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Emergence of physical literacy in physical education: some curricular repercussions

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ABSTRACT

Background: The notion of carry-over value of certain physical activities has long been a preoccupation for physical education (PE) curriculum planners, one goal of PE being to prepare students for an active lifestyle in their adulthood. This goal is reinforced by the fact that over the last decade, there has been a considerable increase in interest for physical literacy (PL), a construct that advocates individuals' lifetime involvement in and with physical activity. This trend is likely to bring about a good deal of adjustments in the curriculum and the delivery of teaching in PE.

Purpose: The purpose of this article is to discuss the emergence of PL over the last years and examine how this trend can blend into the general objectives and the specifics of the PE curriculum, particularly with regard to older students (high school and college level).

Scaffold of the paper: Following an analogy between literacy and PL, and an operational definition of PL and related philosophical foundations, the development of PL in school is presented as a learner/user-centered, situated, socio-constructivist, systemic and progressive process. Considering the part of the PL journey vested in PE, a resulting expansion of PE subject matter is envisioned, and the particular case of learners' performance appreciation is examined. Finally, the author offers a critical analysis of the 'physically literate' term, considering the monist foundation of PL.

Conclusion: The PL term has registered in the collective psyche and is here to stay, at least in a foreseeable future. The PL surge in the PE scenery may be seen as an opportunity to revisit the PE curriculum and PE teaching practices in order to cover a larger spectrum of PA activities for students. Meeting the admitted PL goal (i.e. nurturing autonomous, self-directing, self-actualizing and self-regulating PA-literate adults) cannot be achieved through simply passing on dominant forms of PA activities (whatever they may be) without taking into account physical activities that have become part of emergent and attracting communities of practice.

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Introduction

In North America, as likely in other parts of the world, the general goal or purpose for the physical education (PE) curriculum has evolved over a long period of time, one of the reasons being the evolution of society itself. In the 1930s, under the impact of the industrial revolution, sometimes referred to as the machine age (Morgan 1932; Norton 1932), there was a decrease in utilitarian physical activity (PA) in a growing urban population and a marked increase in leisure time at the adults' disposal. The notion of including physical activities with carry-over value in the PE

curriculum appeared more frequently in professional journal publications (e.g. Morgan 1932; Rogers 1931a, 1931b; Simley 1932) in relation to health and recreation. By the 1960s, the thrust for the inclusion of carry-over activities in the PE curriculum was still very present (e.g. Brunner 1969; Kidd et al. 1971) with emphases on recreation (leisure) and physical fitness. As expressed by Brunner (1969), the purpose of the school or college PE program students participated in was to help them formulate habits of exercise that they would carry over into their adult life. PE activities that met this criterion were considered to have a carry-over value.

In the early 1970s, Klesius (1971) and Ley (1971) provided operational definitions for the notion of *physically educated person*. Although both definitions are close to one another, Klesius's one is strikingly prophetic of what was to develop with regard to the construct of physical literacy (PL), to be discussed later. He wrote:

The physically educated person can be behaviorally described as being able to select developmentally appropriate physical activities, participate voluntarily and regularly in these activities, and enjoy these activities as evidenced by positive verbalization patterns and observable efforts to find opportunities to extend the repertoire of skill, increase the level of performance, or intensify the frequency of participation. This person is self-directing and self-actualizing. (Klesius 1971, 47)

Some 45 years ago, the author of the present article, an assistant university professor at the time, was involved, along with the same PE Department colleagues, in three publications related to three complementary components of PE teacher education: (a) the components of physical capacity and the PE curriculum (Bouchard, Brunelle, and Godbout 1973b); (b) coaching for high sport performance (Bouchard, Brunelle, and Godbout 1973a); (c) physical fitness and well-being (Bouchard et al. 1974). In these authors' view, at the time, the components of the PE curriculum covered (a) movement experimentation, (b) perceptual-kinetic development, (c) sport education (psychomotor and socio-motor skills), (d) muscular and cardiovascular development, (e) creative movement, and (f) relaxation learning. The general goal of the PE curriculum was to provide students with the skills and knowledge deemed to help them become and stay physically active and physically fit throughout their life. Main physical-activity-related practitioner-fields envisioned were (a) PE teaching, (b) coaching and sport education (see Author's note at the end of the article), and (c) fitness leader. To our knowledge (based on graduate studies, post-graduate work and professional encounters experienced in USA, France, Belgium and Germany), this conception of PA-related professional practice was likely similar to what was envisioned in other PE higher institutions in North America and Europe. While dance education and outdoor education were gaining momentum in the USA, they were still peripheral in Quebec (Canada) at the time, and recreation education was beginning to take shape.

