



Guiding Principles for Enhancing Stakeholders Engagement and Sustaining the Active Body, Sharp Mind Approach

Dr. Sylvie Beaudoin

Contact Author: sylvie.beaudoin@usherbrooke.ca

Faculté des sciences de l'activité physique, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Québec, J1N 3C6, Canada

Maïa Savard

Ph. D. Candidate

Faculté des sciences de l'activité physique, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Québec, J1N 3C6, Canada

Dr. David Bezeau

Faculté des sciences de l'activité physique, Université de Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke, Québec, J1N 3C6, Canada

Abstract

Background: The Active Body, Sharp Mind (ABSM) approach involves integrating a 20-minute physical activity (PA) session followed by a 10-minute cool-down period into the school schedule. PA is used to prepare students for learning and support their academic success (Daly-Smith et al., 2018; Luan et al., 2022). Since the COVID-19 pandemic, a gradual disengagement among participating school teams has been observed, largely due to limited autonomy within school settings.

Methodology: An action research project based on Guillemette's (2021) model was conducted during the 2024–2025 school year to support the mobilization of key stakeholders within the school environment. Two objectives guided the study: 1) to develop strategies that foster commitment and engagement among school stakeholders in implementing the ABPB approach; and 2) to identify guiding principles for designing a support model aimed at ensuring the sustainability of ABSM in school contexts. Eight co-construction meetings and two focus groups were held with an implementation team, which included three facilitators and six co-leaders (pedagogical advisors and physical education teachers). Meeting minutes and synthesis documents were produced after each session. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis and analytical questioning (Paillé & Mucchielli, 2021).

Results & Conclusion: This presentation will focus on the description of six guiding principles designed to ensure the sustainability of the approach, as well as the conditions required for their effective implementation : 1) clarifying roles and intentions; 2) establishing a climate of trust and collaboration; 3) promoting progressive autonomy and accountability within school settings; 4) implementing structured, differentiated, and multimodal support; 5) fostering continuous, intentional, and adaptive communication; and 6) supporting professional development and the adoption of a facilitative stance. This study offers research-informed strategies to enhance the implementation of educational innovations in school settings.

Keywords: physical activity, school context, action-research, professional development
References

References

- Daly-Smith, A. J., Zwolinsky, S., McKenna, J., Tomporowski, P. D., Defeyter, M. A., & Manley, A. (2018). Systematic review of acute physically active learning and classroom movement breaks on children's physical activity, cognition, academic performance and classroom behaviour: Understanding critical design features. *BMJ open sport & exercise medicine*, 4(1), e000341. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjsem-2018-000341>
- Guillemette, S. (2021). *Accompagner l'émergence de projets d'établissements apprenants dans le cadre de démarches de recherche-action*. Éditions JFD.
- Luan, X., Liu, J., & Luo, X. (2022). Examining the Link Between Physical Activity and Cognitive Function: A Parallel Mediation Model of Health and Wellbeing Among Adolescents. *Frontiers in psychology*, 13, 764-842. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.764842>
- Paillé, P., & Mucchielli, A. (2021). *L'analyse qualitative en sciences humaines et sociales* (5e éd.). Armand Colin.