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**2019**

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**The Effect of Refugee Resettlement on Physical Educators'  
Behaviors and Teaching Practice**

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**THE EFFECT OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT ON PHYSICAL EDUCATORS'  
BEHAVIORS AND TEACHING PRACTICE**

by

**Jack Vaughn Sears, Jr.**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2019**

## **Dedication**

To Mara, for her unconditional love and support. You have always been my greatest advocate, my cheerleader and my best friend.

To my children, Joe, Dan, Ben and Katy, who have taught me so much about the importance of love, loyalty, and fun.

To my father-in-law, August Boto, a faithful prayer warrior on my behalf and an instrument of God that helped me make this journey.

To the millions of refugees who yearn to be free.

## Acknowledgments

I am grateful for all of the participants in my study. I hope they enjoyed sharing their stories as much as I enjoyed hearing them. All of these teachers demonstrated a commitment to students and displayed professionalism in every way.

I want to thank the faculty and students in The University of Texas PETE program, Department of Curriculum & Instruction that provided emotional support and encouragement throughout my time at The University of Texas in Austin. You welcomed me and created a community of friendship and learning in which to thrive. A special thanks to Dolly Lambdin and Tere Ramirez for your friendship and for your ongoing demonstration of what it looks like to have a passion for physical education. From the faculty in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction I have learned so much about teaching and learning. My understanding of 21<sup>st</sup> century education, societal influences and pedagogy continues to expand.

I want to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Louis Harrison, Dr. Xiaofen Keating, Dr. Darla Castelli and Dr. Richard Reddick. Louis, I appreciate your patience and encouragement to help me finish the course. Xiaofen, your cheerful support always brought a smile to my face, and thanks for helping me get more involved in TAHPERD. Thank you Darla for making me feel welcome to the PhD program from the very beginning, and for allowing me time and space to learn how to conduct research at the highest level. Dr. Richard Reddick, thank you for helping me learn how to listen and to tell other people's stories, and having faith in this project.

# **The Effect of Refugee Resettlement on Physical Educators'**

## **Behaviors and Teaching Practice**

by

Jack Vaughn Sears, Jr., Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2019

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Refugee resettlement is the direct result of persecution brought on by politics, war, ethnic violence, or religious persecution. The United States has traditionally been the place where many refugees settle. Refugee families find their way to cities all across America with hope for a better life, employment and quality education for their children. The physical education (PE) teacher typically has interaction with every student in the school, and is likely to affect, and be affected by, a refugee students' school experience. Currently, there is little to no research concerning the beliefs and subsequent behaviors and teaching practices of PE teachers interacting with refugees. The purpose of this phenomenological multiple case study is to examine the personal, cultural, and professional experiences of physical educators in schools where there is a substantial refugee student population. James Banks' conceptual framework of multicultural education was used to help discover how PE teachers create PE learning environments that are relevant and beneficial to refugee students. Research questions sought to understand how refugees affect the PE teacher's beliefs, behavior, cultural sensitivity and pedagogical practices. This study was conducted over a two-year period

and qualitative data was collected from seventeen PE teachers. A snowball sampling method allowed for more teachers to participate therefore allowing the potential for further enrichment of the study. While completing the literature review, a pilot study was conducted, interviewing and observing five teachers. Overall, seventeen participants were interviewed, and twenty-one observations of PE classes were made. Relevant artifacts were collected along with the researcher's field and observation notes. Upon completion of all interviews and observations a thorough analysis was completed and brought to a conclusion for submission in this dissertation. Findings indicated seven primary themes: the presence of refugee students will shape teaching practices; language and culture influence relationships and teaching; professional development is deficient; a student's culture may enlighten one's worldview; diversity in the classroom may reduce prejudice; the PE teacher becomes aware of adverse childhood experiences; and cultural competency matters. Findings indicated that the behaviors and practices of PE teachers are affected by the presence of refugee students. PE teachers recognize that this phenomenon of diverse student populations in the classroom makes the learning and teaching experience challenging and influential.

## Table of Contents

<b>List of Tables and Illustrations</b> .....	X
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>The Refugee Crisis</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Definitions</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Refugees.....	5
Internally Displaced Persons.....	7
Asylum Seekers.....	9
Economic Migrants .....	10
Unaccompanied Children .....	13
Physical Education Teachers .....	14
Race and Ethnicity.....	14
<b>Physical Education teachers in ethnically diverse schools</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Refugee Resettlement and Education</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>The Purpose</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Theoretical Framework</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Multiculturalism</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Discovering Cultural Competency</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Physical education</b> .....	<b>37</b>
<b>Culturally relevant pedagogy</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>Refugees' education</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>Cultural competency</b> .....	<b>48</b>
<b>In the Urban setting</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<b>Health</b> .....	<b>53</b>
<b>Physical education and physical literacy</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<b>Future literature review and limitations</b> .....	<b>56</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>57</b>
<b>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Approval process</b> .....	<b>65</b>
<b>Locations for the study</b> .....	<b>66</b>
<b>Participant selection</b> .....	<b>68</b>
<b>Data collection and procedures</b> .....	<b>71</b>
Data analysis.....	77
Coding.....	79
Trustworthiness and validity .....	82
<b>Positionality</b> .....	<b>84</b>
<b>Limitations</b> .....	<b>86</b>
<b>Bias in the analysis</b> .....	<b>88</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Results</b> .....	<b>93</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>93</b>
<b>Participant overview</b> .....	<b>94</b>
<b>Participant description</b> .....	<b>96</b>
<b>Thematic expressions</b> .....	<b>127</b>
Theme 1: shaping teaching practices in PE.....	129



Theme 2: language and culture are connected .....	144
Theme 3: professional development for PE teachers is deficient .....	148
Theme 4: refugee students enlighten a PE teacher’s worldview .....	151
Theme 5: ethnic diversity helps to reduce prejudice.....	155
Theme 6: acknowledging adverse childhood experiences .....	159
Theme 7: cultural competency and equity matter .....	163
<b>Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks.....</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Questions.....</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Refugee students.....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>What does it really take to teach PE to refugee students? .....</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>Research limitations.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Implications for practice and future research.....</b>	<b>192</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Appendix A. Consent for Participation in Research .....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>Appendix B. Demographic Survey.....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Appendix C. Interview Protocol .....</b>	<b>204</b>
<b>Appendix D. Observation Instrument.....</b>	<b>206</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>VITA .....</b>	<b>223</b>

## List of Tables and Illustrations

Illustration 1.1 Statue of Liberty.....	1
Table 3.1 Coding.....	80
Table 3.2 Themes.....	81
Table 4.1 Participants.....	97

## Chapter 1: Introduction

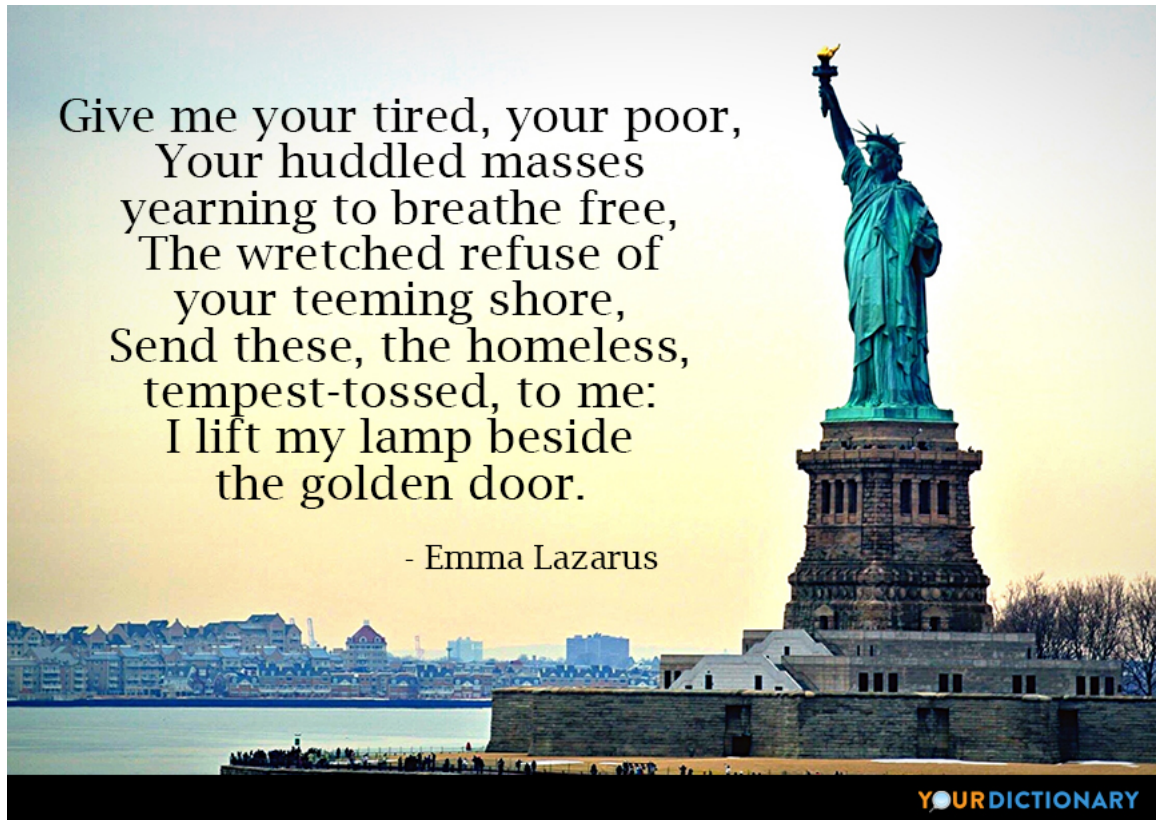


Illustration 1.1. - The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor and words from "The New Colossus" (1883) by Emma Lazarus

### The Refugee Crisis

The United States (U.S.) has long been a recipient of the world's refugees. According to the Pew Research Center the number of incoming refugees shifts according to the global events and priorities of the U.S. (Krogstad & Radford, 2017). Since Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980 (2012), creating the Federal Refugee Resettlement Program, almost 3 million refugees have been resettled across the country. As a partner of the international refugee agencies, the U.S. provides financial

and humanitarian assistance each year, and advances the policies and interests of the global community as it leads the world in resettlement programs and refugee protection (Refugee Admission Report, 2014). According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) the United States is the number one terminus for refugee resettlement. In 2016 the states of California, Texas and New York took in over 20,700 refugees, out of a total of 84,995 (Krogstad & Radford, 2017; Igielnik & Krogstad, 2017). Refugee resettlement is the direct result of persecution brought on by politics, war, ethnic violence, or religious persecution. Refugee families are resettled in towns and cities all over the U.S., and are provided protective services while seeking to become naturalized citizens. In spite of the many barriers, such as presidential executive orders, people “yearning to breathe free” continue to arrive each week seeking peace and a new life.

In December of 2014 it was estimated that there were over 19.5 million refugees who were living under the protection of the UNHCR worldwide. The UNHCR estimates that over sixty million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced from their homes, and almost twenty million were in the process of seeking refugee status in various countries such as Turkey, Pakistan and Lebanon (Bauman, Soerens and Smeir, 2014; UNHCR, 2017). In 2015 over 107,000 refugees were resettled worldwide and it is estimated that almost 34,000 people were forced to flee from their homes due to violence, conflict and persecution. The numbers of refugees being resettled may seem like a great number, however the Americas, (i.e. U.S. and Canada) host only 12% of the worlds displaced people (UNHCR, 2017).

By 2016 there were over 21 million refugees around the world, representing an increase of more than 2 million from 2015 (UNHCR, 2016; De La Garza, 2010). Of these 21 million plus refugees, over half of these persons are under the age of 18. Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees stated in his UN 2016 report on refugee education: “The case for education is clear. Education gives refugee children, adolescents and youth a place of safety amid the tumult of displacement” (p.2). Making sure that refugees have access to education is at the heart of the UNHCR’s mandate to protect the world’s rapidly increasing refugee population.

As the refugee population increases the challenge to respond to life-threatening crises and humanitarian needs of refugees also grows. It is up to the partners of the UNHCR to take actions that will lead to the improvement of lives of tens of millions of refugees and displaced persons (UNHCR, 2014, 2018). Any international response would require all societies and countries that host refugees to insure favorable attitudes and durable strategies that lead to the successful integration of refugees and immigrants (Conner, 2107; Culp, 2018; Esses, Hamilton & Gaucher, 2017). As countries and communities worldwide are becoming more diverse ethnically and racially, they are creating a new sense of normalcy. Refugees face both positive and negative reactions from their new neighbors and are not sure if they really belong anywhere (UNHCR, 2018, UNOSDP, 2013). Diversity, although seemingly welcome by most societies, is often rejected on practical levels, resulting in violence and hatred.

Diversity is not only represented by refugees, but by immigrants and asylum seekers both legal and illegal. Cities and towns all over America are becoming more

ethnically and racially diverse due to the constant in-flow of people from our southern borders and from organized refugee resettlement. As our nation becomes more diverse, so too do our schools, and it is becoming more of a challenge to find teachers who are properly prepared and trained to teach in these diverse settings. Diversity has long been attached to aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, ability and socioeconomic status (Culp, 2018; Milner, 2012). Each of these designations is complicated in and of themselves, and the ever-changing socio-political landscape makes them become more challenging. Challenging for students; challenging for parents; and challenging for teachers. Refugees, immigrants and “ the stranger who dwells among you ” (Leviticus 19:34, New King James Version) are a part of this interesting and creative country of diversity.

## **Definitions**

Because many actors are included in this phenomenological study, and to alleviate any confusion in identification, a brief definition of these various groups is warranted. The primary focus of this study is the physical education teacher, within the context of their relationship with refugee students. Teachers, administrators and the public often want to situate all students who arrive in the U.S. from outside our borders into one broad category that we often refer to as immigrants. However this is not the proper way to identify students who represent various methods of arrival in the U.S. In this study I will primarily refer to refugees and immigrants, not as the same, but because they are intermingled in PE classes in the schools described in this study. For clarification purposes, I will refer to the other cross-cultural students when it is necessary to do so.

## **Refugees**

For the past decade the U.S. has received over 65,000 refugees each year, according to the U.S. State Department. Texas and California are historically the top destination states with over 10,000 resettlements yearly (Refugee Processing Center, 2018). Although the President of the U.S. sets a ceiling on the number of refugees who can enter the U.S., exceptions are often made due to the great numbers of refugees around the world seeking a safe place to resettle. Due to the recent political climate, the U.S. State Department Refugee Processing Center (2018) recorded that the numbers of refugees being settled is far less than previous years.

According to the law of the U.S., a refugee is defined as a person who is living outside of his or her country of origin/ nationality or away from their last habitual residence. That person, the refugee, is unable or unwilling to return to their country because of a fear of persecution or actual persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political beliefs and/or being a member of a particular social group (Refugee Act of 1980). This definition is codified in U.S. law by the Refugee Act and is taken from the language established in the 1951 Convention Related to the Status of Refugees. Throughout the U.S., national, state and local resettlement agencies and organizations are in place to help receive those individuals and families who are unable to return to their home countries and assist them in the resettlement process.

Over two billion people around the world, many of them refugees, are emotionally traumatized, suffering from war, persecution and other forms of violence. Stress and displacement negatively alter the health of refugees, thus affecting daily functioning and long-term adjustment (Measham et al., 2014; World Bank Group, 2015).

Today's children, including refugees, suffer from physical, emotional, and social maladies. Physically, there is a worldwide prevalence of obesity, high mortality rates and infectious diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) statistics for 2012 reported that the leading causes for years of life lost among children included: heart disease, respiratory infections, self-harm, malnutrition and interpersonal violence (WHO, 2012; UNICEF, 2017). The health and well being of refugee students doesn't immediately improve with resettlement. However, resettlement does allow refugees time to be situated where basic needs can be met along with access to emotional and social healing. Resettlement has been a long, sought-for opportunity as refugees strive to get the protection and help they need to become healthy, productive members of their new society.

Immigrants and refugees, and the population growth among certain ethnic groups are impacting schools, in growth, policy and curricula (Choi & Chepyator-Thomson, 2011). Refugee families with school age children arrive representing over one hundred countries. These refugee students bring their culture, languages, and religious beliefs and have the potential to profoundly influence an entire school community. Before families are resettled, they have demonstrated that they meet all the criteria of a refugee, all the while living in very difficult circumstances and in fear of persecution (Bauman, Soerens, Smeir, 2016). It is normal for families who have fled their homelands to spend several years in another country, in refugee camps or moving from place to place before they apply for refugee status. They patiently wait for the UN bureaucracy to approve them for relocation. After a thorough examination the UN determines if a



person or family fits the definition of a refugee and then refers them to a country for resettlement. Only those in the most severe situations are referred, accounting for less than 1 percent of refugees worldwide (Refugee Council USA, 2017). After months, and sometimes years, a refugee is approved and processed for resettlement.

Of the 69,920 persons admitted to the U.S. in 2015, 39.6% were between the ages of 0 and 17 (Homeland Security, 2017). One of the first steps in resettling is to get school aged children enrolled in school. As recipients of refugee students, school administrators and teachers are aware of the many challenges they must address, and often provide programs for the placement of, and instructional support of, these newcomer-students (Kirk, 2011; Mosselson, 2006). While most refugees do adjust to a new life in the U.S., they continue to bear the scars of trauma and the grief of losing family members and leaving a home behind (McBrien, 2005). Refugees are one of the most traumatized groups, experiencing loss, death, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) along with other injuries. It is often left up to resettlement agents, who may or may not identify with the refugee's culture, school counselors and classroom teachers to deal with the symptoms and behavioral issues related to trauma and grief. Many perceive themselves as untrained and unsure of what to do, especially in situations where language is a barrier.

### **Internally Displaced Persons**

People do not want to leave their home, friends and country, but often they have no other choice. They leave their village or city and relocate to a nearby city within their country to escape violence, persecution or some disaster. They go where they can

speak the same or similar language and the culture is familiar. These are not officially refugees because they have not crossed the border of their country of origin (Conner, 2017). Even within the U.S. there are internally displaced persons (IDP); families and individuals who had to leave New Orleans after hurricane Katrina in 2005, or more recently, those who had to flee the Camp Fire in northern California in 2018 (Contexts of Displacement, n.d.). These are often referred to as refugees, but they do not fall into the official category of refugees.

The United Nations give these individuals the status of IDP's and it is estimated that as of 2014 there were over 38 million people who had been displaced in their own country, as in Mexico or Syria. As recently as March 2017 the UNHCR has called for more protection for IDP's in Central America due to various forms of violence (Fontanini, 2017, Mooney, 2005). According to the U.S. Immigration Service more IDP's sought asylum status from the countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in the last three years than the prior fifteen years combined (Homeland Security, 2015). The impact on the U.S. is relatively small by comparison to other countries in the world. However, as situations worsen in certain countries in Central America, the numbers of persons seeking refugee or asylum status can only increase. With natural disasters occurring in highly populated areas, it is estimated that over 200,000 people will be displaced each year, increasing the numbers of IDP's worldwide (Contexts of Displacement, n.d.).

## **Asylum Seekers**

IDP's do not qualify as refugees while they remain in their own country. They can, however, attempt the process of applying for refugee status or they can cross the border and enter into another country requesting sanctuary. These persons are referred to as "asylum seekers." An asylum-seeker is a person who has made a request for sanctuary in a country other than his or her own and the request is yet to be processed (Learn About the Asylum Application Process, 2015; UNHCR, 2017). Of the almost one million asylum-seekers who make application each year, most are seeking protection in the industrialized nations, such as the U.S. and in Europe (UNHCR Asylum Trends, 2014).

While refugees have been granted official permission by the U.S. government to legally enter this country and to be resettled, asylum seekers may enter on a temporary visa or no visa and claim that they are being persecuted in their home country and fear returning. They apply for legal and physical protection and usually wait for weeks, months, and sometimes years, for their claim to be processed and approved. If it is not approved they are normally deported back to their country of origin. In 2015, over 26,000 individuals were granted asylum having been processed through the U.S. Immigration System. Of those granted asylum, 29.5% were between the ages of 0 and 17, or school age students, and over 23% of the asylum grants were from China (Homeland Security, 2017). The positive outcomes of asylum seekers are never a sure thing and many are denied legal entry. They must return home and face their challenges as before. However, as we have seen in recent days, many of these individuals and families refuse to leave, choosing to stay and survive under an illegal status. Children are

allowed to attend school, and until now the parents were allowed to stay as long as they did not commit felony crimes.

Although these families and individuals do not have refugee status they are in many ways the same. They come with their culture, language and religious beliefs. Like refugees they often come with little to no access to educational opportunities and most have experienced some type of violent trauma. The goal of these asylum seekers is to stay in a safe place, find a way to make a living and figure out how to gain permanent status in the U.S. With the implementation of the 2005 REAL ID Act there was no longer a cap on the number of asylees who could apply for and receive Lawful Permanent Resident status (LPR), or the green card. LPR status must be applied for after one year of residence, and as lawful residents they are able to own property, attend public schools, serve in the military and apply for citizenship five years after being admitted as a refugee (Migration Data Hub, 2019). Asylum seekers do not have government support for housing, a helpful resettlement agency, or a monthly stipend. Juveniles are vulnerable to abuse and those who would entrap them into manual labor, prostitution or some other form of slavery. Because almost 45% of asylum seekers are under the age of 24 they are uniquely at risk, and in need of assistance. Asylum seekers need the support of the schools, the local community and willing friends from all quarters of our society.

### **Economic Migrants**

Another group of immigrants who make their way to the U.S. specifically for economic reasons are designated as economic migrants. According to the UNHCR, it is

estimated that over half a million undocumented migrants cross U.S. borders from Mexico or Central America to take advantage of work availability and undocumented pay. Although some are refugees and asylum seekers seeking protection, they are often mixed in with these economic migrants and not easily identified (Passel & Cohn, 2012; UNHCR, 2017). Migrant workers want better jobs and a better future for their children. These immigrants cannot be defined as refugees or asylum seekers because they are looking for a better life for a short period of time or for a good education for their children. Some of these migrants have been in the U.S. for a very long time, working low paying jobs and living below the poverty line. They have made a life for themselves here, sending their children to schools and actually making themselves very useful in our society (Bauman, Soerens, Smeir, 2016). In some of the southwestern U.S. border states, schools are required by law to provide an education for the children of migrant workers. For example, the Texas Education Agency recognizes migrant students as a special student population and has established the Texas Migrant Education Program (MEP) enrolling over 40,000 eligible students most of whom reside in the Rio Grande Valley. The purpose of the MEP is to support educational programs that assist migrant students to overcome the challenges of mobility, language, social isolation and other issues related to the migratory life of their parents.

After a few years some will try to claim asylum status but find it difficult because they have been away from their country for many years, and U.S. law requires that asylum claims must be filed within one year of arrival in the U.S. The alternative is to return to their country of origin and begin the legal process of asylum seeker or refugee.

However this usually becomes impossible or simply a choice that migrants are unwilling to make. It is easier, yet risky, to stay in the U.S. and hope they are never deported.

The status of these immigrants is at the forefront of our current political climate. Children of economic migrants or any illegal immigrant who has committed a felony crime can be detained and deported by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement department. This fear of deportation has forced many children to refrain from attending schools. Rein, Hauslohner and Somashekhar (2017), cited a Washington Post article on federal agents conducting immigration raids and referred to Austin city council member Greg Casar, who knew of teachers that were aware of refugee and economic migrant students who were afraid to come to school for fear of deportation. Students, regardless of their immigration situation, may live with the stress and uncertainty of their legal status and rights to be in this country to live with their family and attend school. It is also from this group that programs such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act have emerged. These programs have allowed these undocumented youth to stay in the U.S. for a longer period of time to complete their education and to work. It also allows undocumented high-school graduates a pathway to U.S. citizenship through college, work or military service (American Immigration Council, 2017; Passel & Cohn, 2012). The children of economic migrants are a recognized student population and are not only eligible for an education but are often recruited into schools. Parents don't know that they can attend school or because they often find themselves moving from state to state and working, they do not see it as a priority. For the migrant students who

attend school, they, along with their teachers, are confronted with similar barriers and challenges that refugees and other immigrant children face.

### **Unaccompanied Children**

In recent years another group has fled their homes and families to seek refuge in the U.S. Unaccompanied children have made incredible journeys across Central America and Mexico to seek a better life in the U.S. Due to the high risk of violence, gangs and poverty, parents of these children believed that their children would have a better life in the U.S. without them. According to Zong, Zong, Batalova & Burrows (2019), “between October 2018 and February 2019, the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended more than 136,000 minor children...and about 27,000 unaccompanied children along the Southwest Border” (para 10). In the summer of 2014, more than ten thousand unaccompanied children were caught crossing the border with Mexico each month knowing that they have relatives who will take them in. Most of these children are detained in detention centers until their case can be heard, but many of them are taken in by family members or are put into the foster care system.

As with all of the refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants these children find their way into our schools. Federal law, by way of the 1982 Supreme Court decision *Plyler v. Doe*, mandates that all children, including illegal immigrants, be provided an education while waiting on the courts to hear their cases of application. Children must have equal access to education regardless of their status. (Schneiderman, 2016; Olivas, 2012; Public Education, 2016). Education is all-inclusive, and PE is one part of that holistic educational approach for students. Refugees and immigrants have the right to

physical activity right along with language and math making the job of the PE teacher valuable.

### **Physical Education Teachers**

In this study the term ‘physical education teacher’ or ‘physical educator’ will be used interchangeably and refer to those educational professionals who teach physical education, health, wellness, sport or any other related physical activity course as prescribed in a school district’s curriculum. The Public School Information for Refugee and Immigrant Families (n.d.) provides educational resources for refugee families, and defines teachers as “the people directly responsible for educating students. They lead learning activities in classrooms. In the U.S., families show respect for teachers by working with the teachers to educate and support their children” (para.6).

All PE teacher participants had a physical education EC-12 teacher certificate and employed full time to teach physical education in the state where the study was conducted. In this study physical educators were selected from a variety of schools that serve various ages of refugee students to obtain rich responses to the interviews.

### **Race and Ethnicity**

In this study it is helpful to have a clear understanding of the difference between the terms race and ethnicity because refugees are very often identified by their race or by their ethnicity. “Race is sometimes socially defined on the basis of physical criteria (i.e. skin color, facial features), while an ethnicity is socially defined on the basis of cultural criteria (i.e. customs, shared history, shared language)” (Choi & Chepyator-Thomson, 2011, p.16). Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2019) defines race as “a



family, tribe, people, or nation belonging to the same stock, also as a class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits or characteristics.” The Dictionary defines ethnicity as a “quality or affiliation; a particular ethnic affiliation or group.” The U.S. Census Bureau defines each term separately and is useful because this definition is most often used in the public forum. Race is defined as “a person’s self-identification with one or more social groups. An individual can report as White, Black or African American, Asian or some other race. Ethnicity determines whether a person of Hispanic origin or not” (Census.gov, 2017). Immigration, including refugee resettlement, can also influence society’s understanding of ethnicity. Ethnicity is observable and is distinguishable from one group to another, even when members of one ethnic group are doing what they can to become a part of new social groups. Refugees and immigrants often assimilate into the dominant culture in society by moving away from their cultural ethnicity and striving to be accepted by any who would be willing to assimilate them (Stuart, 2004). An example of ethnicity would be refugees from Central and Latin America. They are related because of shared culture, language and ancestry, however they would not be identified racially because they don’t have typical physical differences that other social groups would identify them as having (American Sociological Association, 2019). Physical education teachers may recognize racial differences in their refugee students, but would find greater difficulty in finding ethnic differences. This would influence their perceptions regarding students in their classes. Stuart (2004) stated that, “Every influence is interpreted by each person, who decides whether and, if so, how personal beliefs should respond to each of these influences. Therefore, every individual is a

unique blend of many influences” (p.5). Research has shown that teachers’ practices are influenced by their own perspectives of race and ethnicity through one’s development of ethnic identity understanding. They are further influenced by society, media and pre-service training programs, which often result in consideration of the terms race and ethnicity as interchangeable (Gay & Howard, 2000; Hollins, 1999). This study sought to discover how PE teachers define race and ethnicity in their context and if it affects understanding, behavior and teaching practices.

### **Physical Education teachers in ethnically diverse schools**

Physical education (PE) provides a unique setting where teachers have an opportunity to engage refugee students in physical activity that effects social development, peer interaction, cross-cultural understanding, and learning opportunities. A highly qualified PE teacher is challenged to meet the needs of all types of students including those who have limited or no experience in a U.S. PE program (NASPE, 2007). Teachers are tasked with creating a quality teaching and learning environment, engaging the entire school community in physical activity, and being the champion of physical activity in and out of school (NASPE, 2007; NASPE, 2017).

Because refugee students often confront social, physical, and language barriers upon entering school, the implications on how physical education is perceived and performed can be extraordinary (Darling-Hammond, 2015; Weiland, et al., 2013; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). As PE teachers find themselves in the unique situation of working with a diversity of students, their stories and lived experiences are valuable to any PE teacher in a similar situation and to the profession as a whole. By demonstrating

professional behavior and cultural competency, the PE teacher can engage refugee students with an attitude of understanding, caring and responsiveness (Hansen, 2014; Noddings, 2005; Pantic & Wubbels, 2012; Sutliff & Perry, 2000). PE teachers, with their values, worldview, and knowledge, negotiate this refugee resettlement phenomenon using teaching tools learned in a physical education teacher education (PETE) program or by experience. Through the teaching experience, PE teachers become aware of the stories of refugee students. These are not just stories of physical education or sports, but stories of life and all its struggles.

Children's social needs include learning to cooperate with others in work and play. Using sport, recreation and other forms of physical activity are significant for initiating social development, maintaining peace and resolving a conflict among children and adults (Galiliy, Leitner, & Shimion, 2013). Organizations such as the UNESCO, SHAPE America, and Right to Play advocate for the well being of the whole-child, recognizing that every child has the right to good health, adequate physical activity, quality education and a peaceful environment in which to thrive. International organizations, such as UNICEF, promote peaceful and healthy physical activity through sport and PE in refugee camps around the world, however, once a refugee family is settled in the U.S., the burden of responsibility for physical activity falls primarily on schools. PE teachers may find themselves working with students who cannot perform basic fundamental motor skills, or not accustomed to regular physical activity and play. Their practices and modifications to teaching styles, curriculum choices and content assessment become vital sources of knowledge for the pre-service teacher, the instructor of physical

education teacher education (PETE) programs, and numerous in-service teachers in refugee settlement situations.

This study is significant because these stories and meaningful experiences will add valuable insights to the entire PE profession, including best practices, teacher behaviors and cultural knowledge. Physical educators who teach refugees all over the U.S. could be encouraged to consider new approaches or to find solace in their efforts. As such, PE teachers have to negotiate this culturally diverse setting utilizing their worldview, language, knowledge, and experiences. PE teachers who choose to work in this unique environment stand ready, or not, to receive all: the refugee, the asylum seeker, the IDP, the child of a migrant worker, the unaccompanied child and any other student who is placed in their class.

### **Refugee Resettlement and Education**

In 2014 the total number of refugees allowed to enter and resettle in the U.S. was 70,000, representing over 50 nationalities from around the world (Refugee Admission Report, 2014). Refugees have the potential to enrich the communities within the states when provided adequate assistance through the agencies and nonprofit organizations. To ensure success, agencies strive to resettle refugees in locations where they have the greatest opportunity for employment, skill training, and education; opening the doors to advancement and acculturation (Stewart, 2011; Westermeyer, 2011). The goal of the USCIS and resettlement agencies is for refugees to become active, productive members of American society as soon as possible.

One event that greatly enhances the success of refugee resettlement is enrolling school-age refugee children in local schools. Local resettlement agencies begin working immediately with parents and students to obtain proper documentation and to find the appropriate schools. As recipients of these refugee children, school administrators and teachers in the resettlement areas are aware of the many challenges they may have before them, and they provide programs for the placement of, and instructional support of students (Kirk, 2011). Students representing different countries, cultures, and languages often arrive with irregular educational experiences and have the potential to greatly influence the entire school community, including the physical activity program (Gahungu, et al., 2011). Several States in the southern and western U.S. are locations for large numbers of refugee resettlement and many school districts, both large and small, are the recipients of refugee students. In addition to the total numbers, the concentration of refugees in certain urban areas translates into a certain number of schools receiving the lion's share of the refugee students.

The local resettlement authorities determine refugee resettlement locations according to available housing, and schools are made aware of this situation so that they can be ready to receive refugee students. As refugees arrive, they are provided critical financial assistance for several months, as well as appropriate documents for enrolling in school and obtaining employment. Adults are encouraged to find employment as soon as possible, thus expediting their transition into society. Some are fortunate to find employment right away, but many do not due to language, lack of transportation, or other barriers. Many families leave their initial resettlement location

for another city or a different area of the country, especially if there is work or some family connection. As a result, students may not stay long in one school (Kirk, 2011; Stewart, 2011). Moving from one school to another adds further complications to a refugee student's educational progress.

The intent of the resettlement agency is for the student and his/her family to have all the necessary documentation for moving and re-enrolling in another school. School districts don't always function quite the same and don't always follow the same curriculum or calendar. This could be very complicated if the family decides to move out of state. A change in schools and teachers may set the student back because they have to start all over again in a new place. They leave behind friends or resettlement agency helpers who have made their initial resettlement less stressful. They often move away from those who have shared common spaces in an apartment complex or work-place. It may feel as if they are going through the resettlement phase all over again.

Teachers, school leaders and administrators need to learn about the issues that refugee and immigrant students face so that they can understand how they can meet their needs and the needs of the families. School leaders have to work through the process of getting to know these students, their families and their culture (Darling-Hammond (2015). As a result of getting to know their students, teachers will have a better understanding of how to make adjustments to current practices, how to make modifications to instruction, and how to make practical suggestions to administrators for creating a socially constructive environment. School districts are in unique situations to provide educational, social and physical support to refugee students and their

families (Stewart, 2011; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). The entire educational system, including physical educators, must work together and become more knowledgeable about the experiences and needs of refugee students so they can make sure that a suitable learning environment is available to all.

### **The Purpose**

Guided by my own suppositions of cultural competency and multicultural education, I purposed in this phenomenological study to examine the personal, cultural, and professional experiences of PE teachers in a refugee resettlement area. Within this framework it is possible to find that PE teachers could be culturally competent educators, making critical choices in their classrooms and creating a peaceful environment by building cultural bridges of understanding and trust (Ladson-Billings, 1995). To further understand a culturally competent teacher I wanted to understand if PE teachers could be culturally responsive in their pedagogical practices. Gay (2010) defines culturally responsive teaching “as using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p.31). I reviewed Banks’ five dimensions of multicultural education to determine if teachers and refugee students were learning together. Banks (1998) maintained that, “the teacher has a culture, and the teacher and students learn together, share their cultures and construct new knowledge in the classroom” (p.4). I decided to explore the extent of multicultural education and cultural competency, or sensitivity, among PE teachers (Milner, 2012). The numerical growth among refugees and immigrants in urban cities and their school

districts are impacting schools in growth, policy and curricula. Teachers are feeling this impact as well. To support the study on the effects of refugee resettlement on PE and physical educators, three research questions are proposed to guide this exploratory inquiry:

1. How has the refugee resettlement in this community and school affected the physical education teachers' instruction and teaching practices?
2. How has the physical education teacher adapted his or her worldview and cultural experience to the behaviors of refugee students and interactions with refugee families?
3. To what degree does a physical education teacher's educational philosophy and physical education teacher education experiences affect the development of cultural sensitivity and pedagogical practices?

## **Conclusion**

The plight of refugees and immigrants has been at the forefront of many political and social justice conversations in recent years. An attempt to snuff out the light or close the door to human beings who have experienced great trauma and years of waiting has awakened many to rise with a voice of compassion and justice. Asylum seekers and refugees are not welcome in many cities and communities and some segments of the population often speak publically with animosity and hatred toward people who are deemed undesirable (Taylor & Sidhu, 2011). One might feel overwhelmed; one might wish to strike back; and some are without a clear direction as what to do.



The opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students is great and physical educators have the potential to be advocates and catalysts that can bring about change, hope and peace into the lives of those who have not seen much hope (Stewart, 2011). Through this study it is possible to discover the challenges and successes in learning and teaching this group of diverse students. PE teachers can continue to lift the light to shine on this unique population in every state, and throughout the country, and the chance to be partners in opening that door that leads to a fruitful contribution to society is one that may satisfy certain career goals. This study looks to identify the challenges PE teachers face as they receive refugee students into their classrooms; challenges related to their attitudes, their behavior and challenges to their educational practices.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Over the past two years I have learned a great deal about what is happening in our resettlement of refugees in America. I initially became curious about what PE teachers were experiencing three years ago after having a conversation with a junior high math teacher. When I inquired about her teaching situation, she commented on having over 35 different languages represented by refugees and immigrants in her classroom. This piqued my interest. After some initial research on the refugee situation, I discovered that this was an area that I wanted to pursue. After some further study, I realized there was no research on the effects of the refugee phenomenon on PE and physical educators. In recent months political conversations have turned toward the global refugee crisis and it appears that more research is making its way into academic journals. However, there is a gap in the research as it relates to the topic of refugees affecting the behaviors and teaching practices in the physical education setting. I intend to help fill this gap with this study and with future research. I want to will help physical educators understand more fully the impact of refugee and immigrant students on themselves and their practices.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of research findings on refugee resettlement as it affects the behaviors and pedagogical practices of physical education teachers and physical education. To gain a better understanding of the refugee phenomenon and the unique situation that physical education teachers' find themselves, the theoretical framework based on Banks' Multiculturalism was explored

(Banks, 2008). I believe that Banks' dimensions of multicultural education can guide me to determine what I should measure, what relationships might exist, and what I might look for and, or discover in this study. Finally, I will supplement this chapter with a review of additional relevant literature in order to provide a clear and concise picture of this phenomenon of refugees in schools and physical education. If I have these frameworks to guide my thinking and relevant literature to guide my questions and my observations, then I should be able to see how multicultural, diverse and culturally sensitive physical education teachers are or could be. It is a challenge to remain focused on the research study at hand and not be allowed to let the dissertation focus be too expansive or broad, nor to be interrupted (Bolker, 1998). Distractions have the potential to slow progress or get off track.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I have selected the conceptual framework of multicultural education as described by James Banks to guide my study. First, I chose this framework to help me explore how PE teachers might create a learning environment that allows them to teach content that is relevant and beneficial to all diverse students. I believe that behavior reflects what you believe. Secondly, my aim is to discover a PE teachers' attitude toward the attributes of diversity (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender) and observe behaviors that might be manifested towards diverse students. Thirdly, to explore what diversity looks like about the classroom and school culture; and how language, religion and race impact teaching practice. To accomplish this, I must allow teachers to discuss their own process of self-transformation (Banks, 2008; Banks & Tucker, 1998). Through this framework, I

believe I will have a greater chance to discover how refugees effect change in physical education and PE teachers' behaviors and perceptions.

Banks is the most influential scholar in multicultural education and maintains that diversity in schools brings about both challenges and opportunities for teachers. Banks' (2008) provides an in-depth look into multicultural education in his introductory book by providing a thorough discussion of its dimensions, goals and misconceptions. His dimensions provide a multicultural guide for developing an appropriate curriculum and serves as an important foundation for informing pedagogical practices.

In defining multicultural education, Banks (1991) wrote, "Multicultural education is an education for freedom" (p. 32). Refugee students are "yearning to breathe free," and that includes the freedom to pursue an education that meets their unique needs (Lazarus, 2015, p.203). Quezada and Romo (2004) speak to the importance of his model: "The idea is that all children have a right to an equal education in all schools regardless of their ethnic, racial, gender, cultural or language characteristics" (p.5). Teachers, including physical education teachers, need to understand the needs and rights of refugee children. They should use culturally appropriate practices as they teach, respond to each one in a culturally sensitive manner, and provide a learning environment where diversity is respected and equal (Butt & Pahnos, 1995). Filippo Grandi asserted that, "The education of these young refugees is crucial to the peaceful and sustainable development of the places that have welcomed them, and to the future prosperity of their own countries" (UNHCR, 2018). Even with all the support that resettlement agencies and state governments can provide, many of these students will

be left behind in terms of their educational needs. Teachers in schools where refugees attend become primary socializing agents helping them fit into a school environment that many have never experienced. Teachers are called upon to be a part of the resettlement support team that includes resettlement agencies, faith-based groups and other interested organizations. Multicultural education provides a framework in which the research can situate itself. It is a guide.

Banks (2008) maintains that a goal of multicultural education is “to help individuals gain greater self-understanding by viewing themselves from the perspectives of other cultures” (p. 2). Physical education teachers have the opportunity to interact with all students in their school; refugees included. Therefore we may assume that they understand every student’s cultural background. Thus they may have some understanding of their own cultural awareness, or at least they have formed some opinion or perspective of these students. One of the misconceptions is that multicultural education is not for all students, but a program for students of color or diverse ethnic backgrounds, and it should be included in curriculum only if the classroom has those students. Banks (2008) states “when multicultural education is viewed by educators as the study of the ‘other,’ it is marginalized and prevented from becoming a part of mainstream educational reforms” (p.9). Multicultural education should be for all students, including refugees, even when refugees are not present in schools. It is in the best interest of the student and for the school. Students from all racial and ethnic groups need democratic skills and knowledge to fully and equally participate in our society. Multicultural education can be taught and maintained through a policy that is supported by school staff and faculty.

Teachers should use appropriate curricula, strategies, and teaching materials. Parents connect by being participants with the school and with their children. Furthermore, Banks (2008) put forth the idea that schools have to be reformed to meet the needs of all students.

## **Multiculturalism**

The study of multiculturalism and multicultural education appears to be quite extensive due to increasing diversity in America. An exploration of the effects of refugee resettlement on PE teachers' behaviors and teaching practices will bring us closer to understanding how PE can move these marginalized students closer to physical literacy. Immigrants and refugees, and the population growth among certain ethnic groups are impacting schools, in growth, policy and curricula (Choi & Chepyator-Thomson, 2011). Thus, research on multicultural education continues to grow.

The study of multicultural education is predicated on five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 2008). These dimensions provided assistance in developing interview questions, in understanding the roll of the teacher in education and in discovering a fresh way of looking at diversity. A brief description of each dimension is given here based on *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (2008), and supplemented by Sutliff and Perry's article on multicultural education in physical education.

"Content integration deals with the extent to which teachers use examples, data, and information from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate the key concepts,

principles, generalizations, and theories in their subject area or discipline” (Banks, 2008, p. 31). This dimension can help teachers integrate multicultural education into PE, support other content areas and let students know that their culture is important. Teachers would be asking their refugee students questions about PE and sport in their culture or former homeland. A PE teacher could use students as examples or have them talk about their favorite sport or athlete. This way the entire class learns to respect physical activity from other countries and the students from which they come (Sutliff & Perry, 2000). The dimension of knowledge construction “helps students to understand how knowledge is created and how is it influenced by the racial, ethnic, gender, and social-class positions of individuals and groups” (Banks, 2008, p.31). This dimension helps students understand, to think critically, and to put what they are learning into a more centered context (Banks & Tucker, 1998; Gorski, 2010). To construct knowledge the PE teacher has to create an environment that allows for discussion and exchange of ideas and knowledge. This open learning environment encourages students to understand each other and build on their previous knowledge (Sutliff & Perry, 2000). PE teachers who work with diverse students have an opportunity to build knowledge in their classroom, but it must be a planned experience. The third dimension is prejudice reduction, which “describes the characteristics of children’s racial attitudes and strategies that can be used to help the student to develop more positive racial and ethnic attitudes” (Banks, 2008, p.34). PE teachers have a responsibility to work towards reducing prejudice in the classroom knowing that students do exhibit prejudice and racism toward refugees. This dimension aims to “help students develop more open and

positive attitudes toward different groups” (Sutliff & Perry, 2000, p. 35). The very nature of the PE classroom, or gym, provides a suitable environment for students to work together, share language, and cooperate for learning. Fourthly, equity pedagogy “exists when teachers use techniques and teaching methods that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups” (Banks, 2008, p. 34). Teachers can change their pedagogical teaching practices to help all students be successful. In order to make these changes teachers have to know their students and become active learners of diversity and culture (Sutliff & Perry, 2000). Modification, adaptation and reflective all become a part of the teacher’s pedagogical practice and behavior. Finally, multicultural education empowers the total school culture and social structure to become an environment of educational equality (Banks, 2008). Secondary PE teachers and coaches often group students according to what they participate in; such as sports, cheerleading, band or art. Diverse student may become subject to a form of racism because of who they are, such as African-American students play sports, Asian students are in STEM, Hispanic students play soccer and White students are in band or choir (Banks & Tucker, 1998). Again, since PE teachers and coaches are leaders and often interact with all students in a school they are uniquely positioned to help students form a positive school culture. A major goal of multicultural education is to challenge teachers to “create equal educational opportunities for student from different racial, ethnic, language and social-class groups” (Banks, 2008, p. 120). By doing so they can help close the achievement gap that allows students of diversity to dropout or fail. Refugees arrive and find themselves in this achievement gap



and often can't climb out of it unless someone is willing to go the extra mile. PE teachers can be an agent of rescue if they truly understand what it means to a multicultural educator.

In Banks' *Cultural Diversity and Education* (2006) he links together diversity and citizenship education. Citizenship is a part of the refugee resettlement process. Refugees come to America with the ultimate goal of becoming an active citizen. "Citizens in this century need the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to function in their cultural communities and beyond their cultural borders" (Banks, 2006, p.25). In an effort to understand the educational needs of refugees and immigrants it is necessary to realize that their goals lie in the promise of citizenship. Every teacher, including PE teachers, has a part to play in this educational process. PE provides the opportunity for social interaction, language acquisition, and physical skills needed to function in society. A school or "nation that alienates and does not meaningfully and structurally include an ethnic or cultural group into the national culture runs the risk of creating alienation within that group" (Banks, 2006, p. 35).

An approach often seen is that of assimilationist education where students lose their own culture, language or ethnic identity. This approach is not carried out on purpose, but if the PE teacher is not aware of their own cultural sensitivity or educational approach, then they become like the frog in the kettle and little by little they assimilate to their new culture. In some cases they become marginalized in both their new culture and their original community culture (Banks, 2006; Stuart, 2004). Considering refugees and PE, and in keeping with the dimension of equity pedagogy,

Banks' states that "multicultural education suggests a type of education concerned with creating educational environments in which students from a variety of micro cultural groups such as race/ethnicity, gender, social class, regional groups, and people with disabilities experience educational equality" (Banks, 2006, p. 78). I would not hesitate to equate refugees with those micro cultural groups seeking to combine their unique culture into the mainstream of the local culture of the community and school. Banks (2006) continues by stating, "because of the unique problems of each ethnic and racial group, educational institutions should implement targeted educational interventions to complement and strengthen generic multicultural education" (p.78). The interventions could be included in PE curriculum and in PE teacher's practices. This would involve preparing pre-service teachers while they are still in their professional training. If it is discovered that PE teachers are not sure how to proceed with a practice of equity pedagogy then it would be up to institutions of higher learning or school districts to make sure this is included in the curriculum and professional development. It is my aim to discover what multicultural education might mean to PE teachers in this study.

Banks' (2007) *Educating Citizens in a Multicultural Society* covers much of the same ideas and concepts found in his earlier work. His ideas and theories on multicultural education are important pieces of knowledge for every teacher, including PE teachers. Banks (2007) maintains that it is true that "most teachers now in the classroom and in teacher education programs are likely to have students from diverse ethnic, racial, language, and religious groups in their classrooms during their careers. This is true for both inner-city and suburban teachers" (p.viii). This is a description of the

participants for this study to a great degree. Refugees and immigrants make up a substantial number of students in many of the PE classrooms in schools across the Southern and Southwestern regions of the U.S. It is my goal to find the ones that are the most diverse and study how these cross-cultural interactions are affecting the PE teachers' behavior and teaching practice. Teachers and administrators daily interact and engage with students and parents from diverse racial and ethnic groups. Be they refugees or immigrants, the teacher and administrator practice open discussion and free speech as we have all been taught in our democratic society (Banks, 2007). The teacher and the administrator have conversations about policy, curriculum and extra-curricular activities, allowing diverse peoples to express their opinions and concerns. Many refugee students come to America without a strong background in physical education, thus I plan to discover if members of the refugee community ever ask about PE in the school, and if so, what are the responses to such inquiries.

“The teacher is a key variable in successfully implementing multicultural education and in helping students to develop democratic racial attitudes and behaviors. Teachers are human beings who bring their cultural perspectives, values, hopes and dreams to the classroom” (Banks, 2007, p.113). The PE teacher has every opportunity to influence students through their attitudes, language and behaviors. This is why it is important to discover exactly how refugees and immigrant students might affect certain behaviors and practices. If PE teachers have internalized American values, regardless of their race or ethnicity, as they have lived here, attended university and adopted democratic ideologies, then they may be in need of some multicultural education

themselves (Banks, 2007, 2006). It is somewhat prophetic that Banks (2007) wrote: “If the U.S. does not become a more culturally sensitive society in which citizens from different groups can live and work in harmony, its survival as a strong and democratic nation will be imperiled” (p.114). Given today’s political climate and some strong divisions among groups in this country, we may have to depend on our new diverse friends to keep us in harmony. PE teachers could be a part of that transformation and I think they probably are.

In Gay and Howard’s (2000) research on multicultural teacher education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, statistics point out the fact that the demographics of the U.S. are changing. Students in public schools and members of society are becoming more diverse, not just racially and ethnically, but social and linguistically. The authors describe a great divide or separation in large cities and urban centers. However as the population moves toward these differences, the majority of classroom teachers continue to be represented by white females. Gay and Howard describe several attitudes and assumptions about teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including fear of teaching diverse students, resistance to understanding and acknowledging racism and a lack of training for teachers in multicultural education. Concerning pre-service education, they maintain: “This training should begin with multicultural education being mandatory, explicit and thorough in all teacher education programs. Whether teachers intend to work in schools with students from predominantly homogeneous populations or from multiple ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds, all need to develop multicultural knowledge and pedagogical skills” (p. 7). Multicultural skills and pedagogical knowledge is vital for teaching and

foundational for education, and as other researchers have stated, it may take some time to implement this type of training (Gay & Howard, 2000; Harrison, Carson & Burden, 2010).

### **Discovering Cultural Competency**

In Milner's (2012) *"Start Where You Are, but Don't Stay There,"* educators are challenged to engage the opportunity gaps that exist in our schools today by expanding what they believe, adjusting a pre-existing mind set and changing their educational practices. The Explanatory Framework (Milner, 2012, pp. 13-44) is applicable to this study in that it allowed me to explore the five interconnected areas to see if physical educators are addressing the opportunity gaps of refugees and immigrants and their own cultural competency. The framework includes: color blindness, cultural conflicts, myth of meritocracy, low expectations and deficit mind-sets, and context-neutral mind-sets. In a school where refugees and immigrants are creating a more diverse experience, physical education teachers are often confronted by diversity that they weren't prepared for or due to the sudden or slow growth of a diverse population of students.

Color blindness is not a positive attribute because it does not allow teachers to see their students for all that they are. Teachers are often unaware of this negative attribute that is derived from lack of knowledge, fear, inexperience or exposure to diversity (Burden, Hodge, O'Bryant & Harrison, 2004). Culp (2016) referred to Banks' interpretation of colorblindness as an assimilationist ideology requiring unique cultural groups to function within the common dominant culture. Because most refugees are students of color teachers need to recognize and differentiate race from ethnicity and

the multiple ways a proper understanding of how race and ethnicity may intersect with teaching and learning. When teachers adopt color blindness they really don't see their students' for who they are within their unique cultural context. Milner (2010) wrote, "Such teachers are attempting to address incomplete students who do not have a race, and student performance can suffer" (p. 121).

"When teachers operate mostly or solely from their own cultural references and ways of knowing and experiencing the world, the learning milieu can seem foreign to students of color, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students whose first language is not English, and students who live or have lived in different regions of the country or world" (Milner, 2010, p.122). Cultural conflicts lead to disciplinary issues that often come from misunderstandings of culture, language and history. Lack of success for refugee students may simply come from the known or unknown differences in cultural thoughts and ideologies of the teacher over that of the student.

Milner (2012) points out that many educators believe that a student's performance is related to hard work, status or the result of merit. This myth of meritocracy is especially relevant because most refugees arrive and immediately find themselves in poverty. Educators must understand that the economic welfare of a refugee student has a tremendous effect on learning and success. Due to a misunderstanding of the refugee student, or the unfair practice of assuming all refugees are the same, teachers often place low expectations for their students. Students on the other hand long for stability and place their faith in education as the way out of poverty and the economic challenges they face after being resettled (McWilliams & Bonet,

2016). Teachers accept the stereotype that leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy and thus fail to sufficiently challenge refugee and immigrant students. Hard work is just not enough and with a lack of encouragement and guidance, refugee students will fail.

Finally, teachers must know the context in which they teach and the community that surrounds them. Teachers may have a low level of commitment to the students or to the school, and lack the desire to really get to know the students. As previously mentioned, refugees come from very different school situations and have had anything but a normal education. Understanding their context, as it intersects with teachers and physical education will provide a much better understanding of the refugee's needs as a person and as a student.

### **Physical education**

Cultural competency is vital for all teachers and this includes PE teachers. Harrison, Carson & Burden (2010) expressed, "If physical education teachers are to successfully engage a diverse student population in becoming physically educated and active in a culturally relevant fashion, they should accomplish it with a curriculum and teaching style that maintains a sense of cultural identity and connection to students" (p.185). PE teachers have to learn to understand the culture from which they come, their own perspective on the world and how to become knowledgeable to other cultures. They learn to respect other people, their students and the differences they bring into the learning environment. In Harrison, Carson & Burden's study, they gathered survey data from PE teachers both male and female, white and of color. They wanted to evaluate the participant's cultural competency to determine if White

teachers were more or less culturally competent than teachers of color. The results indicated that female teachers and teachers of color showed to be more culturally competent. However the primary implication was that all PE teachers should be receiving “a broad base of cultural knowledge and culturally responsive teaching strategies” (p. 194). Not only do pre-service teachers need training at the higher education level, but in-service teachers could also improve from training on diversity and culturally relevant pedagogy. Their call for greater exposure to diverse students, culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant curriculum is one that institutions should heed. It would appear to be challenging for PE teachers to get this type of training once they begin their careers.

A key article discussing multiculturalism in physical education is Choi & Chepyator-Thompson’s (2011) literature review. They reviewed the current literature on multicultural education in the context of teaching physical education. They provided an overview of the history of multicultural education and define it as an education that values diversity, various cultural perspectives and an opportunity for all students to have equal access to knowledge and skills. In their research they point out that even though schools strive to have multicultural education programs there is still a gap between student and teacher. Teachers lack the cultural competency to interact with students who are not like themselves, and they are generally not sensitive to the needs of diverse students. Not only are the teachers unprepared, but also there is a lack of culturally responsive pedagogy and curriculum. The authors provide a review of literature that addresses physical education teachers and curriculum choices in the PE



context. They conclude by pointing out that human migration (i.e. refugee resettlement) is growing and creating diverse school populations, thus research in this area can greatly help pre-service teacher programs and in-service training. Choi & Chepyator-Thompson put forth that, “Despite the limited number of studies and the wide range of examination, the results of these studies reveal that PE teachers have varying degrees of knowledge and understanding of multicultural education” (p. 19). They strongly support the need for teacher education and curriculum that includes multicultural education.

Several studies explored cultural competency, cultural diversity and cultural sensitivity among in-service teachers and teacher candidates in PETE programs. In the 2010 study of PE teachers and teacher candidates, Columna, Foley and Lytle found that attitudes toward cultural pluralism and diversity in PE was generally valued for understanding and teaching, although the study revealed different responses along gender lines, and not from experience. Males were less likely to develop and integrate strategies into PE lessons that would demonstrate a value on diversity. Females “held more positive attitudes and had a higher level of comfort when interacting with students of diverse backgrounds” (p. 306). The findings disclosed that PE teachers didn’t feel competent or capable of creating culturally responsive strategies for students of diversity. The sample size and data collection were significant, but it was not apparent if the participants worked with diverse students or a refugee population. The measurement of attitudes toward diversity is enough to determine that PE teachers need to have knowledge of cultural diversity and recognize their own cultural competency. Columna, Foley and Lytle’s (2010) research further developed the idea

that teachers, both in-service and pre-service, tend to use prior knowledge and experiences to determine instructional strategies without giving a great deal of thought to “preferences of physical activity from varying ethnic and culturally diverse groups” (p. 297). The study further supports the need for diversity training in PETE programs for teacher candidates.

In a study on pre-service teachers experiential perspectives based on a service practicum, Culp, Chepyator-Thomson, Rose and Hsu (2009) explain that due to an emphasis on multiculturalism there is a the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in PETE programs. “Implications for PETE programs are that the multicultural learning practicum is of benefit to pre-service teachers’ development of culturally responsive pedagogical skills, thus permitting them to acquire knowledge from diverse students’ backgrounds” (p.24). The study fully supported multicultural education as a valuable part of a pre-service teachers’ preparation for working with diverse students in PE. Not only is it valuable for pre-service teachers, but also all teachers should have a “sound knowledge base about other cultures” (p.24). Experiential learning or practicums are vital to a pre-service teachers’ training and PETE programs should provide courses and programs where candidates can learn to appreciate diversity in all forms. The research from Culp et al. (2009) maintain that practicum experiences can assist with developing teaching strategies, demonstrating skills and acquiring knowledge to lead PE teacher candidates toward an effective career.

Internationally, Australian researchers explored the experiences of first year PE teachers who taught African refugees. Teachers adjusted their teaching styles and

lesson strategies to create a suitable learning environment and concluded that training is needed to help PE teachers, along with adequate support on the professional level (Baldwin, 2015). Hoyer and Henriksen (2018) wanted to evaluate cultural competency among pre-service teachers in a PETE course that allowed students to teach soccer in Denmark. Knowing the importance of preparing PE teacher candidates for working with students of diversity, the authors developed this course to “stimulate the PETE students’ acquisition of cultural competence” (p. 40). Their study supported the ongoing process of learning and gaining cultural competency through experience, skill development and formal training. They concluded that, indeed, there is a need for pre-service teachers to learn how to become culturally sensitive and to develop cultural competency so that they can be well prepared for diverse PE settings. Soccer was a unique, and fun, tool and model for assisting teacher candidates learn practical pedagogical strategies for becoming more culturally competent.

Sutcliff and Perry (2000) examine multiculturalism in elementary physical education, and explain the need for integrating content, the constructing of knowledge, reducing prejudice and provided equal pedagogy. In this article they provide simple steps and concepts toward incorporating multicultural education into the PE content, and reminding the reader that the goal is to create equal opportunities for students to learn. In order to accomplish the task of integration the PE teacher can use appropriate cultural games taught by some students. Knowledge is constructed and used as a guide to help students make their own interpretations. Students are taught to cooperate, and the teacher develops strategies to reduce negative racial attitudes and discrimination.

The teacher takes the culture of the students into consideration in order that the appropriate language is used, and teaching styles are modified to make sure that students are learning in the diverse environment. This practically useful article is helpful for any PE teacher.

Hansen (2014) examined the importance of cultural competency in physical education. Agreeing that much has been researched and written on cultural competency and student learning, Hansen states, “there is a lack of literature examining strategies for providing practical methods and resources for faculty to develop and strengthen their own cultural competency” (p.13). If teachers are to be effective, they must become culturally competent through knowledge, skills and experience. Teachers have to accept the differences of diverse classrooms, understanding the dynamics of students and their cultures. Teachers have to know their own culture, their own values and how they express themselves in their teaching. Current teachers are asked to educate these diverse students with little to no assistance in multicultural education strategies, and pre-service teachers are expected to know what it means to be culturally competent, even if they don’t receive any training in their PETE programs. Teachers must know the content they teach, and to be effective in the diverse classroom, “it is essential to cross the threshold of ethnic diversity and learn what it means to be a culturally competent teacher” (Hansen, p.15). It becomes vital for teacher training programs to prepare future teachers to recognize the importance of this skill and insure its place in the training curriculum.

Diversity training for pre-service PE teachers was the focus of an article by Burden, Hodge, O'Bryant and Harrison (2004), in which PETE programs are being encouraged to make diversity education, cultural competency and intercultural sensitivity a part of the PETE training program. PE teachers need to know how to develop culturally sensitive teaching strategies, work effectively with diverse students and teachers, and have opportunities for exposure to diverse student situations. They also maintain that higher education teacher trainers have a responsibility to prepare PE teacher candidates for cross-cultural awareness by using culturally responsive curriculum. Burden et al., (2004) further describe meaningful strategies for change including professional socialization, professional development and a transition from "a dependency on ethnocentric views toward ethno-relative values of intercultural sensitivity" (p.180). PETE programs are responsible for preparing a new generation of PE teachers who will influence, and be influenced by, a new century of diverse learners.

There is a need for teachers to teach multicultural education in schools just like we need first responders to a traumatic situation, or a counselor that are called in to assist in a moment of crisis. Students have been traumatized by so many changes. They have left behind a language, a culture, and a community; now forced to adapt to a way of life that is very different from what they knew (Rotich & Fuller, 2016). As they come to the gym or PE room it is possible that they can find the friendly face of a PE teacher and the welcoming attitude that goes along with it. Although it is no easy task, PE teachers provide a learning environment where refugee students get the opportunity to "experience and grow from knowledge, perspectives and reference points of other

groups other than their own” (Butt & Pahnos, 1995, p.48). Howard (1985) in Butt & Pahnos (1995) maintained that multicultural learning involves the head, heart and hands. The head provides the location for knowledge, the heart is the home of attitudes and feelings, and the hands are for activities and actions. In our PETE program we address this multicultural learning when developing lesson plan objectives that address three corresponding domains: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. PE teachers address multicultural education by focusing on the head, heart and hands. They learn students’ names even when they are really hard to pronounce and they are thoughtful about instruction and education in general. Teachers sacrifice their own comfort zones by challenging their bias, prejudices and racial attitudes. Finally, they provide fun, active resources for students to interact with and work hard so all students are involved in the lesson (Gorski, 2010). Butt and Pahnos (1995) build a strong case for multicultural education by providing teachers with some guidelines on how to teach PE based on Banks’ dimensions. They help teachers understand the importance of a learning environment that “provides equity and reflects and embraces the diversity of the world in which we live” (p.48). In whole, the article addresses curriculum development, the learning environment, teaching strategies, prejudice reduction and teacher education (Butt & Pahnos, 1995). Further study would incorporate their self-reflection questions on prejudice and bias reduction along with questions regarding cultural sensitivity in order to understand more fully the behaviors of PE teachers toward diverse students.

Dagkas (2007) explored the teaching practices of PE teachers in a culturally diverse international setting. One teacher was Greek and the other British, and the

schools where they taught were of the same origin. The study explained that the research on the relationships between PE teachers and diverse students is limited. Teachers don't have knowledge or experience in teaching culturally diverse students, however they have the responsibility to consider students' culture, language and religion in their teaching. The result of this qualitative study found that pre-service teacher training was inadequate to prepare teachers for teaching culturally relevant content and multicultural education. The study provided some interesting insights into the experiences of two different teachers and their diverse contexts. It was concluded that more research needed to be done on the perspectives of PE teachers in multicultural situations.

### **Culturally relevant pedagogy**

This study must mention culturally relevant pedagogy and the work of Ladson-Billings (1995). This scholar has done much to help educators consider good teaching and relevant pedagogy. Although her research is primarily focused on African-American students, the concepts and principles are clear and useful in any context where the students, such as refugee students, are situated in a culture that is not their own and the teachers are culturally different from them. Ladson-Billings informs researchers and teachers alike that research is important to their profession. Personal research into culturally relevant pedagogical practices and theory is a worthy investment for developing excellent teaching practices. Culturally relevant teaching is active, dynamic, and should be done with confidence. With learning as the goal, teachers may find that learning may occur with or without some prescribed curriculum. Relationships between

teacher and student should be healthy and open. Teachers who practice culturally relevant pedagogy “encouraged the students to learn collaboratively, teach each other, and be responsible for each other’s learning” (Ladson-Billings, p. 163). This is what positive culturally relevant pedagogy looks like, not only for the African-American but also for all students of color and varied cultural backgrounds such as refugees and immigrants.

The theme of cultural competency through communication is explored in Rowe & Paterson’s (2010) article where they state that “communication is recognized as an essential human need and, therefore, as a basic human right” (p.334). Communication is vital to cultural competency and where there is misunderstanding or an inability to communicate, barriers may be formed. Many refugees don’t overcome these communication barriers, and as a result they are misunderstood and unable to navigate through many of life’s basic tasks, such as going to a medical health care provider or enrolling a child in school. Culturally competent communication addresses disparities and inadequacies among those who are most vulnerable. The conclusion of this article is that mistakes will happen and are usually not intentional. It is imperative to alleviate the language/communication barriers if possible. Those who work with the refugee community, including students, should become educated about refugees and recognize that culturally competent communication is a part of the ongoing pursuit of professional practice. The lack of communication, or a linguistic barrier, does not promote relationship building or successful learning, only more problems.



## **Refugees' education**

A significant review of literature is McBrien's (2005) article on the educational needs and barriers for refugee students. This study is quite thorough as it provides a review of numerous articles discussing refugees and the acculturation process. She examines the contextual background, students' needs, obstacles to success, and current research that helps overcome those obstacles. Her conclusion points to an emphasis on the range of cultures and the stresses endured by refugees throughout the resettlement process. Refugees come from all over the world so there is not always one answer to solve all the problems, which may include language, family dynamics, academics and various types of trauma. Some of the strategies to success include appropriate assimilation of societal, political and educational support, linguistics, solving parental confusion, and "the importance of teachers' and administrators understanding the refugee experience" (McBrien, p.356). The limitation of the review is that it speaks to education as a whole, with no reference to physical education. Even though it doesn't speak to PE, any professional educator would appreciate the research here and see the practical implications for teaching. The other limitation is the problem of scholars using the term immigrant and refugee when referring to the same people. This makes the literature selection broad and not always related to the refugee. Both refugees and immigrants face similar struggles, including adjustments to a new country, and both need the assistance of a positive resettlement process, wherever it comes from.

## **Cultural competency**

In Domangue & Carson's (2008) study on preparing culturally relevant teachers, they cite Stuart's definition of cultural competency as "the ability to understand and constructively relate to the uniqueness of each individual in light of the diverse cultures that influence each person's perspective" (p. 349). If culturally relevant PE teachers are to include the dimensions of multicultural education in their content, then they themselves have to know how, and why it is important. They have to understand and appreciate how each individual student is different based on their culture, their race and their ethnicity. PE teachers usually teach all the students in a school, especially in elementary and the middle level grades, and are called upon to create equal learning opportunities for all of them (Banks, 2008). Students who come from the refugee resettlement areas represent different racial, ethnic, and social groups. Perhaps the total school environment can be changed so that all students can achieve success and learn to the best of their ability. Perhaps the PE teacher can become an agent of transformation, or even reformation, for the causes of multicultural education.

When considering cultural competency, research supports the idea that PE and sports, and those who teach or coach, have the characteristics necessary to facilitate the needed changes and opportunities for student success. This may be done through teaching soccer in a PETE program or through play and activity. The learning outcomes are based on the participants and the teacher. It requires knowledge of skill, content and confidence in cultural competency (Hoyer & Henriksen, 2018; Monroe, 1995). Harrison, Carson and Burden (2010) maintain that success is possible when a culturally

relevant curriculum is available and partnered with a teaching style that promotes a student's cultural identity. When a PE teacher can utilize their own cultural competency they have the potential to bring out cultural knowledge and skills made available through their relationship with the student. PE teachers must not limit themselves to societal practices and viewpoints of the past, but learn to appreciate and utilize the rich cultural knowledge or differences that are presented to them by diverse students. In the study from McCaughtry, et al., (2006) teachers expressed concern about teaching diverse students with cultural competency. Areas of concern included providing relevant physical activities, use of visual representations for communication and overcoming the communication/language barrier during instruction. In spite of the challenges, teachers can feel some sense of success as they understand the reality of their situation and that through investigation and professional development they can gather the necessary tools to be a culturally competent teacher.

Nonetheless, there is a gap in the literature. There is a growing body of literature on cultural competency coming from studies on teaching diverse students in urban schools from researchers such as Sliwa, et al. (2017); from Domangue & Carson's (2008) research on the shaping of cultural competency among pre-service PE teachers; and subsequent international research from Australia's Peralta, O'Connor, Cotton & Bennie (2014) on providing service learning opportunities for pre-service PE teachers to help them understand and develop their own cultural competency in teaching. These studies address cultural competency in the urban setting and indigenous populations, but the literature does not specifically address culturally competent teaching of PE to refugee

and immigrant populations. It will be necessary to further investigate additional studies on this topic, adding it to my knowledge and understanding. Banks, Gay, Ladson-Billings and others mentioned here have made it clear that cultural competency is an important skill for current and future teachers. As our schools become more diverse, the knowledge and skills for cultural competency will be essential for a successful learning environment.

In St. John's bestseller (2010) about a refugee soccer team, he describes the multicultural experiences of a female, Lebanese coach who takes on the challenge of creating a soccer program for refugee boys in the Atlanta area. The story provides an insightful look into the histories, current living situations and the importance of sports to boys who needed each other, in spite of the fact that they came from all over the world. Through soccer the boys and their coach provide the reader with an example of Banks' dimension of multicultural education, especially the construction of knowledge and empowerment. Both coach and players learned from each other, experience and their surroundings to give them the power they needed to succeed both on and off the field. This story served as a source of encouragement and inspiration for this study, and as such, it provided lots of informational and anecdotal evidence of the realities of refugee resettlement. It will be interesting to discover, in future research, if PE teachers are aware of similar stories of physical activity among refugee students in their communities, and how it influences the school PE program.

## **In the Urban setting**

The relevant work of Harrison, Carson & Burden (2010) described in the earlier section on Physical Education, led me to explore studies on physical activity in urban areas. The urban centers are often the locations where refugees are resettled (Collett, 2010; Conner, 2017; Pipher, 2003). Ennis and Chen (1995) found that PE teachers in urban areas appeared to be more concerned about social responsibility, than mastering the content. Social responsibility, as developed by Hellison (2011) is often referred to in the peace education literature (Harris, 2011; Reardon, 1988). Hellison developed this model by working with students in urban schools, alternative schools and after-school programs. PE teachers could greatly benefit from a program like this, and from those who are passionate about teaching this model. The context of the schools dictated the choice of curriculum and strategies for instruction. Following this study, Ennis published the “Sport for Peace” curriculum to be used in setting where the social values learning and conflict resolution content was to be strongly emphasized alongside the physical (Ennis, et al., 1999). A three-year study by McCaughtry, Barnard, Martin, Shen and Kulinna (2006) on urban PE teachers reported five challenges, including: a lack of resources, difficulty in providing culturally relevant teaching, a need for a curriculum based on games, a basketball focused environment, and violence in and out of the school community. In spite of these challenges teachers were optimistic about creating strategies to overcome the barriers to learning. Ennis’ research evaluating urban PE

teachers' perspectives were consistent with multiculturalism literature, especially as they related to a lack of cultural competency and the challenge of linguistic issues.

In their article on supporting refugee students, Robertson and Breiseth (2008) describe urban-resettled refugees in ELL classrooms and their challenges. They provide a glimpse of these challenges including mental health issues limited educational experiences, resettlement issues and lack of documentation. Robertson and Breiseth, both with experience in researching ELL students and teachers in urban areas such as Minneapolis, Denver and Vancouver, provided a list of ideas to welcome and encourage refugee students. These ideas are easily adapted to the PE classroom and important for any PE teacher who wishes to create a positive relationship with refugee students, especially in the first few months of school. Some applicable suggestions include: learning about your student, remembering their stress issues, integrating the students' cultural information into the class, increasing the exposure to language and pairing students with trained peers for language acquisition and socialization. Language continues to be a barrier between teacher and students, and most scholars would agree that success in school is dependent on language acquisition (Baldwin, 2015; Collet, 2010; McNeely, et al, 2017) Four additional points that are significant for teachers to consider are to: create a language-rich environment, simplify what you say, support language learning, and allow students to learn from each other when possible (Robertson, 2016). It is easy to surmise that language is an issue that confronts both student and teacher. Students don't know, or know very little, English and teachers don't know even one or two other languages besides English. It is possible that a PE

teacher from a Hispanic background may know enough Spanish to communicate with refugees and immigrants from Central or South America, but when a class is represented by over 35 different languages it is impossible for a teacher to do anything but speak English (Pipher, 2002; St. John, 2009). Rowe and Patterson (2010) put it this way: “Communication is recognized as an essential human need and, therefore, as a basic human right. Without it, no individual or community can exist or prosper” (p.334). Cultural sensitivity is displayed through our ability to communicate with another person. Accomplishment and self worth is also achieved when one person can communicate with another. Both the refugee student and the teacher must communicate. It is the first step towards respect and acceptance.

## **Health**

As for physical activity and health among refugees, a group of researchers surveyed Iraqi refugees in the U.S. to assess their physical and mental health needs. They found that the refugees did suffer from various negative health conditions even though they had the healthcare treatments available to them. They concluded that resettlement agencies needed to consider refugee health concerns and make appropriate decisions based on culture, language and post settlement stress (Taylor, et al., 2014). In a self-reported study on physical activity, refugees in Minnesota, described barriers to physical activity even though they perceived it to be important.

In a Canadian study, Measham, et al. (2014) looked at models of mental health care for refugee children. This was a significant study given the stress and trauma that most refugee children go through during the resettlement process. A number of case

vignettes were examined to determine strategies that could be developed by resettlement agencies and the receiving health community. The researchers concluded by offering a model of treatment and support for refugee children at risk. Agencies and organizations involved in the resettlement of refugee children and their families can advocate for health care services, and provide valuable information to government agencies, including schools, that provide social and physical support.

In the Australian study, Fabio (2014) conducted a study on refugee children and the risks related to nutritional deficits. The UN reports that 41% of the world's refugees are children (United Nations, Refugees, The Numbers, n.d.), and the UNHCR reports that approximately 60% of these children live in refugee camps and urban slums in large cities around the world. Fabio concluded that the refugee children are nutritionally at risk, and most camps are not adequately equipped to provide proper food and vitamin supplements. Some of these children will make their way to a country of resettlement, arriving in poor health and in need of support and education. Her conclusion was to encourage organizations to assist in prevention, provide financial help, and consider acculturation practices.

Refugee children have special needs. Strelakova & Hoot (2008) provide an overview of the difficulties faced by refugee children and their families. After a long journey to reach a nation of safety, children are usually enrolled in schools where the language is different, the teachers are White, and very unfamiliar with the American culture. The authors discuss the educational obstacles faced by children, including their previous traumatic experiences, parental resistance, discrimination, cultural



misunderstandings, and poor socioeconomic conditions. Teachers and administrators are warned so that they might respond to the needs of these children appropriately. Refugee students often act out inappropriate behaviors, including anger, fear, withdrawal, negative reaction to authority and poor achievement. The authors conclude that these special children are worthy of our best efforts and to a quality educational experience.

### **Physical education and physical literacy**

Literature and research concerning the implications of peace education concepts being applied to refugees in the physical education setting is almost non-existent. Only in United Nations documents do we find peace education and peace initiatives being supported through sport and physical activity (UNOSDP Annual Report, 2013; UNICEF, 2004). These UN organizations advocate for the right of children and youth to participate in sport and have physical activity during their day, even in refugee camps. As a result a number of organizations, such as Right to Play International and Football 4 Peace International, have organized to meet those needs. Physical literacy is addressed by NASPE (2014) and organizations such as SHAPE America. In national PE standards 4 and 5, it is desired for all physically literate persons to exhibit respect for others through social behavior, and to recognize the value of physical activity for health and social interaction. My preliminary literature research on these organizations and standards was conducted last year and will not be discussed in depth here.

Wieland, et al. (2015), interviewed focus groups of refugees and immigrants and found similar experiences related to physical activity. Most of the participants reported

that their participation in physical activity was determined by social, cultural and linguistic factors, but when they did pursue physical activity they did so when motivated by family and friends. It was concluded that those who teach PE or promote physical activity should consider what constitutes barriers, and what can motivate refugees to engage in physical activity.

Watson (2006) provided a study highlighting short vignettes that bring attention to issues of concern regarding culture, language, and religion of refugee youth. Her article pointed to the physical activity setting in schools where students can move and interact with each other and the teacher. The potential problem in this interactive social environment includes the limited language abilities of participants, the difference in cultures, and the lack of culturally appropriate instructional strategies. She concludes by suggesting that teachers should demonstrate cultural competency, and create an atmosphere that is inclusive of all students. Problems exist and behavior issues are going to happen, but the properly trained teacher can be a part of the solution and not an additional problem.

### **Future literature review and limitations**

It is important to continue learning and understanding the physical education teacher's experiences within the context of peace education, multicultural education, and a comprehensive school physical activity program. It will also be significant to learn about refugees and their journey of resettlement, including acculturation, education, language and perspectives toward physical education. The purpose is to explore

research that will give insight to the effect of refugee resettlement on physical education and the physical educator.

I have limited this research, and review, to articles and to a framework that will shape the study research questions. A thorough study on refugee student's perspectives of PE as well as attitudes towards physical activity is to be conducted in the future and will be of great benefit to the body of literature and provide greater support to the knowledge of refugees and their resettlement into schools and communities. Literature focusing on refugees is vital to this study and is included here to a limited degree because that knowledge will enhance how they perceive PE and PE teachers.

It is not the purpose of this study to interview or hear the perspectives of refugees toward physical education and their teachers. Therefore, in this study I have limited the research to hearing the stories of PE teachers; to observing teachers interacting with refugee and diverse students; and to being as open and understanding as possible to this phenomenon. I have also not chosen to pursue any type of cultural competency survey instrument at this point in order that I may be able to hear the stories first. This researcher's goal is to dig deeper into the literature of culturally relevant pedagogy and peace education as it relates to diverse learning communities.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding the two main actors involved in this phenomenon, refugees and PE teachers, the literature supports the framework and research questions by which we interpret the phenomenon and the actors. Refugees often arrive with little more than a suitcase or bag for each family member. They do not know the language, most children

have been out of school for months, and many suffer from various emotional traumas. At the surface level, the refugee has so many hoops to jump through, such as documentation, language, employment and education, but deep down they carry baggage much more significant and cannot be packed into a suitcase. This study seeks to determine if PE teachers recognize and understand the baggage and if so, how does that knowledge affect their teaching practices and behavior.

The literature further supports the fact that PE teachers may or may not choose to teach in schools that serve the refugee resettlement community. Some may simply be looking for any available job in the district, and are assigned to one of these schools. Given that the literature supports the perceived lack of training for teaching in diverse situations, it is plausible that most PE teachers are not adequately trained for: teaching in a cross-culturally, communicating with multi-lingual students, and/or interacting with several different ethnicities and communities. When beginning this study I noticed that recent research on refugees was scarce. In the past three years more and more scholars are attempting to understand this refugee crisis. However the research intersecting PE and refugees is still very limited. Children have the right to a quality education; teachers must be competent at teaching in a culturally appropriate manner. Refugees are looking for someone to show them human decency; teachers are often the first persons that are in a position to do that. Refugees are looking for peace and acceptance; teachers are 'lifting up the lamp' (Lazarus, 2015, p. 203) and have the opportunity to say 'welcome.' I believe it is important to hear the stories of teachers who experience this refugee resettlement phenomenon because they may provide information for other teachers

who share in the critical role of facilitating the transition of refugees toward inclusion and belonging.

Indeed, the *Golden Door* is open, and the PE teacher is often called upon to perform the task of concierge-teacher in order that meaningful physical education for refugee students can ensue. While there are a few studies on the mental and physical health of refugees, there is a paucity of research concerning the impact of refugee resettlements on physical education, physical activity, and teaching physical education in the U.S. There is also a gap in the literature for the implementing of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program in refugee resettlement areas. This would be an excellent topic for future research.

It could be said that the *Golden Door* is the door to becoming physically active, physically literate and physically educated. If so, then the PE teacher has to hold it open for these refugee students. If they don't, then they will find another door to enter, and perhaps the outcomes will not be desirable. Research points out that many refugee students who are unable to acculturate find security in drugs, gangs and other non-peaceful activities (Westermeyer, 2011). Interviews conducted by Stewart (2011) found that most refugee students make education a priority, and it is their only hope for a successful future. "Education is the agent of change" (p. 67), and in spite of all the challenges, students want a better life. I hope this study will help all teachers as they keep the door open.

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research design of this phenomenological study and explain the data collection methods. This research is unique in its focus and I determined to conduct it as a phenomenological multiple case study. Case studies are used in multiple disciplines to understand the many aspects of the phenomenon being studied within its context as well as the numerous sources of data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Sauro, 2015; Yin, 2003). Creswell (2007) maintains that, “case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e. a setting, a context)...developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases” (p. 73). Creswell, et al. (2007) went on to define case study research as,

a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews...and documents) and reports a case description and case-based themes (p.245).

