



Co-funded by the  
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### **Project sport activity “Alphabet exercise”**

Sport activity “Alphabet exercise” was planned as an alternative activity according to Erasmus+ project “Coping with students challenging behaviour” (project no.2019-1-EE01-KA229-051598).

Aim of our project is to share best practice in other countries in order to increase staff competences about strategies of preventing and reducing challenging behaviour. Due to COVID-19 spread all over the world and travelling restrictions, four schools in this project were looking for better ways to reach the goals. Sport activity as an alternative activity in this project was welcomed by all partners.

Sport can be fun for some and unpleasant for others. Project partners decided to observe students' behaviour through “Alphabet exercise”. We hoped to share some motivation techniques for teachers, wanted to get an overview of how students move from one sport activity to another, does challenging behaviour occur during making these exercises and, more generally, how students accept this task.

Sport activity is one way to lessen anxiety, improve sleep, increase endurance, build muscles, develop motor skills and offer opportunities for socializing. Physical activity offers the chance to grow stronger, expand interests and adds enjoyment to life.

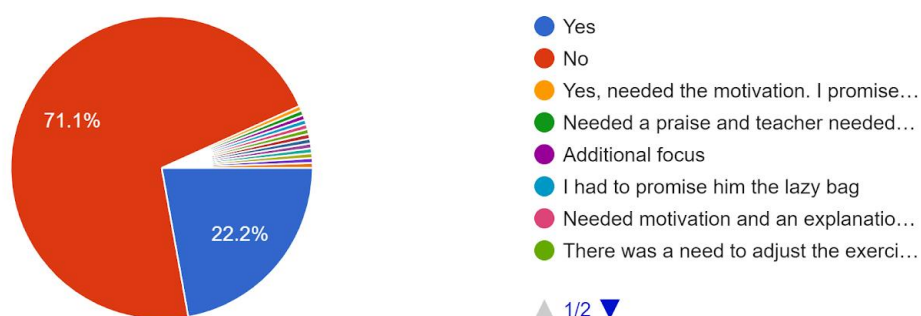
The exercise ideas we used were inexpensive and easy to implement. We used visual material to help to understand the nature of exercises. Visuals help students to grasp concepts and helps to support positive behaviour. As students in our four schools are with different capacities, skills and abilities, we were flexible with giving instructions and in the process of performing the exercises.

## RESULTS OF SPORT ACTIVITY CHECKLIST

With our checklist of sport activity observation we received 194 responses in total. 126 responses from Latvian school, 37 from Estonian, 16 from Slovakian and 15 from Macedonian school. Of all observed students there were 137 boys and 58 girls.

3. Did the student need any motivation during the exercises? If yes please describe it. Name the approaches you used.

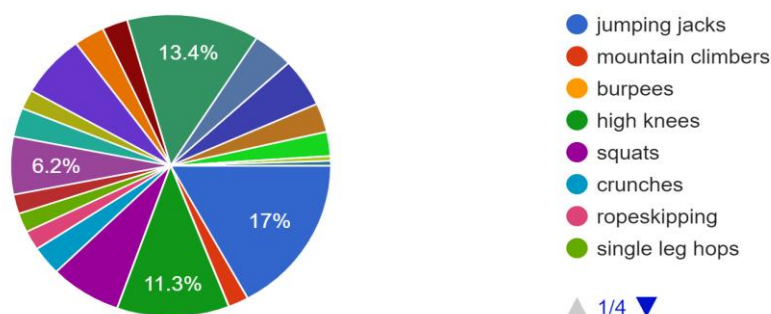
194 responses



143 students were motivated for sport activity, 35 students with average motivation, 4 students from 194 were not motivated. 150 of the students were happy during the exercises, 31 students' mood was average compared to happy and unhappy, 12 from all students who were not happy.

4. Please mark the exercise which was the student's most favorite?

194 responses



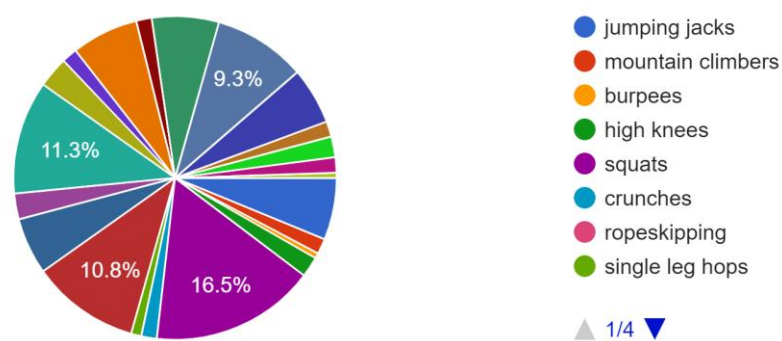
Alphabet workout exercises were created to be also performed by children with physical disabilities. They had to increase their positive attitude and prevent challenging behaviour.

