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Re-theorising inclusion and reframing inclusive practice in physical education

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ABSTRACT
Inclusion remains a key political agenda for education internationally and is a matter that teachers across subject communities and phases of education are challenged to respond to. In physical education specifically, research continues to highlight that current practice often reaffirms rather than challenges established inequities. This paper critically explores the understandings of inclusion that contribute to this situation and addresses the challenge of advancing inclusion in physical education from conceptual and pedagogical viewpoints. DeLuca's [(2013). "Toward an Interdisciplinary Framework for Educational Inclusivity." *Canadian Journal of Education* 36 (1): 305–348] conceptualisation of normative, integrative, dialogical and transgressive approaches to inclusion is employed as a basis for critical analysis of current practice and for thinking afresh about inclusive practice in physical education in relation to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Analysis informs the presentation of a set of principles that are designed to assist teachers and teacher educators to transform inclusive practice in physical education and in doing so, realise visions for physical education that are articulated in international policy guidelines and contemporary curriculum developments.

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Introduction

Teachers are acknowledged as playing a central role in promoting and supporting inclusivity in classrooms. Furthermore, policy frameworks such as the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL 2015), together with contemporary curriculum texts such as the Australian Curriculum (ACARA 2016), clearly establish that support for inclusive learning is not merely desirable – it is a requirement and expectation for all teachers. Internationally, a decade ago Ainscow (2005, 109) suggested that inclusion was the 'big challenge facing school systems throughout the world'. Subsequently, inclusion has been a policy drive embraced by many governments as a strategy for tackling broader social inequalities (Florian and Rouse 2009). In our own context of Victoria, Australia, the

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State Government's targets for education published in 2015 reaffirmed a focus on 'excellence and equity' and a commitment to reducing systemic educational and social disadvantage in the state (Department of Education and Training 2015).

Inclusion is thus a critical political agenda and a matter that teachers across different subject communities and phases of education are challenged to respond to. In physical education specifically, the UNESCO guidelines for Quality Physical Education (UNESCO 2015) reflect that inclusion is an integral and essential feature of quality programme development and pedagogy. The publication of these guidelines also reflected, however, that addressing inclusion remains a notable challenge for the physical education field and profession. Flintoff and Fitzgerald (2012, 16) captured the extent of this challenge in stating that the physical education profession appears 'ill-equipped to acknowledge, celebrate and plan for difference'. Other research supports their stance, pointing to the apparent failure of teachers and teacher educators to challenge the deep-rooted historical practices that exist within the subject (Grimminger 2014; Munk and Agergaard 2015). This is despite research that has provided clear insights into the exclusionary nature of physical education, with studies highlighting that in many instances physical education is structured and delivered in ways that establish and maintain exclusionary discourses, while continuing to privilege individuals who are white (Flintoff 2012), masculine (Brown and Evans 2004) and of high sporting/motor-skill ability (Fitzgerald 2005).

This paper reflects our view that progressing inclusion within physical education requires concerted efforts to disrupt traditional norms and accepted practices that remain embedded in dominant pedagogic and policy discourses internationally. In this respect, we echo Slee and Allan's (2001, 117) emphasis that 'inclusive education represents a fundamental paradigm shift and needs to be presented and recognised as such'. While acknowledging that multiple factors have contributed to the sustained failure of the profession to meaningfully engage with inclusion, including teachers' beliefs and values (Kulinna and Cothran 2017), dominant practices and cultures within school environments (Gerdin, Philpot, and Smith 2016), and wider political structures (Evans and Bairner 2012), this research particularly responds to the documented lack of knowledge of what inclusive physical education might look like in practice (Morley et al. 2005). Furthermore, it addresses the need for new theoretical insights to be accompanied by an explicit articulation of their implications for pedagogical practices and for research to therefore be concerned with both *how* inclusion is being thought about in physical education *and what* is envisaged, experienced and accepted as 'inclusive practice'.

