Research Proposal – Using Self-Study to Explore Meaningful Physical Education Experiences
for Elementary Students
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Background

Personal Connection

As we move forward in these times of educational funding cutbacks, attacks on public education and changes to the system it becomes ever more critical for physical educators to treat physical education like any other academic program with regard to their curricular decisions. Teachers need to bring credibility to their program, demonstrate accountability, make learning meaningful and engaging, and communicate student achievement to the parents (Darst & Pangrazi, 2002; Pangrazi & Beighle, 2010). The idea of having to defend physical education (PE) is at the forefront of many a physical educators mind. Too often the "academic" aspects of PE are overshadowed by the thoughts and beliefs that it is simply play time in the gym. Richard Bailey (2018) discussed this concept in his paper "Sport, Physical Education and Educational Worth", going so far as the create Tiers of importance for subjects. In his discussion he lists Physical Education (PE) last as a Tier 4 subject. He goes on to refer to the words of Barrow that "physical education instructors are in the interesting position of being only marginally related to education". (as cited in Bailey, 2018, p.52) After pages of back and forth debate of philosophies, positions, beliefs and models Bailey concludes with a statement that "when informed by empirical research into the outcomes of positive participation in physical activities, the need for experiences at school that focus on the development and expression of the body in different ways becomes clearer and more compelling." (Bailey, 2018, p.63)

With this ever-present, undesirable attitude toward PE that exists in general, and specifically in my school, though not to a terrible degree, I feel it is imperative that I am able to not only defend the need for physical education, but advocate for why it is critical and what makes it critical in child development. This means, among other things, (1) effectively teaching

my students so that they learn, and (2) creating positive, meaningful experiences for my students. Therefore, my curricular decisions are important and can affect the learning that takes place in the gymnasium. What I value plays a key role in the curricular decisions concerning content selection, assessment, classroom climate, and goals for the program. Correspondingly, what the students value and how they create meaning from the program can be equally critical to our success in the gymnasium. Any possible disconnect between my values as an educator and student values presents an interesting dilemma for a self-study of my teaching practice.

Self-Study and Refection

A reflective practitioner uses reflection as an action to engage in the process of continuous learning. It involves learning from your professional experiences, rather than from formal learning methods. It is an important way to bring together theory and practice, as through reflection, the educator can attribute language and theory to his/her personal practice. It is not just a process of looking back on past actions but a conscious effort to look at emotions, experiences, actions, responses and outcomes of activities and lessons, then using this information to reach a higher level of understanding of your practice.

Excluding those educators that will not reflect on their practice (either because they do not know how, do not know what to reflect on, do not want to challenge their current beliefs, or simply do not care to), I think that the largest impediment to proper reflective practice is the time it takes to properly work through the exercise. Time is already at a premium during a teaching day and the added time for reflection is often just not there. With that in mind I feel that there are three levels to the reality of reflective practice.

The first level is the easiest and most often used. This happens on the spot, in lesson reflections on what is happening and how you can modify the activity or lesson immediately to better achieve your goals for that lesson. This is situational and often will help to address problems arising either within the activity itself or in the resulting student experiences/behaviours.

The second level is an extension of the first and basically involves taking the modifications from the reflection during a previous class and applying these changes and improvements to the next class.

The third level is the least used and the most difficult to develop. This is reflecting afterwards on how a lesson, class, unit, or program went, then taking the reflective thoughts and applying them to future planning. This is a true reflective practitioner and this person allocates time and energy to the process of reflecting on their practice. This can be done in a number of ways and is likely an exercise in trial and error. Typical methods of reflecting would be journaling, collaborative journal writing, self-assessment forms, video recording of teaching, peer review, mentor/protégé experiences, and student feedback, concept mapping, brainstorming, free writing, and problem solving.

Self-Study provides a model of reflection that I can use to help to define and organize my thoughts and observations.

Critical Friends

In recent years, I have spent significant time reflecting on my teaching values and curricular decisions regarding content, assessment and goals for my program. To this end I have worked to create and maintain an informal physical education teachers professional learning

community (PEPLC) with other elementary physical educators in my area. Through this group I have been able to extend my personal reflection to include reflection on the discussions I have with other physical educators regarding their teaching. Additionally, this group has provided a close-knit group of colleagues that can be turned to in times of need and questioning. These people provide critical and constructive feedback on questions for each other in the group and together we are able to resolve queries and issues.

Value Orientation

Throughout my career I have come across a large variety of approaches to teaching physical education. Each of these different teachers valued vastly different aspects of a physical education program. While these experiences happened over all grade levels, from P-12, and over the course of a few years, I believe that they informed my personal values decisions and values orientation as a physical education teacher currently at the elementary level. In my experience teachers can discuss and converse about all of the proper topics, using the key words and hitting all the important points, but when the gym doors close and it is just the teacher and the class, what actually happens may be a fair bit different. I know that personally, there are days that what I value in a physical education program and what I end up doing in the gym can be on opposite ends of the spectrum for any number of reasons.

Quality Teaching

I believe that typically the program I offer students in the gymnasium is excellent. I work to constantly provide new experiences and try to be as innovative in my approach as possible. I believe that my content knowledge is excellent with regard to the curriculum, fundamental

movement skills and sport. I endeavor to give students choice and freedom to explore and experience their learning at their own pace and in their own ways. I work hard to incorporate technology in the gym and can confidently state I have never taught the same thing, the same way twice.

I definitely have areas where I need to improve, and gym management is one. I am constantly looking for the best routines and strategies to manage students through transitions and in activities. Another area that I struggle with is the need to expose students to so many outcomes or indicators of learning as I feel it "waters down" their ability to earn anything. This leads to personal reflection on how whether or not I am actually achieving any learning in the gym and is what I am able to achieve even relevant to the students?

Creating Meaningful Physical Education

My personal beliefs concerning what should be taught and how it should happen in elementary physical education have, until recently, been divergent from the official curriculum. Throughout, my years in education, both informal as an outdoor educator in the recreation field, and formal as a physical educator, I have believed that experiential, student centered, choice-based programs which focused on the development of fundamental skills was important. In fact, a planned for goal of my outdoor education programs was to create "memories that last a lifetime".