As readers will see in more detail in the next section, the PL construct, associated with the embodiment of a physically active lifestyle, flourished over the last 15 years and has been the object of numerous publications. 'Considering Whitehead's (2013a) definition, the ultimate manifestation of PL is for an individual to maintain purposeful physical pursuits/activities throughout his/her life course' (Godbout 2021, 174), hence the connection between the notion of carry-over value of activities considered in the PE curriculum and the contribution of PE to the development of PL.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the emergence of PL over the last years and examine how this trend can blend into the general objectives and the specifics of the PE curriculum, particularly with regard to older students (high school and college level). Following an analogy between literacy and PL, and an operational definition of PL and related philosophical foundations, the development of PL in school is presented as a learner/user-centered, situated, socio-constructivist, systemic and progressive process. Considering the part of the PL journey vested in PE, a resulting expansion of PE subject matter and related content knowledge is envisioned, and the particular case of learners' performance appreciation is examined. Finally, the author offers a critical analysis of the 'physically literate' term, considering the monist foundation of PL.

Developing PL at school – premises

PL as an analogy or extended metaphor

The words letter, literate and literature have the same etymological root, that is, the Latin word ‘littera/littera’, meaning writing formed with letters; by extension, it has also been related to reading words. The connection between literacy and PA can be traced back, on several instances, over more than a century (Cairney et al. 2019; Corbin 2016; Dudley 2018; McCloy 1957a, 1957b). Whatever may be the origin of the expression, it appears that it was with the works of Whitehead (e.g. 1993, 2001, 2013a, 2013b) that the PL construct truly took hold, leading to a flurry of several dozens of publications on the subject over the last 10 years, including special issues in the Journal of Sport Science and PE (2013, no 65), the Journal of Sport and Health Science (2015, 4 [2]), the Journal of Teaching in Physical Education (2018, 37 [3]; 2019, 38 [2]), and Curriculum Studies in Health and Physical Education (2021, 12 [2]).

Part of this success could be related to the strength of the analogy one can establish between literacy and PL, a point of view also discussed by Jurbala (2015). Whereas the literacy may be displayed in various writing categories (journalism, novels, biographies, etc.), PL may be displayed in various types of activities (factory work, gardening, sport, dance, etc.). Whereas literacy implies writing and reading (including reading one’s own writing), PL implies performing physical activities and observing physical performances (including one’s own performance through reflection in or on action). In a sense, one finds two Rs in literacy (reading and writing) and a *modus operandi* (MO) in PL, moving and observing.

While every literate individual can write and read, some individuals are better at writing and become writers; others take pleasure in reading what the former have come up with. Similarly, while individuals can move (unless totally impaired) and observe or perceive human movement, some individuals can physically perform at a high level of excellence; others take pleasure in watching them perform. The writing/reading analogy could be refined even further but suffice to say that on the whole, its potential is strong enough to catch the imagination and draw one’s attention. Performers are associated with writers, while onlookers may be represented as readers. Literacy involves our relationship with written words, while PL involves our relationship with human movement or PA. Despite reservations reported by Robinson, Randall, and Barrett (2018), the author’s contention is that such an analogy goes beyond the simple reality of physical movement and encompasses the whole of a person in all her dimensions, as will be argued below.