We begin by providing an overview of the term 'inclusion' as it relates to physical education in Australian and international contexts. Drawing on international research we point to limitations of current approaches towards inclusion in physical education, and discuss concerns that contemporary curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices variously contribute to the legitimation and reproduction of inequity (Evans and Davies 1986, 1993; Penney and Evans 2013). This provides the basis from which we utilise DeLuca's (2013) interdisciplinary framework to explore a transformational approach to inclusion in physical education from theoretical and pedagogical perspectives. Our analysis illustrates the different meanings that are generated for 'inclusive practice' from each of the four approaches to inclusion that DeLuca (2013) outlines. We argue that DeLuca's conceptualisation of *dialogical* and *transgressive* approaches offers important potential to open up opportunities for difference and diversity to be expressed and celebrated in physical

education. Having explored the conceptualisations theoretically, we extend our analysis to address what is required in practice for this potential to be realised. Here we examine the practical implications for curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and emphasise that transformative efforts need to engage with each of these coherently in order for new understandings of inclusion to be effectively embedded in teaching and learning. The paper concludes by addressing the agendas generated from this work for future policy, practice and research in physical education.

Inclusion: a philosophical approach and pedagogical challenge

Inclusion is a term that continues to be nebulous, contested and open to numerous interpretations (Lewis 2016). As Spaaij, Magee, and Jeanes (2014, 12) highlight, it is a term that we should be posing critical questions of, including, 'inclusion into what? On whose terms? In whose interests?'. For Ainscow (2005, 109), inclusive education is a 'reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners' and should lead to the elimination of social exclusion that stems from 'attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability'. In this paper we adopt a similarly broad conceptualisation of inclusive education and view it as the translation of a basic human right and an essential foundation for a just society. Our use of the term is also anchored in acknowledgement of the social value of difference (Evans and Davies 1993; DeLuca 2013) and accompanying recognition that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are key inter-related mechanisms for the transmission of social values (Bernstein 1990; Penney et al. 2009). Bernstein's (1990) theoretical frame makes explicit the complex ways in which education, and more specifically, normalised curriculum structures, pedagogic practices and assessment processes are shaped by dominant discourses, and simultaneously serve to reaffirm or challenge those discourses and the social relations that they privilege. We therefore consider inclusion to refer to the way teachers and schools value equally the accomplishments, attitudes and wellbeing of every young person while providing a curriculum that is relevant and meaningful (Hayes and Stidder 2003); a pedagogy that embraces difference as a resource to enrich teaching and learning (Evans and Davies 1993); and approaches to assessment that enable diverse abilities to be recognised and celebrated (Hay and Penney 2013). From this perspective, the key task is 'not to defend the need to accommodate learner differences by the provision of something "different from" or "additional to", as defined in the legislation, but to challenge complacency about what is "generally available"' (Florian and Rouse 2009, 598). As we illustrate in the section that follows, research suggests that significant work is needed to support any challenge to 'what is generally available in physical education'.

Physical education: an ongoing history of exclusionary practices

Over two decades ago Evans, Davies, and Penney (1996, 167) noted that:

> … the most many [young people] … learn [in and from physical education] is that they have neither ability, status nor value, and that the most judicious course of action to be taken in protection of their fragile educational physical identities is to adopt a plague-like avoidance of its damaging activities.

As indicated above, physical education has repeatedly been shown to align with and reinforce particular types of hegemonic discourses that privilege a narrow group of (white, middle-class, motor-skilled, masculine) students. Enacted in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, this translates to many teachers focusing on a range of abilities and skills that relatively few students can excel at performing (Penney and Evans 2013). Yet, alongside such observations, it is important to acknowledge an extensive line of research in physical education that has sought to progressively advance understandings of equity and inclusion (see, for example, Evans 1993; Hayes and Stidder 2003; Evans and Davies 2004; Dowling, Fitzgerald, and Flintoff 2012; Hay and Penney 2013). This literature features prominently in many teacher education courses and remains an important foundation for our own work. Internationally, various policy developments have also sought to provide a basis for advancing inclusion in physical education and go at least some way towards challenging embedded inequities (UNESCO 2015; Wilkinson 2017). Nevertheless, research continues to indicate the limited impact that policy developments have had and can be expected to have, in practice. Against this backdrop, we propose a transformative approach and present a framework that brings new theoretical perspectives to thinking about inclusion in physical education.