Finding the work of Dr. Tim Fletcher and his research partners this year has been an almost life changing experience in that I find it reinforces and gave language to everything I have always found to be critically important in elementary PE.

Statement of Problem

The problem I face on a daily basis could be described as a "tug of war" between all of the things I am supposed to be teaching the students in physical education; what I believe to be the most critical skills I should be teaching; how I should go about educating the students; and, if any of it is even relevant and meaningful to the students?

Purpose

The purpose of this self-study is to explore, through reflection, personal observation, discussions with critical friends, and interactions with students, what I value in physical education and how these values support the development of a quality teaching practice by providing meaningful physical education experiences for all students.

Reflective Questions

1. What are my goals and expectations for the students in the elementary physical education program?

2. Why are these goals valued? Do they inform the curricular decisions I make while also aligning with the Nova Scotia P-3 and 4-6 curriculum documents?

3. What is my value orientation? Does it align with providing meaningful physical education experiences to my students?

4. Are my current practices in physical education creating meaningful experiences for all students? How do I know?

This research may be seen as significant for the understanding of my curricular decision making as it pertains to creating meaningful experiences for students in my physical education programs. Given that the experiences of students are contingent upon the content they are exposed to and that content is at the discretion of the physical educator, then knowing why I make these curricular or pedagogical decisions should inform the planning-teaching process. Moreover, other elementary physical educators may be able to take this research and transfer the ideas, thoughts, reflections and concepts to their own practice thereby helping to create meaningful experiences for their students.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is the underlying structure, the scaffolding or frame of my study and consists of concepts and theories that inform my stance or position which I bring to the research. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Keeping this in mind, a qualitative self-study provides an approach to investigating my research problem.

Literature Review

Search Protocol

A search of the literature related to meaningful physical education, self-study and pedagogy was conducted using three electronic databases; SPORTdiscus, Jstor and Proquest. Additionally, a search in Google Scholar was performed. These databases were selected based on their comprehensive social science libraries that include literature specific to physical education, education and teacher education. The searches were limited to full text, peer reviewed articles

published in English after January 1, 2010 using the following search criteria (a) meaningful and

"physical education", (b) "self-study" and "physical education", (c) pedagogy and "physical

education" in the article Abstract. (variances listed below) For a flowchart of the search protocol

refer to Figure 1.

(a) Jstor – search field ALL, in subject "Education" = 98 articles

   ProQuest – in subject "Physical Education" = 20 articles

   SPORTdiscus - in Subject: Thesaurus Term "Physical Education" = 33 articles

(b) Jstor – search field ALL, in subject "Education" = 164 articles

   ProQuest search field ALL = 50 articles

   SPORTdiscus – in Subject: Thesaurus Term "Physical Education" = 19 articles

(c) Jstor – search field ALL in subject Education = 116 articles

   ProQuest - search field ALL = 33 articles

   SPORTdiscus - in Subject: Thesaurus Term "Physical Education" = 66 articles

Once all database searches were completed, three Google Scholar searches using the

same criteria were conducted that resulted in many article possibilities. After scanning the search

results for the first 3 pages of each search no significant new articles were discovered or added to

the group for review beyond a cursory read of their title.

From the database search 130 titles were selected for a closer review. Of these 46 were

duplicate articles. At this point in the review I added 8 published articles by Dr. Tim Fletcher and

his partners found on his LAMPE project website and 11 articles found in links in the LAMPE

blog. This left 103 articles that were then found online through the saved citations in RefWorks

or from the LAMPE website. These abstracts were examined, and 57 articles were deemed to be irrelevant to the research. Related article suggestions from Taylor & Francis Online added a new batch of 17 articles for abstract review. Upon closer inspection of these articles 13 more were added from references and 22 were found to not be relevant for the research. This left 54 articles to be considered for the final research. Additionally, 18 articles that I had previously read were added to the final review as I believed that they could be pertinent to the topic of the research.

Figure 1: Search Protocol Flowchart
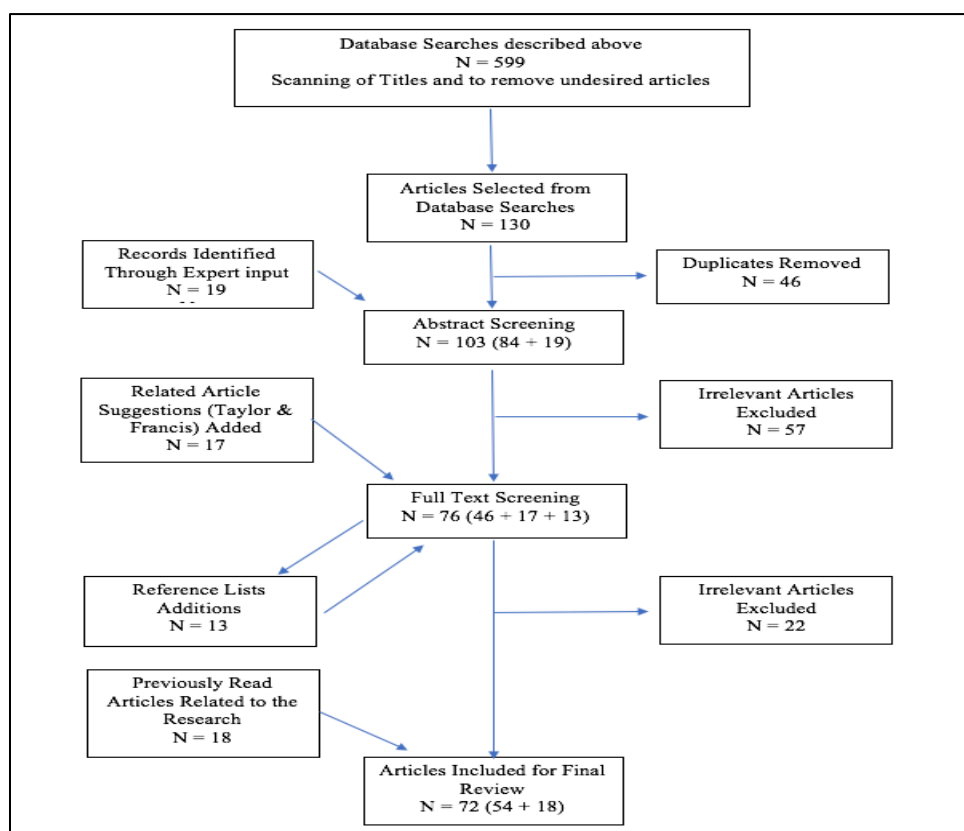
Self-Study

There is a need for educators to take a reflective look at their practice, to gain a deeper understanding of what they are doing, what they are teaching and what they are hoping to have

students learn. Fletcher and Ovens (2015) speak to this as a way of provoking educators to think

deeply about their practice. They looked to work by Brown (2011) that advocated strongly for

the use of self-study. Brown believed that self-study was an important aspect of continuing

professional learning for those working in the field of health, sport, and physical education. "It is

a form of practitioner research in which the development of personal, pedagogical knowledge is

facilitated through a careful examination of one's own learning beliefs, practices, processes,

contexts, and relationships (Loughran, 2004; Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2015)". (as Cited in

Fletcher & Ovens, 2015, p.215)

    LaBosky (2015) determined in a review of novice teacher self-studies that self-study was

definitely a viable option, and that the teachers could "engage in it with fidelity and obtain

meaningful results that are continuing to influence their practice in positive ways". (p.99)

Moreover, it was felt that the teachers benefitted from the flexibility, responsiveness and

evolving questions that the self-study allowed.

    Attard and Armour (2005) believe that the ongoing reflective process will help a teacher

to rethink and reassess their practice. This, they believe, will open the educator up to mew

interpretations and allow them to possibly change, adapt and modify what they are doing. They

discuss how this is a continuum of learning and doesn't happen in stages. Just as important to

them is sharing the reflections within a group in order to gain a wider perspective on the self.

Finally, the linking of practice to theory can be better achieved when the educator participates in

a structured and ongoing reflection of their actions.

    The exploration self-studies by Hamilton and Pinnegar in 2015 revealed that interest,

surprise, and curiosity can be key ingredients in orienting self-study researchers in their work.

They also found that engaging in dialogue about self-study research can orient, deepen, and sharpen questions.

As many of the researchers have pointed out, self-study cannot happen in isolation. While the reflection and journaling will bring out the thoughts and ideas, the practice of self-study needs to have an interactivity to it. "guidelines for quality in self-study research, as expressed by Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), Feldman (2003), Hamilton and Pinnegar (2013), LaBoskey (2004), Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009), Samaras (2010), and Vanassche and Kelchtermans (2015), include interactivity as one of several core features" (as cited in Fletcher, Ní Chróinín & O'Sullivan, 2016, p.303)

Critical Friends

While several options about sources of interactivity exist, many Self Study researchers rely on critical friends as their main source of interaction. Fletcher et.al. (2016) refer to Costa and Kallick (1993) to define a critical friend as a "trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend" (p. 303) Fletcher goes on to discuss even adding a second "layer" to the critical friend concept. In fact, during his work on "A Layered Approach to Critical Friendship as a Means to Support Pedagogical Innovation in Pre-service Teacher Education" from 2016 Fletcher used the reciprocal critical friend approach with Déirdre Ní Chróinín while research partner Mary O'Sullivan acted as a second "outside" layer to the process by providing supportive and challenging feedback. (p.304)

Yoon, Keejoon & Armour, Kathleen M. (2017) researched the benefits of using a Community of Practice (CoP) as a means of Physical Educator Continuing Professional Development (PE-CPD). They conclude that teachers' professional learning in the CoP impacted on the development of both teachers' pedagogies and intended teaching behaviours which then influenced pupils' learning.

Through their research into PE-CPD they found that the traditional models were not effective at bringing about change and innovation to an educators practice. They site a number of reasons such as: "limited focus (Armour and Yelling 2004a), a divergence between what teachers value and the contents of PE-CPD (Makopoulou and Armour 2011), feelings of isolation (O'Sullivan and Deglau 2006), lack of directionality (Choi 2004), failure to take into account the context of the work place (Ko, Wallhead, and Ward 2006), and limited or inappropriate support (Armour and Yelling 2004b)" (as cited in Yoon & Armour, 2017, p.428).

McEvoy, E., Heikinaro-Johansson, P., & MacPhail, A. (2015) discussing values and purpose in teacher education, cite Hanson (2008, p.23) from *The Values and Purpose of Teacher Education* arguing that without discussing the purpose of their teaching practice people can become stagnant in their teaching. By reflecting and sharing teachers are able to remain vibrant and dynamic in their practice and this dialogue is indispensable to their very purpose. It is from interactions in my PEPLC that I have come to believe many educators have trouble with change and the 2015 physical education curriculum has proven to be a significant change.

Value Orientation.

Research suggests that experienced teachers' values reflect several orientations that form a complex profile which influences their selection of content, teaching styles, and assessment

methods. This research has identified five fundamental value orientations: disciplinary mastery (DM), learning process (LP), self-actualization (SA), self/social responsibility (SR), and ecological integration (EI). Each value orientation serves as a philosophical foundation or a belief system guiding physical educators' curricular choices, instructional decisions, and teaching behaviors in the gymnasium. (Chen, Zhang, Wells, Schweighardt, and Ennis, 2017). These five orientations (Table 1) do not exist separate from each other, Chen et.al. (2017) refer to research by Chen and Ennis from 2015 that suggests experienced teachers' belief systems reflect a combination of orientations that form a profile of the teacher's values. This combination represents a hierarchy of priority orientations that are influential in the teacher's selection of content, teaching style, assessment methods, and classroom environment.

Table 1: *A brief description of the five value orientations*

Orientation	Description
Discipline Mastery (DM)	a teacher who emphasizes knowledge and skills.
Learning Process (LP)	a teacher who emphasizes the development of process skills for independent learning regardless of content.
Self-Actualization (SA)	a teacher who emphasizes the continual development of an individual's autonomy
Social Responsibility (SR)	a teacher who encourages pupils to respect and cooperate with others

Ecological Integration (EI)   a teacher who promotes personal meaning for students via

collaboratively developed curricular experiences to achieve

personal and social goals

(Chen et.al., 2017)

Effective or Quality Teaching?

The term effective teaching has been associated with the research movement that sought

links between what teachers do in the class or gymnasium and what students learn, while quality

teaching is used by Darling-Hammond (1997) in general education and by SHAPE America –

The Society of Health and Physical Educators in the "Shape of the Nation" report (National

Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), 2012). More recently, the policy

statement for physical education from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

(2014) used the term quality physical education. (Dyson, 2014) So which term will best reflect

what I am trying to achieve?

The goal of physical education is student learning. Many content forms may be used

appropriately to address this singular goal. It is important, however, not to be distracted by the

diverse assortment of content that effective teachers use to enhance student learning of fitness,

skills, games, adventure, dance, gymnastics, and other movement forms. These are the means to

reaching the end goal of student learning. Getting to this end goal of student learning can be

difficult and easily disrupted by many contextual and behavioural factors. (Ennis, 2014)

Curricular decisions about content and the approach or model used to encourage student

learning can play a critical role in effectiveness. Kretchmar (2006) criticises the mini-unit design

that is so prevalent in gymnasiums. Calling it teaching on "Easy Street" he characterizes the

teacher's role as one of introducing, informing, and entertaining. He explained that on Easy

Street, the physical education focus is on introducing students to a series of mini-units to expose them to many different physical activities with little hope or expectation that they will learn the skills, tactics, concepts, or principles leading to sustained or intrinsic interest or comprehension. Another common approach attached to the mini-unit format that is often seen in the gymnasium is "keeping them busy with activity" or entertaining students who might otherwise become behavior problems by enticing them to participate in "busy, happy, good" environments. This approach, does little to encourage student or teacher accountability for student learning. (Ennis, 2014)

Students' opinions and support play a critical role in physical education teachers' willingness to teach effectively and implement changes in their curriculum and teaching. While student enjoyment and public health benefits are highly valued, when standards-based content is selected and implemented effectively, enjoyment and health are necessary but insufficient outcomes of learning-based physical education programs. Student learning is the gold standard in school-based curricula. (Ennis, 2014)

Quality teaching is a term that has the potential to move our attention beyond a focus merely on issues of effectiveness relating to the achievement of pre-specified objectives. (Dyson, 2014) Teacher quality is a broad concept that embraces both the concepts of teaching quality and teacher characteristics. 'Teaching quality' is linked directly to a teacher's pedagogies in and out of the classroom, such as planning or classroom management. This concept is closely related to aspects of teaching 'technique'. (Yoon & Armour, 2017)

As physical educators, we argue that physical activity is important, but it is just one of many valued outcomes (DEECD, 2015a, 2015b), mindless physical activity in schools seems to be more prevalent when PE is taught by generalist teachers, and Ennis (2014) suggests that in

schools where physical activity is the focus, physical education teachers are discouraged from teaching fundamental motor skills. Without motor skill development included with the physical activity, the redundant exercises, and simple, frantic, but vigorous games lead to a mindless approach that does not encourage student learning.

Meaningful Physical Education

Referred to earlier in the background information, the work of Dr. Tim Fletcher has guided my foray into Meaningful Physical Education through his work in the Learning About Meaningful Physical Education (LAMPE) project. The research presented by Fletcher focuses on much of the work done by R. Scott Kretchmar. Using the work of Kretchmar (2006) as a basis of the LAMPE philosophy, Fletcher and colleagues suggest that personally meaningful experiences typically involve:

- Fun

- Social interaction

- Challenge

- Motor competence

- Delight

- Personally relevance

"What separates the LAMPE innovation from general good practice is that the fostering of meaningful experiences was positioned as the prioritized filter for the pedagogical decisions we made" (Fletcher, Ní Chróinín, & O'Sullivan, 2016, p.305) This prioritization of meaningful experiences, with the explicit planning for it makes the approach of Fletcher somewhat unique. Their development of this pedagogical approach stems partly from the "multi-activity/mini-unit"

approach often found in PE and discussed earlier as part of the Effective and Quality Teaching

section. They believe that many students lack a personal connection to this dominant form of PE

as it has minimal or no relevance to their lives. They refer to research by Bulger and Houser

from 2009 and Kretchmar from 2008 that criticises the multi-activity/mini-unit design for not

having a long-lasting effect for students partly because physical educators take on too many

objectives in a short period of time and the constant turnover of objectives often results in

learners receiving mixed messages about the place of physical activity in their lives. Their belief

is that "focusing on personally meaningful experiences in physical education carries the potential

to facilitate a stronger commitment to lifelong physical activity participation" (Fletcher et.al.,

2016, p.304)

In researching meaningful physical education, a number of other researchers provided

support for the direction the LAMPE team is moving in. Dinsmore & Bailey (2011) point out

that "fun and enjoyment were found to be central to these attitudes, closely associated with a

range of factors contributing to the physical education experience". (p.512) While Wright (2004)

states that "defining educational values has always been problematic: however, there is

increasingly a consensus that in a very fundamental sense they are concerned with the

development of the human potential of each individual. This is often expressed in terms of self-

fulfillment" (p.152) This support for the idea of creating meaningful experiences for the students

as an explicit part of the planning process does pose challenges for teachers. "Creating physical

activity experiences that children and young people ascribe as meaningful requires a pedagogical

approach grounded in listening and responding to children's perspectives. Young people are

consistent in telling us what they value through physical activity experiences: participating with

their friends, being challenged, having fun, and learning." (LAMPE, 2016) This makes it critical

for educators to understand the motivations of the students, Kretchmar believes that through

experiencing joy in their learning students are better capable of achieving success.