Operational definition of PL and underlying philosophical foundations: a brief recall

Since the takeoff of the PL vogue in the last decade, following Whitehead’s initial prompts (1993, 2001), there have been numerous proposals for a definition of either the notion of ‘physically literate individual’ or ‘physical literacy’ (see, among others, Corbin 2016; Dudley et al. 2017; Mandigo et al. 2009; Shearer et al. 2018; Whitehead 2013a). Readers may also consult Bailey (2020) for additional PL-definition-related references and a critical analysis of similarities and differences between definitions. According to Dudley et al. (2017, 441), PL is

the ability to move with competence and confidence using all the physical assets one has at their disposal at any given point in time across varying contexts. Physical Literacy involves a continuum of learning by enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge, movement and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.

As a crucial complement to that definition, I would add, in reference to the last sentence of Klesius’s (1971) definition of a physically educated person presented earlier, that PL implies an individual’s self-direction and self-actualization, in other words, self-regulation.

The PL construct rests on three philosophical foundations: monism, existentialism and phenomenology (Pot, Whitehead, and Durden-Myers 2018; Whitehead 2001, 2010). Since these three foundations bear consequences for both nurturing one's PL and benefiting from it throughout one's life, it seems appropriate to remind readers of their essence through three quotations drawn from Pot, Whitehead, and Durden-Myers (2018, 247–248).

- Although **monism** recognizes the existence of the different dimensions of the human condition, these different dimensions cannot be understood separate from each other. ... Another important implication of this holistic view of the human is that all activities that are meaningful to a person throughout his or her life should be recognized and encouraged.
- The first basic premise of **existentialism** is that interaction with the environment form individuals. The second basis is the notion that humans create themselves as they interact with the world.
- Central to **phenomenology** is the view that every learner experiences the world from a unique perspective, as every learner has his/her own unique set of experiences and affordances.

Aligning the learning of or a regular rapport with PA and each of these foundations, without falling for fantasmatic logics (Quennerstedt, McCuaig, and Mårdh 2020), suggests a few premises in terms of implementation. Five such premises are presented hereafter. Interested readers may find similarities with key instructional principles discussed by Durden-Myers, Green, and Whitehead (2018).

A learner/user-centered approach

The above quotation regarding phenomenology reminds us that learning remains a personal, embodied, experience even when it is managed through co-regulation or shared regulation (Godbout and Gréhaigne 2020). As a consequence, instructional strategies used in view of nurturing individuals' PL ought to be learner centered. Klesius (1971), in his definition of a *physically educated person*, quoted earlier in the introduction, pointed out that the individual physically educated is self-directing and self-actualizing. Someone (in Gréhaigne, Richard, and Griffin 2005, xiv) once wrote '... if we give a person a fish to eat, we nourish that person for one day. If we teach someone how to fish, we nourish that person throughout his or her entire life.' This is what teaching for PL is all about. If students and older individuals are to become autonomous with regard to the management of their PA practice, they are bound to construct and self-regulate their physical-activity habits. Such conducts are intimately associated with constructivism or, even better, social constructivism given the situated characteristic of PL learning and conditions of its development.

A social constructivist approach

In a common pedagogical framework recommended to promote PL, in line with an existentialist view of learning, Whitehead and Almond (2013, 76) included: (a) 'To promote learners' ability to empathise and work with other learners, the practitioner provides opportunities for learners to engage in a variety of group situations'; and (b) 'To provide learners with experiences that empower them to make decisions in respect of their involvement in purposeful physical pursuits, practitioners establish an ethos of shared learning in all sessions'. Such recommendations are clearly in line with the characteristics of social constructivism. A social constructivist approach to decision-making learning implies a shared understanding through structured and informed observation of movement (Godbout 2021; Godbout and Gréhaigne 2021; Zerai, Gréhaigne, and Godbout 2020). By allowing a better perception of reality, this approach facilitates the learners' assimilation or accommodation of knowledge, whether it be declarative or procedural.

