

# Physically active academic lessons in general upper secondary school - student study

<b>Submission date</b>	<b>Recruitment status</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
27/12/2023	No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
<b>Registration date</b>	<b>Overall study status</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
11/01/2024	Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Results
<b>Last Edited</b>	<b>Condition category</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
19/12/2024	Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

## Plain English summary of protocol

### Background and study aims

Physical activity has been successfully integrated in academic lessons in primary schools showing promising results on cognition and student engagement. However, there is a lack of knowledge about its effects and feasibility for individual situated learning processes in upper secondary school students. This study aims to examine the students' experiences and perceptions and acute effects of physically active learning and physically active breaks on students' situational engagement (behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement, disaffection and competence experiences) and cognitive prerequisites of learning (alertness and executive functions), and factors modifying these effects (physical and mental load, perceived physical and academic competence).

### Who can participate?

We will invite the math and foreign language students from grades 1 and 2 in general upper secondary school to reach 120 students (mean age 17 years).

### What does the study involve?

The clusters (students in the same classes) are randomized (by lottery) into three intervention arms, which undergo following treatments in different order: Treatment 1) Physically active math/foreign language lessons with physically active learning (20 minutes of physical activity is integrated into learning goals), Treatment 2) Physically active math/foreign language lessons with physically active breaks (two five-minute breaks, including physical activity not related to learning goals), and Treatment 3) Typical, traditional math/foreign language lessons without physically active learning or physically active breaks (control group).

### What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Participation in the study does not include any risks; study practices are part of a regular school day. The multidisciplinary study project increases the understanding students' experiences, engagement, and effects in physically active academic lessons in upper secondary school. The project provides essential evidence-based recommendations of physically active classroom practices for teachers and teacher education to support the development of subject teachers' competence and, above all, to enhance students' learning and well-being in general upper secondary schools.

Where is the study run from?

The study will be run from Jamk University of Applied Sciences, Likes, Jyväskylä, Finland and University of Oulu, Finland

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

September 2023 to December 2024

Who is funding the study?

The study is funded by the Research Council of Finland (355350).

Who is the main contact?

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# Additional identifiers

## Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

## ClinicalTrials.gov (NCT)

Nil known

## Protocol serial number

SA-355350

# Study information

## Scientific Title

Students' experiences and the acute effects of physically active academic lessons on students' situational engagement and cognitive prerequisites of learning in general upper secondary school

## Acronym

PAAL-S

## Study objectives

This study aims to explore the students' experiences and acute effects of physically active academic lessons on students' situational engagement and cognitive prerequisites of learning in general upper secondary school. We examine:

1a. the students' perceptions and experiences on students' situational engagement and its relation to the physically active classroom practices and academic activities.

1b. the students' perceptions and experiences on the usefulness of differently used physically active classroom practices during the academic lessons.

2a. how physically active learning and physically active breaks affect students' alertness and executive functions during academic lessons?

We hypothesize that physically active learning and physically active breaks prevent the decline in alertness and executive functions during academic lessons.

2b. how physically active learning and physically active breaks affect students' situational engagement?

We hypothesize that physically active learning and physically active breaks increase student's situational engagement.

2c. how current physical and mental load modify the acute effects of physically active learning and physically active breaks on situational engagement and cognitive prerequisites of learning?

We hypothesize that current physical and mental load alter the effects of physically active learning and physically active breaks on situational engagement and cognitive prerequisites of learning.

2d. how perceived physical and academic competence of students modify the acute effects of PAAL on situational engagement and cognitive prerequisites of learning?

We hypothesize that the perceived physical and academic competence of students alters the effects of physically active learning and physically active breaks on situational engagement and cognitive prerequisites of learning.

