knowledge and examples of how these guidelines can be implemented into real life practice





Structure of this session

1. Theory – school environments & physical activity
 - Ecological dynamics
 - Self-determination theory

1. Guidelines for the implementation of active environment
 - Practical examples of Finnish implementation
 - Practitioner’s perspective and experiences

- 3 Application into practice
 - Group work
 - Sharing ideas (online platform / live)





What comes to your mind when thinking about active school environments?

... Write your answers to the chat

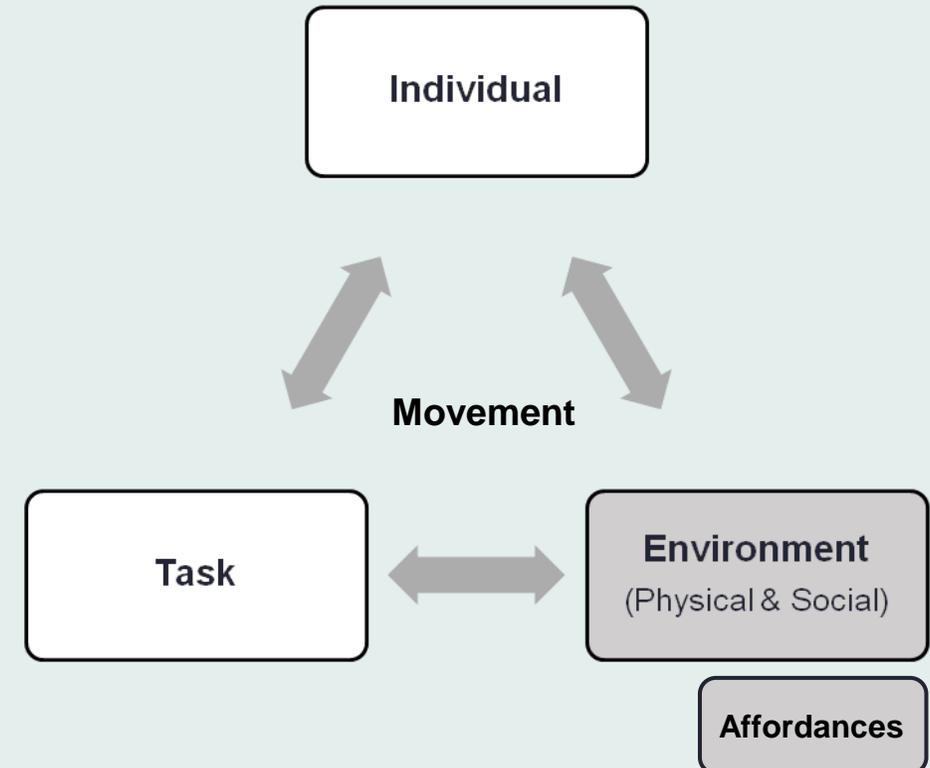






Ecological dynamics

- An ecological dynamics approach views movement as emerging from a self-organising relationship formed between an individual, the task being performed, and the environment in which it occurs (Warren 2006).
- **Affordances** = opportunities or 'invitations' for action in the form of performance behaviours (Gibson 1979).
 - i.e., climbing frames, sport fields and equipment, playground markings...

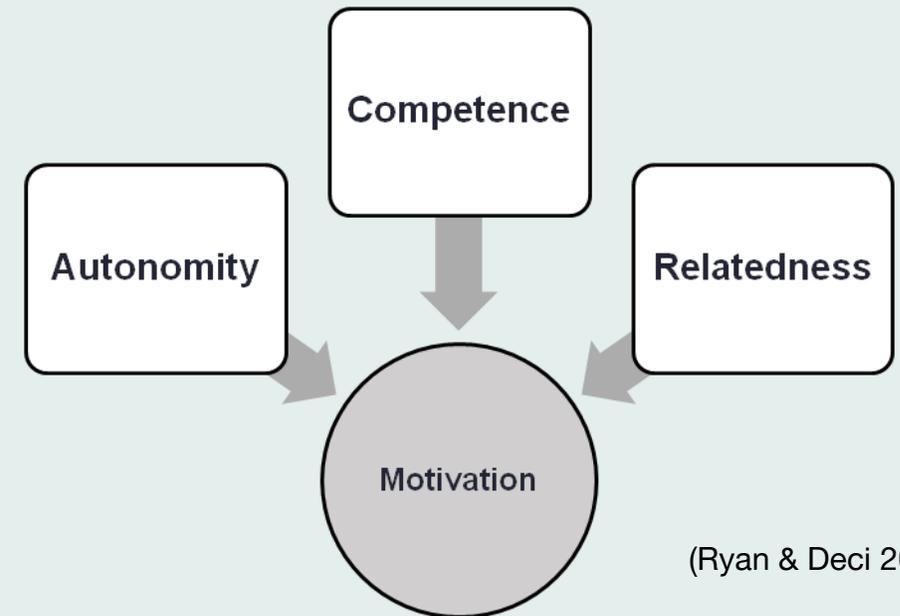


Modified from Newell's Model of Constraints (1986)



Self-determination theory

- There are three basic psychological needs — need for competence, need for autonomy, and need for relatedness — which, when satisfied, enhance well-being and self-determined motivation (Ryan & Deci 2017).
- Physical activity point of view (Zhang & Solmon 2012)
 - Autonomy – i.e., providing enough equipment and spaces to increase choices
 - Competence - i.e., providing the physical activity resources that enable students to feel competent
 - Relatedness - i.e., creating an setting where children feel safe and close with each other.





Active environments – GAPPA

The aim is to create and maintain environments that promote equal access for all people to go places and spaces where they can be physically active (GAPPA):

- Strengthen urban and traffic planning actions at all levels of government, so that walking, cycling and other forms of movement are possible in urban, suburban and rural communities.
- Develop safer and more accessible bicycle and footpath networks for all.
- Accelerate the implementation of actions related to traffic safety (especially safety of pedestrians and cyclists).
- Strengthen access of all people to good-quality public, green and recreational spaces and sports amenities.
- Actions, guidelines and frameworks at the national and regional level should be strengthened so that the environments and buildings of public services, workplaces, schools and healthcare would support physical activity.



Factors influencing students' physical activity

- Physical activity behavior among school-aged students is determined by multilevel factors, including personal characteristics, individual cognitive factors, social environmental factors, and physical environmental factors. (Zhang & Solmon 2012)
- The behaviours are a result of the mix and interaction of the components of context, setting and function, and can promote or discourage a particular behaviour. For example, a cycle path, sports field or playground might promote an active behaviour, while a busy road or elevator might discourage an active behaviour. (Foster & Hillsdon 2004)



School environment and physical activity

- The school environment seems to be an important setting for improving children's physical activity levels (Dessing et al. 2013).
- The most inactive children and adolescents achieve their highest physical activity level during the school day (Jussila et al. 2016).
- Physical activity levels are particularly high during school recess. (Dessing et al. 2013).
- Improvements of the physical school environment can increase physical activity participation in recess and lunch time (Verstraete et al. 2006; Sallis et al. 2001).





School environment and physical activity

- Factors related to physical environment such as the **availability** of physical activity facilities, **convenience** of facilities, and the **safety** of physical activity settings influence PA behaviours (Zhang & Solmon 2012).
- Children in the **activity-permissive environment** move significantly more compared to the traditional school environments (Lanningham-Foster et al. 2012).
- School facilities can significantly influence students' **motivation** to be active (Haug, Torsheim, Sallis, & Samdal, 2010).





Schools on the Move -programme

The main themes of the programme:

- Supporting learning
- Enabling student participation
- Increasing physical activity
- Decreasing excessive sitting

93% of Finland's municipalities are involved in the Schools on the Move programme

The programme is carried out by the Finnish National Agency of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