A situated-learning/using approach

Considering the current surge of PL, one might think that part of the publication by Kirk and Macdonald (1998) came some 15–20 years too soon. At the time, they chose to apply their theoretical framework to sport education, but much of the constructivist and socio-constructivist considerations discussed in their article do apply to the development of PL. In their article (1998, 380), Kirk and Macdonald drew our attention to the notions of ‘communities of practice’ and ‘legitimate peripheral participation,’ referring to the work of Lave and Wenger (1991). They wrote ‘The notion of community of practice refers to any collectivity or group who together contribute to shared or public practices in particular spheres of life’ (380). Referring to these public practices, French pedagogy researchers use the notion of ‘reference social-practices’ (*pratiques sociales de référence*) (e.g. Martinand 1989; Mascret 2009). The notion of the *community of practice* is thus a construct very much aligned with an existentialist perspective of learning. In a situated-learning context, students take these practices into account; such practices give meaning to the learning they are experiencing (readers may refer to Dudley et al. [2017] for a discussion on PL as situated in context).

Non-utilitarian PA practices have evolved considerably over the years. For instance, in the world of sport, gymnastics has spawned a variety of adaptations such as artistic gymnastics (the first of the series), rhythmic gymnastics, acrobatic gymnastics, tumbling, etc. Dance has also diversified in the form of ballet, ballroom dancing, contemporary dancing, tap dance, street dancing, hip-hop (breakdance, popping), etc. The same has happened with regard to skiing where several forms of snowboarding have joined alpine and cross-country skiing. Cycling has joined the parade with road bikes, mountain bikes, fat bikes, etc. People exercise on flat land, in forests or on mountains, in the air, on the snow, on ice, in and on water, and so on (see Higgs et al. 2019 for a similar reasoning). Classification of activities that could be associated with PL have been put forward by several authors (e.g. Ellerton 2018; Macdonald, Doan, and Chepko 2017; Newton and Bassett 2013; Stevens-Smith 2016). Through television and social networks, children, teenagers and adults are becoming more and more familiar with these public practices, and many are drawn to start experiencing them either by themselves or through leisure programs. The point made here is that social practices are no longer simply part of one’s physical environment; they have become part of the media social-environment. Communities of practice are multiple and ways of accessing them are numerous.

As expressed by Mandigo et al. (2009, 28), ‘physical literacy is based upon a solid foundation where children and youth develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes across a wide variety of activities so that they might engage with poise and confidence.’ Considering that the development of PL rests on learner-centered and situated pedagogical approaches, PE teachers now face a considerable challenge if they are to facilitate access to individual preferences for their many students.

A systemic (multidimensional and interactive) approach

From the start, along with existentialism and phenomenology, PL has been associated with monism as asserted by various authors (e.g. Edwards et al. 2017; Pot, Whitehead, and Durden-Myers 2018; Whitehead 2013c). This implies that the experience of human movement, beyond its physical manifestation, encompasses intellectual, psychological and social processes. Each of these three domains on the one hand influence individuals’ PA performance and practice level and, on the other hand, is influenced by them, hence the interactive perspective. Individuals’ rapport with PA may be looked at from a performing point of view, in terms of PA practice, or from an observing point of view, in terms of PA-performance appreciation. As is the case for the performing aspect, such an appreciation draws on the intellectual, psychological and social development of a person and, inversely, has an impact on it.

A progressive-autonomy approach

For years, the notion of carry-over value has frequently been invoked for justifying in part the planning of PE curricula, the underlying purpose being to prepare students for future needs to be met once they would reach adulthood and be on their own in terms of physical-activity-practice (PAP) management. Endowing future adults with PAP management skills remains a responsibility of the school system, as is the case for other facets of people's life. However, a phenomenological point of view implies that, whatever their age and level of development as children and adolescents (or adults for that matter), individuals' perception and significance of their PA experience are worth for what they are at that moment, although they will change along with their understanding and appreciation of the world. Thus, a learner-situated approach is bound to reflect both facets of students' PL journey: enjoying PAs for what they are and learning about them for what benefit they may provide in the future. Contrary to legal age, autonomy does not come overnight. As their physical competence, knowledge and understanding increase along their formal PE journey, students should progressively take more responsibility both in their learning and management with regard to their PAP to the point where they can conduct personal PA projects.

The part of the PL journey vested in PE

The PL journey (Whitehead 2013b) might be compared to the flight of a space shuttle, where pre-school, elementary school, high school (and college in some countries) would represent propulsion phases (successive thrusts) ensured by several rocket stages. Once propelled in space, the shuttle continues its journey, making corrections of trajectory as needed. Thus, implementing the development of PL in schools is not a matter of replacing PE. The house is still the same, but some redecoration, or even renovation, may be deemed appropriate, possibly with regard to both the curriculum and teaching strategies. Discussing the relationship between PL and PE, Whitehead (2013a, 32) wrote: '... physical literacy is not an alternative to PE, nor is it in competition with PE. PE is a subject area in the school curriculum while physical literacy is the goal of physical education.' As do other constructs such as health, fitness and happiness, physical literacy (as an expression) refers to a state someone is in, a way of being.

Content knowledge that plays a role in the development of PL

As expressed above, PE is the central school subject-matter with respect to the development of PL. PE content knowledge related to PA competencies per se (Escalié et al. 2019) and their management (Carl, Sudeck, and Pfeifer 2020; Godbout 2021) will be drawn from fundamental skills, sports, dance and creative movements (Mattsson and Larsson 2021), and physical fitness activities (e.g. Corbin et al. 2019). Through their interest for particular communities of practice, older students (high school and college levels) may wish to explore other activities related either to dance education, outdoor education, sport education (see Author's note at the end of the article), or other recreation programs (Allar and Bulger 2018; Bryant 2018; Cox and Meany 2018; Coyne et al. 2016; El-Sherif 2014; Hastie, Chen, and Guarino 2017; Martel et al. 2011; Robinson, Randall, and Barrett 2018; Treadwell 2018). Such out-of-school experiences likely contribute to the nurturing of one person's PL. As mentioned earlier, the existentialist foundation of PL highlights the fundamental importance of taking into account the significance of PAs experienced outside of school; such experiences may in fact, reflect what, in many cases, are the actual students' PA preferences. Taking such preferences into account may likely bring about an expansion of the PE subject matter with regard to physical activities considered in the PE curriculum.

That some students, particularly older students, become interested in other PAs than those usually encountered in PE lessons is far from anecdotal. There has been in recent years a rise in the Student Voice movement calling for more decision-making opportunities for students

who wish to explore different activities unavailable through the regular curriculum (e.g. El-Sherif 2014; Fisette 2013; Lamb and Lane 2013). Such a concern converges with the notion of meaningful experiences in PE (e.g. Banville et al. 2021; Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2021), that of expanding students' landscape of movement capability (Barker, Nyberg, and Larsson 2021), that of (new) movement exploration (Aartun et al. 2020) or that of Interest-based PE (Erdvik, Moen, and Säfvenbom 2021).

Additional content knowledge may be considered based on concepts and principles borrowed from related fields such as Nutrition Education (e.g. Kerksick et al. 2018) and Health Education (Carl, Sudeck, and Pfeifer 2020) regarding fitness activities and Safety Education with regard to risky or excessive activities. Among common concepts associated with an active life, one finds, for instance, the calorie intake/energy expenditure balance or the carbohydrates/proteins/fat intake balance with regard to nutrition, and overtraining, tendinitis, and muscle pains with regard to safety, to mention but a few (see, for instance, Konukman, Henschel Pellett, and Pellett [2010] for a semantic map of fitness words; see also Godbout [2021]). The older and closer to the end of their schooling students get, the more they should try to assimilate such concepts in connection with their PA experiences (see Godbout [2021] and Sudeck and Pfeifer [2016] for more elaborate discussions on the management of one's PAP).

Dealing with the expansion of PE subject matter

Adapting PE teaching practices to develop autonomous individuals in terms of PA practice represents a considerable challenge, given such a large spectrum of physical activities one can find in various communities of practice. No doubt, the need expressed by students for an extended spectrum of learning opportunities in terms of PAs has to be balanced with institutions' logistic capacity for meeting such expectations. The trap of presenting students with a series of physical activities to nibble to without any chance of mastering any of them to a satisfactory level has been alluded to on several occasions (e.g. Durden-Myers, Green et al. 2018; Kirk 2010). Coming back to the fifth premise of PL development in school submitted earlier, regarding a progressive-autonomy approach to PL development, older students (high school or college level) should be not only allowed but challenged to progressively take more responsibility in their selection, learning and management of PAs to the point where they can plan and implement personal PA projects. Pedagogically speaking, with the teacher's assent and guidance (a form of prudential curriculum policy [Brown and 2021]), this would call for students' self-appropriation of new content knowledge along with a metacognitive awareness of the way they master and manage new PAs. Such an approach would be in line with curriculum-planning key principles discussed by Durden-Myers, Green et al. (2018).

This general section of the article is entitled 'The part of the PL journey vested in Physical Education'. It may be then that children's and adolescents' PL development does not solely rest on school Physical Education programs. Words stated by Durden-Myers, Green et al. (2018, 269) bear a particular resonance in the context of the present article. They wrote:

... a substantial program of physical activities [should be] offered in extracurricular time, on-site and off-site. ... This extracurricular provision would provide opportunities for participation in new activities and further involvement in activities covered in curriculum time, as well provide talent development. In addition, it would provide an excellent context in which individuals can select activities and design a pattern of participation for themselves. This decision making would provide a valuable experience in readiness for making choices regarding participation in physical activity in life after school.

With regard to the involvement of community sport-organizations, Casey and Kirk (2021), discussing stakeholders in a locality, have expressed the opinion that in some cases, community sports clubs and other organizations that provide access to PA may be stakeholders. While challenging older students to plan and implement personal PA projects, teachers should inform students of

the opportunities offered by the community and/or facilitate the carrying out of PA projects initiated by students themselves.

The particular case of performance appreciation

Performance appreciation is a construct that has been particularly used in reference to esthetic physical performance, not only with regard to dance but with regard to sport activities, such as synchronized swimming, figure skating, artistic gymnastics, and diving. In this case, in a competition context, appreciation refers to qualitative measurement of performance, an investigation area that has been subjected to much research associated with content validity and inter-rater reliability.

In this article, performance appreciation is considered not from a measurement point of view but from an independent witness or onlooker point of view. Scholars from the field of dance have given a good deal of attention to the ‘appreciation’ construct (e.g. Dils 2007; Jusslin 2019; Stevens et al. 2009) although, at times, it has wrongly been equated with the dance literacy construct (Dils 2007; Jusslin 2019); in the author’s view, dance appreciation is but a part of dance literacy as PA performance appreciation is but a part of PL. The appreciation of physical performance has no limit in itself and can apply to any type of PA, from a most physical effort (such as weight lifting) to a most esthetical display (such as ballet or contemporary dancing), from a most linear performance (such as archery) to a most non-linear performance (such as soccer, American football or ice-hockey).

In their rapport with literacy, individuals lean on reading to learn writing through reflection on one’s production or the reading of productions from others. Similarly, in their rapport with PA, students lean on observation to learn moving, through reflection on one’s production or the observation of performances from others. Discussing the social construction of knowledge in team sports, Godbout and Gréhaigne (2021, 48) wrote ‘whether going through assimilation, accommodation or adaptation, the learner first reacts to some type of perception of reality. Perception of reality is a starting point not to be overlooked in a deliberate and organized learning context.’ They identified three observation processes involving students engaged one way or the other in PA: (a) self-observation by the student-performer, leading to reflection in action; (b) player’s observation of teammates or opponents, leading to reflection on current actions performed by others; (c) student-bystanders’ observations, either formal or informal, leading to recording of information or reflection on current actions performed by others. Based on this observational setup, they then proceeded to discuss the interactive process of understanding and learning, which leads to the development of game play intelligence. Their contention is that performing and observing are two basic ingredients in the learning process, especially when they combine with reflection and verbalization.