According to the survey of sport teachers or class teachers observations the most favourite exercises were jumping jacks- for 33 students out of 194 responses they were their favourites, then follow skip with clap-26 students enjoyed it, high knees- 22 students, squats-14, jogging in place-13, calf raises-12 and wall sit accordingly 10 students performed them as their favourites.8 students enjoyed squat jumps. 6 students as their favourites proved-low plank, push ups shoulder tap push, jumps forward, and crunches.

For 5 students push ups and twist jumps were their favourites. 4 students enjoyed and with enthusiasm did rope skipping, single leg hops, front lunches, high plank and mountain climbing. Only 1 student enjoyed bird dogs and modified/adjusted exercise.

5. Please mark the exercise which the student didn't like at all?

194 responses



With the checklist of sport activity observation we also received the responses of exercises which students did not like at all.

Out of 194 responses 32 students did not enjoy squats, then follow low plank-22 students did not like it, front lunges-21 student, squat jumps-18, push ups and skip with clap-13 students, jumping jacks-12 students, accordingly for 11 students wall sit and back lunges were not their favourites.

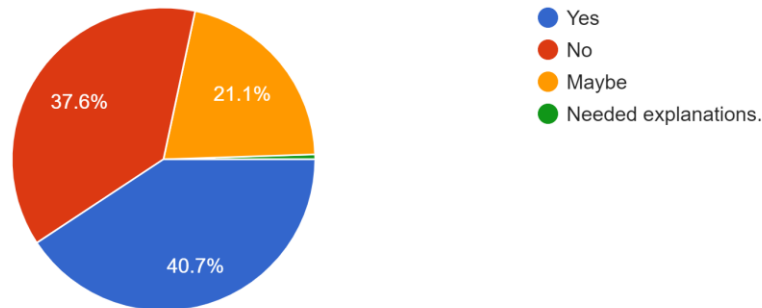
Sport teachers/ class teachers observed that 6 students did not like high plank exercises, 5 students calf raises, but 4 students twist jumps and high knees.

According to the checklist responses 3 students did not enjoy the following exercises- jumping forward, star jumps, mountain climbing, crunches, jogging in place and push ups shoulder tap push.

2 students did not like single leg hops, while 1 student was not eager to exercise bird dogs and burpees.

6. Was it easy for the student to move from one exercise to another?

194 responses

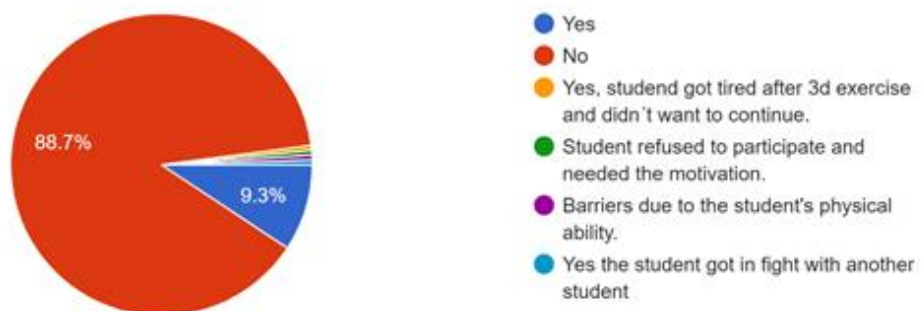


The survey proved that for 79 students out of 194 responses it was easy to move from one exercise to another.

As sport teachers/ class teachers had observed 73 students found it difficult to start another exercise while 41 student's position was neutral. This means it could have been challenging for students. One teacher pointed out the need for further explanations.

