Recently, I was a supply teacher at an elementary school and I overheard a comment that really bothered me. During an afternoon nutrition break I was responsible for supervising three different classrooms while they finished their lunches. The grade 5 classroom was particularly loud and I could tell by surveying the room that students had a lot of energy that needed to be released. Most of them were out of their seats either socializing with friends or running between the desks counting down the minutes until the recess bell rang.

While I was in this classroom trying to keep the peace a teacher walked in and said, “This afternoon we have science and physical education. If you aren’t quiet and cooperative during science than we are not having physical education.”

I immediately heard a few students moaning and one boy mumbled, “That’s not fair!”

Shortly after the teacher left, the recess bell rang and there was a swarm of students making their way out of the classroom and down the hall to enjoy a beautiful sunny day.

As I walked to the staff room to get my lunch I pondered to myself, "Is physical education a right or a privilege?" This prompted a whole slew of questions: Why are teachers threatening to take away one of the
Melissa Corrente is a part time instructor of health and physical education at Nipissing University and a current PhD candidate. She loves biking, swimming, cooking, yoga and watching her son and daughter experience life.

References

