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11   "You have to find your slant, your groove:" One Physical Education Teacher's

12   Efforts to Employ Transformative Pedagogy

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23   Abstract

24 *Background*: Teaching for social good and inequity has been presented as needed in sport

25 pedagogy research. However, very little is known how transformative pedagogical practices that

26 teach for social good are implemented and sustained at the elementary level.

27 *Purpose*: This digital ethnographic study sought to describe one elementary school physical

28 education (PE) teacher's attempt to employ transformative pedagogy (TP).

29 *Method*: Cochran-Smith's (1998, 2004) pedagogical principles for social justice education (SJE)

30 drove our data collection and analysis. Seven qualitative methods were employed to collect data

31 about Harry's pedagogies, organizational structures, and the content he taught. These were

32 formal and informal interviews, conversations, short films, document collection, social media

33 accounts, and an electronic journal. Data were analyzed using both inductive and deductive

34 methods (Patton 2015).

35 *Findings*: Harry's TP and the factors that facilitated and limited his practice were uncovered

36 within five main themes: (a) creating communities of learners through restorative practice

37 principles, (b) building on what students bring to school with them for a democratic curriculum,

38 (c) teaching skills, bridging gaps, and the affective component, (d), working with communities

39 in-between social justice illiteracy, and (e) utilizing diverse forms of assessment.

40 *Conclusion*: We confirmed that there is no best way to teach social justice through PE and that

41 TP must be individual to the teacher. In addition, this study highlighted methods and pedagogies

42 by which teachers could engage in TP. Finally, the study's findings implied how teacher

43 educators might go about working with both preservice and inservice PE teachers with the goal

44 that they focus on facilitating social justice through their pedagogical approach.

45   **Keywords:** transformative pedagogy; physical education; social justice education; sociocultural

46   perspective

47   "You have to find your slant, your groove:"

48   One Physical Education Teacher's Efforts to Employ Transformative Pedagogy

49   A number of critical sport pedagogists have suggested that in some circumstances

50   physical education (PE) promotes inequality in Western cultures (Azzarito, Macdonald, Dagkas,

51   and Fisette 2017; Kirk 1998, 2009). Scholars have suggested that PE content reflects the

52   prevalence of consumerist and conservative capitalist governmental agendas to prepare working

53   class students for military service or employment in jobs requiring hard physical labor (Kirk

54   1998; Wright 2004). Other critics have argued that neoliberal ideologies have led to standardized

55   curricula which privilege some students and discriminate against others (Azzarito et al. 2017;

56   Macdonald 2011). Specifically, when sporting performance is the key goal, the suggestion is that

57   both the formal and hidden curriculum are elitist, sexist, racist, classist, and ableist (Azzarito

58   2017; Dowling and Garrett 2017; Fernandez-Balboa 1993; Kirk 1998; Wright 2004). Moreover,

59   since most PE teachers are socialized into accepting and supporting the delivery of sport-based

60   curricula and the use of direct, teacher-centered, technically-focused pedagogies, they are

61   oblivious to their own contributions to the proliferation of inequality (Fernandez-Balboa 1993).

62   To rectify this state of affairs, a small group of sport pedagogists have argued that PE

63   must change so that it becomes a medium through which inequality can be countered, in order to

64   maintain its relevance for today's children and youth (Butler 2016; Fernandez-Balboa 1995;

65   Fitzpatrick and Russell 2015; McCaughtry and Centeio 2014; Penney 2017; Tinning and

66   Fitzclarence 1992). One way that this can be achieved is for PE teachers to embrace a

67   sociocultural perspective through which they become acutely aware of how their content,

68   teaching styles, methods of evaluation, and interactions with children and youth can serve to

69   promote equality and social justice or support cultural inequities (Azzarito 2017; Azzarito,

70   Marttinen, Simon, and Markiewicz 2014; Cliff, Wright, and Clarke 2009). Additionally, scholars

71   have championed the use of *transformative pedagogy* (TP), a philosophical approach to PE

72   teaching, in which the main goals are to promote students' self-examination of their core values

73   and beliefs and an understanding of those who have different core values and beliefs from their

74   own within health, sporting, and physical activity contexts (McIntyre, Philpot, and Smith 2016;

75   Ovens 2017; Tinning 2017; Ukpokodu 2009). Furthermore, teachers who embrace TP encourage

76   students to become critical consumers of physical culture, examining who exercises power and

77   has privilege and who does not, acting when they recognize social injustice (Fitzpatrick and

78   Enright 2017).

79   Only a small amount of research on PE teachers' use of TP has been conducted to date,

80   all of it within secondary schools. This research has indicated that the approach can lead to

81   students changing their beliefs and values (Azzarito et al. 2014), but that teachers find it difficult

82   to implement in their curriculum (Alfrey, O'Connor, and Jones 2017). Moreover, PE teachers

83   employing TP were successful when they built a close rapport with their students, used student-

84   centered reflective pedagogies, deconstructed students' views regarding power relations in

85   society, and explicitly focused on critical topics (Fitzpatrick and Russell 2015; Oliver and Kirk

86   2016). The goal of the study was to build on these limited findings. Its purpose was to describe

87   one elementary school physical education teacher's attempt to employ TP. The specific research

88   questions we attempted to answer were (a) What methods, content, and organizational structure

89   did the teacher employ in order to influence students' beliefs and values? and (b) What barriers

90   and facilitators served to limit or facilitate the teacher's ability to employ TP?

91   **Theoretical Framework**

92   According to Bell (2007), social justice education (SJE) is an important pedagogical

93   component for teachers intent on facilitating a more democratic society. Hackman (2005) noted

94   that a key element of SJE was that teachers critically examined systems of power, privilege,

95   oppression, and unequal distribution of resources with their students. In addition, Hackman

96   (2005) stressed that teachers with a SJE focus should attempt to convince their students to

97   become activists committed to social change. There are several strands of SJE. These have been

98   described as philosophical/conceptual, practical, ethnographic/narrative, theoretically specific,

99   and democratically grounded (Hytten and Bettez 2011). The practical and ethnographic/narrative

100   strands were most salient for our research.

101   Consequently, the theoretical framework that drove data collection and analysis was

102   comprised of the six pedagogical principles for teaching SJE described by Cochran-Smith (1998,

103   2004). These principles were that teachers (a) recognize that students form communities of

104   learners and are thoughtful consumers of knowledge, (b) build on students' prior knowledge by

105   using indirect student-centered teaching styles; (c) teach skills and bridge gaps to new

106   knowledge by making links to students' prior knowledge; (d) strive to understand students'

107   cultural, social, and historical heritage as a prerequisite for working with students, their families,

108   and communities (e) employ a range of individualized assessment and evaluation techniques

109   which go against standardized hierarchical assessment processes; and (f) making inequity,

110   power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum so that students are encouraged to question

111   status quo norms of society after understanding sociocultural issues. These principles are

112   described further in Figure 1. To ensure transformative educators are adhering to SJE aims and

113   objectives, teachers should use them as a guide to reflect on their practice, but importantly be

114   cognizant that there are no strict recipes, best practices, or models that simply transfer between

115   contexts (Cochran-Smith 2004). Consequently, due to the reflexive element of the pedagogical

116   principles, they were helpful and led our methodology towards an ethnographic orientation and

117   drove our analysis.

118   **Method**

119   **Design**

120   During this study, we took a digital ethnographic approach (Pink 2016; Pink et al. 2016). Thus,

121   the methods by which we collected and analyzed data evolved, included employing the

122   technologies used by participants, and were collaborative. Digital ethnography was helpful as it

123   spoke to the social justice agenda (Azzarito et al. 2017), we intended to contribute to the

124   knowledge in this field of study by providing something new, which allowed us to reimagine and

125   pursue ethical orientations for emancipation. In congruence with the approach, we sought to both

126   protect participants' anonymity and use their voices as much as possible in the findings section.

127   **Participants**

128   The primary participant in this study was Harry (self-selected pseudonym), a 36-year-old

129   male PE teacher who worked at Everytown (a fictitious name) Elementary School in the

130   Northeastern United States. Harry was selected because he was already known to the first author

131   as a teacher dedicated to SJE and TP.

132   During his own schooling, Harry was a successful athlete taking part in basketball,

133   wrestling, and soccer. He continued to be active during his university PE teacher education

134   (PETE) and, at the time the study was conducted, was still playing recreational 'old man

135   basketball.' Harry's PETE was technically orientated; did not include a critical element, promote

136   a sociocultural perspective, or focus on TP; and, according to Harry, was 'useless.'

137   Harry identified as Caucasian, Jewish, middle-class, socially liberal, and voted for the

138   Democratic candidate in the 2016 general election. He had been teaching for 13 years. For the

139   first five years of his teaching career, Harry worked part-time at two state-funded elementary

140   schools. In the first school, he was a regular PE teacher, and in the second, he was the adapted

141   PE teacher, which he claimed to be 'the greatest job in the world.' Following state education

142   budget cuts, Harry was forced to find work elsewhere and moved to a new position as the only

143   full-time PE teacher at Everytown Elementary located in the same region. At the time the study

144   commenced, he had worked at Everytown for eight years.

145   Secondary participants in the study included Everytown's principal (Gregory, also the

146   school district's superintendent), assistant principal (Europa, also the school's curriculum

147   coordinator), a first-grade classroom teacher (Sarah), and social welfare officer (Rachel). These

148   participants were assigned pseudonyms selected by Harry. Prior to the study commencing,

149   ethical approval was given by our university's institutional review board, and participants signed

150   informed consent forms.