> When movement is experienced as joy, it adorns our lives, makes our days go
> better, and gives us something to look forward to. It provides a refreshing
> interlude. It prevents the world from turning an unbecoming shade of gray and
> keeps us from becoming tired and disinterested. When movement is joyful and
> meaningful, it may even inspire us to do things we never thought possible.
> (Kretchmar, 2008, p.162)

Methodology

Self-Study Design

I will be using a self-study design to take an in-depth look at my practice. Encouraged by

the work of Dr. Tim Fletcher in the areas of self-study and meaningful physical education

experiences, I hope to be able to look deeply into my practice and determine if I am giving

students meaningful experiences in the gymnasium while also meeting the myriad of

requirements imposed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Fletcher et.al. (2016) use LaBoskey's criteria for quality self-study research design: (a) self-

initiated and self-focused, (b) improvement-aimed, (c) interactive, (d) using multiple forms of

qualitative data, and (e) demonstrating validity based in trustworthiness. (p. 307) Moreover

Fletcher's earlier work with his LAMPE colleagues (Ní Chróinín, Fletcher, & O'Sullivan, 2015)

outlined some benefits they see in the self-study approach:

1. That self-study can capture opportunities and challenges and provide self-illumination while sharing insights on pedagogies of meaning making

2. That self-study forced them to analyse their teaching practices, make judgements and identify enabling and limiting aspects of their practices.

3. That self-study engaged them in questioning of their pedagogy.

4. That self-study provided the tools for a systematic inquiry into the complex nature of their practice.

Framework-for-Inquiry

Hamilton and Pinnegar (2015) using The Framework-for-Inquiry Analytic Tool (Table 3) to identify issues that researchers might address in their study providing a series of questions focused on self and practice. This framework aids researchers to inform themselves and colleagues less familiar with this work about the operational how's and why's of this methodology.

Table 3. Framework-for-inquiry analytic tool

Topic	Questions focused on the self…
Purpose	What is the purpose of the study?
Definition of S-STEP	What definition of S-STEP does the author use? Where is the self-situated in this study?
Definition of S-STEP methodology	When the author describes methodology, how is it apparent that the study is a S-STEP? How does the author describe the methodology?

Rigorous research practice	What data collection and data analysis tools are used? How are the aspects of the methodology described? How did the author make apparent thoughtful research practice? As part of making a study rigorous comes in the context selected for study, in what way or ways does the context support the rigor of the study?
Explicit evidence	In what ways does the author connect the data collected with the assertions made in the study? For example, if they said that they interviewed people, how is that displayed in the evidence? Does the evidence collected allow for the insights the author claims?
Authority of experience	How does the author situate the authority of her/his own experience in the study? How do he/she situate themselves in the study so that the readers will accept their work as trustworthy?
Story of self	In what ways is the self-portrayed in the study? Where is the self in relationship with others? How is the self-evident?
Situate in larger literature	Within what research literatures does the author situate their work? How do they bring depth to the understandings of their field of focus?

(Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2015, p.183)

Quality Indicators for the Teacher Research

Dana and Yendol-Hoppey (2014) present five indicators of quality teacher research; (1) Context of Study, (2) Wonderings and Purpose, (3) Teacher-Research Design, (4) Teacher-Researcher Learning, and (5) Implications for Practice. These five quality indicators will help to

inform my approach to be an effective Teacher Researcher. Table 2 presents a brief description of the five indicators and how they can inform my teacher research.

Table 2. Quality Indicators for Teacher Research

Indicator	Questions to ponder
Context of Study	o Have I considered all aspects of my context? Will others be able to understand where my thoughts and wonderings emerge from based on the description of the context?
Wonderings and Purpose	o Have I effectively described my dilemma? Have I connected my wonderings to related literature? Are my wonderings focused on me and my personal practice?
Teacher-Researcher Design	o Have I considered all possible data sources and the number of data sources used? Is my timeline flexible? Is it realistic?
Teacher-Researcher Learning	o How will I illustrate my findings? Am I confident my findings emerged from the data rather than forcing the data to fit pre-determined findings? Can I explain data that didn't fit? Did these findings resonate with me through my reflections?
Implications for Practice	o Will these results lead to action within my practice? Are they logical outgrowths of what I learned in my inquiry? Are there further wonderings that can grow out of my inquiry?

(Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2014)

Methods

Timeline

The timeline for this self-study is rather short. Reflections began in February 2018 as part of the initial development of this research proposal, this will be followed up in April 2018-May 2018 with further reflections, independent observer notes, critical friend discussions, student interactions, and an analysis of personal values in education using the Ennis VOI will take place in May 2018.

Data will be reviewed and analyzed through the months of May and June 2018 with the completion of the self-study presented in mid-July 2018.

1. Literature Review: February – March 2018

2. Data Collection: April – June 2018

   a. Researcher Generated Documents Reviewed: May 2018

   b. Reflections: February – late May 2018

   c. Non-Participant Observations: May 2018

   d. Critical Friend Discussions and Notes: May 2018

   e. Student Interaction Notes: May 2018

3. Data Analysis: May – June 2018

4. Capping Experience Presentation and Report Writing: July 2018

Data Collection

In order to maximize the collection of data and provide a varied approach to the collection of data I will be using five separate strategies. Firstly, the collection and review of documents will provide context for the self-study as it relates to the required curriculum as well

as the yearly, unit and lesson plans that have been created. The second data set will come from

written journal reflections on the lessons taking place during the study period of late April

through June. Thirdly, I have the opportunity to have a non-participant observer record

interpretations of what she is watching in the gymnasium. The fourth data set will come from

discussions with a critical friend. My critical friend will be another elementary physical educator

who I often speak with and share my practice with. Additionally, I may be able to share this

research with my PEPLC group in May, thereby getting further critical friends involved in the

discussion of my self-study. The fifth and final data collection method will be student voice. In

order to determine whether the program is meaningful to the students, it is a requirement to find

out from the students what they find meaningful; what they find fun; what they find challenging

or delightful; what motor skills they are developing; what types of social interactions are taking

place, and; what aspects of the physical education program may be personally relevant to their

lives.

Table 3. Data Sources and Prompts

Source	Prompts
Documents	o Lesson topic? Lesson outcomes? What am I explicitly attempting to do/teach/present in this lesson? In this unit? What model is being used?
Written Reflections	o Do I feel that the students are getting what I want from the lesson? Is my focus similar to what they are experiencing?
Non-participant Observer	o What do students seem to be doing during lesson? What are you observing in their behaviours? Are they on task,

		developing a skill? Interest in activity? Do they appear to be having fun, experiencing joy or delight? Are they being challenged appropriately? What social interactions are being observed?
Critical Friend Discussion	o	What resonated with me from our discussion was… I would approach this lesson by…I suggest that you…
Student Voice	o	Do you find this activity relevant to you? Is it challenging? Would you describe it as fun or delightful? What is your favorite activity, why?

Documents. Through the entire process I will collect documents that will inform me on my curricular decisions regarding content selection, assessment strategies and timing, unit and lesson design, and other educational priorities. This data will come from review and reflection on my planning documents (yearly, unit and lesson plans, assessment plans and documents).

Other documents that will inform the data are the NSTU Guidelines: Constitution and Policy document, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Physical Education P-3 and 4-6 curriculum documents, the Essential Learning Outcomes P-3 document, and the Streamlined Curriculum 4-6 document.

Written Reflections. "Capturing "thinking" is a challenge for any researcher. One way a teacher researcher captures the thinking that occurs in the school and classroom and within his or her own mind is through journaling. Journals provide teachers a tool for reflecting on their own thought processes" (Dana, 2014, p.109)

Fletcher and Ní Chróinín developed a format for recording their reflections. They began with brief overviews of the lesson plan but would focus the reflection on a critical incident from each class that resonated with them and the LAMPE pedagogies. They recorded a contextual description of the incident and would reflect on whether their feelings about the critical incident had changed as a result of the reflections. In doing this they were able to pinpoint and analyze their data with respect to the meaningful experiences and the pedagogical approaches that enabled or limited the experiences. This type of structured reflection is the approach I will take as I believe it focuses the mind and data collection thereby making it easier to analyze at a later time. Additionally, as a novice teacher researcher and as a novice reflective educator (in a structured and organized sense) this format will also assist in the process of reflecting. (Fletcher et.al., 2016)

Non-Participant Observer. The availability of a Non-Participant Observer provides the teacher researcher with an ability to collect observations of lessons, teaching practice, and student behaviour and provides a major means of collecting data in qualitative research. It offers a firsthand account of the situation under study and, when combined with other methods of data collection, provides for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Having access to a non-participant observer also allows for the use of digital pictures and video as data. Nancy Fichtman Dana (2014) describes the use of pictures and video as allowing teacher researchers to gain a better "understand an unfolding behavior, capture the process used, study the learning situation, and make visible products or outcomes. More specifically, through observing video of one's own teaching, teachers can observe attitudes, skill and knowledge

levels, nature of interactions, nonverbal behavior, instructional clarity, and the influence of physical surroundings" (p.107-108)

       Critical Friend Discussion. Fletcher et.al. (2016) look to the work of Costa and Kallick (1993) who defined a critical friend as a "trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens, and offers critique of a person's work as a friend" (p.303). They go on to consider the beliefs of Baskerville & Goldblatt (2009) and Vanassche & Kelchtermans (2015) who believe that having a critical friendship allows a teacher researcher to challenge their assumptions and identify new ways of thinking about their practice as a teacher, while also allowing for alternative interpretations of situations and reflections. One caution from Fletchers work with Ní Chróinín & O'Sullivan (2016) was that they found themselves to be more "friend" than "critic" and may have been "overly sensitive to one another's feelings and emotions, we risked not receiving enough critical support from one another through moments of frustration or uncertainty" (p.303) In their discussion they reflected that this may have occurred because initially parameters were not set for their expectations of each other in the relationship. This learning will inform my critical friendship in such as I will endeavour to establish clear expectations with my critical friend prior to beginning our discussions.

       As a part of the critical friend discussion I will use prompts similar to those Fletcher and Ní Chróinín did. Examples of the prompts they used are:

- What resonated with my thinking was…
- The questions that it raised for me are…
- If I were going to be contentious, I might suggest…   (Fletcher et.al., 2016, p.308)

Student Voice. "Helping children to articulate their opinions about the environment and stimulating the development of social responsibility is a crucial, but often forgotten, factor in the prevention of psychosocial problems and promotion of health and well-being for children." (MacDougall, Shiller and Darbyshire, 2004, p.372) Given that this self-study is a reflection of my teaching practice it seems illogical to not include the voice of those who are directly influenced by the curricular decisions I am making on a daily basis. Yet, with the age of the students my main concern is their ability to effectively participate in discussions on their PE needs. Working with students from 4-12 years of age MacDougall, Shiller and Darbyshire (2004) found in their study of student opinions regarding physical activity that "children were enthusiastic participants in the research and appreciated the opportunity to communicate their views." (p.369) If my students' values and opinions are going to help shape their future PE experiences, I need to listen to these views, conduct research where necessary and consider how their views can inform and shape my practice. By taking the time to speak with students in informal ways I hope to gauge their impressions of the PE program and whether it is meeting their needs. This data collection will take the form of in class notes that will then later be compiled into a journal format.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is an ongoing process in a qualitative research study. It should begin with the completion of the first collection of data, be it an interview, survey, observation... and doesn't conclude until you have presented your findings. Even then, through peer review, submission to journals and defence of the research further data analysis may continue as a result of the feedback and critiques received. The process is emerging, recursive and dynamic.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) talk about the interactive nature of data collection, analysis and reporting, of how one set of data informs and directs the next phase in the data collection, of how as the researcher your insights, hunches and hypothesis may change or take the research in a new direction. The continual analysis of collected data allows for the refinement of the collection process; fine tuning the observational focus or rewording an interview question.

Using a timeline of data collection that will allow for simultaneous data analysis is important. Too much data can become overwhelming and unmanageable. It will be important to keep in mind a few of the "helpful suggestions" that Merriam and Tisdell (2016) attribute to Bogdan and Biklen. The most helpful for my research will be the suggestions that help to keep me focused on the task at hand, to keep my mind and data from wandering and to keep myself organized and methodical. For my study, I will be using data analysis to inform my data collection as described above. By creating a timeline that allows for simultaneous collection and analysis I allow the data to lead me through the observations. Keeping track of my thoughts, feelings and commentary will be a critical aspect of my reflections and by using the hints offered by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) such as margin notes, brackets and a journal I hope to manage these aspects of the data collection effectively.

Coding. As data is collected and analysed, it is important to begin the process of coding the data. This involves reading through the field notes, transcripts, or other data and identifying the key ideas and concepts as they relate to the research problem. As Merriam and Tisdell point out "a unit of data can be as small as a word a participant uses to describe a feeling or phenomenon, or as large as several pages of field notes describing a particular incident."

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 201). As the data grows so will the codes that represent all aspects

of everything determined to be relevant to the study. Once a number of codes have been

developed through data then I will review codes looking for larger concepts that can bring

together groups of the codes. For example, for my non-participant observer I might have a set of

codes such as *feedback, praise*, *criticism*, and *social*. All of these codes could then be

categorized under *responsive interactions* between teacher and student. This process is called

axial coding.

Given the research problem and guiding questions have formed my thinking going into

the data collection, the use of a priori coding strategy, where I have predetermined some of the

codes to fit the desired storyline of the research may also be effective (Stuckey HL, 2015). With

the focus on meaningful physical education experiences I plan to begin use the coding described

in Table 4, below.

Table 4. A Priori Coding – potential codes and behaviours

Code	Behaviours to observe
Fun and/or Delight	o Happiness, laughing, engagement, joy
Challenge	o Too easy, too hard, appropriate
	o Frustration, errors, off task
Interactions	o Positive, negative
	o Student-student, student-teacher, teacher-student
	▪ Behaviour, social, critical, constructive/corrective
Motor Competence	o Practicing skill

o   Proper performance, uses feedback

Personally Relevant   o   Engagement, interest

An important final reminder from Merriam and Tisdell (2016) is the need to ensure that

categories are responsive to the research problem and reflect what is being studied, that they be

exhaustive and include every piece relevant data, that they be mutually exclusive and that the

names should be sensitive to the data in the category, and finally that they are conceptually

congruent, in that each item of data should exist on the same "level".

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Do the research findings match the reality from which they were observed? Is the

researcher capturing the true essence of the observation? Is the researcher measuring what they

believe they are measuring? Credibility or internal validity addresses these questions. It "refers to

the believability and trustworthiness of the findings. This depends more on the richness of the

data gathered than on the quantity of data. The participants of the study are the only ones that

decide if the results actually reflect the phenomena being studied and therefore, it is important

that participants feel the findings are credible and accurate." (CIRT, n.d.)

Merriam and Tisdell (2006) describe triangulation as a means to "shore up" the

credibility (internal validity) of a study. They refer to the four types of triangulation (as cited in

Denzin, 1978); multiple methods, multiple data sources, multiple theories, and multiple

investigators. Similarly, Cohen and Crabtree (2006) discuss these same ways to triangulate data.

However, believe that "rather than seeing triangulation as a method for validation or verification,

qualitative researchers generally use this technique to ensure that an account is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed." (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, Triangulation Page).

Through the use of a multiple methods triangulation, which is the cross-checking of data and findings through the various sources of data collection, I will endeavour to provide credibility and trustworthiness to the research. Personal journaling and reflection, the Ennis Value Orientation Instrument (VOI), non-participant observations, critical friend discussions, student interactions, and written documents (curriculum guides, yearly, unit, lesson and assessment plans and timelines) will all provide a rich and in-depth picture of the research.

Hamilton and Pinnegar (2015) discuss how researchers in a self-study will come up against unexpected experiences or reflections that challenge their understandings. At these times they need to reach out to the wider knowledge base and the research related to their self-study. This allows the researcher to deepen and support their understandings and put themselves into a larger research conversation thereby giving the opportunity for the researcher to share their findings and contribute to a broader understanding of the topic. (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2015) Meanwhile, Fletcher and Ovens (2015) believe that trustworthiness is established by readers of their research placing the findings and results into their personal contexts, situations, challenges and understandings.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the standards and norms that help a person determine right from wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. The credibility and consistency of research findings rely on the adherence to ethical principles. Patton (2015) states that "methods do not ensure rigor. A

research design does not ensure rigor. Analytical techniques and procedures do not ensure rigor. Rigor resides in, depends on, and is manifest in rigorous thinking— about everything, including methods and analysis" (as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.260).

Analyzing data may present other ethical problems. Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection, data have been filtered through his or her particular theoretical position and biases. Deciding what is important— what should or should not be attended to when collecting and analyzing data— is almost always up to the investigator. Opportunities thus exist for excluding data contradictory to the investigator's views. Sometimes these biases are not readily apparent to the researcher. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) Through the use of a non-participant observer as well as critical friend discussions, it is possible to mitigate these biases and this limitation to the self-study.

Ethics in Practice

The personal ethics of the researcher may at times come to the forefront in qualitative research. Dilemmas may emerge during data collection, data analysis or when sharing the findings that force the researcher to make an ethical decision. Knowing what to do can be a challenge and the researcher must trust their own personal values, morals, and beliefs and make a decision. (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) The "Ethical Issues Checklist" developed by Patton in 2015 lists 12 items to be considered.

- o Explaining the purpose of the inquiry and methods to be used
- o Reciprocity (what's in it for those involved)
- o Promises
- o Risk assessment

- Confidentiality

- Informed consent

- Data access and ownership

- Interviewer mental health

- Ethical advice (who will be your counselor on ethical matters)

- Data collection boundaries

- Ethical and methodological choices

- Ethical versus legal   (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.264)

As a novice researcher, this list is a perfect starting off point to ensure that, aside from any procedural ethics involved in the research (of which I do not believe there to be any), I don't make any ethical miss-steps. In the end ethics is simply making sure that, as a researcher, you have crossed your "t's" and dotted your "i's", that you have considered the moral and ethical implications of what you are doing, observing, asking, and determined them to be acceptable, that you are doing no harm whether physical, social, emotional or mental to anyone involved or affected by the research and that you are not putting yourself or others in any illegal situations.

Further Research Focus

Future work related to this self-study can examine the quality of experience and meaningfulness of PE experiences for small groups of students. Specifically, a focus on race (African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal, Asian, Middle Eastern…), gender (male, female, other…), social class (lower, middle, upper…) and/or disabilities that affect participation and learning in PE (autistic spectrum, physical disability, syndromes…).

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    Korea. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy, 22(4)*, 427-444.

    doi: 10.1080/17408989.2016.1268589

Oxford Commas

Inclusive language check – parents/guardians…

Fix PE acronym in opening paragraph

Missing apostrophes

Space after periods in citations

APA headings

Headings

APA Style uses a unique headings system to separate and classify paper sections. Headings are used to help guide the reader through a document. The levels are organized by levels of subordination, and each section of the paper should start with the highest level of heading. There are 5 **heading levels** in APA. The 6th edition of the APA manual revises and simplifies previous heading guidelines. Regardless of the number of levels, always use the headings in order, beginning with level 1. The format of each level is illustrated below:

APA Headings	
Level	Format
1	**Centered, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Headings**
2	**Left-aligned, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**
3	**Indented, boldface, lowercase heading with a period.**
4	***Indented, boldface, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.***
5	*Indented, italicized, lowercase heading with a period.*

Thus, if the article has four sections, some of which have subsections and some of which don't, use headings depending on the level of subordination. Section headings receive level one format. Subsections receive level two format. Subsections of subsections receive level three format. For example:

Method (Level 1)

Site of Study (Level 2)

Participant Population (Level 2)

Teachers. (Level 3)

Students. (Level 3)

Results (Level 1)

Spatial Ability (Level 2)

Test one. (Level 3)

Teachers with experience. (Level 4)

Teachers in training. (Level 4)

Test two. (Level 3)

Kinesthetic Ability (Level 2)

Database capitalizations

End of sentence punctuation?

Consistent verb tense (past or present perfect)

Et al after authors listed

All references?

Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, C. C. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Periodical, volume number*(issue number), pages. http://doi.org/xx.xxx/yyyyy

Article in Journal Paginated by Volume

Journals that are paginated by volume begin with page one in issue one, and continue

numbering issue two where issue one ended, etc.

Harlow, H. F. (1983). Fundamentals for preparing psychology journal articles. *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology, 55*, 893-896.

Article in Journal Paginated by Issue

Journals paginated by issue begin with page one every issue; therefore, the issue number gets

indicated in parentheses after the volume. The parentheses and issue number are not italicized

or underlined.

Scruton, R. (1996). The eclipse of listening. *The New Criterion, 15*(3), 5-13.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal, volume number,* page range. doi:0000000/000000000000 or http://doi.org/10.0000/0000

Brownlie, D. (2007). Toward effective poster presentations: An annotated bibliography. *European Journal of Marketing, 41*, 1245-1283. doi:10.1108/03090560710821161

Wooldridge, M.B., & Shapka, J. (2012). Playing with technology: Mother-toddler interaction scores lower during play with electronic toys. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 33*(5), 211-218. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2012.05.005

Nonperiodical Web Document or Report

List as much of the following information as possible (you sometimes have to hunt around to

find the information; don't be lazy. If there is a page like

http://www.somesite.com/somepage.htm, and somepage.htm doesn't have the information

you're looking for, move up the URL to http://www.somesite.com/):

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). *Title of document*. Retrieved from http://Web address

Angeli, E., Wagner, J., Lawrick, E., Moore, K., Anderson, M., Soderland, L., & Brizee, A. (2010, May 5). *General format.* Retrieved from http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/ **NOTE**: When an Internet document is more than one web page, provide a URL that links to the

home page or entry page for the document. Also, if there isn't a date available for the

document use (n.d.) for no date.

To cite a *YouTube* video, the APA recommends following the above format.

Blog (Weblog) and Video Blog Post

Include the title of the message and the URL. Please note that titles for items in online

communities (e.g. blogs, newsgroups, forums) are not italicized. If the author's name is not

available, provide the screen name.

J Dean. (2008, May 7). When the self emerges: Is that me in the mirror? [web log comment].
Retrieved from http://www.spring.org.uk/the1sttransport

Psychology Video Blog #3 [Video file]. Retrieved from
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqM90eQi5-M

Electronic Books

Electronic books may include books found on personal websites, databases, or even in audio

form. Use the following format if the book you are using is *only* provided in a digital format or is

difficult to find in print. If the work is not directly available online or must be purchased, use

"Available from," rather than "Retrieved from," and point readers to where they can find it. For

books available in print form and electronic form, include the publish date in parentheses after

the author's name. For references to e-book editions, be sure to include the type and version of

e-book you are referencing (e.g., "[Kindle DX version]"). If DOIs are available, provide them at

the end of the reference.

De Huff, E. W. (n.d.). *Taytay's tales: Traditional Pueblo Indian tales*. Retrieved from
http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/dehuff/taytay/taytay.html

Davis, J. (n.d.). *Familiar birdsongs of the Northwest*. Available from
http://www.powells.com/cgi-bin/biblio? inkey=1-9780931686108-0
Kindle Books

To cite Kindle (or other e-book formats) you must include the following information: The

author, date of publication, title, e-book version, and either the Digital Object Identifer (DOI)

number, or the place where you downloaded the book. Please note that the DOI/place of

download is used in-place of publisher information.

Here's an example:

Stoker, B. (1897). *Dracula* [Kindle DX version]. Retrieved from Amazon.com