Advancing inclusion: a transformative approach

There is a general consensus that inclusive practice requires the transformation of existing educational systems (Artiles, Harris-Murri, and Rostenberg 2006, 260). Within Australia, the contemporary policy context of curriculum reform reflects a system-wide, national commitment to providing all students with access to quality schooling free from discrimination and the promotion of personalised learning that can fulfil the diverse capabilities of each young Australian (MCEECDYA 2008). In the introduction to the Australian Curriculum, it is emphasised that 'All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs drawn from a challenging curriculum that addresses their individual learning needs' (ACARA 2016). New state curriculum texts that have followed the national policy lead, such as the Victorian Curriculum (VCAA 2015), have echoed this emphasis.

In the learning area of Health and Physical Education, new curriculum texts provide distinct opportunities for sociocultural and socio-critical perspectives to be brought to the fore of curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches and assessment in PE (see, for example, Leahy, O'Flynn, and Wright 2013). New official texts remain, however, inevitably open to varied interpretations and responses and do not change the reality that in the context of broader policy, school structures and school cultures, teachers exert a considerable influence over young people's engagement with physical education and their subsequent feelings of inclusion/exclusion. As Flintoff and Fitzgerald (2012, 11) observe:

> [physical education] teachers … are involved in hundreds of decisions and interactions … that will determine who gets made to feel different, who learns and experiences success and conversely those who don't. Whilst everyone should have an equal right to achieve educational or sporting merits, or to be healthy, the reality we know is somewhat different.

Following Noddings (1993) we suggest that inclusive policy needs to be enacted in the context of an encompassing moral position on education. Such a moral position needs a theoretical grounding to guide transformative developments in physical education

policy and practice. Amidst multiple discourses arising from different disciplinary perspectives and from interest in various marginalised groups (defined by gender, class, ability, ethnicity) in physical education, we turn to an interdisciplinary framework to provide a reference point to prospectively unify and extend thinking about inclusion in physical education.

An inclusion framework for education

Here we explore the potential that DeLuca's (2013) interdisciplinary framework for education inclusivity offers to reimagine and transform curriculum, pedagogy and assessment within physical education, understood as three inter-related mechanisms via which messages about inclusion (and wider social values) are communicated to young people. We regard DeLuca's (2013) framework as one of the few that has sought to provide a holistic overview of inclusion, rather than focusing on inclusive practice for particular groups of students who are categorised, labelled and targeted (e.g. as those 'with disabilities'). The framework thereby helps reveal the flawed nature of categorisation as a basis for thinking about inclusion in education. Drawing on perspectives from disability studies, multiculturalism and anti-racist education, gender and women's education and queer studies, DeLuca outlines four conceptions of inclusion: *normative, integrative, dialogical* and *transgressive*, which represent a continuum of inclusive approaches.

DeLuca (2013, 326) suggests that *normative* approaches to inclusion focus on the 'active assimilation and normalisation of minority individuals to a dominant cultural standard'. Thus, while non-dominant groups are recognised, they can only be included if they 'assimilate to the dominant standard'. Within a normative conception of inclusion, the dominant group is not required to have any interest in the minority group or consider their role in promoting the exclusion of that minority. An *integrative* approach 'accepts and legitimises the presence of difference in society through formal modification' (2013, 332). Integrative approaches often include segregated opportunities which highlight the 'duality between the dominant group and the minority group' (2013, 332).

Within DeLuca's (2013) *dialogical* conception, the dominant group continues to be evident as such, but at the same time, cultural complexity is recognised and celebrated. According to DeLuca (2013, 334), dialogical interactions 'bring forward knowledge as rooted in the lived, cultural experiences of diverse students'. Dialogical conceptions aim to extend thinking and practice beyond the familiar, gathering ideas from different sources with the intention that all students will be enabled to participate fully in learning without prejudice. This conception aligns with Evans and Davies (1993) challenge to physical educationalists to celebrate diversity as a resource that can enrich learning for all while opening up learning opportunities in physical education to many students who would otherwise be marginalised or excluded.

