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Masters of Arts in Physical Education, Sport and Literacy Program

Dissertation Proposal

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Background and Context

My name is Christina Seguin, and I am a grade 4/5 classroom teacher in Surrey District #36. Prior to teaching general classroom, I was a school music teacher for about 8 years. Growing up I was always interested in physical education. I played volleyball, basketball, track and field, and tennis in school. My first experience teaching physical education was when I went to an “Athletic Instructor” training camp through Air Cadets and was my Squadrons instructor. I further went on to become a swimming instructor, and lifeguard prior to being a teacher. Working at the district I have continued to coach volleyball, track and field and for the past two years have been the physical literacy lead and co leader at my school running the “Sport for Life” program.

Physical Activity and Music are both my passions. Both subjects support my physical and emotional health. When I am stressed or emotional, doing something physical or making music has always given me clarity, and have made me feel better. I also enjoy doing these two things with friends, such as playing on a recreational team, or going hiking with friends, or making music with my husband. Participating in activities with friends bonds my relationships with them and creates opportunities for beautiful memories.

When planning for my research I reflected upon the last school year and thought of issues at my school, and issues I faced with my grade 4/5 class. Students struggled with emotional regulation, inappropriate social conflicts, racism, exclusion, and divide. As the physical literacy lead, my colleagues explained that that they were feeling uncomfortable implementing Physical Education (PE) as there was not enough teacher

training. Multiple teachers admitted letting the students play whatever sport/game they wanted in the gym during their PE time. Having this kind of culture at our school made it difficult for students to understand that PE is more than just sports. It took a while for them to be willing to put in the effort in new activities, to which they would realize “oh this could be fun too.” However, this issue spreads light on the value and need for autonomy for our students.

When exploring topics, I looked for topics that related to Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Inclusion. I believe that when we are emotionally well, that is when we can learn. Therefore, I decided to take on a case study where I can implement an intervention to see if it can make a difference for my students’ connection to self and others in class and help them find meaning in physical activity.

Literature Review

“Meaningful Physical Education (MPE) is a pedagogical approach to PE instruction designed with the aim of helping teachers explicitly priorities meaningful experiences for students.” (Beni et al., 2021, p666) To meet MPE experiences for learners, scholars like Beni et al. 2017 follow Kretchmer’s (2006) 5-point criteria for meaningful experiences in Physical Education. This includes exploring social interaction, fun, challenge, increased motor competence and delight. In this study we are going to explore MPE through a Social Constructivist lens. Social constructivism was coined by Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky in 1978 as a theory that explores how individuals learn and gain knowledge through the environment of their social interactions. Studies have shown that when students are participating in MPE learning they are working on their Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). In Howley et al. (2022, p7) study students reflected upon their experience with how fun and social connection can connect stating “I feel like when people meet new people, that’s when the fun really starts to happen. . . putting your two heads together. . . understanding what you like and stuff. . . you can really feel the enjoyment.” Howley et al. (2022, p8) states that “utilizing cooperative learning elements such as face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence and interpersonal and social skills within structured tasks allowed teachers to place a deliberate emphasis on social interaction.” The result was students expressing that they learned how they can learn about others in class which would result with a better understanding of how to work with each other. Through increased motor competence criterion in Howley et al. (2022) study, students emphasized the role of making a connection to others class where they felt that they contributed to a positive

learning environment where they encouraged and supported others who showed that they were less confident in motor competence. This encouragement was seen as way to help others improve in class. ““I was already physically active. I’m a motor competence person. I can drive myself. . . I think it may have helped us look at how to make the experience for others that maybe aren’t as physically active better for them. . . the main overall should be improvement throughout the class.” (Jack, FGG)” Howley et al. (2022, p8) In Walseth et al. (2018) study, they explored how using an activist research lens can help with the implementation of MPE. The findings showed that there was an increase of MPE especially for the females and for the students who disliked PE. Walseth et al. (2018, p244) stated that “among the majority of the students, PE was a favourite subject because of the social interaction in the lessons.” A major cause for the students who did not like PE was since they did not feel included in the regular competitive nature of PE.

Meaningful Physical Education (MPE) can be linked to Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model (Hellison, 1985, 1995, 2003, 2011) through the importance of social interaction and social responsibility. TPSR is a model that promotes individual value, responsibility and life skills and has 5 steps: (1) respect for the rights and feelings of others; (2) self-motivation; (3) self-direction; (4) caring; and (5) transfer ‘outside the gym’ (Hellison, 2011). In the Merino-Barrero et al. (2020) study of TPSR the hypothesis of “after experiencing a TPSR-based program, would increase their (students) responsibility, motivation, basic psychological needs satisfaction, sportsmanship, and intention to be physically active outside school.” Merino-Barrero et al. (2020, p252) was true through quantitative analysis. In Koutelidas et al. (2020) study, they collected

qualitative data to look at responsibility through the student lens. Under the fourth level of responsibility students reflected upon their level of caring for others. A theme that came up was the idea of empathy and connection to helping others. Evelyn, a student in the study stated, “Let’s say...some girls who are trained in sports could help kids who can’t cope with sports.” Koutelidas et al. (2020, p177). She is making connections with others to have a positive social classroom environment.

Research has shown that being engaged in reflective practices for educators and learners supports Meaningful Physical Education (MPE). Reflection is part of the TPSR framework. In Beni et al. (2021) focused on reflection to aid in MPE. All teachers participating in the study saw the value of reflection even if there were some challenges they faced with implementing it. In an interview Sophie (a teacher) stated “she would carry the use of a PE diary into the new school year because she felt it enhanced student motivation, gave opportunities for all students to share their opinions, and allowed students to be consciously aware of what they were learning.” Beni et al. (2021, p675). Howley et al. (2022, p6) states that “the opportunity to utilize reflection within and outside of classes allowed teachers to draw on students’ prior knowledge and experiences when planning for teaching and learning.” Students also saw the value of reflection in PE in this study. Melissa a student stated ““It was positive and negative because I did have some downs. . . it was good to reflect back on it” Howley et al. (2022, p6). The teacher researcher further stated that “By taking a step back from physical activity we’re opening up much more discussion about what it is we’re doing, why we’re doing it, and how we can do it in a way that makes it more meaningful for students” Howley et al. (2022, p7). Hellisons’ (2011) Teaching Personal and Social

(TPSR) framework includes the use of reflection. The lesson format is comprised of five sections: Relational Time, Awareness Talk, Physical Activity Plan, Group Meeting, and Reflection.

Both Meaningful Physical Education (MPE) and the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model support student social emotional learning. The use of reflection through the TPSR model will aid in helping students find what is meaningful to them in Physical Education. Therefore, I would like to explore how the Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model created by Don Hellison (2011) can create Meaningful Physical Education (MPE) within a Physical Education environment.

Aim, Research Question and Objectives

Aim: The purpose of this case study is to explore using the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) method created by Don Hellison (1985) as a tool in creating Meaningful Physical Education (MPE) for my students.

Research Question: How does the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) method created by Don Hellison (2011) support Meaningful Physical Education (MPE)?

Objectives:

- 1) Meet ethics requirements for this research. Receive approval from university, district, school, and parents.
- 2) Survey #1: Mixed methods survey. Quantitative: Student reflection related questions to the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-based Education (TARE) assessment tool used for TPSR assessment, and the Basic Psychological Needs in Exercise scale (BPNEs) with the Likert scale.

Qualitative questions to explore:

- PE Interest (to find connections with MPE, and for planning purposes)
 - Social and Emotional learning: Connection to one's emotions, and others.
- 3) Planning phase (1-2 weeks) Based on the survey and class discussions plan which activities the intervention will include to allow for student autonomy.
 - 4) Run the intervention. Collect data:
 - Teacher reflections
 - Student reflections
 - Group discussions (recordings)

- Field notes analysis: Use of TPSR Responsibility Level Chart.
- 5) Survey #2: Mix Methods: Repeat same quantitative survey questionnaire.
 - 6) Analyze Data and write report.

Methodology Rationale

The Methodology that would suit my study would be a case study. I chose a case study because it is a singular study to which I can go into detailed analysis to discover if my intervention would make an impact for my students. To support my case study, I would use methods such as observations, questionnaire-surveys, intervention, field notes, field notes assessment, and reflections. I will start the case study with a questionnaire-survey, so I understand where my students' baseline is including information exploring their current assessment of social and personal responsibility, Social and Emotional learning, and their physical activity interests. Qualitative data in the questionnaire-survey will aid in the planning of this intervention. Quantitative data in the questionnaire-survey will provide concrete evidence that will measure if the intervention is a success. The intervention is going to use the TPSR framework. Each lesson will revolve around Don Hellison (2011) lesson format following the order of relational time, awareness talk, physical activity plan, group meeting, and reflection. Qualitative Field notes and Quantitative Field note assessment will occur during the physical activity plan to document students' social interactions, and responsibility. The group meeting will be audio recorded as it would be easier for analysis. Students will be given prompt questions for written or verbal reflection. It is important for students to have options with inputting data for this research so that they can feel included. Verbal and input assistance will be provided if needed to students who struggle to input data with the questionnaire-surveys.

Methods

Survey #1

Rating on the Likert scale 0-4 (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always) based of Tool for Assessing Responsibility-based Education (TARE):

- 1) I am responsible, do no harm verbally and physically to others, include others, and resolves conflict peacefully
- 2) I try all activities and will take on roles if asked
- 3) I try my best to master every activity and focus on improving my skills
- 4) I am able to stay on task when doing an activity with peers or alone, and I do not follow bad examples or peer pressure without direct instruction or supervision.
- 5) I am able to help, encourage, and offer feedback to others in my class

Rating on the Likert scale 0-4 (never, rarely, sometimes, often, always) based of the Basic Phycological Needs in Exercise scale (BPNES) for relatedness:

- 6) I feel extremely comfortable with other classmates
- 7) I feel that I associate with other classmates in a very friendly way
- 8) I feel that there are open channels for communication with other exercise classmates
- 9) I feel very much at ease with other classmates

Qualitative questions:

- 10) What does Meaningful Physical Education mean to you?

11) What activities have you learned in PE class that you enjoy on your free time outside class?

12) Do you enjoy Physical Education class? Why? Or why not?

13) How much physical activity do you currently partake outside of school?

14) How do you feel when participating in PE class?

15) Do you work well with others in PE class? How?

16) Do you feel included in PE class?

Qualitative questions for planning:

17) What kind of physical activities do you find fun at school?

18) What's your favorite game or sport? Why?

Optional last Qualitative question:

19) Is there anything you would like me to know about you in the context of Physical Education, and relationships in our classroom?

Survey #2: The same as Survey #1 but omitting questions 17 and 18.

Field Notes: Qualitative teacher field notes need to be used to notate observations.

Quantitative field notes assessment: Using the TPSR 5 level rating system for responsibility (Hellison, 2011). Students will get an overall rating for their responsibility level of character.

See Table:

Table 3 Responsibility level chart.

Level	Level content	Behavior example
Level 0	Irresponsible	When teachers and friends were talking, I chatted. I did not take responsibility for my behavior. (Failure to blame others. I was warned but did not reflect on me.) I did not actively participate in today's activities. I hurt others or playfully.
Level 1	Respecting the rights and feelings of others	I did not chat when teachers and friends were talking. I did not say bad things or make fun of my friends. Even though I had a different opinion from my friends, I solved it by talks. I acted, thinking that everyone was part of an irreplaceable group.
Level 2	Participation and making effort	I worked ambitiously. I tried to achieve the task. I positively challenged the new task. I did not give up and tackled the task until the end.
Level 2	Self-direction	Even though it was not instructed, I worked on the task. I found out what to do to solve the problem I did not talk anything other than the subject of the lesson. I warned playful friends.
Level 4	Caring	I encouraged and taught my friends who can not do it well. I invited members who do not participate and let them join. When my friend succeeded, I was pleased and praised together. I followed my teacher's instructions and group decisions.
Level 5	Taking responsible behavior even outside PE classes	I took responsible behavior even outside PE classes

After Lesson-Student Reflection Prompts:

- 1) What did I learn about in today's lesson?
- 2) What did I find important to me during the lesson?
- 3) How was my interaction with others? Was I kind and helpful?
- 4) What was fun or delightful?
- 5) What do I want to play again?
- 6) How did I challenge myself?
- 7) How are my skills getting better?

Tool for Assessing Responsibility-based Education (TARE):

I am using part of the TARE assessment to assess student responsibility. This assessment was created for assessing the TPSR framework. The questions relate to

both personal and social assessment of their participation. Having this in the survey before and after the interventions allows for student self-assessment for themselves. With this I can measure if their opinion of their self-assessment in responsibility has improved with the intervention.

TPSR Responsibility Level Rating:

I will be using the TPSR Responsibility level rating to assess student performance for their responsibility levels per class. The goal with this data is to see if there is an increase to their abilities to be personally and socially responsible in class.

Basic Psychological Needs in Exercise scale (BPNES):

I have chosen to use the BPNES which is broken into three sections: Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness. Merino-Barrero et al., (2020) used this in their study to measure basic psychological needs. Since I am doing this study through a social constructivist lens and I must limit my questions to make my survey age appropriate, I chose to use only the relatedness section. This section includes questions that students use to self analyze their relatedness to others in class. The purpose of this being in both survey 1 and 2 is to get a quantitative measure if the intervention helped them improve their relatedness to others.

Reflection Prompt Questions:

The goal of the reflection prompt questions is to assist my students to evaluate their MPE within the lesson. Included within the questions are Kretchmer's (2006) 5-point criteria for meaningful experiences in Physical Education: social interaction, fun, challenge, increased motor competence and delight. By basing student reflections on

MPE within the TPSR lesson framework, we will be able to gather data that can connect the two concepts together. Students are not required to answer each question for every reflection. They are expected to choose to answer two to three questions that are relevant to them from the lesson they just experienced.

Teacher-Researcher Reflection:

The goal of my teacher-researcher reflections is to analyze how well I can implement this intervention, see if I have any bias, and to be able to adapt my intervention if needed. If an activity in the intervention does not work, it is important to adapt to the needs of my students and change activities. If there is something that comes up that I did not factor into my study, it needs to be documented, and a change may need to be made during the intervention. I must be very clear in my language so that the students have a genuine authentic experience in the program, and do not engage in it in a way that they just want to “do it for their teacher.” I do recognize that my current bias is that I want and believe that this intervention will work and be a success. It is important to watch what I say so that students just do not work to “meet my bias.”

Timeline

September 2024	Submit Proposal Sept 16 th Submit Ethics Sept 30 th	Continue to work on Literature Review.	Check in with Dr. Kate to continue to get feedback throughout study to ensure I am on track.
October 2024	Refine Research: Time to revise anything after proposal feedback. Once Ethics is approved, submit paperwork for permissions.		
November 2024	Refine Research		
December 2024	Refine Research		
January 2025	Start Case study: Jan 13 (Survey #1 and planning) Start Intervention: January 17 th		
February 2025	Finish Intervention: February 27 st Survey #2: February 28 th		
March 2025		Data Analysis and write up	
April 2025			
May 2025			
June 2025			
July 2025			
August 2025	Hand In		

Limitations

There are two limitations to this study. The first is that this study has a small sample size. It is projected to have 50 students. The second limitation is the amount of time. This study is being conducted over 7 weeks, with the intervention taking place for 4 weeks. Therefore, due to both limitations in this study, findings cannot be used for generalization on the topic.

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