7. Did any kind of challenging behaviour occur during making these exercises? Please name the behaviour...

194 responses

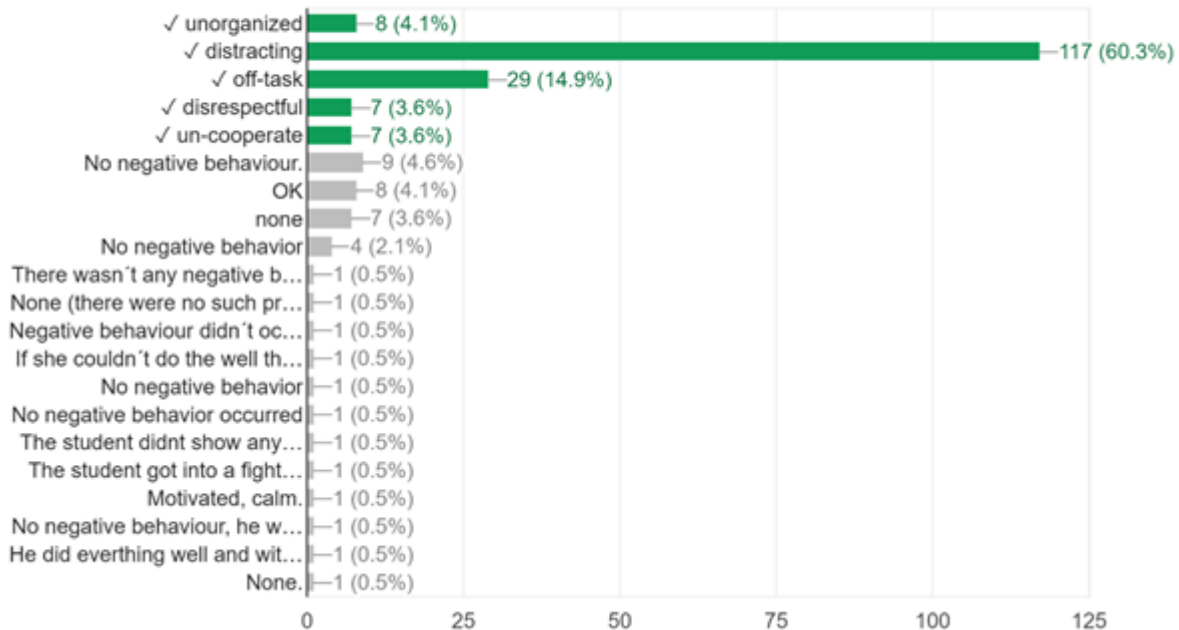


These question results show that during the exercise students did not show any challenging behaviour- answers of 88.7% of respondents and only 9.3% answers of students that have shown challenging behaviour.

The rest of the answers are about students' fatigue after 3<sup>rd</sup> exercise and refusal to continue; refusal of participation and need of motivation; barriers about physical abilities and a fight between students.

8. Please mark the occurrence of negative behaviour during the activity. Student was:

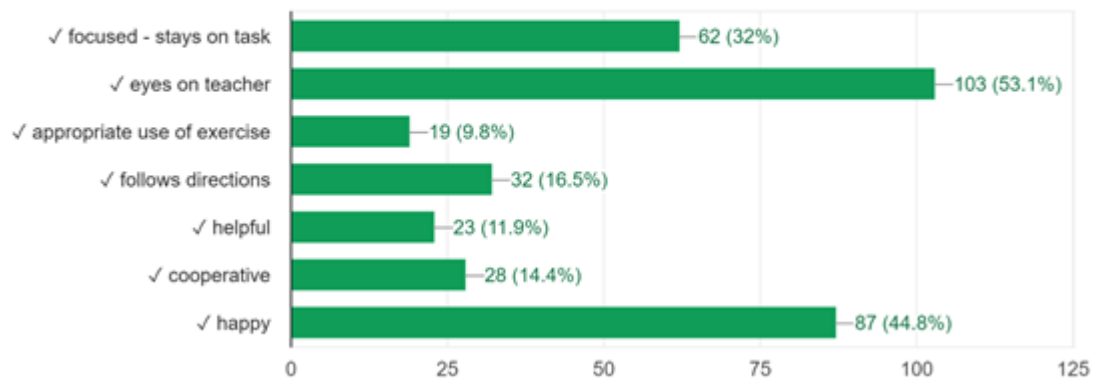
0 / 194 correct responses



The larger number of answers refers to students' distraction expressed with 117 answers, like most common problem in children with special needs. Further on, there is the answer about off-task work with 29 answers. Also common answer is the data that there was no negative behaviour occurred with 19 answers; answers relating to unorganized students, OK and none, with 8 answers; disrespectful and uncooperative behaviour with 7 answers; and with 2 answers we find negative behaviour like anger and fight.

9. Please mark the occurrence of positive behaviour during the activity. Student was:

0 / 194 correct responses



Largest number of answers- 103 are about established looks with the teacher (eyes on teacher). 87 answers indicated that students were happy during the exercises. We find in 62 answers

focused on behaviour- student stays on task, and 32 answers are related to following directions. Students cooperation is positive in 28 answers; students being helpful during sport activity is found in 23 answers and appropriate use of exercise is expressed in 19 answers.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Project sport activity “Alphabet exercise” turned out overall to be a positive choice according to students behaviour. Responses show it was mostly well received by students and the project management team received good feedback from their colleagues. As the results show students were motivated and happy by starting this activity.

About the motivation before or during the exercises teachers had to show the exercises first, explain the purpose of this activity, praise the student, use first and then approach (first do this and then you can do that), help to track the time passage, count the exercise repetitions and cheer the student’s. To keep the motivation, some teachers had to adjust the exercises due to students abilities. In Macedonian school the alphabet (Latin) was changed to the alphabet used in their country (which is an adaptation of the Cyrillic script) and made the exercises understandable to their students and appropriate to their abilities. At the same time, the same muscle groups were meant to be affected as on the original workout.

Moving from one exercise to another was difficult for our special needs students. Transitioning from one activity to another is a part of life, we face it every day. Being able to transition successfully is an important skill as it increases independence, reduces challenging behaviour and lessens anxiety. There are many ways that are simple to use in the school or at home to support transitions. Our schools teachers use the visual support to count down, to schedule the activities, give a warning in advance, allow for extra time, signal “finished”.

As this activity was well received only few cases of challenging behaviour occurred. Students were able to monitor the teacher, stay on task and show their happiness during these exercises.

During these difficult times, we chose the right activity for the project. We didn't have a chance to travel to see our partner schools but watching the photos and videos of students performing the Alphabet workout, it gives the feeling we were together.

## DISCLAMER

„The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein”