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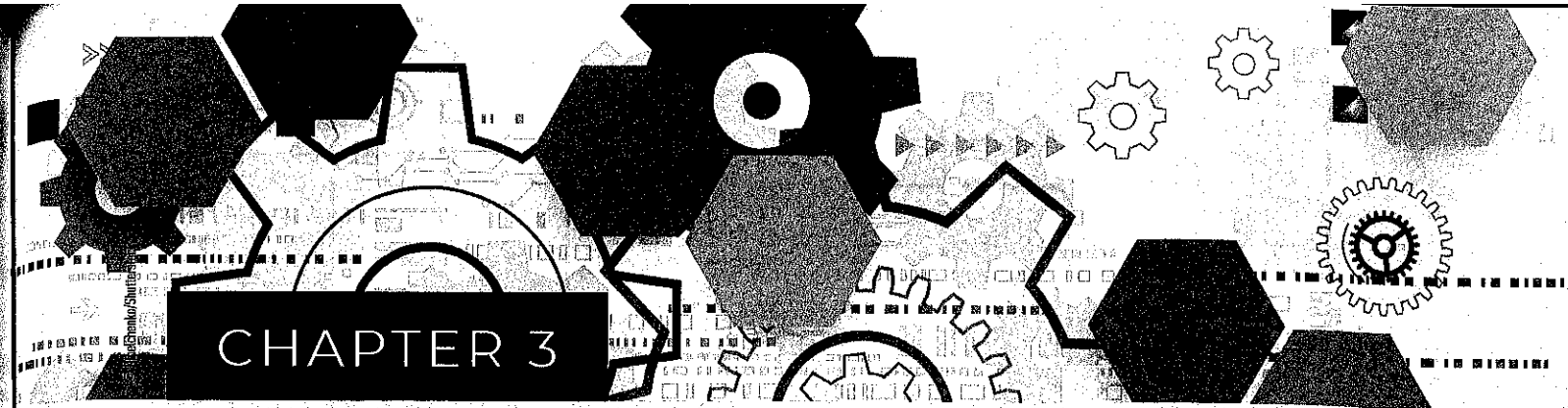
Self-Determination in Relation to Self-Advocacy in Physical Education and Health Education

Kristi Roth, Cathy MacDonald, and Lars Kristén

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Describe the three components of self-determination.
- Identify classroom application of the principles of self-determination theory.
- Link the Universal Design for Learning framework to self-determination.
- Describe the relationship between self-determination and self-advocacy.

KEY TERMS

Autonomy	Relatedness	Self-efficacy
Competence	Self-advocacy	Universal Design for Learning
Motivation	Self-determination	

SCENARIO 1

Choua

Choua is a ninth-grade student who is transitioning to high school. She is working with her IEP team to establish her Individual Transition Plan. In addition to her future goals for work, Choua is given a survey to help determine what she wants to do to stay physically active after high school. The survey includes most of the activities and sports she has done in her physical education classes thus far. She has struggled to enjoy many of those activities. Choua tells the IEP team that what she really wants to learn is adventure racing, a multidisciplinary team sport involving navigation of a wilderness course. She has a friend who enjoys adventure racing, and she thinks she will like it too. Recognizing the importance for Choua to self-

determine her physical activities, the IEP team asks Choua to interview her friend to figure out what skills she will need to become an adventure racer. After her interview, which allowed Choua to connect with her friend on a deeper level, she brought the list of the skills to the next IEP meeting. Choua then shared with the group the skills that she thought she needed to work on the most, and the team crafted measurable goals around those skills. This process helped ensure Choua was in charge of her future and development, which is an essential skill in order to self-advocate.

Aligned with the National Physical Education Standard: S5.H3.L1 Selects and participates in physical activities or dance that meet the need for self-expression and enjoyment (SHAPE America, 2013).

As is illustrated in the preceding case study, students who are taught to advocate for themselves learn to have a voice and be in control of their own wants and needs. **Self-advocacy** and **self-determination** include the abilities to select personal goals, plan steps toward goals, make choices, and self-monitor and self-evaluate one's behaviors (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teachers play an important role in supporting and teaching students to use the skills associated with self-determination. In physical education, teachers support the development of self-determination by providing choices and encouraging goal setting in and outside lessons (Doll et al., 1996) as well as opportunities for taking initiative and providing constructive feedback and rationales for their actions (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003). With appropriate supports, accommodations, and opportunities from staff, students, including those with a disability, develop enhanced self-determination.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of self-determination theory and demonstrate how educators apply the theory in the classroom. We provide specific ideas as to how to implement associated strategies in physical education. In addition, we introduce the **Universal Design for Learning** framework and demonstrate how it is used to foster self-determination in students. Finally, we describe the relationship between self-determination and self-advocacy.

Self-Determination

Self-advocacy is a key component of self-determination, as described in Chapter 1. Understanding the conceptual framework of self-advocacy within health is key to application of self-advocacy within health and physical education. Self-determination is the act of students directing their own lives as they desire without the influence or dictation of others. Goal setting, decision-making, problem solving, **self-efficacy**, and self-advocacy are all skills required to achieve self-determination (Wehmeyer et al., 1998). Self-determination theory includes the psychological needs of **competence**, **autonomy**, and **relatedness** and is a key theory of **motivation** (Ryan & Deci, 2000). If students feel like they have the skills they need to complete a task, feel that they are engaged in activities that they initiate or have a voice in, and feel that they are connected to others, they are more likely to do the task. Self-determination is directly tied to self-regulated behaviors and motivation, including those related to health and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Types of Motivation

Ryan and Deci (2000) identify three types of motivation that are related to self-determination theory (**Figure 3.1**). These include amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation. A student who is amotivated is unwilling or lacks drive to engage in activity. This lack of motivation is caused by a variety of external or internal factors. The student may not have interest in the activity (Ryan, 1995), they may not feel like they have the skills to do the activity (Bandura, 1996), or they may feel that the activity may not result in a positive outcome. Amotivated students may engage in activity only to avoid guilt or shame or to avoid punishment, which results in minimal effort and a lack of persistence. Extrinsic motivators are tangible or intangible and include school rules, grades, social pressure, assessments, and teacher
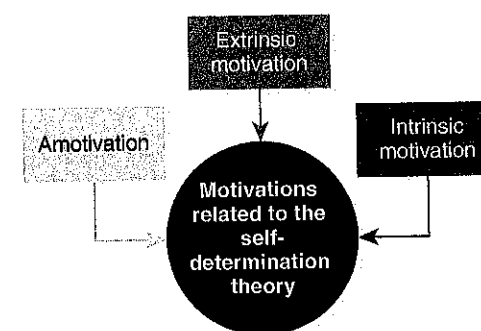
Figure 3.1 Motivations Related to the Self-Determination Theory

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behaviors, rewards, praise, or encouragement (Deci et al., 1999). Students may respond positively to extrinsic motivators. However, similar to amotivated students, their engagement does not persist. They may engage in the activity because they have to, subsequently perform at a minimal level, and allow their participation to wane when the extrinsic motivator is removed (Sun et al., 2017). When students are intrinsically motivated, they engage in the activity because it is inherently interesting, pleasurable, or satisfying for them to do so. Intrinsic motivation may also be referred to as autonomous motivation. Individuals who are intrinsically or autonomously motivated are more likely to engage and persist in exercise-related activities (Teixeira et al., 2012).

Autonomy

Individuals are autonomously motivated when the goals of the activity reflect their personal interests and values (Koestner et al., 2008). Autonomously motivated individuals are therefore more likely to be effective in self-regulation of behavior. Teachers create an autonomy-supportive classroom by providing students with choices and allowing options for self-direction (Shen et al., 2008). Standard 3 of the SHAPE America (2013) National Standards for Physical Education states: "The physically literate individual demonstrates the knowledge and skills to achieve a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness and contains a grade level outcome for students to participate several times a week in a self-selected lifetime activity outside of the school day" (S3.H6.L1). Creating opportunities for students to self-identify their own needs and engage in decision-making on how to address those needs empowers learners and facilitates motivation. Kristén et al. (2020) found that when students were asked to use and provide feedback on a new piece of modified equipment for physical education, students with disabilities who were previously not engaged in class joined the class to discuss and help with the equipment. By letting students know that their opinions on the equipment were valued and by asking them to work together to provide feedback, student motivation increased. Classrooms where physical educators provide more rationale for activities and enhance student choice within activities result in an increase in the frequency with which students engage in physical activity during their free time (Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2009). A few strategies that support student autonomy in health and physical education are found in **Figure 3.2**.
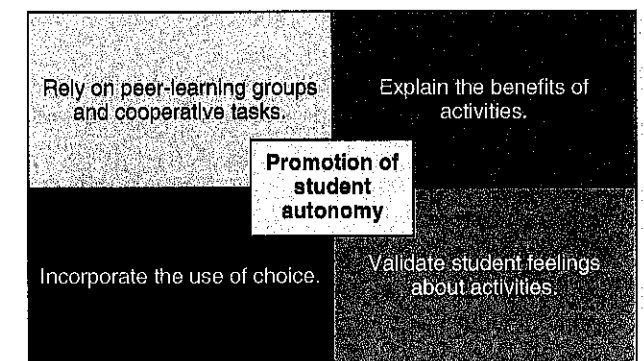
Figure 3.2 Strategies to Support Student Autonomy

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Competence

Self-perception of an ability to achieve goals is imperative to begin to attempt a goal. This perception of competence leads to self-empowerment, which is a necessary building block for self-determination (Seibert et al., 2011). In order to attempt new skills, students must have foundational skills to feel confident enough to try new challenges. Standard 1 of the SHAPE America (2013) National Standards for K–12 Physical Education emphasizes that the physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns. Subsequently, physical educators must design activities that allow students to experience success in the foundational skills of those activities. Careful scaffolding of student learning outcomes and ensuring a progression of tasks are adhered to allow students to experience success prior to added challenge, which facilitates student confidence (Rink, 2009). The ability to successfully perform skills also leads to autonomous motivation (Kalaja et al., 2009). Additional strategies to promote student beliefs in their ability to perform tasks include providing specific feedback on skill attempts, including the elements that students perform well in that feedback (Katartzi & Vlachopoulos, 2011), and asking students to recognize the steps they are performing well (**Figure 3.3**).
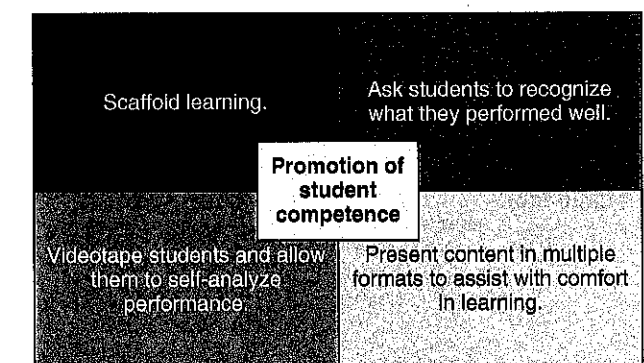
Figure 3.3 Strategies to Support Student Competence

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Relatedness

Relatedness refers to the extent that students feel connected to others, feel cared for and care for others, and feel like they are a valued member of a community. Establishment of supportive and positive relationships builds trust and confidence. These traits are necessary for students to feel safe enough to self-advocate. Health and physical education teachers foster relatedness by designing activities and procedures that foster collaboration and support (**Figure 3.4**). Integration of cooperative learning and multicultural activities are examples of how a curriculum fosters relatedness. It is also imperative that culturally sensitive learning environments are cultivated to foster inclusivity. Standard 4 of the National Standards for K–12 Physical Education states that the physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others. The grade-level outcomes throughout this standard include a focus on working with others and aims to cultivate students who utilize one another for problem solving and support. Students gain connections with one another when they share common experiences and tackle challenges together
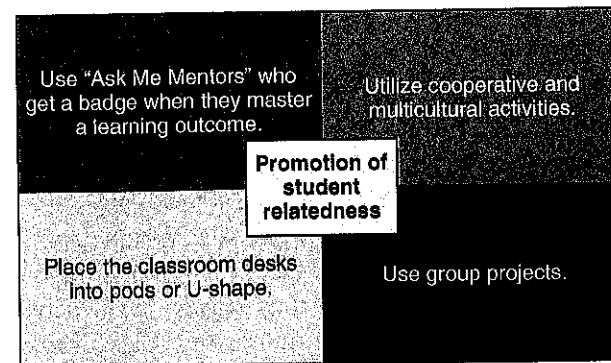

Figure 3.4 Strategies to Support Student Relatedness
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(Connell, 1991). A classroom environment that fosters relatedness positively affects students' mood states, class engagement, intrinsic motivation, sense of self-efficacy, and engagement in leisure pursuits (Sparks et al., 2015).

Physical education is an optimal learning environment to foster relatedness due to the nature of the curriculum and activities. By combining strategies that address autonomy, competency, and relatedness, as shown in **Table 3.1**, health and physical

educators establish the important building blocks for cultivating self-determination in their students.

Self-Determination and Universal Design for Learning

Utilization of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to help meet the autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs of students is an effective approach to foster self-determination. The UDL guidelines provide users with means for fostering equity through integration of multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression. The UDL framework provides checkpoints that move through three levels of accomplishment: access, build, and internalize (Center for Applied Special Technology [CAST], 2018).

- In the access level, the checkpoints emphasize eliciting interest and fostering choice in students. This aligns with the self-determination principle of autonomy.
- In the build level, the checkpoints emphasize methods for developing effort and persistence and fostering communication and expression. This aligns with the self-determination principles of autonomy and relatedness.
- In the internalize level, the checkpoints emphasize methods to empower learners to self-regulate, plan, and focus. This aligns with autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

By integrating the UDL framework into their instruction, teachers provide multiple mean of engagement, representation, and action and expression and allow students to have pathways to learning that promote self-determination (Lieberman et al., 2020). See **Figure 3.5** for a framework that shows how UDL and self-determination align and are applied to activities in the health or physical education setting (Roth, 2021). We believe that it is imperative that educators design a culture of UDL practice that is initiated among students rather than always designed and led by the physical or health educator. By creating a reliance on adults to create equitable practices, we disempower students to be inclusive when adults are not there to

Table 3.1 In-Class Application of Self-Determination Needs

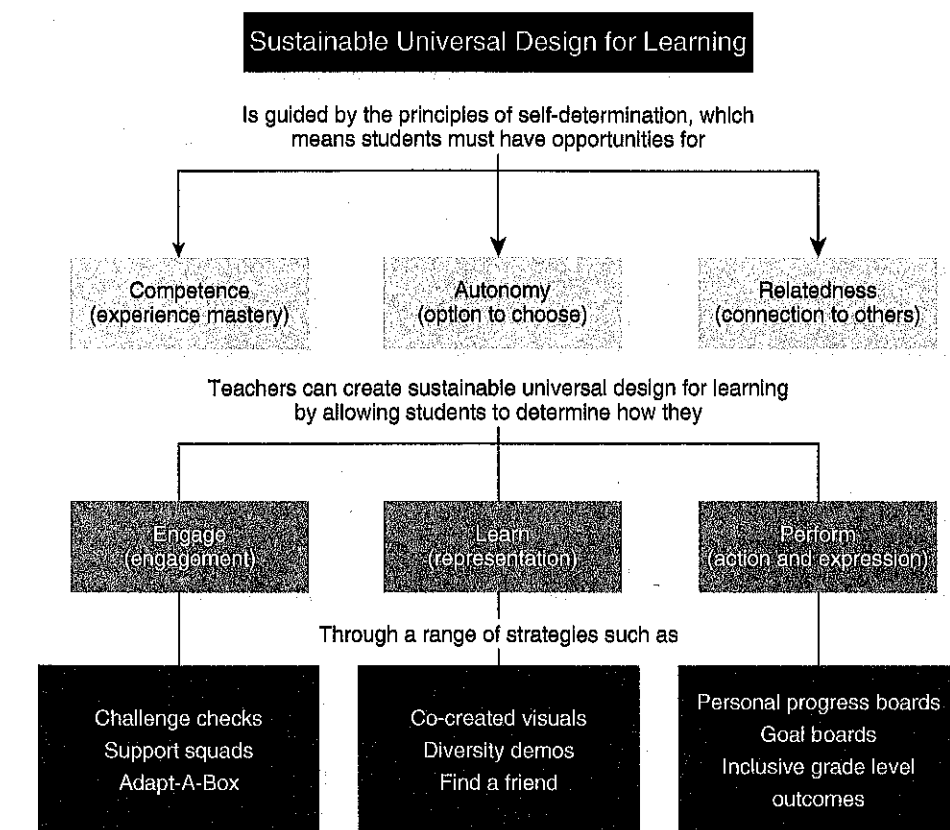| Self-Determination Needs	Classroom Strategies
Autonomy	■ When starting a unit, show students the learning outcomes for the unit and allow them to select three activities from a list to engage in and demonstrate mastery in that unit. ■ Have a "Modification Station" in an area of the classroom or gym where students go to select a piece of equipment to make an activity easier or harder. Examples include balloons, beach balls, large racquets, knobby balls, scooters, and foxtails. ■ Create "Personal Progress Boards" for students where they track their progress on grade-level outcomes posted on a bulletin board. They move their name card up as they master more outcomes.
Competence	■ Use stations that have varied levels of difficulty and allow students to move freely among the stations. ■ Have students share with a peer at the end of class one skill they mastered or improved on that day in class. ■ Set up game play with scaffolded challenges. For example, during volleyball, have a 2 v 2 sit volleyball area with a balloon, a volleyball court with a lowered net and a beach ball, and a standard volleyball game area. Students rotate between areas based on mastery of skills. ■ Ask students to set a personal goal for the day based on the grade-level outcome addressed and guide them in self-assessing on that goal at the end of the lesson.
Relatedness	■ Utilize a "Support Squad" where in the middle of game play or an activity, students gather with their squad to determine who needs more or less challenge and generate ideas for adapting the activity to meet their squads needs. ■ Assign "Accountability Partners" who go when the teacher calls "Challenge Check." The partners discuss their goal for the day and share ideas for being more successful. They also share what they saw each other doing well that day and what they could improve on. ■ Integrate cooperative learning activities. ■ Ensure a multicultural curriculum.

Figure 3.5 A Concept Map for Sustainable Universal Design for Learning
Reproduced from Roth, K. L., & Hockett, A. N. (2020, April). Crowdsourcing Universal Design for Learning. In 2020 SHAPE America National Convention & Expo. SHAPEAMERICA..

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guide them. We discuss this further in our chapter on self-advocacy and social justice and equity.

Connecting Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy

The concepts of self-determination and self-advocacy are often applied to the education of students with disabilities. However, self-determination and self-advocacy are universal skills for all students to learn (Pennell, 2001). In fact, students cannot become self-determined without learning how to advocate for themselves. Self-determination is a philosophy that emphasizes the placement of power, control, voice, and choice in the hands of students and empowers them to be agents of change for their own future. Individuals who are self-determined select their own goals and act freely in the pursuit of those goals. They are considered causal agents of their own lives (Shogren et al., 2015).

> Self-determination is speaking up for our rights and responsibilities and empowering ourselves to stand up for what we believe in. This means being able to choose where we work, live, and our friends; to educate ourselves and others, to work as a team to obtain common goals; and to develop the skills that enable us to fight for our beliefs, to advocate for our needs, and to obtain the level of independence that we desire. (Self Advocates Becoming Empowered, 1996)

Self-advocacy is an important skill to have as students become self-determined. Self-advocacy involves students speaking up for themselves and having confidence to be their own activist for what they know they need or want (Pennell, 2001). Self-advocacy is

interconnected with self-determination, as we shared in Chapter 1. Self-advocacy, along with goal setting, decision-making, problem solving, and self-efficacy, allows students to live as independent, self-directed members of their community. Students in a health education class and engaged in a unit on planning lifetime healthful living activities demonstrate self-advocacy in a variety of ways. For example, they complete planning worksheets that are framed around Standard 8 of the National Health Education Standards: "Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health" (Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, 2007). Within these worksheets, students rank order by preference a list of lifetime healthful living activities such as yoga, weightlifting, baseball, archery, healthy cooking, and hiking. Students are also allowed to write in their own preferred activities if they are not listed. Students then set goals for integrating their top three activities into their weekly practice. By allowing students choice in activities and the freedom to design their own goals, students are demonstrating skills in self-determination. By creating a system of practice where students include activities that are not on a predetermined list, allowing them the opportunity to self-reflect on their personal desires, navigate the resources to attain those desires, and communicate their desires for lifetime activity, students are demonstrating skills in self-advocacy.

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Connection to the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model

The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model is the CDC's framework for addressing health in schools and emphasizes the role of the

community in supporting the school and the connections between health and academic achievement along with evidence-based school policies and practices. The WSCC model places the child at the center, surrounded by five whole child tenets: healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. Students who are self-determined are likely to take ownership over their physical activity and health needs by engaging in physical education as well as in after-school programs and within the community.

Conclusion

Self-determination and self-advocacy are important in the education of students. Goal setting, decision-making, problem solving, self-efficacy, and self-advocacy are all skills required to develop self-determination. Self-determination theory includes the psychological needs of competence, autonomy,

and relatedness and is a key theory of motivation. Educators use various strategies to meet these needs. For example, students might be given the opportunity to set personal goals and learn to track their progress on grade-level outcomes to develop a sense of autonomy and competence or to engage in cooperative learning activities to develop relatedness. The UDL framework may be implemented to help students meet the autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs and may be an effective approach to foster self-determination. The UDL guidelines provides users with means for fostering equity through integration of multiple means of engagement, representation, and action and expression (CAST, 2018) and provides checkpoints that move through three levels of accomplishment: access, build, and internalize. By fostering self-determination and self-advocacy, educators help students develop the skills needed to put them in control of their own health and physical activity wants and needs (Lieberman et al., 2020).

SCENARIO 2

Frida and Johan

Frida and Johan are in seventh grade and participate in a general physical education class. Frida has a hearing impairment, and Johan has an orthopedic impairment and ambulates with a walker. The class is engaged in a dance unit. The PE teacher divides the students into different groups and asks them to try to create a dance. During the group planning, Frida and Johan explain to their groups how the dance can be designed so that they can participate fully. The students collaborate to determine how everyone can be included in the dance and try different steps and rhythms to music. The physical education teacher circulates to each group and guides their discussion on how to plan dance moves that Frida and Johan can engage in successfully. After planning, each group teaches the rest of the class the dance they created. At the end of the instruction, before the class practices the dances, each group checks with Frida and Johan to ensure they can complete the steps of the dance and determine if they need modifications. Frida and Johan share what they need, and the class discusses ideas for ensuring their success. Frida and Johan feel that their opinions are important and that the other students and teachers listen to them. Ultimately, the class selects a ribbon for Johan to use for moves that are difficult for him to perform (slide), and they come up with clear verbal cues for the dance for Frida. As the class worked together to ensure all students' needs were met, they all experienced a sense of relatedness. With the modifications, Frida and Johan were able to feel a sense of competence, and by creating structures where students were determining how to best meet the needs of learning communities, the physical educator was fostering competence. This subsequently empowers all students in the class to self-advocate, which promotes intrinsic motivation and supports self-determination.

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Aligned with National Physical Education Standard: S4.M1.7 Exhibits responsible social behaviors by cooperating with classmates, demonstrating inclusive behaviors, and supporting classmates [SHAPE America, 2013].
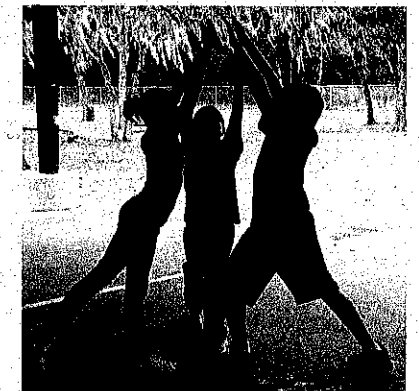
Chapter Review Questions

1. What is self-determination and its three components?
2. Identify strategies used to support the application of the three components of self-determination.
3. How can educators use the UDL framework to foster self-determination?
4. Describe the connection between self-determination and self-advocacy.

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CHAPTER 4

Infusing Self-Advocacy into Physical Education

Kevin Andrew Richards and Paul M. Wright

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Identify self-advocacy skills that are important for all students.
- Describe the relationship between self-advocacy and social and emotional learning.
- Design instructional activities that prioritize self-advocacy in physical education.

KEY TERMS

Relationship skills	Self-awareness	Social awareness
Responsible decision-making	Self-management	Transfer of learning

SCENARIO 1

Educational Leadership Program

I spent over a decade of my teaching career developing the physical education leaders program at my high school that now includes over 100 students. New leaders typically assist teachers with managerial tasks and/or provide additional support in our adapted physical education classes. After a year or two, they can take on higher-level responsibilities such as going off-site to help adapted teach physical education at a school in our district or mentoring to newer members just starting the program. The development of this large and comprehensive leadership program became one of my biggest points of pride. However, as I neared retirement, my attention was drawn to a blind spot for myself and the program. David, a student with autism, had worked with leaders in his physical education classes. Being bright, helpful, social, and a good self-advocate, David asked me if he could join the leadership program. I had never consciously decided that students with disabilities could not serve in this program—it had just never occurred to me. Slightly humbled but inspired by that realization, I made slight adaptations to the training and leadership roles that David required. Although he was placed in teams of leaders with strong peer support, David was fully involved. He gave and received as much as all the other leaders. We now have a more inclusive physical education leadership program, and David's self-advocacy skills helped me continue growing and learning as an educator even up to the final years of my career.

—Pam Rangel, retired teacher, West Aurora High School, Aurora, Illinois

Aligned with SHAPE America Physical Education Standard 4: The physically literate individual exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others (SHAPE America, 2014).