With a *transgressive* conception of inclusion, individual diversity is 'used as a vehicle for the generation of new knowledge and learning experiences' (DeLuca 2013, 334). There is no dominant cultural group, only overlays of divergent cultures that 'creates a shared and emergent learning' (334). DeLuca (2013) thereby highlights the need for society to recognise the very different ways of being human and being different. Transgressive conceptions thus begin to challenge educators to consider unclassified diversities, or cultural complexities. Such conceptions prompt awareness of the limitations of stereotypically labelling of

difference that emphasise a single-issue focus (Flintoff, Fitzgerald, and Scraton 2008) and/or that focus on some differences and not others. Transgressive thinking thus calls for recognition that various 'isms' (for example, sexism, classism, racism …) are socially constructed and hence, need to be problematised. A transgressive approach is thus intended to value individual difference and empower individuals, by sharing uniqueness and leveraging it to be more authentically '… about the self, others and the world' (DeLuca 2013, 335). We suggest that this aligns with and usefully advances work in physical education that has called for intersectionality to be adopted as a basis for (re-)thinking approaches to inclusion (Azzarito and Solomon 2005; Flintoff, Fitzgerald, and Scraton 2008). More specifically, we contend that DeLuca's (2013) work provides a useful frame of reference that can provoke questions and generate fresh ideas about how physical education teachers and pre-service teachers understand inclusion and inclusive practice. Below we present our analysis of the alignment of various approaches to inclusion in physical education with DeLuca's four conceptualisations. In doing so, we establish a basis from which to discuss more specific ways in which to extend transformative thinking about inclusion and inclusive practice in physical education.

A conceptual analysis of inclusion in physical education

Normative and integrative inclusion

Much of what happens in physical education classrooms, we argue, is situated across the normative and integrative conceptions of inclusion. With normative conceptions, the role of education is essentially to ensure conformity to a particular defined standard identity that is explicitly and implicitly 'written into' and legitimated by curriculum, as represented in official texts and physical education programmes in schools. Physical education curriculum itself then becomes narrowly conceived. The sustained dominance of a multi-activity based curriculum and particular sports and games in physical education (Kirk 2010) and teachers' tendencies to prioritise particular movement experiences that are normalised 'as PE'. The dominant curriculum form privileges and effectively only enables the expression of particular movement skills, knowledge and understandings. Students who cannot perform this specific skill set to a level that is required and/or expected, and/or students who lack prior exposure to the activities that are privileged, are marginalised and may well disengage from physical education (Evans and Davies 1993; Azzarito, Solmon, and Harrison 2006; Hay and Lisahunter 2006). A normative stance is also reflected in curriculum that directs attention to human deficits, illness, negative individual risk behaviours and societal risks (McCuaig, Quennerstedt, and Macdonald 2013). Pedagogically and in assessment, the normative perspective plays out in deficit approaches that focus on what students are lacking (e.g. fitness, resilience, skill) in relation to specified standards and norms.

None of the comments are intended to imply that teachers' efforts are not well intentioned. Rather, it is to acknowledge the thinking that lies behind normative-based practices, with teachers seeking to help those students who are positioned and labelled as unskilled to become skilled, unfit to become fit and non-sporty to want to play the versions of sport that align with dominant social and cultural values and interests (Azzarito et al. 2017). Lessons stemming from this orientation are frequently characterised by teacher-led

approaches with teachers seeking to support students to reach proficiency that aligns with a particular standard of motor skill, fitness or tactical competency, often linked to a set of culturally specific and gendered sporting activities (Evans 2004; Penney and lisahunter 2006; Flintoff 2008; Kirk 2010). The approach hinges on notions of 'equal access' to a minimum standard of physical, technical or tactical performativity that is regarded as necessary to unlock access to a lifetime of sporting endeavour and as others have previously identified, is inherently flawed as a basis for thinking about equity and inclusion in physical education (Evans and Davies 1993; Wilkinson 2017).

