

# CHANGING PHYSICAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUAL UNDERSTANDING OF “BEING FIT”

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## INTRODUCTION

Self-imaging is highly associated with the individual's sense of well-being (Carvalho & Spamer, 2022). It represents the image and the idea of how each person sees themselves, and usually a positive vision of their physical appearance may boost self-esteem and improve confidence. Therefore, as Physical Education (PE) is the only subject in school that attends corporeality as a pedagogical subject, PE teachers can have an essential role in developing body concept. In fact, school is a privileged place to promote healthy habits and construct an idea of “fit” adjusted to each individual (Harris et al., 2018).

## OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to capture students' opinions, from a seventh-grade class, concerning the idea of “What's being Fit?” and “How they see himself/herself bodies”.

## METHODS

The participants were 21 students, aged between 12 and 14 years old (10 boys and 11 girls), from a school in the metropolitan Porto area. Students were required to fill out a questionnaire entitled “How do you see your body?” to analyse the level of satisfaction with their own body and physical appearance and to draw or write, on a plain sheet, their idea of “What's being Fit?”. The images, texts, and questionnaire answers were analysed using thematic analysis (Patton, 2002).

## CONCLUSION

The idea of “being Fit” needs to be developed at school, namely in PE, to help students to adjust to their own needs throughout life. The ability to produce any movement with minimal energy expenditure is workable. For that reason, we, as PE teachers, should implement ways to make students enjoy physical activity in the present, motivating them to adopt healthier lifestyles in the future.

## INTERVENTION PLAN

After getting the students' insights about the idea of “What's being Fit?”, an intervention plan was developed to demystify misconceptions and beliefs about it. The main goal was to explain that a fit body cannot be observed because there are different ways of being fit. Thus, the goal was to remove the focus on social beauty patterns and emphasize body motor skills.

## RESULTS

The preliminary results showed that: 1) the images and texts created by the students are in line with a healthy lifestyle, referring to a healthy diet, defined/athletic bodies and regular sports practice; 2) being fit is not a consensual concept, and some of them defined it as “having a well-defined, strong and muscular body; being in shape; having a healthy diet, drinking water and with sleep”; 3) 23,8% of the students mentioned they were not happy with their appearance and 71,4% said they instead change something (to be skinnier and muscled or to adopt healthier habits).



## References

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