151   **Setting**

152   Everytown elementary school was situated in a small town of 15,000 with a mixture of

153   suburban subdivisions and more isolated houses surrounded by farmland. Approximately 220

154   students between the ages of 3 and 13 years attended Everytown. Eighty-five percent of the

155   students were Caucasian, 6% African American, 6% Hispanic, 2% Hawaiian native, and 1%

156   Asian. Seventeen percent of the students were classed as economically disadvantaged. In

157   addition, Everytown's enrollment included students whose parents worked at the local military

158   base and students whose parents did seasonal work on the local farms.

159   Everytown's PE facilities were modest and included a small gymnasium which was the

160   size of one regular basketball court and funded and built by the community. In addition, Harry

161   taught lessons on an evenly grassed playing field and a small blacktop playground when the

162   weather was suitable. Both of these facilities were adjacent to the school. PE equipment was

163   plentiful and included an assortment of balls, bats, mats, and soccer and basketball goals.

164   Students at Everytown were taught two 45-minute PE lessons per week in the first and third

165   trimester and one 45-minute PE lesson and one 45-minute health lesson in the second trimester.

166   Class sizes did not exceed 27 students.

167   **Data Collection**

168   Data were collected with seven qualitative methods over a period of 28 weeks. One *open-*

169   *ended formal interview* was conducted with Harry by the first author, which focused on relevant

170   aspects of Harry's background and career prior to the study, the goals and objectives of his PE

171   program, the content he taught, and the practices and pedagogies he employed in the name of TP.

172   In addition, Harry was asked to describe facilitators and barriers he encountered when attempting

173   to implement TP. The formal interview was conducted via Zoom, was 113 minutes in duration,

174   and recorded and transcribed verbatim. Additional formal interviews were conducted with each

175   of the secondary participants. The purpose of these formal interviews was to gather information

176   on colleagues' and supervisors' views of Harry's use of TP and gauge their thoughts on students'

177   reactions to this kind of teaching. Formal interviews with the secondary participants were

178   conducted via FaceTime, Google Hangout, Zoom, or telephone; ranged from 20 to 42 minutes in

179   duration, and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

180   The first author also recorded daily *conversations* with Harry via WhatsApp, Voxer, and

181   email. During these audio and text conversations, Harry shared information on the content he had

182   taught and the pedagogies he had employed during the preceding day, and the degree to which he

183   thought his teaching had been successful. These conversations were also audio-recorded and

184   transcribed verbatim and comprised 6974 words. In addition, Harry supplied 15 *short films* of his

185   teaching that illustrated the pedagogies he was employing and the students' reactions to these

186   pedagogies. Films were uploaded to a shared Google Drive or shared on WhatsApp so that the

187   first author could view and make detailed notes on them and ask Harry any follow-up questions

188   she had during short, *informal interviews* conducted via Voxer and WhatsApp. These informal

189   interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

190   Harry was also asked to upload relevant *documents* and materials to the shared Google

191   drive. These documents and materials included Harry's curriculum vitae, a philosophical

192   statement about his views on teaching PE, his yearly scope and sequence chart, 111 lesson plans,

193   two student evaluations, six pieces of student work, six health-related rubrics, 19 lesson

194   resources (e.g., student worksheets, case studies, wall posters, etc.), the SHAPE America (2013)

195   National PE standards (what students should be able to achieve by the end of each school year),

196   and digital materials Harry had developed for his classes. Text documents and digital materials

197   were subjected to content analysis by the first author, which involved her making copious notes

198   on their contents.

199   Harry also agreed to allow the first author to examine and extract relevant text and audio

200   conversations from his *social media* accounts which included Twitter (3127 Tweets and Re-

201   tweets), an online blog Harry had started on questions surrounding health and PE teaching (24

202   entries), and a Voxer group Harry had initiated that discussed issues surrounding social justice in

203   PE. Audio conversations from this source were transcribed verbatim. All social media account

204   data were collected using NCapture (QSR NVivo 11 software). Finally, Harry shared reflections

205   about his teaching in an *electronic journal* (698 words) via the shared Google drive. Within this

206   journal, Harry occasionally chose to write about barriers and facilitators that constrained or

207   enabled him to employ TP.

208   **Data Analysis**

209   Data were analyzed through both inductive and deductive methods (Patton 2015). A five-

210   stage inductive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) involved the first author (a)

211   familiarizing herself with and identifying data which pertained to the two research questions we

212   attempted to answer, (b) assigning initial codes to data chunks, (c) searching for themes which

213   were linked the theoretical framework, (d) reviewing and revising themes based on the constructs

214   within the theoretical framework, and (e) defining and naming themes. Data were coded and

215   sorted into themes by using the QSR NVivo 11 software. Throughout the data reduction process,

216   the second author acted as a 'peer debriefer' (Lincoln and Guba 1985) which involved discussing

217   and providing feedback on developing themes. During the final phase of the analysis, data

218   snippets which illustrated key themes identified were selected for use in the manuscript.

219   Credibility and trustworthiness of the analysis were ensured by employing four strategies

220   (Tracy 2010). First, an *audit trail* was created during data collection. This involved noting exactly

221   which data were collected, the method used, and time of collection. Second, by collecting data

222   with seven different methods, we were able to *triangulate* our findings and cross-check them for

223   accuracy. Third, *member reflections* were conducted throughout the data collection process by

224   asking Harry about the accuracy of data collected and allowing him to suggest revisions at each

225   stage of the manuscript. Finally, any *negative* and *discrepant cases* discovered were used to

226   modify developing codes and themes.

227   **Findings and Discussion**

228   In the following sections, we describe and illustrate Harry's TP and the facilitators and

229   barriers that Harry encountered within five themes. Unless stated, the quotes throughout are drawn

230   from Harry's formal interview.

231   **Communities of Learners through Restorative Practice Principles**

232   The main method adopted in Harry's class was restorative practice principles, where a

233   community of learners was created before engaging in intellectual PE. Restorative practice is an

234   alternative approach to the traditional educational experience, and its main aim is to restore

235   relationships and build a community within schools. Hopkins (2004) highlighted that the approach

236   consists of active, empathic, non-judgmental, non-directive listening through community

237   conferences and problem-solving circles. Harry specifically called these 'share circles' or 'circle

238   up time,' which helped create a culture of inclusion and belonging within the school because

239   'students understand what the needs of everyone are' (Tweet 2190). Explaining how share circles

240   led to discussions based around social injustices Harry proffered,

241   So, social justice in my teaching practice is everything, is based on the restorative justice

242   circles. So, we come in, we do an instant activity, and then we do circle time. We circle

243   up, and everyone gets one share, or I give them a prompt. You can share anything you

244   want, or you can answer the prompt that I give out; e.g., what's the last thing you read,

245   what's the last thing you watched on T.V, what's your favorite thing to eat, anything.

246   This is just to get students talking. From there, that's where I am looking for the items

247   that we can expand upon into the realm of social justice and equity . . . I am always

248   looking for these opportunities where we can look up race, gender, religion, you know, in

249   a way that is authentic. You know, it is not really me driving the conversation, but I do

250   want to identify what we can do. Over time, it gets easier for me to steer the conversation

251   in a way where we can understand our differences and try and look at it as a positive

252   instead of a deficit mindset. (Voxerchat 12.2.17)

253   At the end of the share circles, Harry gave students the choice of 'a hug, a high five, a

254   handshake, or nothing.' Harry described the purpose of this as 'still building the relationship and

255   touch is so important. I want them to enjoy my class; I want them to feel like we have a

256   relationship. I want them to feel like they are wanted in my class.' Such inclusive approaches to

257   teaching came with benefits like students feeling comfortable to open up and learn about each

258   other: 'One student told me his friend was killed in a quad accident the day before. No one else

259   at school knew' (Tweet 2723).

260   ***Student Led Discipline***

261   Another part of restorative practice includes innovative approaches to misbehavior such as

262   asking the student what harm happened and how they can put it right (Hopkins 2004). Although

263   these disciplinary occurrences appeared to be rare in Harry's class, he explained his steps to

264   discipline: 'Step 1. Recognize the harm, Step 2. Repair the harm, Step 3. Stop the harm from

265   occurring again' (Tweet 914). The assistant principal, Europa, observed this as one of Harry's key

266   strengths as an educator: 'I have never heard him raise his voice. It's not, "Oh, I blame you"

267   situation.' Harry gave an example of this method in action:

268   I'll go over and have the talk. I mean my kids know if they are upset, they can just start

269   walking in the yellow, which is outside the perimeter of the gym. Sometimes I'll tell the kid

270   just take a walk in the yellow and then we will have a conversation.

271   Harry was explicit that these occurrences are uncommon because 'when you are constantly having

272   input [i.e., from students] what is there to rebel against?'

273   **Build on What Students Bring to School with them for a Democratic Curriculum**

274   Ovens (2017) stipulated that educators should include negotiated learning as part of

275   transformative pedagogical practice, whereby students are involved in the design process of

276   lessons, and the organizational structure of classes. Democratic practices were an evident finding

277   within this paper. Both Harry and the secondary participants articulated an explicit rejection of

278   traditional direct styles of teaching. Identifying his students' prior knowledge and experiences

279   Harry noted,

280   I don't believe in that tabular, empty vessel, I need to dump all my knowledge into these

281   open mouths, and they have to take everything that I am telling them as gospel or that they

282   have to learn from me.

283   Rather, 'everything is student-driven, he [Harry] puts a lot of ownership on the kids, and a lot of

284   responsibility and they step up to the plate' (Rachel). Sarah agreed, 'He allows the students to

285   really own the curriculum,' and 'if they develop and draw a plan for a game and bring it into his

286   classroom, he will have them play it, and they will discuss it—what worked, what didn't work,

287   what are the rules.'

288   Teaching films five and six revealed a student-invented game that five-second graders

289   created called 'The Boycott Game.' In the film, the students articulated that they all 'took turns and

290   took votes' on the rules of the game. They recalled what a boycott was and why they had invented

291   the game based on the bus boycott by Rosa Parks that they had learned about the week before in

292   class. The innovative tag-like game had a bus driver, police officers, and people trying to get on

293   the bus that were stopped by police officers on scooters with noodles. In the film, Harry asked the

294   students, 'Is it fair that people can't sit on the bus where they want?' The students concomitantly

295   shouted 'no' in unison. Student-designed games are a favorable way for students to understand

296   how democracy works (e.g., collaboration, negotiation, inclusiveness, fairness) (Butler 2016).

297 ***Student Voice***

298   Harry's yearly scope and sequence indicated a basic structure of locomotor movements for

299 the younger grades. For grades four and above, Harry adopted partial elements of curriculum

300 models such as cooperative games, teaching games for understanding, sport education, and

301 individual pursuits to align with the purpose of the lesson. He noted that at times, 'I create some

302 activities. The students make them better. They create some activities; I make them better. We can

303 all be chefs' (Tweet 2452) in the complex pedagogical practice of educating. Harry also set up a

304 program where older grades supported and peer-taught lower grades within his PE classes. This

305 was done on the proviso that students must have completed all other classwork, and if so, they

306 were able to co-teach the younger grades during certain class periods. Harry co-constructed the

307 curriculum *with* his students as equals, rather than *for* his students, even if Harry initially drove the

308 original content focus of the lesson.

309   Within the organizational structure of the class, Harry described key moments where he

310 would survey his students for feedback. One example was at the end of each of trimester, 'to ask

311 how the class is going for them.' Additionally, 'to find out what their perception of me is. One of

312 the questions I ask them is "how much do you feel Harry likes you?"' (Blog 7). Harry used student

313 feedback to change his practice: 'They have a voice . . . The key is to amplify it and use what they

314 are saying to make real change' (Tweet 2649).

315 ***The Big Kid, Breaking Down the Hierarchy***

316   Similar to findings by Fitzpatrick and Russell (2015) and Oliver and Kirk (2016), student-

317 centered pedagogies are ideal for democratic teaching spaces. Harry's playful personality and

318 unique attire created an atmosphere in which students felt comfortable talking to him, especially

319 when he decided to wear his SpongeBob SquarePants wooly hat for the day and a snowman

320   Christmas jumper. Harry's principal, Gregory perceived Harry to be 'kind of like a big kid. He's

321   got a very good rapport with the kids. He doesn't take himself too seriously. He's super inclusive.'

322   Sarah agreed, 'He is just very laid back and easy going with the kids. He jokes around with them,

323   but it never goes beyond that, and the kids can joke around back.' Europa commented that her

324   office was across the hall from the lunch hall, and when Harry enters, 'Oh my god! You just hear

325   the kids, "Mr. H, Mr. H" shouting. They absolutely *love him* from the preschoolers to the sixth

326   graders.' In explanation to a fellow educator, Harry noted, 'If you're not a jerk on power trips, kids

327   don't usually hate you. I treat them how I would treat my kids. (Minus the butt pinch if they are

328   rude.)' (Tweet 68). When asking Harry to reflect on this, he said,

329   My way for teaching isn't gonna work for most people. You gotta find your own stride,

330   rhythm, your own way to build relationships with kids . . . I feel like it's very individual.

331   You have to find your slant, your groove.

332   Harry's TP was more effective due of the close rapport he built with students and because

333   he allowed the students to take risks. Teaching films one and two featured Harry supervising an

334   afterschool club where 'students are skeleton racing in teams. They are padded up in protective

335   equipment and using skateboards to race down the corridors on their stomachs.' In the film, Harry

336   is laughing with the students. In a later conversation with the first author, he emphasized that

337   school should be a place where students have fun and are encouraged to take risks. This finding

338   illustrates the importance of transformative educators taking risks. Typically, skeleton racing in

339   school hallways would be frowned upon. By working with and trusting the students, however, in

340   this instance Harry was able to create a safe environment for this activity. This kind of teaching

341   encouraged and amplified student curiosity and, in line with Cochran-Smiths' (2004) principles,

342   meant that they felt included.

343   **Teach Skills, Bridge Gaps, and the Affective Component**

344   Harry's largest facilitator to TP was his flexibility as the only PE teacher in the school.

345   Harry's gym was located away from the main school building, allowing Harry a sense of freedom

346   within his teaching space: 'I have the freedom to do what I want or take something in the direction

347   I want personally or professionally.' Freedom allowed Harry complete autonomy within the

348   content for lessons, and almost all of Harry's lesson plans included a psychomotor component

349   (e.g., striking, fielding, catching, kicking, throwing, rolling, balancing, fleeing, chasing, dribbling,

350   attacking, and defending). However, his lesson plans, resources, curriculum materials, blogs, and

351   colleague's comments suggested his focus was predominantly within the affective domain. The

352   main recurring themes covered within these sources included trustworthiness, mindfulness,

353   sportsmanship, communication, teamwork, cooperation, personal responsibility, relationships,

354   student similarities, friendships, and having fun. Blog 13 testified to this: 'If we do not target the

355   social and emotional parts of our students, we are missing the boat.'