Integrative approaches have emerged in part in response to critiques of the exclusionary nature of physical education curriculum. Rather than radically changing content, integrative approaches feature adaptation to accommodate a broader range of young people within existing structures. Gender-differentiated curriculum provision (with, for example, girls offered netball while boys are offered rugby) and the practice of streaming on the basis of ability defined in relation to sport-based performance criteria, perhaps best characterise 'inclusive' PE curriculum underpinned by integrative principles (Hills and Croston 2012; Wilkinson 2017). Teachers who align with an integrative conception of inclusion may use pedagogies that acknowledge a need for differentiation, but are seeking to achieve this by adapting activities that in and of themselves continue to reinforce stereotypical thinking. For example, a teacher may seek to address diverse abilities by dividing a large court space up into three game areas and assigning students to high, medium and low ability courts based upon a prior skill test. This may enable engagement of some students with diverse abilities, but such modifications are focused on assisting students to achieve a fixed norm in a way that highlights difference as a deficit to be accommodated. We suggest that many of the models that emerged through attempts to introduce more inclusive pedagogies to physical education, including Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) (Bunker and Thorpe 1986), Game Sense (Light 2012) and Sport Education (Siedentop 1994), could be framed as integrative. These models have undoubtedly prompted changes to teaching and learning in physical education, including a greater focus on problem-based and co-operative learning within modified small-sided games, and student-led learning and peer-teaching in team contexts (Casey 2017). As others have acknowledged, however, pedagogical changes are often made within the context of a curriculum that remains dominated by 'traditional' competitive team games and that as a consequence, may reinforce gender and social class norms (Brock, Rovegno, and Oliver 2009). Further, following Evans and Bairner (2012), we suggest that these, as all models, need to be recognised as socially encoded (reflecting particular distributions of power and control) and as always received in specific contexts of 'opportunity'.

In relation to assessment, as Penney, Brooker, Hay and Gillespie outline, 'traditional assessment approaches in PE have often been product orientated, focusing on components of fitness, or de-contextualised, as in the case of assessment of isolated skills' (2009, 43). Fitness testing in physical education is a pedagogical practice that illustrates efforts to address inclusion in ways that reflect normative and integrative orientations. Fitness testing often centres on a level of fitness that is presented as 'normal' or 'healthy' and that students should be seeking to attain and against which student success may be judged (Alfrey and Gard 2014). An integrative approach is illustrated when teachers adapt this practice to establish individual fitness targets and challenge students to 'beat

their personal bests'. How 'fitness' is being defined and measured is rarely questioned however, and those students who are positioned as 'lower ability' on the basis of the particular aspects of fitness and measures privileged, remain fully aware that their personal best is below what is presented as 'normal'. Moving beyond normative and integrative approaches requires a willingness to question assumptions that underpin established curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practices and that simultaneously contribute to the reproduction of inequities in physical education.

Dialogical and transgressive inclusion in PE

Within dialogical and transgressive conceptualisations of inclusion, what counts as legitimate and valued knowledge does not come exclusively from a historically reproduced set of games, activities, dances or movement forms. Rather, what is prioritised is a bringing forward of '… knowledge as rooted in the lived, cultural experiences of diverse students, whether already present in the learning environment or not' (DeLuca 2013, 334). Moving towards dialogical and transgressive approaches in physical education therefore requires an appreciation that there are many different ways of moving, being healthy and physically active and a commitment to this diversity being reflected in curriculum. That is, the shift in conceptualisation demands that we revisit the skills, knowledge, understandings and movement contexts that are assumed to legitimately hold centre stage in physical education curriculum. Linked to this, DeLuca (2013) further highlights that dialogical and transgressive approaches should promote spaces for deep and critical learning. In physical education we associate this with efforts to support students to question matters such as what it means to be 'healthy', 'active' or 'fit', through curriculum offerings, pedagogical approaches and assessment tasks that all align with this critical stance. Furthermore, the transgressive conceptualisation calls for curriculum that legitimises and prioritises exploration of the types of movement experience that are personally meaningful and rewarding to students.

UNESCO's Quality Physical Education guidelines (2015) affirm such an orientation, identifying flexibility, adaptation to maximise relevance, and shifting to more student-centred pedagogies, as fundamental in efforts to address inclusion in physical education. Examples of dialogical and transgressive approaches are also clearly evident within pockets of practice in physical education internationally. Ennis (1999) exploration of culturally relevant curriculum for disengaged girls illustrated the importance of foregrounding participants' perspectives in seeking to develop curriculum that is more meaningful to more students (and in Ennis' work, specifically those girls who found little connection with traditional physical education curriculum). Almost two decades on it is important to acknowledge that such approaches have remained relatively marginal. Petrie and colleagues' research with teachers and students in New Zealand primary schools (Petrie et al. 2013) and Enright and O'Sullivan's (2010) work focusing on young women's participation in physical education are more recent examples that illustrate how dialogical and transgressive approaches can be taken forward in contemporary physical education. Petrie et al.'s (2013) 'Everybody counts' curriculum particularly reveals the powerful role of discourse in shaping – and potentially transforming – teaching and learning expectations in physical education. Critically in relation to the prompts that DeLuca's framework presents, Petrie et al.'s (2013) and Enright and O'Sullivan's (2010) projects involved teachers

supporting students in a process that promotes student engagement in the critique and *creative reimagining* of their physical education experience to embrace forms of movement, reasons for moving and ways of moving that are meaningful to students. O'Connor, Jeanes, and Alfrey's (2016) development of curriculum grounded in inquiry-based learning and featuring co-construction and negotiation of learning is another recent example that illustrates how students can be supported to explore and create movement opportunities that are authentic and prospectively, sustainable beyond the classroom. Notably, in this instance, visions of movement underpinning the curriculum 're-visioning' extended beyond organised sport to informal sport and physical activity that could have a legitimate place in student's lives as a means of transport, recreation and social connection.

As the above examples indicate, particular pedagogies and most notably, inquiry-based learning and critical pedagogy, align with dialogical and transgressive approaches. Culpan and Bruce's (2007) development of critical pedagogy in physical education usefully highlights the extension to notions of student-centred pedagogy that are crucial to progress dialogical and transgressive conceptualisations of inclusion in practice. As Culpan and Bruce (2007, 3) explain, critical pedagogy focuses on emancipation and social justice and enables students to 'obtain the knowledge, skills and power necessary to gain a greater degree of control over their individual and collective lives'. Culpan and Bruce (2007) argue that the use of critical pedagogy within physical education needs to move beyond critical thinking and 'develop further the entirety of the critical pedagogy cycle' to encourage students to generate a transformation of ideologies and structures that may restrict their enjoyment of physical education and physical activity and sport beyond schools. Students' own physical education programmes, sport and physical activity offerings beyond the curriculum, funding priorities and assessment frameworks, may all prospectively be a focus for critical inquiry with the intent of transformation. Again we suggest that the international examples above usefully demonstrate the practical application of such thinking to fundamentally change the way in which physical education is conceived and organised within schools and to ensure that it is meaningful for young people.

We also echo Hay and Penney (2009, 2013) in highlighting the need for critical pedagogy to inform transformative thinking about assessment in physical education. As Hay and Penney (2009, 398) outline, 'socially just approaches to assessment provide opportunities for all students to engage in assessment, receive attention and recognition for demonstrations of performance, and learn as a consequence of their engagement in assessment'. They further suggest that inclusive assessment relies not only on the diversity of tasks on offer and modes of possible response (including, for example, use of oral assessments, exhibitions, peer assessment, portfolios and video (see Mintah 2003), but also requires the opportunity for all students to be clear on how they are expected to engage with them. Hence, 'adequate [and necessarily varied] task scaffolding' and 'explicit and understandable criteria' (Hay and Penney 2009, 399) are fundamental within assessment approaches that claim to address concerns for inclusion. To reflect dialogical or transgressive thinking, however, there is a need for assessment processes that enable students to negotiate the assessment tasks, methods and timelines that will best enable them to demonstrate their learning and abilities in physical education. This aligns with Hay and

Penney's (2009) discussion of 'quality' assessment, characterised by assessment practices that support learning, are authentic, integrated, valid and socially just.

As teacher educators, we acknowledge that inclusion is impacted by structures well beyond the reach of the teacher and that developments such as those discussed above are by no means easy to progress. We nevertheless remain invested in finding ways to support teachers to actively disrupt long-established patterns of inequity in physical education and thereby advance inclusion as a central facet of quality provision (UNESCO 2015). Drawing insight from our conceptually informed analysis, we propose a set of principles for future teachers and teacher educators to adopt as a basis for transforming the notion of inclusive practice in physical education.

Redefining inclusive practice in PE

As indicated above, in this section we seek to make explicit the practical implications of the paradigm shift that we have argued is needed and that DeLuca's (2013) framework provides a foundation for. Following Penney et al. (2009) we retain the emphasis that any approach must engage with, and seek alignment of, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Broaden the physical education curriculum

According to Penney and Jess (2004, 275), as it has been traditionally presented, physical education is 'destined to have partial and short-lived relevance to many people's lives'. Taking forward DeLuca's (2013) transgressive perspective particularly challenges us to re-think the starting point for curriculum planning and specifically, start from an exploration and understanding of how different types of movement variously features in people's lives. Hence, we contend that developing inclusive practice needs to be underpinned by a willingness and commitment to exploring how more diverse ways of learning 'in, through and about' movement (Arnold 1979)[1] can be reflected in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Considering what might constitute a curriculum that connects with the notion of 'a diverse range of lifetime physical activities' requires first and foremost, an openness to listen to the stories, views and feelings of all learners, and to accept that interests in and attitudes towards movement that may well contrast to our own. We suggest that currently, physical education curriculum too often makes limited connections to the ways of moving and movement skills that are important to young people now and in the future. As Penney and Jess (2004) illustrated, a lifetime of physical activity sees people engaging in many forms of movement for a range of reasons, including movement to meet the physical demands of work and everyday life tasks, social engagement in physical activities and health-related participation, as well as performance-oriented involvement in sport. From this perspective, broadening the movement experiences that feature in physical education and particularly, shifting thinking about the skills, knowledge and understanding, that should be at the fore of curriculum, is critical to enhancing relevance, authenticity and we contend, inclusivity. We suggest that taking a transgressive approach to designing an inclusive curriculum requires thinking afresh about the learning that is required for a curriculum to effectively extend each students' individual physical, social and emotional capability to engage in movement and physical activity for purposes that they value and in contexts that they can relate to now and in the future.

Share decision-making and use strengths-based pedagogies

As indicated earlier in this paper, shifting towards dialogical and/or transgressive visions of inclusion also requires a move away from deficit-based thinking about students' learning needs and towards the sort of pedagogical approaches that align with a strengths-based orientation. We acknowledge that it is not easy to resist linear and hierarchical concepts of 'development' (skill development, growth, fitness) as the basis for thinking about prospective grouping and differentiation of learning. Such approaches are also underpinned by very genuine concerns to 'cater for all students' and extend opportunities for learning. Yet, we contend that actively exploring individual difference in relation to skills, knowledge, understandings and interests in the ways discussed above, should not only re-frame curriculum – it should also re-frame pedagogy and assessment. Hence, from a pedagogical perspective, re-visioning inclusive practice must start with a willingness to engage in co-constructing curriculum with students and a focus on facilitating students' individual progress and growth through supported student-led learning that is characterised by choice and collaborative learning opportunities and that therefore, embraces personal relevance. While we remain acutely aware that official curriculum requirements, institutional expectations and/or arrangements for learning, and pressures arising from wider education policy, may all generate tensions that inhibit developments along the pedagogical lines being advocated (see, for example, O'Connor, Jeanes, and Alfrey 2016) we also retain the view that all of these factors simultaneously create possibilities for creative and specifically, transformative pedagogy to be explored in physical education (Penney 2013).

Broaden what counts for and as assessment

Assessment in physical education, as in other subjects, is immensely powerful in conveying the differential value of particular skills, knowledge and understanding to students. Furthermore, both formal and informal assessment in physical education often communicate very publicly notions of ability that are notably narrow (Evans 2004; Penney and lisahunter 2006; Hay and Penney 2013). In seeking advances in inclusive assessment practice, we echo Hay and Penney's (2013) emphasis of the need to critically examine *what* skills, knowledge and understanding assessment addresses, privileges and marginalises and in parallel, address *how* assessment occurs in PE, and particularly, *how students are involved*. Taking forward DeLuca's (2013) transgressive conceptualisations clearly requires that development of inclusive assessment practice needs to start with students' personal understanding and analysis of their strengths and aspirations as learners in physical education. It then needs to involve a collaborative process of negotiation to identify assessment tasks and modes of assessment that will inform and support ongoing learning, while also enabling students to demonstrate progression in learning that aligns with formal curriculum expectations but that also remains highly authentic.

Choice and flexibility are thus fundamental to inclusive assessment practice that foregrounds a genuine concern to celebrate individual difference and not merely accommodate it. Further, we identify the process as characterised by student ownership of assessment that clearly builds their assessment literacy (Hay and Penney 2013), and

that consistently seeks to maximise individual students' opportunities for learning and success in physical education. We see such practice as characterised by diversity in the learning focus that is at the fore of any individual student's assessment at a specific point in time, negotiated tasks to reflect the particular learning focus and variation in the mode via which students communicate their learning. Although again the tendency may be to see curriculum requirements and established institutional arrangements as sitting in tension with such ideas, there is clearly a need to be exploring the spaces within which such practice can begin to be developed.

Engage in critical reflexivity

Our work to explore inclusion and inclusive practice in physical education is also linked to an ongoing process of critical reflexivity. We make no grand claims to have 'solved the problem' of inclusion in physical education, but rather, recognise that engaging with inclusion and developing inclusive practice needs to be a constant and dynamic aspect of our professional work. The literature in physical education reflects that understandings of what the challenges of inclusion are, and what inclusive practice 'is', have changed over time and also vary in different national, cultural, policy and institutional contexts (see Wilkinson 2017). Amidst this fluidity, we contend that teachers, teacher educators and researchers need to keep asking critical questions that challenge the assumptions underpinning current practices. As indicated above, we see a need for this questioning to span matters of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on how inclusion and inclusive practice in physical education are conceptualised and reflected in contemporary practice. DeLuca's (2013) conceptualisation of inclusion and specifically, his articulation of dialogical and transgressive approaches to inclusion, has been used as a framework and stimulus for critical analysis of current approaches to inclusion in physical education and to inform the development of a set of principles that may inform future thinking and practice. While each of the principles – *Broaden the physical education curriculum*; *Share decision-making and use strengths-based pedagogies*; *Broaden what counts for and as assessment*; and *Engage in critical reflexivity* – are in and of themselves important, we contend that their *collective power* as a framework for transforming curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, is far more significant. Hence, we put forward the set of principles as a conceptually grounded framework that at the same time, deliberately has an explicitly applied orientation. Our analysis and discussion is thus designed to assist policymakers, teachers, teacher educators and researchers to actively contribute to the sort of paradigm shift that we contend is needed to meaningfully advance inclusive practice in physical education and to delivery on stated policy intentions of contemporary curricula. As teacher educators we are exploring ways in which we can apply the principles and in doing so, both encourage and enable future teachers to challenge but also respond to established inequitable practices in schools. Future research with teachers, and student experiences of revisioned physical education programmes, will clearly be the litmus test for the framework presented.

Note

1. Arnold's (1979) framework comprising three inter-related dimensions of learning 'in', 'through' and 'about' movement has informed many curriculum developments in physical education internationally. It is referred to here to reaffirm the need for curriculum developments to engage with the complexities of learning (i) *in* varied contexts of movement, from a kinaesthetic perspective and with a focus on embodied learning and lived experiences; (ii) *through* participation in a variety of movement activities, with participation the means of achieving extrinsic learning outcomes; and (iii) *about* movement from biophysical and socio-cultural perspectives. For further discussion of these concepts and their application in physical education, see Brown (2013), Brown and Penney (2018) and Stolz and Thorburn (2017).

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