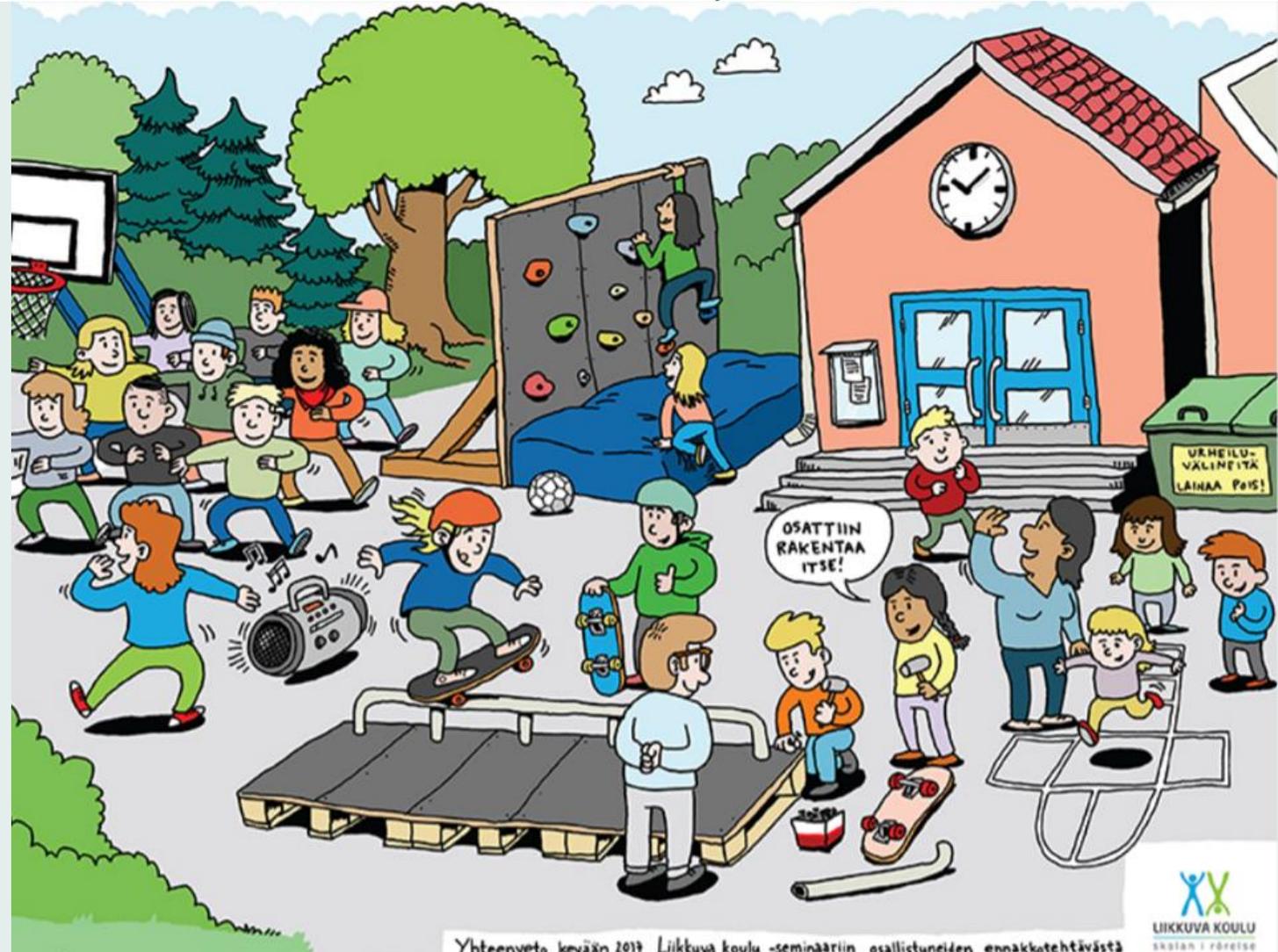


“Programme, for its part, has increased the amount of physical activity during the school day and increased interest among teaching staff in the links between physical activity and learning (Final review 2018).”

Successful actions of the Schools on the Move -program

- Modifying the structure of the school day (longer breaks)
- Making breaks more physically active
- Acquisition of sports and play equipment for schools
- Developing physically active learning methods for different academic subjects (eg. math, language)
- Teacher training
- Connecting sports club activities to the school days

(External evaluation of School on the Move –program key project phase 2015–2018)











Example of physically active classroom from the Keski-Palokka School, Jyväskylä, Central-Finland.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rpUTnRF-R8>



Practitioner's Perspective and Experiences – Interview of Finnish teachers and a school principal.

Why and how have Finnish schools implemented physical activity into the school day?

<https://youtu.be/xVZVvd0OsCo>



Applications into practice (online version)

- Participants are divided into small groups (approx. 3-5 persons)
- Topics for groups to consider
 1. Schoolyards
 2. Classrooms / common indoor areas
 3. Surroundings of the school (walkways and bike paths)
 4. Recess activity (equipment, facilities..)
- Discuss and answer following questions from the perspective of your own topic:
 - What kind of factors limit and support physical activity in your school environment at the moment?
 - What could you do to improve things?
 - What resources are required to carry out the actions?
 - How would you prioritize the actions?
- Share your ideas:
<https://padlet.com/sallamoberg/r52izhec10vsy709>
- Return to the main session room to have a review/discussion of each groups findings.



Applications into practice (face to face)

- Participants are divided into small groups (approx. 5 person)
- Topics for groups to consider
 1. Schoolyards
 2. Classrooms / common indoor areas
 3. Surroundings of the school (walkways and bike paths)
 4. Recess activity (equipment, facilities..)
- Discuss and answer following questions from the perspective of your own topic:
 - What kind of factors limit and support physical activity in your school environment at the moment?
 - What could you do to improve things?
 - What resources are required to carry out the actions?
 - How would you prioritize the actions?
- Share your ideas:
<https://padlet.com/sallamoberg/r52izhec10vsy709>



Summary

Hopefully, you now feel that you:

- Understand the effects of the environment on physical activity.
- Outline the connections of the ecological model and self-determination theory to active environments.
- Understand what active environments mean in the school context.
- Received examples of active school environments in Finland.
- Got ideas on how you could create active environments in your own school.



What's next?

- Module 4 – Creating active people
- Module 5 – Creating active systems
- Module 6 - Interdisciplinary teaching and physical activity
- Evaluation of educational modules



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