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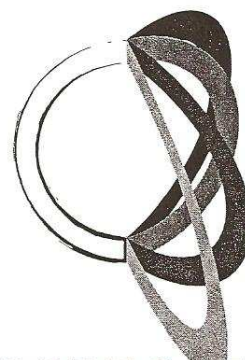
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# IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN A PE CLASS. AN ACTION-RESEARCH PROJECT

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## Introduction

Adolescents' motivation is a major concern of PE teachers. Many students, especially girls, are characterized by unmotivated behaviours in the gym (clothing, low involvement...). For two decades, quantitative research has been conducted to better understand the problem [1]. More recently, some qualitative studies have been proposed [2]. Even if descriptive and correlational data are fundamental, it seems that practitioners need to be more integrated into the research to develop applied knowledge and to increase the impact of the studies on the field.

## Methods

The study took place in a secondary level school of Liège, frequented by a large proportion of low socio-economic status students. A female teacher (55 years old) and 15 students belonging to one of her classes (14 to 16 years old girls) were involved across a whole school year (2002-2003). During a three months period, data were collected to determine the students' motivation level and to analyse the class context. After this period, the teacher planned an action designed to improve the motivation of her students. The following step was an intervention phase where the teacher experimented her project. Questionnaires, interviews and observation were combined in each phase of the study.

## Results

Students' attitude towards PE was not particularly positive but the girls participated under teacher's pressure. Class climate was quite positive. Activities proposed by the teacher were not really challenging and lessons lacked of momentum. The teacher chose to experiment with a new form of organization based on games and challenging activities. She was able to introduce it but her behaviour was not really consistent with the new approach. Finally, most of the students and the teacher perceived positive changes in the class but the least motivated students did not modify their motivation level.

## Discussion/Conclusions

This action-research pointed out the interest of practitioners towards experimentation with new approaches designed to improve the teaching process. It also appeared that modification of the task design should be clearly integrated by the teacher and needs personal behaviour changes. The teacher was identified as a determining factor of the students' motivation. Increasing motivation of some students should require deep and complex interventions due to their poor individual socio-cultural background.

## References

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- [2]. Cloes M. et al. (2002). *Avante*, 8, 1-14.