## Ethics approval required

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**Ethics approval(s)**

approved 21/12/2023, Ethics Committee of Jamk University of Applied Sciences (PO BOX 207, Jyväskylä, FI-40101, Finland; +358 20 743 8100; tutkimuslupa@jamk.fi), ref: JAMK/4675/13.02 /2023472673

**Study design**

Cluster-randomized individual crossover trial

**Primary study design**

Interventional

**Study type(s)**

Quality of life

**Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied**

Effects of physically active academic lessons in general upper secondary school

**Interventions**

The effectiveness of physically active academic lessons is examined with a cluster-randomized individual crossover trial. We recruit math and foreign language students from grades 1 and 2 in general upper secondary school to reach 120 students for the classroom measurements. The clusters (students in the same classes) are randomized (by lottery) into three intervention arms, which undergo the following treatments in a different order:

Treatment 1. Physically active math/foreign language lessons with physically active learning (20 min physical activity is integrated into learning goals)

Treatment 2. Physically active math/foreign language lessons with physically active breaks (two five-minute breaks, including physical activity not related to learning goals)

Treatment 3. Typical, traditional math/foreign language lessons without physically active learning or physically active breaks (control group)

**Intervention Type**

Behavioural

**Primary outcome(s)**

1. Alertness is assessed with a self-reported questionnaire (eKarolinska Sleepiness scale, KSS) at four times during the 75 min academic lesson in every treatment.
2. Executive functions are evaluated with a modified version of the Eriksen Flanker task in the beginning and the end of the 75 min academic lesson in every treatment.
3. Situation-specific engagement is assessed with the computer-based InSituations (InSitu) instrument at the end of the 75 min academic lesson in every treatment.
4. Students' perceptions and experiences are assessed with transcribed interviews of students.

**Key secondary outcome(s)**

1. Physical load (beat-to-beat heart rate, stress, recovery, sleep and physical activity metrics) is measured with Firstbeat Bodyguard 3 sensors at the baseline and during every treatment.
2. Mental load. Study burnout and engagement are measured with the Student Burnout Inventory (SBI-9) and Energy, Dedication and Absorption (EDA-9) questionnaires at the baseline.
3. Perceived physical competence is measured with a questionnaire including a modified Perceived Physical Competence Scale for Children (PPCS) and with questions for ability and

desire to develop one's own physical ability at the baseline.

4. Perceived academic competence is assessed with a questionnaire including self-reported academic achievement score (AA) and self-perceptions (in math and foreign language) at the baseline.

#### **Completion date**

31/12/2024

## **Eligibility**

#### **Key inclusion criteria**

Math and foreign language students from grades 1 and 2 in general upper secondary school

#### **Participant type(s)**

Learner/student

#### **Healthy volunteers allowed**

No

#### **Age group**

Mixed

#### **Lower age limit**

16 years

#### **Upper age limit**

20 years

#### **Sex**

All

#### **Key exclusion criteria**

Young people who are not able to participate in physical activities due to disability or health reasons will not be included in the analyses.

#### **Date of first enrolment**

12/02/2024

#### **Date of final enrolment**

30/11/2024

## **Locations**

#### **Countries of recruitment**

Finland

#### **Study participating centre**

**Jamk University of Applied Sciences**

Piippukatu 2  
Jyväskylä  
Finland  
40100

**Study participating centre**

**University of Oulu**  
PL 8000,  
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FI-90014

## **Sponsor information**

**Organisation**

JAMK University of Applied Sciences

**ROR**

<https://ror.org/01dn2ng71>

## **Funder(s)**

**Funder type**

Research council

**Funder Name**

Academy of Finland

**Alternative Name(s)**

Academy of Finland, Suomen Akatemia, Finlands Akademi, AKA

**Funding Body Type**

Government organisation

**Funding Body Subtype**

Research institutes and centers

**Location**

Finland

# Results and Publications

## Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be available upon request from (Tuija Tammelin, [tuija.tammelin@jamk.fi](mailto:tuija.tammelin@jamk.fi)).

## IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

## Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>		06/03/2024	06/03/2024	No	Yes
<a href="#">Participant information sheet</a>	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
<a href="#">Study website</a>	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes