**Understanding Motivation in a Rural Physical Education Setting**

by

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## Abstract

This ethnographic case study examined students' experiences in a rural physical education setting during the 2017-2018 school year. Participants in this study were seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students (n=43), a volunteer teacher (n=1), and an in-service teacher (n=1). The results revealed that the environment was a barrier to instruction. The results also show that students had limited experience with formal physical education. This study has raised important questions about the nature of physical education in rural areas.

Acknowledgments

Be Optimistic!

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

# Chapter I: Introduction

The examination of achievement motivation in physical education settings tends to focus on the actions of students from middle, upper- middle, and affluent socioeconomic backgrounds, from either metropolitan cities or suburban areas in the United States and abroad (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010). These examinations are exclusionary at best and do not reflect the behaviors of children who live at or below the poverty line and who live in rural communities. Because of limited studies conducted within the demographics above, current achievement motivation literature in physical education paints positions, motivation, and privilege as similar constructs.

## Statement of the Problem

From a scholarly viewpoint little is known about how students in rural communities exhibit amotivation behaviors. According to Ntoumanis, Pensgaard, Martin, and Pipe (2004) motivation in PE has been one of the most abundant areas of research in sport and exercise psychology literature. Consequently, they argue that there is sparse research focusing on amotivation in physical education. Amotivation is generally defined as the absence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. More precisely, amotivation is conceptualized as the lack of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2002). In fact, Pelletier, Fortier, Vallarand, and Brure (2001) argued that amotivated individuals could not perceive a relationship between their actions and the subsequent outcomes of those actions. Furthermore, Vallarand et al. (2001) posit that during physical education amotivated students can feel disintegrated or feel as though they lack control of their actions and will thus invest little effort or energy in their pursuit of completing an assigned task. In compulsory physical education, amotivated students are more prone to exhibiting anti-social and avoidance behaviors such as making excuses, or leaving their shoes and clothes at home.

There are overwhelming amounts of empirical evidence that support the notion that physical education has significant public health implications. This study aims to gain a better understanding of how amotivated behaviors are displayed in rural compulsory physical education settings; how rural physical educations teachers modify amotivated behaviors; and to what extent rurality affects students' participation in compulsory physical education. Vallerand et al. (2001), Baker (2004), and Pelletier et al. (2001) agree that amotivation is associated with boredom, poor concentration, poor psychosocial adjustment, high perceived stress in school, and school dropout. However, amotivation is the most concerning form of motivation because of the various negative outcomes associated with mental, physical, and affective well-being. Similarly, the concept of alienation is referred to as the persistent negative feelings students associated with activities they perceive as unappealing or frivolous. Put simply, students who experience the aforementioned negative feelings describe their experiences in physical education as boring. Carlson (1995) argues that if individuals believe they cannot control or change a situation, the circumstances of the situation has the potential to lead them to withdraw emotionally, mentally, or physically from physical education sessions.

**Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of amotivation among adolescences during physical education physical education. The achievement motivation literature presents amotivation from the perspective of the interactions between students and the environment, but rarely includes interpersonal factors that influence amotivation. The secondary purpose of this study is to expand the learning motivation research in physical education settings in rural communities. This is important because students who lack motivation in physical education have the potential to experience disengagement from physical activity in general, but

more importantly, they are at greater risk of developing major adverse health conditions such as coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, anxiety and depression, and type 2 diabetes.

Over the past few decades, the concept of amotivation in physical education has evolved from two theoretical frameworks: learned helplessness and alienation. Dweck (1986) posits that the characteristics of children with a learned-helpless orientation are clear when compared with students who exhibit mastery-oriented behaviors. For example, mastery-oriented students will see a task through to completion regardless of the hardships they experience. Such students seek challenges and show a high level of persistence. Their achievement pattern is characterized by pride and satisfaction regarding the effort exerted in both successful and unsuccessful conditions. Conversely, students with a learned- helpless orientation lack of control over situations (Ritcher 1957). More precisely when such students are exposed to situations that restrict their sense of control the onset of learned helplessness is rapid.

For example, in a study conducted by Martinek and Karper (1982, 1984a) findings suggested that elementary students who were categorized as low-expectancy students by their teacher exerted significantly less effort in their motor task than did students that were categorized as high-expectancy. Additionally, they argued that the implications above happen when the instructional climates are performance based.

Some researchers, namely Rice, (1988), argue that alienation in physical education is influenced by the following factors: boredom, lack of engaging tasks, repetition of tasks, teacher behaviors, and aversion for the content. Additionally, there is wide agreement that the onset of alienation is influenced by instructional climates that emphasize social comparison, task completion, and performance (Portman, 1992; Robinson, 1990).

Mandigo, Holt, Anderson, and Sheppard (2008) examined students' motivational experiences during game lessons based on autonomy-supportive strategies and sought to understand the interaction between boys' and girls' motivational experiences across different categories of games. Participants consisted of 779 (380 females and 379 males) fourth through seventh-grade students. Researchers administered a 22-item questionnaire; that included items pertaining directly to SDT's theoretical model. In addition to the 22-item questionnaire, researchers included one open-ended question (e.g., is there anything else you want to tell us about the lesson?). Findings suggested that using autonomy-supportive teaching to deliver game lessons that are consistent with physical education is an effective way to support intrinsic motivation. The majority of participants indicated a high level of overall motivation through the 22-item questionnaire. Results from the open-ended questions were linked back to the theoretical framework of SDT. More precisely, findings from the study revealed that participants who wrote about their fun experiences talked about fun within the context of their desire to do the activity again, which correlated to intrinsic motivation. When participants wrote statements about their enjoyment of participating with other students and being included such responses were associated with the psychological need of relatedness. When participants reported that challenges made them feel successful, such responses related to the construct of competent at an optimally challenging task. Lastly, responses that conveyed motivation to the point where they wanted to teach other children their age the same activities, such responses correlate to autonomous motivation. However, 17% of the voluntary comments indicated that activities within the lessons were simply too easy. Their basic psychological needs associated with relatedness, competence, and autonomy were not met.

Tessier, Sarrazin, and Ntoumanis (2010) tested the effects of a training program for three first-year physical education teachers. Specifically, first-year teachers' overt behaviors, students' psychological needs satisfaction, self-determined motivation, and engagement in a sport based unit were examined. Results of the study revealed the following: first-year teachers managed to improve their teaching style, and students were receptive to changes made by teachers. Such findings reflected the increase of need satisfaction, self-determined motivation and engagement in class. Lastly, Horn (1985) examined the relationship between coaches' feedback and changes in the self-perceptions of female athletes over an athletic season. Results suggested that coaches who gave more non-contingent praise to athletes who were classified as low-expectations exhibited dismal effort and performed poorly. Furthermore, the primary investigator argued that feedback given by adults in response to children's achievement performance affects children's perceptions of their ability.

**Theoretical Framework**

Self-determination theory (SDT) is an organismic-dialectic framework of motivation that considers humans to be actively seeking optimal challenges and new experiences to master and integrate (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Scholars posit that motivation should not be viewed from a unidimensional perspective. Conversely, Deci and Ryan (1985) argued that motivation is multidimensional, and should be examined as such. As a result, they identified three dimensions of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation. More specifically, SDT theorizes that intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation (i.e., external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation), and amotivation lie on a continuum of self-determination. The SDT continuum has been tested for reliability and validity in a variety of contexts including education (Ryan & Connell, 1989

\), sport, exercise, and physical education (Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Biddle, Smith, & Wang, 2003).

Intrinsic motivation is the first dimension of motivation outlined in SDT. This form of motivation refers to an individual's volitional engagement in an activity for its sheer pleasure and satisfaction of engagement. For example, when an individual is intrinsically motivated, he or she is fully self-regulated, experiences a sense of volition, and functions without the aid of external regulations. Vallerand and Bissonnette (1992) argued that intrinsic motivation was a global state, and is best articulated when it is categorized into three sub-motives: the intrinsic motivation to know, to accomplish, and to experience stimulation.

The first sub-type of intrinsic motivation is referred to as the motivation to know. More specifically, this motive is expressed when an individual engages in an activity for pleasure and satisfaction while learning, exploring, or trying to seek understanding of a task. The second sub-type of intrinsic motivation is referred to as the motivation towards accomplishments. This form of intrinsic motivation is characterized by one's engagement in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction he or she derives when attempting to excel, create something new, or reach a new standard. Moreover, individuals with a motivation of accomplishment orientation gain gratification from the feeling of competence that is derived from the process it took to be successful. Such individuals may be more concerned with the process it took to be successful more than the actual outcome. The final sub-type of intrinsic motivation is referred to as the experience stimulation. Vallerand et al. (1993) posited that individuals with this orientation of motivation involvement with an activity for the experience of fun, excitement, and positive sensations such as gratification and fulfillment.

The second dimension of motivation outlined in SDT is extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation refers to a wide range of controlling characteristics that are tangential. In fact, extrinsic motivation is distinguished from intrinsic motivation by the fact that an individual's motive for performing an activity is directed by an independent outcome such as fear of punishment, reward, or threat. Deci and Ryan (1985) viewed extrinsic motivation as a multidimensional construct, which consists of three sub-types of extrinsic motivation: external regulation, introjection, and identification.

The first sub-type of extrinsic motivation is referred to as external regulation. This sub-type of external motivation refers to actions that are controlled by external events such as the anticipation of rewards and appraisal, the avoidance of conflict, and the threat of punishment (Jackson-Kerseys & Spray, 2013). For example, individuals who are externally regulated have the motivation to participate that can be characterized as engagement in an activity to either receive praise from peers or participating to avoid confrontation from a person in authority (i.e., parent, teacher, coach).

The second sub-type of extrinsic motivation is referred to as introjected regulation. This type of regulation is more complex than the other sub-types of extrinsic motivation. Regulation is thought to occur within an individual, but introjected regulation is relatively external to the individual. For example, an introjected regulated athlete may participate in an off-season training program, not because he or she wants to, but because the athlete perceives that he or she should because that is what elite athletes do during the off-season. Essentially, this belief is referred to as self-guilt.

The third sub-type of extrinsic motivation is referred to as identified regulation. Deci and Ryan (1985) argued that identified regulation refers to a relatively autonomous regulatory style

which is characterized by the acceptance of regulation as one's own. For example, an individual who identifies joining a health club as an important context for facilitating a healthful lifestyle, and adopts the belief that staying healthy requires regular physical activity would be exhibiting identified regulation.

The third dimension of motivation outlined in SDT is amotivation. The term amotivation is referred to as the absence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Put simply, amotivation is the lack of intent to act. Individuals who are amotivated do not show evidence of having certain purposes and goals, they do not systematically approach tasks, and they do not demonstrate the intent to engage in an activity. There is widespread agreement that amotivation is comparable to learned helplessness. Lastly, individuals withdraw effort because of the perception of incompetence and lack/loss of control.

Table 1

*Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory*

| **Amotivation** | **Extrinsic Motivation** | **Intrinsic Motivation** |
|---|---|---|
| Non-Intentional | External Regulation | Interest |
| Non-Valuing | Introjected Regulation | Enjoyment |
| Incompetence | Identified Regulation | Inherent |
| Lack of Control | Integrated Regulation | Stratification |

**Definitions of Key Terms**

- Amotivation refers to situations where individuals are neither intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.
- Extrinsic motivation is most evident when an activity is carried performed as a means to an end.

- Intrinsic motivation represents behaviors that occur without external rewards such as trophies and are undertaken solely out of interest in an activity for self-gratification.
- Autonomy refers to the basic need to experience one's behavior as self-endorsed or volitional.
- Competence is understood as a perception of being able to demonstrate a connection with peers who are deemed significant to the student.
- Relatedness can be thought of as an individual's need to have a close, affectionate relationship with others such as peers, parents, teachers, and caregivers.

**Research Questions**

1. How are amotivated behaviors displayed in rural compulsory physical education settings?
2. How do rural physical educations teachers modify amotivated behaviors?
3. To what extent does rurality affect students' participation in compulsory physical education?

## Chapter II: Review of Literature

Individuals who are amotivated do not show evidence of having certain purposes and goals, they do not systematically approach tasks, and they do not demonstrate the intent to engage in an activity. The achievement motivation literature suggests that amotivation and other motivational deficit conditions are not learned behavior, but traits. For example, Hiroto and Seligman (1975) postulated that learned helplessness in humans is a transient and peripheral state, which is similar to frustration, anxiety, or nervousness. More precisely, amotivation is believed to be enabled by an individual's motivational climate established by adults such as teacher and parental behaviors (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 2005). The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how amotivation is manifested, how amotivated behaviors are displayed during physical education and what intrapersonal factors induce amotivation among adolescence. This chapter presents a review of the literature for the study and consists of two sections, the environmental correlates of amotivation and intrapersonal correlates of amotivation, and methodologies that measure student voice in physical education.

### Section 1: Environmental/Intrapersonal Correlates of Amotivation

**Motivation/instructional climate.** The examination of the instructional climate (Motivational climate) in physical education has been identified as an important construct for determining student's motivational profile in physical education and physical activity. More specifically, two distinct climates have been identified: a mastery-oriented climate and a performance-oriented climate. A mastery climate is characterized by a focus on individual improvement, effort, and cooperative learning. Alternatively, a performance climate is highlighted by competition, outperforming others, viewing mistakes as failures, and the achieving success with minimal effort (Ames, 1992).

***Performance goals.*** Performance goals are based on ability and sense of self-worth. Ability is believed to be non-malleable and is demonstrated by outperforming others, surpassing normative based standards, or by achieving success with little effort (Dweck, 1986). Public recognition of superiority is especially important to performance-oriented achievement. When an individual adopts a performance goal, that person's self-worth is determined by his or her ability to perform and achieve the normative standard of success. Consequently, expending effort can threaten an individual's self-image when the outcome may be construed as a failure (Ames, 1992). In contrast, the purpose of behavior when mastery goals are salient is to develop competence and work towards task mastery. In this mindset, individuals are oriented toward developing new skills, improving their competence, or achieving mastery based on self-referenced standards. The focus of attention is on the intrinsic value of learning and maximizing effort (Nicholls, 1989). Within the context of mastery goals, failure can be construed as helpful information in the process of learning and mastering a task (Elliot, 2005).

***Positive effects of mastery climates***. In theory, creating a mastery climate for children in physical education classes levels the playing field for all students to experience success. Children are in critical developmental stages during their elementary and middle school years as they experience rapid intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth under the guidance of adults. The benefits of mastery goal salience go beyond philosophical assumptions. Studies have demonstrated a variety of important effects, including increased student enjoyment and satisfaction, willingness to exert maximum effort and preference for more challenging tasks. Immediate effects on activity levels have been associated with a mastery climate in children as young as four. Parish, Rudisill, and Onge (2007) compared heart-rates and energy expenditure in preschool-aged children who participated in a physical play session. Leaders of the experimental

group purposefully structured the environment to be characteristic of a mastery climate. The control group intentionally did not provide any structure to the play sessions, allowing the toddlers to play freely. Children in the experimental group recorded significantly higher heart-rates and played more vigorously compared to children in the non-structured play session. Due to the increased prevalence of overweight and obese children, creating environments that increase activity levels consistently is a short-term benefit that carries relevance and value. Favorable changes in cognition and effects have been associated with long-term mastery climate intervention programs.

Morgan and Carpenter (2002) orchestrated a mastery-oriented intervention program for elementary school physical education classes over a seven-week period. In the experimental group, each teacher was given instructions regarding advantageous manipulation of the TARGET elements to create a strong mastery orientation in the classroom. The tasks were multidimensional and designed for inclusion. Students were involved in the decision-making process by designing their practice lessons and corresponding rules; Recognition was contingent upon effort and improvement. The groups were small and comprised of students of mixed abilities working together toward task improvement. Personal journals were given to each student to record their performance and self-evaluation of effort and improvement at the conclusion of each lesson. The lessons were structured in a multidimensional way to ensure each student had numerous attempts at every task and waiting time was minimized. Not surprisingly, students in the control group reported no change in cognition or attitudes from the pre-test to the post-test. However, students whose teacher implemented the mastery climate adjustments reported numerous positive changes. The experimental group showed greater preference for challenging tasks, increased satisfaction as well as a more positive attitude towards physical

activity after the seven weeks had elapsed. Since high levels of satisfaction and cultivating positive attitudes toward physical activity in children are predictive of their attitudes in adulthood (Robertson-Wilson et al., 2003), the gains made in this area are particularly meaningful.

***Detrimental nature of performance climates.*** There is widespread agreement that creating a mastery climate in physical education classes yields significant cognitive and affective benefits in youth, but does that mean that educators who create a performance climate could potentially encumber their students? The answer appears to be 'possibly'. If the focus of learning is on social comparison and evaluation is based on normative standards, students in physical education classes are likely to perceive a performance-oriented climate and are more likely to show ineffective motivational responses, decreased motivation, and enjoyment. Several studies support this assertion by uncovering adverse reactions to the presence of performance climate structures. A study by Marsh and Peart (1988) demonstrated the detrimental effects of a performance climate on young females' self-image and perceived physical ability. Adolescent females were split into two groups for anaerobic session program in their physical education classes; one group was a cooperative intervention program that focused on creating a mastery climate, while the other intentionally fostered a performance climate by making intra-class comparisons salient and publicly recognizing top performers. Individuals from both groups demonstrated equally significant physical aerobic improvement, and members of the mastery intervention group reported cognitions that mirrored these physical gains. Students in this group expressed an enhanced self-image as well as an increase in their perceived physical ability. However, those in the performance intervention program expressed an overall belief that their physical fitness levels had decreased and reported a decline in the perception of their physical

appearance (Marsh & Peart, 1988). This discrepancy raises a major red flag. In a situation where individuals' self- image should reflect their enhanced fitness level, the opposite occurred. Especially during adolescence, when sensitive self-esteem issues can influence a plethora of other assessments and cognitions, this result could have serious long-term effects relating to attitudes toward organized physical activity.

The potentially damaging effects of a performance motivational climate were also evident in a study conducted by Solomon and Lee (1997). Over 800 elementary and middle school physical education students were asked about the climate they perceived during class time, as well as their efficacy perceptions and other psychological cognitions. Once again, there was a disturbing correlation between a perceived performance climate in physical education class and important psychological factors. Students who perceived a performance climate reported lower confidence-efficacy, decreased attention/concentration toward lesson material, and a reduced desire to participate compared with those who perceived the climate as mastery-oriented (Solomon & Lee, 1997). These cognitive outcomes are adverse for projected future voluntary involvement in PA. Logically, a child would want to avoid future efficacy threats if given a choice, especially if the activity is not interesting or appealing to them.

***Teacher behaviors.*** McCaughtry, Martin, Gran, Kulk, and Fahlman (2015) examined the relationship between physical education teachers' burnout and their students' autonomous motivation in physical education. Findings confirmed that physical education teacher's burnout undermined student motivation. Moreover, their findings support the claim that teacher burnout is interrelated, but teacher burnout might play a different role in undermining students' motivation development. They argued not only can teachers influence students' motivation in education through instructional style, but they can also motivate students through their own outward emotions and motivation. In conclusion, the inferences students made about their teachers' attitude toward instruction is an important yet understudied source of influence on student motivation in physical education.

According to Reeve, Deci, and Ryan (1985) controlling behaviors are described as an interpersonal sentiment and behavior that teachers provide students with during instruction to pressure students to think, feel, or behave in a specific way. Consequently, the opposite of the aforementioned is autonomy-support, which is the interpersonal sentiment and behavior teachers provide to identify nurture and develop students' inner motivational resources. In fact, educational psychology scholars, namely Deci and Ryan (1985), argued that such teacher behaviors are an important educational construct because students of autonomy-supportive teachers display more positive classroom function and educational outcomes than do students of controlling teachers.

Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Barch, and Jeon (2004) argued that when trained, objective raters scored teachers' naturally occurring instructional behaviors regarding how autonomy-supportive versus controlling they were. Raters generally scored teachers as having a natural tendency to exhibit a controlling style of teaching. Examples of such controlling behaviors are characterized

as frequently relying on extrinsic motivators to spark student engagement in a learning activity; using pressuring-inducing language, neglecting to provide explanatory rationales for requests; and opposing students' complaints and expressions of negative effect. There is widespread agreement that teachers typically enact both autonomy-supportive and controlling behaviors during a given instructional episode; however, controlling behaviors were found to be more common.

Reeve (2009) investigated why teachers adopted a controlling style of teaching. Findings suggested the following: when teachers complete a battery of personality inventories and have objective raters score their use of controlling motivating strategies during instruction, the control-oriented aspects of teachers' personalities predict the extent to which they use controlling strategies. For example, teachers with a controlling disposition, a control causality orientation, and low openness to experience were more likely to engage in controlling behaviors. These behaviors included: relying on outer sources of motivation, neglecting explanatory rationales, relying on pressure-inducing language, displaying impatience for students to produce the right answer and asserting their power to overcome students' complaints and expressions of negative effect.

***Parenting behaviors.*** Parenting behaviors such as involvement, autonomy-support versus control, structure versus control, and parental involvements are determinates of a child's motivation. Such parental behaviors exemplify self-determination theory. Moreover, parenting behaviors are multidimensional and include cognitive and intellectual involvement, behavioral involvement, and personal involvement. Cognitive and intellectual involvement include, but are not limited to, exposing a child to cognitively stimulating activities such as culturally enriching events. Behavioral involvement entails parents attending meetings with their child's teacher,

participating in school activities such as fundraisers, and the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings. Personal involvement entails a child's perception of their parents' level of engagement in their academics and the perception of the quality of their parent's interactions with him or her away from school. For example, this may include time spent on non-academic tasks such as spending quality time.

In a study conducted by Grolnick, Ryan, and Deci (2005), it was concluded that parental involvement contributed to children feeling more competent and in control of school successes, and more autonomous in their activities, each of which was, in essence, related to increased performance in school. Additionally, intrinsic motivation for learning results from children's need for autonomy being met. As a result, children are more autonomously self-regulated to pursue academic endeavors, persist during tasks that are beyond their comfort level, such as in physical education, and take an active role in their academic achievement or behaviors. Consequently, when parents exhibit controlling behaviors or when children perceive that parents exhibit controlling behaviors, children are more susceptible to adopt an extrinsic goal orientation for learning, which is related to adverse motivational outcomes (e.g., amotivation). As a result of sparse empirical evidence supporting behavioral issues as a result of amotivation, the term learned helplessness would be used instead of amotivation. The construct of amotivation is relatively new in comparison to learned helplessness. In fact, learned helplessness theory is the foundation to amotivation. The section below provides an overview of the theory of learned helplessness and an explanation of behavioral issues that occur as a result of helplessness.

***Learned helplessness.*** The phenomenon of learned helplessness was first introduced by Seligman and Maier (1967). In fact, they postulated that learned helplessness is most evident when an organism (e.g., dogs, cats, fish, and humans) perceives that its behaviors and outcomes

are independent. In fact, when an individual experiences uncontrollable events it can lead to the expectation that no course of action will combat future outcomes. Such beliefs lead to lowered response initiation, lowered persistence (e.g., motivational deficits), sadness and lowered self-esteem (e.g., emotional deficits).

In a study conducted by Hiroto and Seligman (1975) their findings suggested that when subjects were exposed to situations that were inescapability and insolubility both provoked beliefs that responding was independent of reinforcement. In other words, when an individual experienced a situation that was unavoidable and difficult to resolve, learned helplessness is induced. Seligman (1990) claimed that depression might be a result of one's belief that their actions are independent of their outcomes. Seligman arrived at this by identifying the similarities between learned helplessness deficits and motivational, cognitive, and emotional deficits of human depression. A cause for children giving up quickly or avoiding any task engagement was because of their sense of having little control over the outcomes of during achievement situations Seligman (1990).

Moreover, Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale, (1978) argued that learned helplessness manifests when individuals expect the outcome of their behavior to be independent of their actions. In fact, Abramson et al. (1978) postulated that learned helplessness is either restricted to a particular activity in physical education or global such as across all activities in physical education, or across all school subjects. Additionally, learned helplessness could also be unstable (transient) or stable (chronic). Finally, learned helplessness can be universal, such as when students perceive that they and relevant others have control over a particular outcome, or personal such as when such perceptions of uncontrollability do not extend beyond the self. Personal, as opposed to universal learned helplessness, in physical education is more likely to be

due to inter-individual variations in physical competence levels. According to Abramson et al. (1978), global, stable, and personal helplessness beliefs can result in depression and low self-esteem.

Consequently, in 1978 the theory of learned helplessness was reformed to apply to the emotional and behavioral development of deficits (Abramson et al., 1978). This reformation established a set of predictions about the emotional and behavioral development of children. Such predictions claimed that children who possessed an attributional style that habitually leads them to view the causes of bad events as stable in time, global in effect and internal to themselves will be vulnerable to a defined cluster of helplessness deficits such as lowered response initiation (i.e., passivity), cognitive deficits, sadness, lowered self-esteem, and lowered assertiveness and competitiveness.

Nolen-Hoeksema, Girgus, and Seligman (1986) examined the validity and reliability of the predictions children's emotional and behavioral development that are outlined in the reformulated theory of learned behavior. More specifically, researchers tested the prediction that children with an explanatory style would exhibit more helplessness deficits than children without an explanatory style. Findings suggested that children who tended to explain bad event by internal, stable, and global causes and good events by external, unstable, and specific causes reported more depression and showed more achievement-related problems. Consequently, children who were not depressed and who were not having achievement problems tended to explain bad events by external, unstable, and specific causes and good events by internal, stable, and global causes.

In conclusion, there is widespread agreement that amotivation in physical education is positively correlated with the instructional climate set by the teacher. More precisely, Dweck

(1986) suggest that when struggling students are exposed to a performance goal clime, he or she associated their self-worth to his or her ability to perform and achieve the normative standard of success. In addition to the motivational and instructional climate, amotivation is correlated to student's perception of their caregiver's motivational disposition. For example, Reeves (2004) found that student's motivational profile is strongly correlated with teachers' feeling of burnout and job dissatisfaction. This same was true for parental behaviors, in that, children's motivational profiles have been found to be positively correlated to their perception of their parent's behavior (e.g., personal involvement, quality of their parent's interactions, and engagement in their academics).

**Section II: Student Voice**

The section below reviews and synthesizes physical education (PE) research that uses various methods for collecting data on student voice, and is organized in the following manner: primary, intermediate, and secondary schools.

Dyson (1995) posited that to gain a noteworthy perspective into how physical education curriculum is perceived by students, it is important for researchers to listen to students' perceptions. For instance, Silverman (1995) argued that students who experience chronic feelings of failure due to a lack of competence, their propensity to persist are thwarted. Consequently, Ennis (1996) affirmed the breadth and depth of what students learn and his or her conceptualization of physical education are compromised due to the latter. Moreover, scholars (e.g., Elbaz, 1983; Evans, 1990; Lee & Solmon,1992; Schuell, 1986; Wittrock, 1986) agreed with the notion that understanding students' perceptions and beliefs of physical education has marked effects on students' decision to participate in physical education class and to what extent he or she participants.

Ennis (1996) suggested if a physical education class evokes negative experiences students may no longer wish to participate in such activities. However, Sinelnikov and Hastie (2010) affirmed the opposite, indicating that students who had positive experiences during physical education are more engaged during class, and can recall more event-specific and relevant information several years after the class than do students who had negative experiences.

**Primary.** Oliver and Hamzeh (2010) examined four fifth-grade mestiza girls' self-identified barriers to being physically active in school. Mestizas are females of mixed race specifically children born to Mexican or American Indian parents. The purpose of this study was for researchers to gain a better understanding of mestizas' self-identified barriers to physical activity (PA) and to work with them to develop strategies for challenging these barriers. The primary investigator used participatory action research designed to collect data on student-voice. Consequently, under the guidance of the lead researcher, the participants acted as co-researchers and completed the following tasks:

- created personal biographies;
- captured photos of things that enabled them to be physically active and things that prevented them from prevented them from being physically active;
- conducted individual and group analyses of the previously captured photographs to identify major themes that influenced their PA; and
- conducted an mini research project that sought to understand their peers' self-identified barriers to PA.

Findings revealed that girls' collective self-identified barrier to being physically active was due to boys not allowing them to play. More specifically, the aforementioned barrier were extrapolated into more nuanced discourses such as:

- boys' actions and words that suggested physical activity is for them but not for girls;
- lunch monitors who ignored the fact that many girls were not physically active because the boys were dominating the playground equipment as well as available spaces to play;
- the school principal who allowed the monitors to ignore girls' and boys' activity patterns;
- girls' interests in being physically activity versus the perception of others who labeled them as being uninterested in activity;
- family obligations, (e.g. household chores and tending to siblings) and doing homework; and
- parents allowing the girls to watch several hours of television daily but not encouraging them to be physically active.

In conclusion, this study also debunks the notion of the lack of physical activity in historically marginalized groups (e.g., Mestizas, Muslims, and African-Americans) are not due to a lack of interested but are due to abstract obstacles such as sexism, racism, and sexism.

Temel and Gllu (2016) examined Turkish students' perceptions of social gender in physical education by conducting a document analyzing pictures drawn by students. The notion of social gender is associated with how one describes the relationships between genders. Participants consisted of 394 eleven-year-old students (190 female and 204 male), enrolled in 12 schools throughout five cities in Turkey. Before conducting the content analysis, the investigator examined students drawing and eliminated pictures that contained inappropriate content. The content analysis was completed in three steps.

First, the lead researcher, along with graduate students, analyzed the drawing individually so that they could determine the emergent themes without social coercion. Second, data obtained by the researchers separately were compared and then reanalyzed as a group. As a result of the previous two steps, researchers discovered that some pictures fit a single theme while others fit more than one theme. Lastly, per the suggestion of Robert and Priest (2006) the lead researcher solicited the assistance of a visual arts expert. More precisely, the visual arts expert proved his option of students' drawing, and the themes researchers developed. Findings revealed that within the theme of gender status there were no major differences in the only female, only male, female-male, and male-male subthemes. However, male students were observed to draw pictures that depicted male students with male students. Conversely, 21% (n=44) of female students drew mostly female figures. The same was true for male students in that males drew male figures at an identical rate as female students. The rate of female figures was 34% (n=64). Findings regarding pictures drawn by male students revealed that the majority of the figures were the only male figure(s). More specifically, the rate of male figures drawn was at a rate of 88% (n= 951). Lastly, results from the content analysis revealed that co-ed classes had a significant impact on female students' ability to develop positive perceptions of social gender than did females in single-gender classes. Lastly, girls in single-gender classes showed that they created more rigid gender roles than females in single-gender classes and males.

Brock, Rovegno, and Oliver (2009) were interested in gaining insight into what happens during a 9-week Sports Education unit and how status influenced student's social interactions and decision making. Participants consisted of ten fourth-grade students (six girls and four boys) from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The lead researcher administered a questionnaire to collect the student's data (e.g., hobbies, friends, extracurricular activities) and demographic

information (e.g., race, gender, and class). The lead researcher examined student voice (i.e., social interactions and perceptions of status) by collecting data from multiple sources such as individual and group interviews, student artifacts (e.g., team captain's contracts and playing time), audio recordings, and journal entries. Contrary to findings from previous studies, findings revealed that two girls were perceived by the other participants as high status.

According to Brock et al. (2009), the identified high-status girls made the majority of decisions for their team. In fact, low-status students were silenced, and their voices were not heard. The latter was most evident during social interactions (e.g., meetings) when lower status students did not object the requests of their higher status peers. In conclusion, Brock et al. (2009) posited that the students who were perceived as higher statues learned that status was determined by students' perception of economic level, attractiveness, athletic involvement, and personality.

**Intermediate.** Couturier, Chepko, and Coughlin (2005) developed an action research project to determine what attracted middle and high school students to physical education and what barriers restricted students' participation. They also wanted to identify differences between middle and high school students' perceptions of participating in physical education. Researchers administered a survey designed to determine several factors:

- reasons why students wanted to participate in physical education,
- reasons why students did not want to participate in physical education, and
- what students participated in physical education (i.e., demographics).

Data were aggregated from seven middle schools (grades 6-8) and four high schools (grade 9-12) situated in an urban school system located in the southeastern region of the United States. Findings from this study revealed that students had a strong desire for choice within the context of the physical education curriculum. Also, students wanted to work at their own pace

and select their own groups. Regarding differences between middle and high school students' perceptions of participating in physical education, findings revealed several noteworthy differences.

- middle school students ranked swimming skills first while high school students ranked it last;
- middle school students ranked fitness skills last while high school students ranked it second;

Middle school students were more likely than high school students to:

- agree that they like learning new games and activities,
- say they wanted the ability to select the group they worked with,
- that they participated because they wanted to improve their skills,
- that they thought physical education was just as important as core subjects,
- That they were more afraid of their peers making fun of them, and
- that they did not feel comfortable changing in front of others.

High school students were more likely than middle school students to:

- agree that they like getting out of class and moving,
- that physical education makes them healthier,
- that they like to pick their activities,
- that they participate because they have to,
- that they don't have enough time to change and shower,
- that they don't like having to bring clothes for class, and
- that they do not like to swim.

**Secondary.** Hamzeh and Oliver (2012) were interested in gaining a better understanding of how Muslim girls negotiated opportunities for PA. Participants consisted of 4 girls between the ages of 14 and 17 years old, from the southwestern region of the United States of American, self-identified as Muslims, and considered English their first language. To support the aim of this study, the lead researcher developed some participant-centered data collection methods that measured student voice for over a 12-month period. The lead researcher collected data over a one-year period and met with participants 17 times for approximately 9-11 per meeting. A wide range of data collection techniques were used to collect student voice data including,

- a self-mapping questionnaire that sketched basic information about the intersections of each girl's identity, family members, school interests, places and activities of interest, and the ways they saw themselves as Muslims;
- using a disposable cameras to capture images of events, places, and people in their lives that participants wanted to share with the lead researcher and other participants;
- selecting snippets from fashion and music magazines to make collages;
- writing in personal journals with prompts such as "I am…," and "What if";
- using e-mail to as a platform to exchange their thoughts and to discuss issues with the lead researcher and other participants;
- creating a body collage and induvial scrapbooks to represent and describe themselves to the lead researcher in an oral presentation;
- engaging in small group discussions; and
- participation in a variety of physical activities.

Findings suggested that to successfully promote physical activity among Muslim girls it is necessary for practitioners and researchers to navigate the diversity of young Muslims within

the intersecting discourses in their lives that challenge their participation in physical activity. It is also necessary for practitioners to honor young Muslims' choices while negotiating their chances of maintaining physical activity. In conclusion, findings from this study affirm Asher's (2003) recommendations for physical educator and researchers to deracialize and deculturalize the conceptualization of physical education studies and pedagogies and invite all participants to an engaging dialogue across difference.

**Photo Elicitation Interview**

The term Photo Elicitation Interview (PEI) refers to the idea of inserting a photograph into interviews. More specifically, PEI is a methodological strategy that uses a single or sets of photographs as a stimulus during an interview. The purposes of PEI are multi-faceted and aim to trigger rich responses, jog memories and unveil participants' attitudes, views, beliefs, and meanings of group dynamics. According to Harper (2002) photos used in PEI research lie on a continuum and include: scientific, institutional experiences, and intimate social groups. The first tenet of the PEI continuum is considered the most scientific and includes visual inventories of objects, people, and artifacts. Such photos are often seen in anthropological field studies. Specifically, these photos included visual inventories of objects, people, and artifacts.

The second tenet of the PEI continuum outlines that images depict events that were part of collective or instructional pasts. These images may include photos of work, schools or an individual's institutional experiences, and images depicting events that occurred earlier in the lifetimes of the subjects. Also, these images may also connect an individual to experiences or eras that do not reflect the research subject's actual lives. Lastly, the third tenet of the PEI continuum includes photos that portray the intimate dimensions of family relationships. This

tenet also includes images of intimate social groups, such as sports teams, academic cohorts, classroom ecologies or an individual's body.

**Advantages of photo-interviewing.** Meo (2010) examined the relationships between class habitus, identities, and schooling in the context of a post-neoliberal political landscape in the recently altered socioeconomic structure and inclusive educational policies in the city of Bueno Aires, Argentina. The secondary aim of the study was to examine the advantages and limitations of photo-elicitation interviewing as a methodological tool. This was accomplished by examining the proposed research design, research questions, and methodological strategies to locate the inclusion of photo-elicitation interviewing. Secondly, the primary researcher compared the structure and the data yielded by photo-elicitation interviews to traditional interviews conducted in the primary aim of the study. Findings suggest that photo-elicitation promoted access to areas of inquiry that researchers would not traditionally be able to explore. Findings from this study identified seven significant advantages of using photo-elicitation in a qualitative inquiry that appear in Table 2.

Table 2

*Seven Advantages of Photo-Interviewing*

1. Photo-interviews longer and more enjoyable interviews.
2. Photo-interviews enhance the participation and control of interviewees.
3. Gathering of richer data about similar topics.
4. Photo-interviews reinforced what was already stated in the traditional interview.
5. Photo-interviews offer a close look at what and whom participants consider important.
6. Photo-interviews allow the emergence of unexpected topics.
7. Photo-interviews enabled making sense of some data, which otherwise would have been difficult to interpret.

Capello (2005), Clark (1999), Epstein, Stevens, McKeever, & Baruchel (2006), and Fishman (2012) suggested that photo-elicitation in research with adolescent subjects (e.g., children and youth) promotes rapport and enables researchers to conceptualize lived experiences.

There is strong evidence that suggests that photo-elicitation triggers richer conversations about the community, memories, and reflections (Clarke-Ibanez, 2004; Hazel, 1995; and Holliday, 2000). Scholars agree that photo-elicitation has the potential to function as a bridge between the distant social and cultural worlds of the researcher and contribute to the denaturalization of the interviewees' social worlds. Additionally, Becker, (2002) and Schwartz (2001) view, photo elicitation favors richer interpretations of social actors' perceptive by researchers and readers and can potentially challenge researchers 'analyses. Collier (1967) writes:

> Pictures elicit longer and more comprehensive interviews but at the same time helps subjects overcome the fatigue and repetition of conventional interviews. In fact, photo-interviews lasted an average of two hours, whereas traditional oral interviews last an average of one hour. I asked questions intently about the images, participants, and situations. The familiarity of this act favored comments from the interviewees, jokes, laughter, and authorized me to ask detail questions about different topics and areas, and enhanced rapport between interviewees and me. (p. 858).

**Photo-elicitation in education and physical education.** Hill (2015) examined how three boys invested in their bodies by engaging in particular types of physical activities that would enable them to develop muscularity, fitness and motor competence, to attain or retain physical and social capital in school. Participants consisted of three 13- year -old British Asian boys. The aim of this study was achieved by drawing on subjects' visual and verbal narratives from the photo diaries of their physical activity experiences in and out of school. More specifically, three group sessions were held during this year-long ethnographic project with boys and girls in an ethnically diverse secondary school in Midland United Kingdom. During the first session, participants discussed their experiences in physical activity and the ways that bodies become admired or valued in physical education. After this initial session, participants were given a

digital camera and instructed to make a photo diary. Photo diaries consisted of photos of people they admired in their physical education class and their peer group.

During the second and third group interview sessions, the lead researcher structured the discussion around electing meanings of participants' photo content and the representations they offered of their experiences of physical activity within their respective photo dairies. The lead researcher used group interviews because she deemed they offered ways of reproducing the thick rich description of social interactions and peer dynamics among students. Group interview view also put participants at ease because of the nature of information garnered during sessions. Findings affirmed that these boys' decisions about when and how to engage in physical activity were complete. For example, they invested in their bodies so they could become or remain competent, strong or fit. Also, they performed and or practiced activities that would give them the most social capital among their peers. Surprisingly, some of the participants were willing to exchange competence for social capital.

Azzarito and Katzew (2010) developed a 1-year qualitative study using an ethnographic design to examine individuals' storytelling of their life experiences and memories in specific contexts (i.e., physical education and physical activity). The purpose of this study was to explore how young people in physical education form identities through their interpretations of media images of the body and to determine what interpretations students use and how they relate them to their physicality. To address the proposed research questions the lead researcher collected field notes weekly for six months before conducting formal (open-ended questions) and informal (conversational) interviews. Observations focused on students' daily experiences in physical education, namely their interactions with peers and the classroom teacher, and displays of body actions and behaviors such as competitiveness, cooperation, leadership, and forceful occupation

of space. Once the observation period was complete, the lead researcher conducted two individual qualitative interviews with participants. Lastly, researchers created a cultural inventory of performing bodies to probe participants' narratives about the body. Findings suggest when recalling experiences in physical activity practices girls and boys adopted complex multiple body signifiers.

**Advantages of Group Interviews**

Researchers agree upon some significant advantages associated with the use of traditional group interviewing as a data-gathering strategy. Such advantages include, but are not limited to the following:

- group interviews allow researchers to understand better how members of a group arrive at or alter their conclusions about some topic or issue;
- it provides access to interaction clues; and
- it offers greater flexibility, in that the moderator can explore related, but unanticipated, topics as they arise in the course of the group nterview.

## Chapter III: Case Study I – Instructional Setting Observations and Content Building

This study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences in a rural physical education setting. Standard deviations and internal reliability for all variables were calculated for the various scales, and qualitative data analysis techniques included the development of coding categories, analytic induction, member checking of transcripts, and theme development. Findings revealed that students had limited exposure to formal physical education instruction and students' motivational profiles are comparable to their white counterparts when the relevant quality instruction is provided consistently.

Participants were 43 boys and girls, ages 12-14 who attended a rural middle and school. Students participated in a 20-lesson Sports Education Unit. The principal investigator administered two questionnaires to participating students during the first half of the school year and once at the end of the second half of the school year. The purpose of the scales was to identify participants' motivational profiles in the context of physical education and physical activity. The selection criteria for the study were:

- if participants indicated on their questionnaire that they would be willing to be interviewed, and
- if participants scored above (>5) the midpoint on the Amotivation in Physical Education Inventory.

Semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted before and at the end of the Sports Education Fitness Unit. Prompts for students' photo voice activity and journal entries center on three themes: (1) students' positive expertness during physical education lessons, (2) students' negative experiences during lessons, and (3) if given the opportunity what students would change about their physical education experience.

Findings of the study centered around three themes: (1) the barriers students identified to their participation in physical education; (2) the factors that the physical educator identified as barriers to providing quality instruction; and (3) interpretations of the environment (e.g., administration, curriculum, and instruction).

Achievement motivation research in physical education has shown that students who lack motivation in physical activity have the potential to experience disengagement form physical activity in general. However, the populations in these studies have been almost exclusively students from middle, upper-middle, and affluent socioeconomic backgrounds, from either metropolitan cities or suburban areas in the United States and abroad (Carroll & Loumidis 2001; Hill 2015). Investigations that focus on high school students' motivational profiles and experiences during physical education lessons in rural settings are scant in physical education literature. The current study was guided by the recommendations of Oliver (1999) and Oliver and Lalik (2000) and employs a Transformative mixed method design to address the research questions.

SHAPE America defines a physically literate individual as someone who demonstrates knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness. A keystone of this goal is the 50 million strong initiative, which is a call to action for all of America's health and physical educators to unite and focus on a common purpose, that being getting all of the nation's children physically active, enthusiastic and committed to making healthy lifestyle choices. However, a lack of curriculum time and large class sizes make achieving SHAPE America's 50 million strong initiative, at best, difficult to achieve. The Principal Investigator (PI) postulates that if students participate in a Sports Education Fitness season that achieving SHAPE America's 50 Million Strong is possible because students have

more opportunities to make choices about their participation in physical education, learn health-related fitness concepts, and learn in a structured environment.

**Purpose Statement**

This paper seeks to uncover students' motivational profiles and experiences of students during physical education through field observations, motivational scales, and semi-structured interviews. The purpose of this study is to examine how amotivation is developed and displayed in a rural physical education setting.

**Participants and Setting**

Participants and Setting Students from a seventh, eight, and ninth grade physical education class and their teacher were selected to participate in this study. The gender and ethnic demographics of the class included 21 girls and 23 boys. Of these students, 30 were African American, 11 were Latinx, and two were Caucasian. The teacher in this study had 14 years of teaching experience. She was from the southeastern part of Alabama. She attended a private Christian in Alabama. She identifies as being abled bodied, a woman and heterosexual she is deeply committed to working with, "students whom society does not expect much from." The setting for this study was a rural secondary school (7-12) located in the Southeastern United States. The school enrolls 233 students and is listed as a Title I program. The percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch was 99%. The school was predominately African American (88%) with the rest of the population consisting of Latinx (7.4%) and Caucasian (2%) students.

At the time of this study, the Principal Investigator was 30 years old. He identifies as African American, middle-class, Christian, heterosexual, physically active, and able-bodied. He graduated from a Historically Black College in the rural South Carolina and raised in a

predominately Black neighborhood but attended a predominately White suburban public-school system. He is deeply committed to improving the physical activity behaviors of historically marginalized children. He has spent the past eight years studying children and adolescent motivation for physical activity and learning in physical education with specific application to rural and urban populations. His diverse academic and professional experiences and identities have allowed him to develop a critical lens to examine issues related to marginalize racial groups historically. Personally, and professionally, his experiences in crossing cultures position him as an inbetweener (Anzaldúa, 2007) because he understands the plight of students in the current study from past lived experience, but now he lives in a reality that cafes my background. While his age and academic position situate his as an outsider (Hill-Collins, 1990).

**Program - Sports Education Fitness**

Rink (2007) and Baet al. (2015) found the number of students who achieved within the healthy fitness zones on the Fitness Gram was50-percent. Keating et al. (2009) suggested that there were "a lack of Health-Related Fitness (HRF) knowledge among students at all educational levels (i.e., elementary, secondary, and college" (p. 333).

The challenge for physical educators, especially those working in Title I schools, is to deliver enjoyable learning experiences to students that promote physical activity, fitness development, and knowledge. If the fitness objectives include students having opportunities to make choices about their participation, knowledge of health-related fitness, and create an environment that is less controlling this model for the teacher. In SE students are taught and expected to officiate games, which requires students to know the rules, be proactive in competitions, and learn to self-govern their games. In this study a Sports Education Fitness unit was used to provide a setting for the researcher to manipulate the environment so that students could interact in a formal physical education setting.

**Season outline.** Students participated in a modified Sports Education Fitness season. This modified season consisted of a 15, 30-minute health-related fitness (HRF) themed, lessons, instructional days, team practice days and two formal team-based competitions. See Figure 1 for an outline of the modified season.

**Instructional days.** Instructional days consisted of thematic stations and micro-lessons where teachers provide an overview of a Health-Related Fitness (HRF) topic that provided students with information for their next competition. Instructional days were facilitated by a graduate assistant.

**Team practice days.** Team Practice days were designated for teams to spend class time practicing and designing challenges. Teams control how they choose to spend their time during Team Practice days. Students were encouraged to prepare individually by focusing on exercises they believed would prepare them for success. Students were encouraged to spend this time developing their strengths and weaknesses. For example, students were allowed to run to develop aerobic fitness, while other students focused on muscular strength or endurance activities by doing bodyweight squats with a weighted ball. Team Practice days provided students with autonomy to select physical activities that they found personally enjoyable.

**Formal competitions.** Two days during the week were designated for competition days. The first day served as a dry-run where students practiced scoring protocols and asking questions concerning the rules. The second day was dedicated to competing. In this modified season students three competitions scheduled during the season: Head-to-Head Challenge and Everyone across the Gym.

**Formal Competition Description**

On competition days students competed against one team. One representative from each team will explain their team's rules and demonstrate the challenge to their opponents. Another representative from each team records while their opponent competes. Students will then complete their own team's challenge and exchange roles. The team that scores the faster time on each challenge is awarded five points with a total of 10 possible points if a team wins both challenges. Some teams might focus entirely on muscular strength. Teams are likely to design some form of a relay with a combination of fitness elements from the aerobic and resistance circuits they completed in earlier lessons. Teams might choose to include penalty points, by adding five seconds if an opponent knocks over a hurdle or touches a jump rope when crawling under or jumping over an object. Teams are encouraged to design circuits that will maximize their abilities and fitness profiles while potentially exploiting their opponents' weaknesses. They are also encouraged to look around and see what other teams were designing.

**Head-to-head.** Students decided on the format of the challenge. While most teams designed a relay, a challenge that required all team members to complete a series of exercises in a designated amount of time or a challenge that closely resembled a station they enjoyed during an instructional day.

**Unit challenge.** Each team has an inventory of exercises that need to be completed (see figure 2). All team members must do at least one exercise, but not all team members have to do equal numbers of repetition per exercise. Team members can rotate to another activity at any time. During the competition, one team completed the challenge while the other team kept score and judged. When all teams completed the challenge, the teacher ranked the times. See Figure 3 for ranks and times.

## Data Analysis

To gain a general sense of the setting a series of steps were implemented during the process of data analysis as follows:

- A blank coding sheet was adopted with the following headings: code #, theme and examples of characteristics with the theme. Predetermined codes were avoided in an attempt to avoid subjectivity.
- All individual interviews were transcribed and common themes were identified.
- The data were then triangulated using, interviews, field notes, and photographs and possible themes were identified.

**Increasing trustworthiness of data.** The PI implemented several strategies to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative data: these included minimizing reflexivity and reactivity effects during field observations, upholding neutrality and reporting negative cases, and conducting member checks on interview data.

**Reflexivity effects.** The PI controlled for reflexivity effects by carefully providing highly detailed, authentic descriptions of teacher and student behavior, and class segments. PI recorded field notes using descriptive language in the active voice as opposed to judgmental language. Additionally, the PI wrote memos and comments in separate columns during observation. PI balanced objective and subjective reasoning from a critical pedagogy viewpoint through official class descriptions. This aided in increasing the credibility of the data.

**Reactivity effects.** The PI minimized reactivity effects through the sequencing of data collection methodologies. The PI collected questionnaires and conducted field observations before student interviews and the second set of instructor interviews to preserve authentic classroom behavior and questionnaire results. If the PI conducted interviews before these data

were collected, the instructors and students potentially discerned the research focus and behaved and responded in accordance with what they thought the PI wanted to see and hear. Secondly, the PI remained semi-covert in his role as the researcher until all data had been collected. During field observation, the PI remained in an unobtrusive position in the gym during instructional time. The PI remained close enough to hear and see instructor/student interactions fully, but PI did not disrupt the natural flow of classes. Finally, the PI retained the role of a spectator-observer during field observation to reduce disruptions in the natural course of the lessons. Neutrality Throughout the interview and reporting process, the PI upheld neutrality to the maximum extent. The PI avoided pressing a particular perspective during interviews and manipulating transcriptions to accentuate a biased perspective (Patton, 2015). Additionally, throughout the data collection process, the PI reported negative cases that emerged from field observations and interviews.

**Member checks**. To increase the accuracy of interview transcriptions, the PI conducted member checks. The PI emailed transcriptions to the instructors and students for them to proofread the transcriptions for the accuracy of their statements. The PI made corrections accordingly per participant request (Patton, 2015).

## Results

The following results are not intended to be generalized to describe a population. Instead, these findings are meant to provide insight into one rural secondary school in the Southeastern United States. The teacher and students' responses and comments to interview questions seldom reflected the characteristics that support Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory. This evidence suggests that the environment did not support the teacher's and students' well-being. The major purpose of this study was to examine how amotivation is developed and displayed in a

rural physical education setting and how teachers respond to amotivated behaviors. Presented are the results from interviews and field note observations. The data analysis from this study showed the emergence of the following themes, the environment as a barrier and administration.

**Environment.** The majority of the responses to interview questions and informal conversations with the teacher centered on factors that prevented her from providing instruction. Such factors included the environmental adequacies and the institutional environment.

***Environmental adequacies.*** During a preliminary interview with the teacher regarding the daily management procedures she commented:

> I can't make the dress out anymore. When we are in the "New Gym" we dressed out every day. Now that we are in this dump [referring to the old gym]! We do not dress out because we cannot use the girl's locker room. Well for starters, the door to the girls' locker room does not lock, and the sink in the girl's locker has fell off the wall and is just sitting in the middle of the floor.
>
> I continually asked them to clean out this storage room! This week, when I came into the Girl's locker room, I saw the junk from the storage room in the dressing area of the girl's locker room! Boy, was I heated! Now the girls cannot dress out for my class until this junk is moved! (See Figure One).

*Figure 1*. Photograph of girl's locker room taken by one interviewee (teacher) when asked about her daily management procedures.

Figure two is a photograph of the lobby that was being renovated during this study. During a photo elicitation interview, the teacher commented:

> The construction that's underway in the lobby, on the sidewalk and the landscape work between the main building and the gym gets in the way of instruction. Some days we have to be in the small gym, and other days we are in the "new gym." Moving between buildings just throws the rhythm off… I can't do anything that requires stationary equipment (e.g., volleyball, badminton, or pickle ball) because I never know what gym is going to be available. It's a real pain, you know!


*Figure 2*. Photograph of the lobby that was being renovated during this study.

***Institutional environment.*** An institutional environment is "characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform to receive legitimacy and support." (Scott p. 132). The teacher expressed concerns within the environment that made teaching difficult and or unappealing. Such concerns included the ambiguity of her expectations and a lack of support from her peers. When asked what those aspects might be the following response was given, "I am feeling burnt out from all this crap! I feel this way because it seems as though he [the principal] holds me to a different standard than the other physical education teachers. "He [referring to the principal] is always in the gym during instructional

time. He does not speak to me or observes my teaching. He comes to the gym to talk to Bam or Pitts [the head football and the head basketball coach] … Just the other day he came into my classroom telling me how he wants to start a volleyball program next Fall, and I need to be the coach. He then goes on to say; you need to start carrying your weight around here because all you do is teach PE."

She continues about how she feels like the new football and basketball coaches are not held accountable for their actions. "I'm not saying because I'm white they are ganging up on me, but I know for sure because I am a woman!" The claims of the teacher are supported by the PI observations in September. He observed the football coach leaving his entire class in the gym while he cut grass during, prepared for practice or games, and complete other coaching tasks during instructional time. In an impromptu conversation, the football coach boasts that "I'm here to teach discipline… I'm not here to be a good guy."

The image below was taken by the teacher and represents athletics at Loachapoka. She expressed how athletics is a barrier to her teaching because of the value the community places on it. She adds that equipment is at the disposal for athletics and the gym is the prime real estate for athletic events, which are not limited to practicing and playing, but it reserved for prep-rallies and assemblies without any consideration for physical education instruction. The PI's observations supported the teacher's claim.

> Coaches and students alike appeared to have to mentally checked out because today is the first basketball game of the season. The head basketball coach, who is also the middle school physical education teacher, has a distinct zeal today. So much so that he has been anxiously pacing throughout the gym while listening to music during instructional time. Like the head basketball coach, a majority if not

all of the students in the intervention are displaying similar forms of angst by their refusal to participate, their stiff and jittery body language, and their attire.

***Administration.*** Figure three, a set of photographs, was taken by the teacher and represented an aspect of are of equipment the principal bought for the physical education program. During a photo elicitation interview, the teacher expressed displeasure with the equipment the principal purchased for the physical education program.