Readers will note that there are different levels of perception related to sight. While seeing represents a passive level of perception, looking implies an intent, a starting attention level. For its part, observing requires a structured attention level, a frame of reference. To serve its purpose, observation needs to be recorded (in written or spoken words) and eventually communicated in written words (reports) or through verbal exchanges, hence the notion of verbalization. Registering or communicating (verbally and/or in written form) observational information implies the use of a language that bears a certain level of specificity with regard to the physical performance observed (Godbout and Gréhaigne 2021). Thus, the development of PL implies, to some extent, the development of an activity-related language that will make it possible to analyze, interpret, appreciate, communicate, and/or discuss experienced or observed PA (Lundin and Schenker 2021; Wickens and Parker 2019).

Coming back to the literacy metaphor, as mentioned earlier, literate individuals not only use reading to learn to regulate their writing but may also elect to read the production of other writers for enjoyment. Some will prefer novels, others thrillers or science-fiction, etc. Similarly, with regard to PA, individuals may elect to observe the performance of others for enjoyment, thus becoming

onlookers. Some will prefer one sport or another (often many of them) while others will enjoy the performances of dancers, acrobats, etc. To the author's knowledge, PA performance appreciation has received little attention in Physical Education, possibly for fear of inducing or supporting the couch potato syndrome. When performance appreciation is or has been educated, there is no contradiction between staying physically active and enjoying knowledgeably the spectacle of high-level performances. Both contribute to an individual's well-being. Both the monist and existentialist perspectives of PL demand that PA be considered from a performer point of view and a witness point of view as well. Rejecting the possibility of being moved to tears by a piece of contemporary dance, charmed by the grace of a synchronized swimming performance, astonished by a spectacular goal in soccer or ice hockey, or awed by the raw beauty of a record-breaking weight lift or shot-put throw negates the existentialist foundation of PL. As written by Pot, Whitehead, and Durden-Myers (2018, 247), 'Individuals thus interact with the world in as many ways as they can. The richer and more varied these interactions are, the more fully the human being realizes its potential.'

In short, an individuals' rapport with PA may be looked at from a performing point of view, in terms of PA practice, and from an observing point of view, in terms of PA-performance appreciation. As is the case for the performing aspect, such an appreciation draws on the intellectual, psychological and social development of a person and, inversely, has an impact on it. One's performance appreciation capacity may vary from the fan stage to one of a connoisseur and ultimately one of expert-analyst. Each stage will require a corresponding level of PL-related language and PL-related intelligence. That having been said, where, when and how does a learner get to develop such a capacity? An answer to these questions could undoubtedly bear consequences for the PE curriculum and ensuing instructional strategies.

Additional reflections on PE curricular repercussions associated with PL

Beyond (a) a possible expansion of the PE subject matter related to students' and teachers' pursuit for additional situated learning experiences and (b) the progressive development of students' performance appreciation, two repercussions considered in this article, other curriculum adjustments associated with PL have been discussed in the literature. For instance, Durden-Myers, Whitehead and Pot (2018) have discussed the contribution of PL to human flourishing, a point of view characterized as a beatific narrative by Quennerstedt, McCuaig, and Mårdh (2020). In the same line of thought, Landi, Blackshear, and McFadden (2021, 109) have associated PL, as a term, to a constellation of (utopian) outcomes: 'claims are made that physically literate people have a wide range of skills related to physical, cognitive, affective, and (to some extent) social domains.' Whatever the scope of outcomes targeted in the name of PL, the repercussions considered in this article appear to be in line with what Quennerstedt, McCuaig, and Mårdh (2020, 5–6) have termed as the social logics of PL. They wrote:

Research reveals a discursive coherence about physical literacy as the development of movement competencies in various contexts leading to lifelong movement; positive affect like self-esteem and motivation to be physically active; and, cognitive knowledge about movement. What appears uncontested, is that physical literacy involves various movement competencies and skills and that increased engagement in physical activity leads to improved health in terms of life-long safe engagement in physical activity.

A final thought: what's in a term?

As exemplified by the subject of this article, words can be powerful vehicles. Earlier, the author has defined 'PL,' for lack of a better expression, as a state a person is in, a way of being. Whitehead (2013a, 32) stated that 'physical literacy is the goal of physical education.' In that respect, it is not a process; it is an outcome, a condition that can be developed and embodied to various extents. A person who has developed some level of PL, as opposed to none, is often said to be 'physically

literate' (e.g. Castelli, Barcelona, and Bryant 2015; Goodway et al. 2013; Johnson and Walker 2016; Oliver 2013; Robinson, Randall, and Barrett 2018; Whitehead 2013a). I submit that the expression is misleading in the sense that, as everyone seems to agree on, one's rapport to PA goes beyond its only physical dimension. In fact, the expression 'physically literate' does not reflect the monist foundation of PL. As everyone seems to agree on, the notion of PL relates to our rapport with PA, not our rapport with our physical dimension. Corbin (2016) mentions that in recent years, types of literacy related to PA have also emerged, such as games literacy, movement literacy, sport literacy, and esthetic literacy. Such expressions suggest that what is at stake is being versed in a same type or category of activity, not being only *physically* engaged.

In her article 'The history and development of physical literacy,' Whitehead (2013c) explained that the term 'physical' was to be seen as a compromise, being 'the most acceptable term to refer to our embodied capability' (26). She then went on to offer several examples of subject areas having adopted the suffix 'literacy' to describe the value, goals, and intentions with respect to their work. Among a sample of these examples, one finds music literacy, computer literacy, nutrition literacy, maths literacy, science literacy, geographic literacy, arts literacy, health literacy, etc., all related to a field or an area of human endeavor, just as PA is. To add to our semantic conundrum, I would suggest that the expression 'physically literate' appears to be a semantic slip and that, in reality, a person is physical-activity literate or P-A literate. In so being, that person's rapport with PA encompasses several dimensions, whether physical, intellectual, psychological (spiritual included), or social (ethical included). If anything, being *physical literate* or a *physical literate*, as an expression, would be better aligned with 'physical literacy' than would being 'physically literate' (adjective) or being 'a physically literate' (noun).

Limitation

One aspect of the emergence of PL in the PE scenery has not been discussed in this article. It concerns all implications for instructional procedures. One curricular repercussion of PL discussed, namely a likely expansion of the PE subject matter and related content knowledge, may well require varied teaching strategies if schools consider it significant to take into account students' interest for communities of practice not covered by their present PE curriculum. Discussing instructional implications would require a full article in itself. Earlier, in the 'Content Knowledge that Plays a Role in the Development of PL' section, the author referred to several 'project' or 'programs' putting forward approaches to reflect students' different needs and interests. Recently, Kirk (2020, chapter 8) discussed several critical pedagogies of affect for PE. One such strategy is Kimberly Oliver's activist approach with girls or co-education classes in PE. Readers may consult Oliver and Kirk (2015, 2016) for more details.

Conclusion

Some vogue would not fade. Terms like Fitness, TGFU, and now PL have registered in the collective psyche and, like it or not, they are here to stay, at least in a foreseeable future. The PL surge in the PE scenery may be seen as an opportunity to revisit the PE curriculum and PE teaching practices in order to cover a larger spectrum of PA activities for students. Meeting the admitted PL goal (i.e. nurturing autonomous, self-directing, self-actualizing and self-regulating PA-literate adults) cannot be achieved through simply passing on dominant forms of PA activities (whatever they may be) without taking into account physical activities that have become part of emergent and attracting communities of practice. Students' and becoming adults' voices need to be listened to if PL is to make any sense. This article has covered much ground in relation to the rise of PL, the resultant expansion of the subject-matter content knowledge, and the identification of new constructs such as PL-related language and PL-related intelligence. It is hoped that the limited development of these ideas in the confines of a single article will give rise to other publications on the subject,

particularly with regard to instructional strategies and pedagogical approaches considerate of students' PA interests and preferences.

Author's note

In this article, 'sport education' does not refer to Siedentop's (1994, 1998) instructional model. It refers to children's, adolescents' and older students' educational experiences in out-of-PE-lessons sport programs offered them under the form of intramural and interschool competition, community-led sport leagues programs, specialized summer camps, etc. Through coaching, PE-trained educators and other sport educators contribute largely to the participants' sport education.

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