356   Scaffolding new learning within the affective domain is an essential element of SJE

357   (Cochran-Smith 2004) and subsequently, Harry did not privilege motor and sporting techniques as

358   a curriculum (Kirk 1998, 2009). His curricular freedom allowed him to teach innovative sports

359   without focusing solely on the 'physical component.' Rachel recognized Harry's focus: 'I haven't

360   come across many teachers that were more involved in the whole child, not just their physical

361   abilities. It's their whole well-being; it's not just kicking a ball.' Harry encouraged student

362   participation and provided them with the opportunity to bring their culture into the gymnasium

363   after exploring other cultures sports and activities. Material in Harry's yearly scope and sequence

364   demonstrated that he covered a variety of 'non-traditional, non-Eurocentric activities, and games

365   from across the world' such as Handball (Denmark), Quidditch (game invented by J.K Rowling),

366 La Gallinita Ciega (Mexico), Spikeball (United States), Peteca (Brazil), and Ki-o-Rahi (New

367 Zealand).

Developmentally Appropriate Social Justice Content

369   Cochran-Smith (2004) suggested SJE content has to be developmentally appropriate, and

370 teachers should seek to scaffold information. Harry's explicit teaching of social injustices occurred

371 in both PE share circles: 'Today in class we talked about whether boys can play with Barbies or

372 not and do toys have gender roles' (Conversation 11.20.17) and within Harry's health lessons.

373 Wright (2004) proffered that social justice perspectives align with appropriate behavior towards

374 others and sensitivity toward difference/diversity which is primarily taught in health education.

375 However, the material in lesson plans indicated that students in Harry's PE classes covered

376 privilege, discrimination, bias, bullying, equity, gang violence, community conflict, harassment,

377 ability, citizenship, sex, sexual orientation, class, race, and gender. It is noteworthy that such

378 critically based topics were discussed all year round and not just on Martin Luther King Day. For

379 example, 'I have been doing the work all year and to focus solely on social justice today and then

380 forget about it until next year seems disingenuous' (Blog 11).

381   Harry's resources indicated that he encouraged critical thinking and self-reflection through

382 Edu puzzles, case studies, discussion, role-play, and advocacy projects. Additionally, Harry noted

383 that students are rarely given homework as part of his class, but if they are, 'I tell some of my little

384 students of color, or in kindergarten, they have to go home and look in the mirror and tell

385 themselves they are a handsome person.' Not only did Harry reveal a rejection of transmissive

386 teaching, but also a commitment to critical content areas that challenged the status-quo. Thus,

387 Harry developed uncensored democratic learning communities (Chomsky 2000) that privileged

388   discussion and dialogue related to sociocultural issues (Ukpokodu 2006), and in which his students

389   felt they belonged, had considerable autonomy, became more competent, and were empowered.

390   ***National Political Environment***

391   Teaching does not occur in isolation. Rather, it is a product of and influenced by school,

392   community, and national cultures. For this reason, and as emphasized by Cochran-Smith (2004),

393   teaching is a political act. During this study, Harry's teaching was influenced, to some extent, by

394   the national policies and standards issued by SHAPE America (2013). In addition, his practice was

395   also affected by the political environment in the country. Harry had 'definite views on politics,'

396   and as 'socially liberal,' he was 'really scared for our children of color once Trump got in [elected

397   as president].' Harry believed that 'all humans regardless of what they look like should have the

398   same opportunity for success in our country [United States].' However, equal opportunity 'doesn't

399   seem to be working very well in our country right now.'

400   Politics are entangled within national organizations and government agendas reflect

401   consumerist and conservative plans; specifically, these are played out in neoliberal ideologies and

402   standardized curricula (Azzarito et al. 2017; Macdonald 2011). Harry explained,

403   Our national organization is moving toward more standards, more testing, and a more

404   nationalistic approach to teaching. It is our job to remind our state and national

405   organizations that *you* work for us. We need more individual resources that will impact our

406   lessons not more standardization of content. Create units for us that are outside of the

407   traditional North American Eurocentric sports garbage we have been doing for years.

408   Incorporate biking standards, skiing standards, and swimming standards. No one is under

409   the illusion that our students will master all of the standards that are out there. Create a

410   boatload, so we can a la carte them and create a personalized, quality physical education

411   program. (Blog 5)

412   Unlike Alfrey et al. (2017), Harry was adamant that the barriers he encountered would not

413   discourage him from attempting to construct a SJE for his students. He saw his role as being

414   revolutionary: 'Learning should be fun, engaging, interesting, and new. Students deserve a system

415   that says you are important, and I will tailor education around you. Up until now, that has not been

416   the case. I will help to change that.' Moreover, it appeared that Harry was able to circumvent or

417   simply ignore many of the political barriers he faced.

418   **Work with Communities in-between Social Justice Illiteracy**

419   One of the biggest barriers to SJE is social justice illiteracy; gaps in peoples' understanding

420   of what social justice is and what is required to achieve it (Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017). In

421   congruence with the findings of Fitzpatrick and Russell (2015), Harry realized that SJE can be

422   difficult to implement and potentially disruptive, particularly when it opposes the values of school

423   and community cultures. The conservative culture of Everytown created by Harry's colleagues and

424   his students' parents, and their resulting social justice illiteracy, were the most formidable barriers

425   Harry faced. Europa, the only African American educator in the school, believed 'staff lack

426   cultural fluency and sensitivity,' and 'when disciplining students of color, they often blame the

427   child' saying 'I don't know what to do with *them.*' One lunchtime attendant said, 'It's been a long

428   time since I had to deal with one of *those.*' Europa explained,

429   The teachers are not connected to what's going on. They see it on the news, and it's not

430   part of their life, and it's not part of their student's life or their parent's life, so it's just out

431   of sight, out of mind.

432   As Fernandez-Balboa (1993) articulated, teachers can be oblivious of their contributions to the

433   proliferation of inequality, seeing their role as abstract to the social justice cause. Interestingly,

434   Europa and Gregory observed that Harry had attempted to inform teachers of their contributions,

435   and teach them of the importance of bringing students cultures into the classroom, and ensuring

436   their curriculum is inclusive. However, 'they kind of get mad at him, like stay out of our business'

437   (Europa). Subsequently, 'he pisses off his co-workers, and I have to deal with the accompanying

438   drama,' said Gregory.

439   Moreover, Harry's 'socially liberal' political views often conflicted the parents' views.

440   Although Europa and Gregory supported Harry's controversial topics within class, on occasions,

441   parents/guardians were against it. Europa explained, 'When you talk to younger kids about White

442   privilege, and they go home and tell their parents, and we are in a Republican area. Urgh, that's a

443   tough situation.' Another example was when Harry taught a second-grade gender roles and norms

444   lesson. He received an email from a worried parent regarding her daughter that he shared with the

445   first author:

446   I'm very confused. She told me that you were talking about how it's ok for a boy to dress

447   like girls and wear nail polish. It's puzzling to me. I'm sure she got that all wrong . . . I am

448   sure you would never take it upon yourself to instill your views on young and

449   impressionable children. (Email 4.12.17)

450   Harry explained to the parent the national standards (SHAPE America 2013) he covered within the

451   curriculum and outlined the lesson to the parent. The parent was 'still a little confused' but said,

452   'You obviously have your way of teaching.' After speaking to Harry about this incident he voiced

453   You have to blur the line, come as close to the line as possible but don't cross it; let kids

454   know you are real; take calculated risks, so know where you are going, but don't be too

455   crazy and radical, just attempt to shift a student's perspective. (Conversation 12.4.17)

456   On asking Harry whether he was worried about job security, being a 'radical' educator, he stated

457   that his 'experience,' content 'knowledge,' and 'tenure status' meant 'it is next to impossible to

458   fire me.' 'Tenure recognition' and 'administration' has allowed Harry 'greater freedom and

459   flexibility, despite occasional push-back from questioning parents' and colleagues. To overcome

460   social justice illiteracy, Harry advocated and shared his ideas and perspectives on education,

461   especially the need to involve a wider community of professionals.

462   ***Advocacy***

463   Working within a community of like-minded teachers is crucial if teachers with a SJE focus

464   are to be successful (Cochran-Smith 2004). Harry supported others with this focus and gained

465   much from them. For example, he espoused his sociocritical orientation by following critically-

466   orientated scholars on social media to begin with. Subsequently, he became a prominent voice

467   within that medium himself. He was specifically interested in how his self-identity influenced his

468   practice. Furthermore, Harry felt a moral imperative to be active in the wider teaching community:

469   'I have a responsibility to use my privilege [i.e., race, ability, and gender] in order to amplify the

470   voices of others and get the message across of social justice.' Gregory noted this was one of the

471   main facilitators of Harry's practice:

472   First author: Do you think there is anything that helps Harry teach?

473   Gregory: Yeah, his networking. You know his willingness to network . . . He is passionate

474   about it . . . I would say if you had put his passion for education up against mine, he is more

475   passionate about it than I am. He will go and spend four hours online, podcasting, writing

476   his blog, connecting on Voxer. He goes to Educamps or as many conferences as we'll pay

477   for him to go to. That's a huge sacrifice. He is the type where when his kids go to bed, he's

478   probably online researching, trying to learn more. When my kids go to bed, I am trying to

479   just keep my eyes open for another half hour. So, I can never fault that guy for his

480   commitment to education. It's really impressive.

481 Social media was instrumental in Harry's advocacy, and his networking appeared to be appreciated

482 by many educators in the profession, including his superiors, which made him appear more

483 credible. Social media became a platform where he was able to promote his transformative ideas

484 but also learn from a variety of others from an array of perspectives: 'Everyone has a story, and I

485 can learn from everyone' (Blog 2). For example, being active on social media meant that Harry

486 was able to learn about innovative methods by which to assess students that were compatible with

487 his pedagogical beliefs.

488 **Diverse Forms of Assessment: Plagnets, Whiteboards, and Seesaw**

489   Harry was an advocate for blending assessment and instruction to suit students' needs as

490 recommended by Cochran-Smith (2004). Harry believed that most grading systems are 'bullshit,'

491 and as an alternative educator, he recognized 'what standardizing testing has done to education'

492 and that assessment can be a form of social stratification (Sensoy and DiAngelo 2017). Harry

493 assessed using Plagnets, individual student whiteboards, and Seesaw as tools for evidential

494 learning. Considering Harry believed that 'grades don't mean anything to students,' he used

495 assessment as a tool for dialogue with students and parents to show evidence of learning 'where

496 assessments are authentic and engaging' (Philosophy Statement).

497 ***Plagnets***

498   Similar to plickers, plagnets allowed Harry to give students an individualized magnet for

499   formal assessment before, during, or after class. After posing a question such as 'how equitable

500   was this activity?' (Lesson Plan 71), students had a variety of answers to choose from and would

501   attach their plagnet to the door or to a large whiteboard. Harry was able to correlate each of the

502   answers to identify the students and what they learned in the lesson.

503   *Whiteboards*

504   Individual student whiteboards allowed Harry's students to 'feel like a teacher' and have

505   allowed students to 'be reflective in the affective domain.' After asking students to write on the

506   whiteboard, Harry would 'take a picture of the whiteboard, upload it to Seesaw so that parents can

507   see what we are doing as well, you know, hopefully, that is a conversation starter' to engage them

508   within the students learning.

509   *Seesaw*

510   Seesaw is a digital portfolio of student learning that can include films, pictures, and

511   documents and it was Harry's most commonly used assessment tool. Seesaw allowed reciprocal

512   communication for all parties. For example, if students wanted to communicate with Harry

513   regarding a game or activity they wanted to play, they could via Seesaw. Additionally, guardians

514   could also communicate with Harry and vice versa. For instance, 'if kids are not wearing sneakers,

515   I'll just send a message through Seesaw to an individual parent.' Seesaw was a way for guardians

516   to see their child's learning in 'real time.' Rachel noted Harry's use of Seesaw 'by recording the

517   child and then sending it home to the parents, that parent gets a window . . . kind of like being a fly

518   on the wall, I love it.' By adopting Seesaw, parents were able to engage in their child's education

519   and have constant dialogue with Harry, involving them in the PE community and curriculum that

520   Harry created: 'There is nothing more powerful than enabling a family to have a window into my

521   class that starts a conversation about learning and joy' (Blog 1).

522   **Conclusions and Implications**

523   This study produced several notable findings and added to previous research (Alfrey et al.

524   2017; Fitzpatrick and Russell 2015; Oliver and Kirk 2016). We believe that shedding light on

525   practical approaches to TP has been helpful to pre-service teachers, physical educators, and teacher

526   educators. Collectively, we can move towards a more conscious and ethical approach to social

527   change when our communities and, subsequently, our schools are becoming more diverse than

528   ever. We agree there are no best organizational structures, contents, or methods that work for every

529   context (Cochran-Smith 2004; Fitzpatrick and Enright 2017; Ovens 2017; Tinning 2017) and

530   teachers should find their own 'groove' and 'slant' for transformative practice.

531   To conclude, the findings of this study have implications for PE curricula and schools of

532   education globally. PE curricula should focus on critical sociocultural perspectives (Cliff et al.

533   2009), along with negotiated and student-centered pedagogies that allow the student to take

534   ownership and responsibility of their learning within schooling environments (Ovens 2017).

535   Consequently, teacher education programs should be a place of facilitation and opportunity for

536   these concepts to be practiced. Schools of education and teacher preparation programs should

537   highlight the formal and hidden curricula within PE with the goal of making pre-service teachers

538   aware of their contributions to the proliferation of inequality (Fernandez-Balboa 1993). Lastly,

539   national and state organizations should focus their efforts on providing professional development

540   opportunities within SJE in PE. The SJE principles would be helpful in this task (Cochran-Smith

541   2004). Future research should include other qualitative studies that focus on the transformative

542   practices used by minority teachers within the profession, and the reactions of all students to TP,

543   particularly different groups of students in politically diverse settings.

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