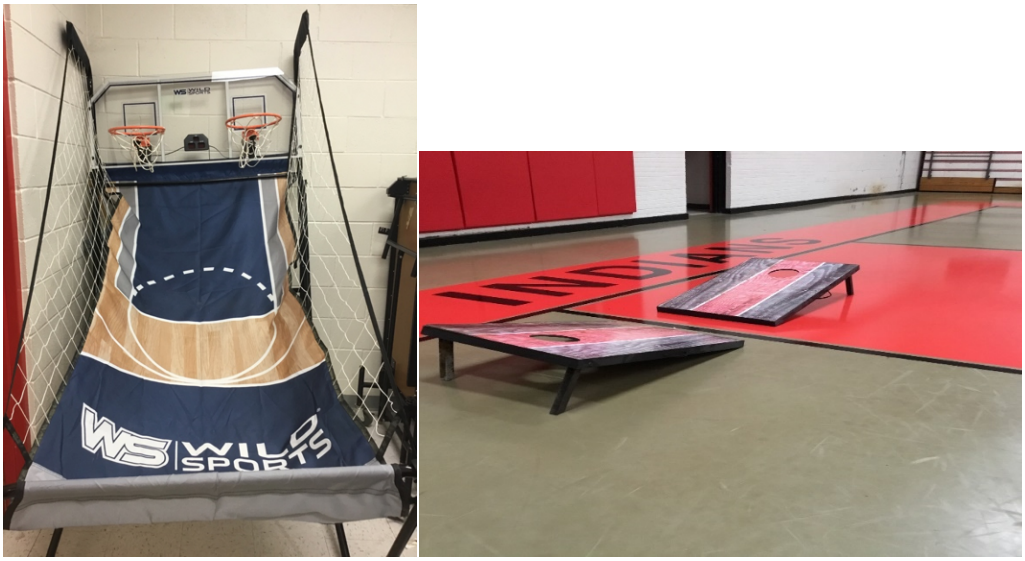


*Figure 3.* Photographs taken by the teacher and represent an aspect of equipment the principal bought for the physical education program.

> Expletive. He could have asked me what I needed. Instead, he buys equipment for a recreation center. What am I going to do with two ping-pong tables, a Corn-hole set, a ladder golf set, or with an arcade basketball set? He should know better! He claims to have a degree in physical education... I can't use any of this crap...What unit objective can I complete with this junk!

**Discussion**

Amotivation in physical education is most evident when students cannot generate the motivation they need to participate in and benefit from activities their teachers provide (cite). It is interesting to note that, amotivation is not a rare phenomenon in physical education

(Ntoumanis, 2002). Recognizing this, his study aimed to understand students' experiences during physical education and understand how amotivation was developed and displayed during physical education. The teacher who participated in the study expressed how the environment was a barrier to providing students with quality instruction, and this was confirmed both by classroom observations and by the students of the teacher.

This study gives voice to historically marginalized middle and high school students and their teacher in a small rural town in the Southeastern United States. Through a set of Photograph along with interviews with the teacher, prominent themes emerged (list themes).

The results of this study iterate the impact the environment has on the teacher's ability to perform. Findings of this study are aligned with Solomon (1957)'s claim that disengagement is a momentary state of being that is caused by the environment. In this case study, evident by the results that students manifested amotivated behaviors due to the environment.

From these results, it is clear that understanding the motivational profiles of students in a rural setting has the potential to shed light on issues of regarding the schools' environment. This is important because understanding students' motivational profiles can be used as an approach to combat childhood and adolescent obesity. Understanding students' motivational profiles can also broaden the scope of motivational research and raise awareness about issues in rural school settings.

The results demonstrate two things. First, students' amotivated behaviors are a manifestation of the behaviors of the adults in the environment. Second, the institutional environment prohibited the teacher from consistently providing instruction. Findings from this study demonstrated that the teacher was unable to perform her job because of barriers in the environment. Such barriers include the institutional environment and environmental adequacies.

Evidence from the observations suggested that physical education in this setting was an extension of recess and study hall. These observations are supported by the Hastie and Pickwell's (1996) findings in that students' social agenda dominated the feeble environment. Furthermore, students expressed how they only played basketball, completed their homework or walked around the gym for the entire period. This evidence shows the need for students to be exposed to a formal physical education program if provided consistently and within a structured environment.

**Future Works**

A question that may spark a degree of controversy with the teacher and administrator might be, "what happens when students are exposed to formal physical education in a structured environment?" This is particularly important when investigating students' motivational profiles. The evidence from this study shows that these students have never been a part of a formal physical education program. In the present study, it appears that students are in an environment that lacks the infrastructure for learning. However, it seems that in this case study the physical education teacher is unaware of the status of the physical education program, however, does not have the status to make the necessary changes.

However, the PI acknowledges that there are considerable discussions among researchers that motivation is not a result of the environment but an innate personality trait that is associated with one's socioeconomic status. At this stage of understating, the PI believes that students are not amotivated toward physical education; however, they are merely displaying behaviors that are perpetuated by the environment. Future research should consider the potential effects of students' motivational profiles and experiences in physical education more carefully. In future work, investigating how students in this setting, particularly amotivated students, experience

formal physical education might prove important. Also, future studies could explore this issue further by investigating students' daily experiences with a formal physical education taught by an experienced teacher.

## Chapter IV: Case Study II – Changing the Instructional Setting

Achievement motivation research in physical education has shown that students who lack motivation in physical activity have the potential to experience disengagement form physical activity in general. However, the populations in these studies have been almost exclusively students from middle, upper-middle, and affluent socioeconomic backgrounds, from either metropolitan cities or suburban areas in the United States and abroad (Carroll & Loumidis 2001; Hill 2015). Investigations that focus on high school students' motivational profiles and experiences during physical education lessons in rural settings are scant in physical education literature. The current study was guided by the recommendations of Oliver (1999) and Oliver and Lalik (2000) and employs a Sequential Transformative mixed method design to address the research questions. This mixed methods study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences in a rural physical education setting. The primary goal of this study was to investigate how amotivated students develop, display, and experience physical education. A Sequential Transformative mixed methods design was used to address the research questions. This design was most appropriate because I wanted to address the social issues of marginalized and underrepresented populations. Furthermore, this design was used because the environment was not conducive for formal physical education instruction.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to attempt to answer the following relevant questions

- What are the motivational profiles of students in compulsory physical education?
- What factors affect students' motivational profiles and experiences in compulsory physical education?
- What is the students' experience during a formal physical education unit?

## Methodology

Due to the nature of the environment in this setting, an ethnographic case study was used. Data were gathered through questionnaires, journal entries, semi-structured interview, informal discussion, and observations. Multiple data sources allowed for triangulation of data to add support emergent themes.

## Participants

**Students.** Students from a joint seventh, eight, and ninth grade physical education class and a volunteer graduate research fellow were selected to participate in this study. The gender and ethnic demographics of the class included 21 girls and 23 boys. Of these students, 30 were African American, 11 were Latinx, and two were Caucasian.

Participants were 43 boys and girls, ages 12-14 years old who attend a school that serves students who live in rural communities. This school was chosen because:

- It has the smallest attendance zone in it respective school district with an estimated population of over 1,000
- It is an incorporated community located just 5 miles from a metropolitan area
- The area maintains a rural agricultural based community with little to no central business district, restaurants or convenience stores to meet the immediate needs of the citizens
- The racial demographics of the population consists of 95% African American, 4% Hispanic, and 1% White.

**Volunteer teacher.** A graduate research fellow served as the Volunteer teacher for the intervention and a peer debriefer with whom the PI consulted with throughout this case study. At the time of the study, she was 37 years old. She identified as African American, middle- class,

heterosexual, physically active, and able-bodied. She received her undergraduate degree from a Predominantly White University in the Midwest, and at the time of the study, she was a graduate student at Auburn University. Lauren was raised in a predominantly Black neighborhood and public-school system in the Midwest. Before the study, she spent nine years teaching Kindergarten through eighth-grade physical education in the inner-city of Chicago. While her age and academic status position her as an outsider, her embodied understanding of the complexities of teaching socially vulnerable students and positions her as an inbetweener (Anzaldúa, 2007).

**Program Description**

Students participated in a 20-lesson Handball Sports Education Unit. In the experimental condition, the Volunteer teacher implemented the Sports Education model. The intervention model followed a three-phase format: a teacher-directed skill development phase, a preseason scrimmage phase, and finally a formal competition phase. The teacher-directed skill development phase involved five lessons, during which students led warm-ups but were given teacher instructions on the generic skills of scoring, passing, and dribbling. The preseason phase also involved ten lessons and was designed primarily for students to work in their teams with practices led by the student-coach and facilitated by the teacher. In this phase, the students took responsibility for refereeing and the choice of tactics and team strategies. During this phase, no formal records were kept of scrimmage results. The formal competition phase involved five lessons and consisted of teams practicing for a 30-min period and then participating in 4 competitive games per lesson. Although during this phase the students had the choice of warm-up and skill session and were responsible for refereeing and scoring, the introduction of formal

competition could have fostered some elements of an ego-involving climate (e.g., public and normative evaluations of success).

During each phase of the Sports Education program, the specific responsibilities associated with the roles of coach, referee, captain, and scorer were explicitly stated to the students. Students on each team were responsible for selecting individuals to fulfill each role. Students were informed that they would be taking part in a study that "would look for new ways to improve PE at their school," but they were not informed of the exact purposes of the study.

**Data collection**

This research study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection strategies. Quantitative data were obtained through the Physical Education Motivation Scale that sought responses to questions related to aspects of students' attitudes toward compulsory physical education. Primarily quantitative data were collected via the Physical Education Motivation Scale (Sulz et al., 2011). The principal investigator administered the PEMS to students during the first half of the school year and once at the end of the second half of the school year. The purpose of the scales was to identify participants' motivational profiles in the context of physical education and physical activity. The questionnaires took approximately 20 minutes to complete; the PI read the scripted instructions to the students before administering the questionnaire and read aloud the questionnaire item by item while students completed the scale in their own time. The students were encouraged to be as honest as possible and were assured that their responses would be confidential. At the end of the 4-week intervention, all students again completed the same questionnaires.

Table 3

*Data Collection Timeline*

| August | September | November | December |
|---|---|---|---|
| PI conducted observations | Modified Fitness SE unit began | Photovoice episode II | Photovoice episode III |

**Qualitative field observations.** The majority of the qualitative data were gathered via field observations, interviews, students' responses to open-ended journal prompts, and photographs by taken students. Qualitative data were analyzed by generating themes via traditional interpretive and ethnographic methods. Students wrote about their experiences during the intervention in interactive journals and captured images that reflected their experiences. Journal and photo prompts centered on three themes: (1) students' positive experiences during physical education lessons, (2) students' negative experiences during lessons, and (3) students' suggestions for improving their physical education experience. See Figure 1.

**Data Analysis**

Data were transcribed and thematic coding was used to analyze all data to identify common themes (Spradley, 1979). The number of data sources collected in different contexts was able to strengthen the themes and produces a clearer account of the students' experience in this setting. The use of multiple data sources allowed for comprehensive data collection of student perceptions and experiences. The design of the study was also strengthened through data triangulation. During data triangulation, all data sources were reviewed and analyze, and hems were recovered to prevent misinterpretation. If participants agreed with the interpretation of meaning, then the next question was asked. During data collection, the PI repeated participants answers back to them checking for misinterpretation.

**Increasing trustworthiness of data.** The PI implemented several strategies to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative data: these included minimizing reflexivity and reactivity effects during field observations, upholding neutrality and reporting negative cases, and conducting member checks on interview data.

**Reflexivity effects.** The PI controlled for reflexivity effects by carefully providing highly detailed, authentic descriptions of teacher and student behavior, and class segments. PI recorded field notes using descriptive language in the active voice as opposed to judgmental language. Additionally, the PI wrote memos and comments in separate columns during observation. PI balanced objective and subjective reasoning from a critical pedagogy viewpoint through official class descriptions. This aided in increasing the credibility of the data.

**Reactivity effects**. The PI minimized reactivity effects through the sequencing of data collection methodologies. The PI collected questionnaires and conducted field observations before student interviews and the second set of instructor interviews to preserve authentic classroom behavior and questionnaire results. If the PI would have conducted interviews before these data were collected, the instructors and students potentially could have discerned the research focus and behaved and responded in accordance to what they thought the PI wanted to see and hear. Secondly, the PI remained semi-covert in my role as the researcher until all data had been collected. During field observation, the PI remained in an unobtrusive position in the gym during instructional time. The PI remained close enough to hear and see instructor/student interactions fully, but PI did not disrupt the natural flow of classes. Finally, the PI retained the role of a spectator- observer during field observation to reduce disruptions in the natural course of the lessons**.**

**Neutrality.** Throughout the interview and reporting process, the PI upheld neutrality to the maximum extent. The PI avoided pressing a particular perspective during interviews and manipulating transcriptions to accentuate a biased perspective (Patton, 2015). The PI committed to understanding the instructor's data collection process unfolded. Additionally, throughout the data collection process, the PI reported negative cases that emerged from field observations and interviews.

**Member checks.** To increase the accuracy of interview transcriptions, the PI conducted member checks. The PI emailed transcriptions to the instructors and students for them to proofread the transcriptions for the accuracy of their statements. The PI made corrections accordingly per participant request (Patton, 2015).

## Results

The following section presents the results of the Physical Education Motivation Scale, and it addresses the first research question. This scale is a self-report questionnaire measured students' level of motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, amotivation) towards physical education.

**Physical Education Motivation Scale (PEMS).** Three variables: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, amotivation were measured. The PI conducted a repeated measures MANOVA with a between-subjects factor (gender). This analysis allows us to examine the time effect (intervention effect) and potential differential time effects for males and females. Moreover, by using a multivariate ANOVA, analyzing the three types of motivation simultaneously, the statistical power was increased. Before looking at the time effect, or gender effect, the interaction terms had to be examined (time*gender; See Table 3). The table below shows that the interaction term was significant for intrinsic motivation (p=.031). Put simply; this

means that the effect of the intervention was different for males and females for intrinsic motivation.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Sample of Students*

| | **Mean** | **Standard Deviation** | **Variance** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Intrinsic Motivation | 14.64 | 5.05 | 25.3% |
| Extrinsic Motivation | 14.31 | 4.027 | 16.2% |
| Amotivation | 9.10 | 7.67 | 58% |

Table 5

*Repeated Measure MANOVA*

| **PEMS** | **Df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intrinsic Motivation | 1 | 74 | 5.02 | .031 |
| Extrinsic Motivation | 1 | 15 | .932 | .340 |
| Amotivation | 1 | 39.6 | 1.11 | .297 |

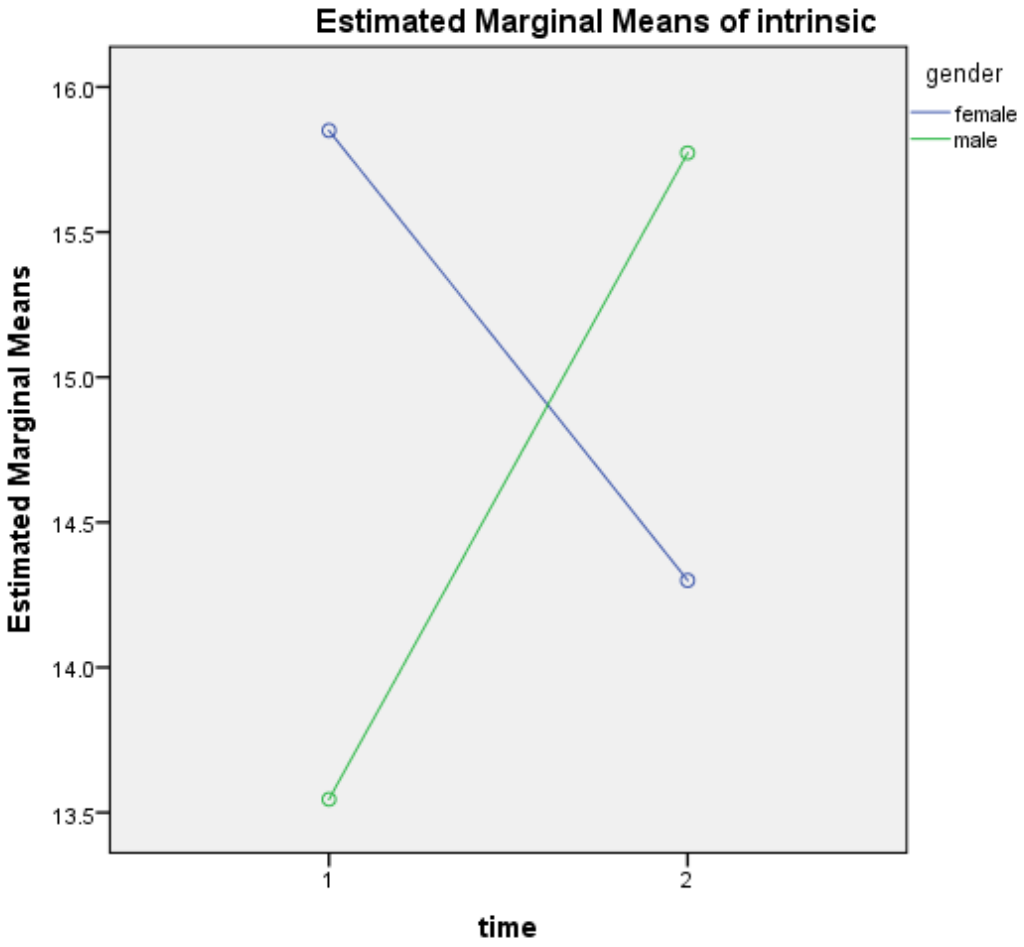


*Figure 4*. Time by Gender Interaction Plot for Intrinsic Motivation. The interaction terms were not significant for extrinsic (p=.340) and amotivation (p=.297). This means that the effect of this study was the same for males and females concerning extensive and amotivation. Therefore, the main effects of time for these two variables can interpret can be interpreted. For extrinsic, the time effect was not significant (p=.109) and for amotivation, the time effect was not significant (p=.505).

**Qualitative data collection.** Throughout the study, the collection of students' and the volunteer teacher informal discussions, observations, journal entries provided a clear picture of what happened in this setting during the intervention. The journal entries served to strengthen the developing themes and provided new ones that were not evident. Although the primary focus of this study was to gain an understanding of how amotivated students experienced physical education this became a back seat to the lack of students' exposure to formal physical education

instruction and structure which were ultimately the major underpinning causes for students' disengagement in physical education. This overwhelmingly predominate theme was able to ease out underlying notions of the environment that were counterproductive to positive learning outcomes. At no time throughout the study was the volunteer teacher led by the PI to discuss the students' lack of exposure to formal physical education or the absence of a structure of their prior physical education experiences. The themes of a strong sense of leadership and students' positive and negative experiences recurred throughout the data collection.

***Strong sense of leadership.*** Through journal entries, observations, and focus group meetings, students constantly mentioned how they noticed a difference within the environment when the volunteer teacher lead the intervention in January. One participant commented:

> PE class is more enjoyable than it used to be. It used to be one of my least favorite parts of the day. We would have to run all the time, and we would get yelled at and scolded for the tiniest things. Now that Ms. Lauren is our teacher she doesn't yell at us. She talks to us like we are adults unlike our teachers in the past.

Another journal entry alluded to the notion of the volunteer teacher's classroom management by writing "at the beginning of each class Ms. Lauren does this thing where she raises her hand. When this happens, you have to stop what you are doing and run to as fast as you can!" She added, "Ms. Lauren (volunteer teacher) turn the basketball clock on during class. When we walked into class the clock was running (counting down). We had to be dressed and finished with our warm-up before the clocked buzzed!"

During an interview with the lead teacher, she asserted that:

> When the study first started, I noticed that the students seemed not to know where to go or what to do with themselves, so I had to provide them with structure and

discipline. I did this by removing them from an activity when they couldn't manage themselves.

I used a running clock to show the students how much time they are wasting before class started. I would set the clock for 8-minutes before class started. Students had to get dressed and finish their warm-up before the clock went off…During the instructional, I would set the clock for 30-minutes, the clock would continuously run. I used the clock to hold the student accountable and keep them mindful of where their time goes. (See Figure Five).


*Figure 5*. Photograph of basketball clock used to show students how much time they were wasting before class started and during instructional time.

***A lack of experience with formal physical education instruction.*** It was evident that students valued and enjoyed physical education; however, they expressed how various barriers prohibited them from participating in physical education consistently. When asked what they thought about physical education a couple of students commented, "PE before you guys came PE was boring. All we did was sit in the bleachers and wait for the bell to ring."

*Figure 6*. Photograph taken by JC during a photovoice episode. Symbolizes the opportunity to leave class or go to the band room instead of coming to class.

Figure six shows a photograph that was taken by JC during a photovoice episode. We played it (kickball) a lot. Then as the year progressed PE was becoming worse every day. Last year in the middle of the second semester, everyone had the opportunity to leave class or go to the band room instead of coming to class."

The fact that so few of the students had experience with formal physical education was most evident during Case Study I; however, students were vocal about the, for example, students introduced mechanisms to resist change, including a lack of attention and a lack of participation to control the lesson agenda. Post lesson journal entries from the students revolved around the requirement of having to be attentive during instruction which for many of them was expressed as a negative experience, "I did not like that we had to wait until people got quite to continue. We also had to do these exercises together at the beginning when we first started because of our behavior." Another student added, "I did not like that they used too much time by talking. I did not like PE with Ms. Lauren because she stopped us from plying extended period games. I do not like her because she took our time by telling us to sit and behave."

***Students' experiences with formal physical education.*** *As* the study progressed, students displayed agentic motivation, as evident by their journal entries. After the first handball lesson, students were allowed to practice drills and play competitively. Also, the volunteer teacher communicated her expectations frequently throughout the unit. In contrast to previous physical education lessons, all students were keen to perform well in games. Post lesson journal entries revolved around the game tactics they learned and the requirement for working together:

> Today in P.E. we played handball. At first, my teammates already knew what to do since because it was the same as our last strategy worked in the last game. I was fun as always and easy to defend our cones.
>
> I got better at passing and catching. Another thing I go better coming up with strategies.
>
> Today in PE I learned that handball takes teamwork. I learned a strategy during our first game- stay in the middle until the tagging team chooses a side to go on. When that happened, I would run to the opposite side. I learned a street during the second game- stay close to your partner, so no one knocks your ball done. I learned that when the whistle blows you must stop!
>
> Today in PE, I learned how to throw properly. I learned how to properly step out with your opposite foot from your throwing hand. The next thing I learned was, shorter passes are easier to catch. I also learned not to run with the crowd. Lastly, I learned to anticipate my partner's movement.

***Experiences with sports education.*** Toward the end of the handball unit, the students began to express how they saw a difference between regular PE and physical education during the study. These comments were made at the end of the study:

> PE was very different with you guys. It was different because we got to play basketball when you all weren't here. However, with you, we can't.

> I really think you guys brought us together as a class. I really feel different about you guys then I did in January. I think you guys will have a good influence on us in the future.
>
> The difference with you all in P.E. was that before we didn't really like exercise [PE] and it was boring. At first, I didn't like playing as a group, but later I really enjoyed working as a team. It was really fun with you all around. I've become more active and energetic.
>
> PE without you all we only did one thing. We only played basketball and sat for 40 or so minutes. When you all came to our PE class things changed. We had more activities. We played more than one activity.
>
> Mrs. Lauren cooperates with students by asking questions and giving us choices. Another way that she corporates with us is by making eye contact before and after class. She also fist bumps us and ask us how our day was going. That made me feel like she cared for.
>
> The difference is we play more games such as handball. We also have teams. This PE class is more fun because we get to compete and win points and get prizes.

**Discussion**

Two themes emerged from the study: the presence of strong leadership and students' experience with formal instruction. From interviews, observations, and focus group meetings, it was clear that the volunteer teacher created an environment that was conducive to learning and agentic motivation for physical education. Also, students mentioned how they could distinguish a difference between the class ecology before and after the intervention. Specifically, students mentioned how the volunteer teacher created an environment that made them feel welcomed, valued, and respected. This was achieved by her approach to communication which was informative. For example, the volunteer teacher required each student to check-in with her

before, and after class by giving students a fist bump, she used her set induction to reiterate her expectations, and she used a running clock to hold students accountable before and during lessons. The results tie well with previous studies (Reeve & Jang, 2006; Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010), wherein students mentioned that because of the environment the volunteer teacher created during the intervention, their peers who were typically disruptive during class were less disruptive and more involved.

**Limitations of the study**

One limitation of the study was the lack of experience the students had in a formal physical education especially the various curricula models such as Sports Education. Second, the limited ability for the volunteer teacher to communicate with English Language Learners (ELL). It was challenging to understand ELLs' experiences in the intervention. Third, participants were asked if the intervention motived them to participate in physical education. They did not initially indicate that having a new curricular model and teacher were motivating factors for their participation. However, the participants later concurred that having clear boundaries and being held accountable for their behavior had an impact on their experience in the intervention. A fourth limitation was the observational tool used by the Principle Investigator which should have included frequency of events that took place during a given physical education class. A fifth, to get a better understanding of students' motivational profiles, the school community including parents could have been interviewed and surveyed. A sixth limitation relates to the girls' social agenda. We did not support the needs of the girls' agendas, and as a result, the girls gave the volunteer teacher what she wanted. Lastly, this study was limited regarding examining only one class.

**Contributions of this Study**

It is important to point out that according to the second research question, that participant noticed an improvement in the physical education environment was a motivating factor for them to continue to participate. This is a valid finding because it was evident from the interviews, observations, and the focus group meetings that witnessing physical education instruction delivered in a structured environment improved the cooperating teacher's morale and increased students' willingness to participate in physical education. It is also important to point out that the intervention had an impact on the cooperating teacher's instruction and performance. She indicated that the intervention served as year-long professional development and that it gave her hope. Because of the of the intervention, the cooperating teacher in this study commented that she would place more focus on the importance of creating a clear structure in the classroom versus managing student behavior. Furthermore, because of this intervention, the cooperating teacher has transformed from a fragmented curricular model to a Sports Education curricular model. Finally, regarding the first research question, the Cooperating Physical Education teacher feels that this intervention shows the students at this school matter and people's perception of physical education will change for the better.

**Recommendations for Future Study**

Since there were only one class and one school in the study, it is imperative to select more participants to get a more vivid picture of rural physical education settings. Although the literature was supported by the participants' responses to the Physical Education Motivational Scales (PEMS) regarding the first research question, more participants responses may give a better indication or new ideas of the motivational profiles of students in a rural setting. There is sparse research related to the first research question and interviewing more students in rural areas

may give a better indication of the motivational profiles of students in rural physical education settings. Furthermore, more in-depth research needs to be conducted to investigate or explore the class ecology and motivational profiles of students in rural physical education settings. Last, there needs to be further investigation into appropriate professional development opportunities for physical education teachers working in Title I rural schools.

There is also sparse research regarding the first research question. In this study, regarding this research question, students were asked how they perceived physical education and physical activity. It is also recommended that stakeholders (e.g., parents and administrators) also be asked how they perceive physical education and physical activity. This is important because this exploration may give a better idea of how the school community regards physical education and its importance in schools. It is also recommended that researchers explore the ecology of elementary schools and athletic programs in rural settings. Last, it is imperative to investigate how students are being assessed and evaluated in their physical education classes. It is possible that if there is evidence of formal assessments and evaluations, the grades students receive in physical education may carry more weight and possibly result and add substance to physical education in settings where it has scant values.

**Conclusions**

Diversity and inclusion, poverty, mental health, and childhood obesity is a concern in the United States. It is imperative to challenge the field of physical education to combat these concerns. In effort to gain a better understanding of the field of physical education, researchers need to focus on several factors. First, researchers need to broaden their scope to focus on the behaviors of students that are historically marginalized. Researchers also need to seek to understand what attracts physical education teachers to rural settings. Lastly, researcher need to

seek to understand how to provide assistance physical education programs without disregarding their identity and personhood, and without perpetuating cultural dominance. As a result, scholars can begin to gain an understanding of their lived experiences that is not told from a position of deficit.

Regarding research question one, there have been gaps in addressing the motivational profiles of students in rural physical education settings. In this study, it was found that students' motivational profiles were supported by the existing literature. The findings suggested that the teacher and the students identified factors that affected students' motivation for physical education. These factors include

- the lack of experience with formal physical education,
- the schools'-built environment,
- the administration, and
- the athletic program.

Within this study, it was it was found that the teacher was motived to improve her instructions because of what she witnessed with her students during the intervention. Similarly, students were motived to participate in formal physical education because of their experiences in the intervention. Again, it is important to consider the situational interest and a new teacher.

In this study, it was evident that the Cooperating Physical Education Teacher and the volunteer teacher adopted two different styles of teaching. The Cooperating Physical Education Teacher adopted a controlling style of teaching while the volunteer teacher adopted a more structured style of teaching. This was most evident during interviews, observations, and focus group interviews. In regards, to how students perceived the physical education with the volunteer teacher, students' views were mixed. Initially many of the students commented on how the

volunteer teacher spent too much time talking during class. After further probing, the students mistaken the volunteer teacher s' set induction, whole group instructional time, and debriefing for talking, which further supports the claim that students in this study had limited exposure to formal physical education instruction.

Regarding research question three, again there has been little to no research conducted in rural physical education settings. One common theme was students' lack of exposure to a formal physical education program. Other sub-themes that were evident in this current study included: teachers' agenda for teaching, the lack of accountability placed on physical educators for their daily roles, and responsibilities as teachers.

It is essential that physical education come to the forefront of education especially in rural settings where opportunities for physical activity are limited. There are several misconceptions about students who attend rural schools. The obesity rate in the United States is not only high for adults but in children and adolescents as well. It is imperative that more. Research focuses on the motivational profiles of populations that are historically marginalized from a non-deficit approach. Also, there needs to be more substance added to physical education in settings similar to the one in this study. Whether it is a diverse curriculum or if more emphasis is placed on improving fitness levels, it is urgent to increase our understanding of the motivational profiles and physical activity behaviors of students in rural areas.

## Chapter V: Educational Implications

To summarize, the purpose of this study was to explore how students developed and displayed amotivated behaviors in a rural physical education setting. The findings were able to show barriers that prevented the teacher from providing consistent instruction which negatively impacted students' motivation toward physical education through a series of interviews, photos, and observations. While the students' eagerness to participate in physical activity is evident in their values, beliefs, and interactions, both teacher and students showed an apparent lack of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

The teacher in Case Study I expressed that her environment (e.g., structural and intuitional) prevented her from providing formal physical education instruction consistently. Moreover, the culture of this school and the general mindset of this setting differed substantially from ideals of formal physical education. Differences of opinion caused clashes among the teacher, her peers, and the administration which created a toxic learning and working environment. As a result, the teacher in Case Study I had to prioritize non-teaching tasks over instructional responsibility.

Study II showed when students are provided with formal physical education instruction in a structured environment their motivational profiles increased and their experiences in physical education were positive. This was evident by students' performance of their team roles and their effective behavior. As compared to the beginning of the study, students showed resistance to the intervention by either being disruptive or by manipulating tasks during tasks to fit their agenda (Hastie & Pickwell 2004).

Due to the lack of research conducted in rural Title I program school physical education programs scholars there is sparse evidence that accounts for the motivational profiles of students

in rural settings. The condition by society to conform to unchallenged cultural and class beliefs make it impossible to recognize that motivation is not an innate construct. Due to a lack of research conducted in rural school settings that serve historically marginalized students, it positions motivation in physical education as a construct that is exclusively western hegemony in nature. A way to combat these problems must be sought before physical education programs are removed from underperforming schools. The following are suggestions to attempt to rectify the problems when dealing with diversity issues in education and research.

1. Research shows that having a faculty member of color can provide authentic opportunities for teacher candidates to experience cultural settings different from their own.
2. PETE programs should provide opportunities for teacher candidates to observe or team teach in rural areas.
3. PETE programs must include motivational curriculum content throughout the entire teacher education program.
4. PETE programs should provide professional development to local or regional rural schools.
5. Teachers in rural areas should strive to align the physical education programs as students matriculate from elementary, middle, and high school.
6. Teachers should use the resources available to them to enhance the rigor of their curriculum (e.g., green space, beautiful weather, community traditions, and cultural practices).
7. K-12 administrators should encourage the senior PE teacher to verbalize their opinions and needs as needed.

8. K-12 administrators should provide clear boundaries between physical education and athletics. Actively engage to ensure the physical education teacher/ coaches have clear understating of their roles.

As suggested by the teacher involved in Study I, for students to take this class seriously the physical education faculty and administration need to be a united front. The teacher was adamant that if she had the support of her peers and administration that providing students with adequate physical education would be possible. Therefore, the physical education teachers in this setting need to have more autonomy and support from administration.

In closing, the findings from this study reported that the institutional environment was a barrier to providing and experiencing formal physical education. Information from this study will add to the knowledge base in pedagogy and on how to research a rural setting. The implications presented in this section do not serve as the last word on approaches to teaching and researching games and sport but serve to initiate dialogue about how to teach games and sports to students who attend rural school and how to investigate how to teach games and sports in rural settings. The objectives of this section were to present the implications of the results for PETE programs, administrators, and future research.

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