The cases being studied here is the pedagogical practice and behaviors of multiple PE teachers within the context of the PE setting where there are substantial numbers of students who have been identified as refugees. Yin (2003) and Stake (1995) suggest that researchers take caution and not allow the study to become too broad in its scope or to have too many research questions. Yin (2003) further suggests data collection

procedures may be replicated with each case in a multiple-case design with the intent of collecting reliable data in order to gain an in-depth understanding of each teacher and the PE classroom context. Thus this collective case study is bound to time, location and context, keeping the study limited in breadth and depth. It is bound to time because the data is collected within a short period; it is bound to location because the data collection is limited to only a few selected schools; and it is bound to context because the participants are restricted to schools where refugees are present in substantial numbers. This multiple-case study describes a phenomenon in real-life contexts, i.e. PE teachers teaching refugee students (Yin, 2003). It is not within the purpose of this study to research refugee students or their reactions to the physical education class. However, it is the future intent to explore the perceptions and attitudes of refugee students towards PE and the PE teacher.

Yin (2003) defines a multiple case study as one where the researcher is able to explore different cases, draw comparisons and replicate findings throughout the cases. As such, cases have to be chosen carefully so that the researcher can predict similar findings. This study will explore different cases by interviewing PE teachers from different schools with multiple refugee students of different ages. The cases are similar in that the only teachers being interviewed will be PE teachers and the only context will be within the PE setting. Comparisons will be drawn from each case allowing for the prediction of similar results as they present themselves or to predict contrasting results based on the qualitative evidence that presents itself (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Yin (2003) recommends multiple types of sources of evidence for case studies. This study will

include interviews, archival records, direct observations, participant observations and physical artifacts, all of which are used as data in this study.

The qualitative data collected through interviews and direct observations will provide detailed, rich narratives of the PE teachers' meaningful experiences within this phenomenal context. Qualitative research will allow for the opportunity to uncover the phenomenological experiences because the "understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making a difference in people's lives" (Merriam, 2009, p.1). Qualitative research is a scientific approach to understanding, describing and interpreting a unique culture, group or phenomena. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research this way:

It is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p. 2)

Phenomenology draws upon the works of the philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). As a research method, it attempts to study and describe human beings and their experiences (Creswell, et al., 2007, Glesne, 2011). Sauro (2015) explained, "When you want to describe an event, activity, or phenomenon...you use a combination of



methods, such as conducting interviews or visiting places...to understand the meaning participants place on whatever's being examined" (p. 3). Phenomenological research emphasizes the individual's subjective experience, seeking the perception of the participant and the meaning of the lived experience. Lester (1999) maintains,

Phenomenological and associated approaches can be applied to single cases or...to deliberately selected samples. The establishment of a good level of and empathy is critical to gaining depth of information...and methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives (p.1).

Qualitative methods allowed for an interpretation of the participants' experiences within their context and influential environment (Yin, 2003). In order to understand the challenges and successes faced by PE teachers in refugee resettlement areas, this study included an initial interview to gather demographic information from each participant, followed by a semi-structured interview, a follow-up email for participants to verify the interview transcription and direct observations. There are a limited number of PE teachers who teach in schools with substantial numbers of refugee students, and it was important to make sure that all of the PE teachers' voices were heard and considered, appropriate to their experiences.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the experiences of others and discover how they made meaning from their experiences (Siedman, 1998; Creswell, 2013; Glesne, 2011). From the beginning I purposed to be a part of the data collecting process, knowing that I would have to understand my role in the data

collection/interview process. I recognized my need to be flexible and patient to conduct my way through any barriers or to meet the needs of teachers (Creswell, 2009; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research methods were chosen because this complemented my own personality and desire to discover insights of this phenomenon. Qualitative methods were also used to ensure that my research questions were answered with freedom, giving opportunity for participants to answer open-ended questions and further express any other related thoughts. This method provided an excellent guide to the investigation.

A constructivist approach was implemented in this study to demonstrate how physical educators navigate this educational phenomenon. This approach allowed me to understand the meanings physical educators have constructed about their world and their experiences as a result of refugee students in their classrooms, schools and community. As a researcher I desired to interact with the process, to gain an understanding of the experience, and to collect the data through a more interactive mode. Guba and Lincoln (1994) wrote, "The variable and personal nature of social constructions suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents" (p.111). By utilizing a constructivist methodology, I was able to obtain multiple perspectives through the interactions with participants, to understand the various social constructions of meaning and knowledge (Merten, 2010). I aimed to allow my participants to disclose these constructions through inquisitive qualitative interviews; it was a rich learning experience for all.

## **Approval process**

The approval process was completed in two phases. First, all required and appropriate documents were completed and submitted along with the application to obtain the Internal Review Board (IRB) approval from the University Office of Research Support and Compliance. An initial request was made to begin the study with a pilot project. Upon approval, the pilot study was conducted and completed. A second request was filed for the completion of the remainder of the study. The IRB approval was granted within an appropriate time frame.

Secondly, when all approvals were satisfied, I began the process of recruiting participants. Specific school districts were selected after meeting with local resettlement agencies and school district personnel. It was initially determined that three districts would be targeted in the Southern and Southwest regions of the U.S., but five districts were eventually represented. In each school district there is normally an office that oversees requests for conducting research within the district. These offices were contacted and appropriate application documents were obtained. If the district employed a physical education coordinator, they were contacted to get further information on schools and teachers who would meet the participant requirements for this study. Following those recommendations, formal applications were submitted to each of the district's review board, as required. Two districts in the Southern region granted permission to begin research, and one district denied permission; but would review the request again in the new school year. The one district in the Southwest did not require an application, only approval of the school principal or agreement of the

participant. With the permission of the Southern districts, an initial pilot study with five teachers was conducted and completed. While waiting on final approval from other area districts, an investigation was made into other area schools and teachers who could possibly be selected for the study. This process included researching school websites to find the names of PE teachers, communicating with the district PE coordinator and talking to government and non-profit organization professionals who might know of potential schools where there were significant populations of refugees.

### **Locations for the study**

This study was primarily conducted within two large urban areas in a Southern U.S. Two major cities were selected that were determined to be primary locations for refugee resettlement; each having large school districts that accommodate both refugees and immigrants. One of metropolitan cities is an economic center for the region with over 6 million residents in the area. The city targeted in this study has over 2.3 million residents and continues to develop as one of the most ethnically and racially diverse cities in the U.S. According to the Institute for Urban Research (Rice Kinder, 2018), this makes for an ideal place to explore diversity, racial identity and refugee populations. Over 90 different languages are spoken and it is estimated that over 500,000 illegal aliens, asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees live in the metro area. This urban center now has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest Hispanic population in the U.S. (World Population Review, 2017). There are over 20 separate independent school districts operating within the area. For this study, only three districts were selected based on the information provided in the approval process.

The second location for data collection was a single school district also located in the Southern U.S. This target location also has a substantial refugee resettlement population and a total population that makes it one of the larger urban centers in the region. This Southern city is culturally and ethnically diverse with over twenty cultures represented in multiple school districts. The concentration of refugees in certain areas of the urban area translates into a certain number of schools receiving the lion's share of the refugee students. Six schools were identified and chosen for this study.

Districts are not selected for refugee resettlement based on the services they provide, their size or cultural expertise, but for economic and housing availability. For this reason, the larger districts located in the urban area were targeted. There are other smaller districts with refugees, and two were selected due to the refugee resettlement located within them. Once the school districts were identified, individual schools were identified, and finally, potential study participants were identified within those schools. The identification process began with preliminary Internet research, trying to gather insight from the demographic data made public on a potential school's website. A barrier to locating schools in this manner is that students are not identified as refugees or immigrants, only by race or ethnicity, so this needed to be crosschecked with conversations with the resettlement agency personnel and with the district PE coordinators. Another barrier for locating participants is that PE teachers are not often identified nor is contact information made available. This selection process required emails to request meetings with district PE coordinators or visit schools directly.

The process of locating schools for potential participation in the study included the assistance of local agencies working with refugees. These agencies included Catholic Charities, Interfaith Ministries and International Rescue Committee. Each agency has designated coordinators who conduct cultural orientation meetings with refugee newcomers. They assist with language acquisition and finding employment. It was within the nature of this study to connect with district personnel and agency workers on a personal basis. They are gatekeepers to the participants and it seemed best for a qualitative study such as this to interact personally with them (Wanat, 2008). Networking with these gatekeepers will also allow me to conduct future research or to follow up with the participants in the future.

One other teacher was selected to participate in the study. This teacher is located in a large urban city in the Southwest U.S. where thousands of refugees have been assisted over the past five years. This Southwest region is home to one of the most populous cities in the U.S. with 4.5 million people in 2016 (World Population Review, 2018) and over 300 public school districts. It was a by chance that this teacher was introduced to me, and after hearing his story and understanding his role in teaching PE to refugee students, I determined to conduct an interview and include the data in this study, believing that it would add great insight to the results.

### **Participant selection**

For this study, “physical education teacher” refers to individuals who are currently teachers of PE in local public schools. The participants, all EC-12 certified and full-time PE teachers, were selected based on the location of their school in a

resettlement area and the presence of refugee students in that school. The PE teachers represented all levels of schools, elementary, middle, junior high and senior high. As the researcher I presented myself as a PETE professor at a local university and graduate student conducting research on schools with refugee students. None of the participants were students, nor were they graduates of either institution that I represented. I have not taught any of the participants and it is unlikely that I will ever teach with any of them.

The PE teachers were initially contacted by email or in person. The participant sample included both male and female and an age range was not considered. It was desired that the participants represent at least two to three different ethnic/racial groups, specifically African-American, Hispanic and Caucasian. The amount of teaching experience was not a limiting factor, however the participants had to be full-time employees of the district, not student teachers, interns or substitute teachers.

Based on earlier experiences of contacting teachers, the plan was to contact participants personally and establish a relationship before asking them if they would be interested in participating in the study. District coordinators and resettlement agency administrators were asked to give me the names of schools or teachers who share the common experience of teaching refugee students. After contacting several of the PE teachers directly, a snowball sampling was attempted, however this method did not prove to be productive. Participants who responded to initial inquiries did not know where other refugees were located in the district, and many were not sure of the names

of other teachers. The contact information from the coordinators and agencies was current and most beneficial.

After getting the names of schools that were known to have a substantial numbers of refugees, I looked at school websites to find the names of the PE teachers. If an email address was listed, I emailed the teacher to introduce myself and ask if they would be willing to talk to me about their PE program. Phone numbers were often available, but most every time this led to a voice mail or the school receptionist, and it was rare for teachers to call back. Email worked best and most of the teachers responded to my inquiries. If I did not hear from a specific teacher, I went directly to the school and made an introductory cold call. This worked more often than not. Following the steps of the approval process, and where it was applicable, I informed them that I had been in touch with the district coordinator and had approval to discuss my study with them. In the one district that required me to go directly to the principal, I emailed the principal and was permitted to contact the PE teacher. The one teacher from the Southwest was contacted directly by email. I inquired if permission to interview was required by the principal or district; it was not.

At the in-person introductory meeting, conducted at the school, the qualitative research study was explained to the participant and questions were answered as needed. My role as a researcher for the interviews and observation experiences was discussed. After the study was described, participants completed the Consent for Participation in Research Form. All of the participants who agreed to participate chose



to be in the study and signed the form (Appendix A). Not one participant believed that the interview or observation would impact the classroom setting, their instruction or their schedule.

The pilot study consisted of five teachers in one district in the Southern state described previously. All five interviews and observations took place at the school and at a time determined by the teacher. For three of the participants, the interview took place during the school day; for two, the interviews came at the end of the day. All of the observations took place during the school day at a time suggested by the teacher. After the pilot study I set a goal to interview a total of twelve PE teachers from as many schools as possible; based on the criteria that there were substantial numbers of refugee students. I believed this would add to the rich and comprehensive results for this study. In the end, because of my snowball sampling method, a total of seventeen participants were interviewed for this study; sixteen from the Southern region and one from the Southwest. All of the participants were employed by public schools in the district. I did not have participants from either private or charter schools.

### **Data collection and procedures**

This study examined qualitative data from PE teachers in selected school districts who could describe their phenomenological experiences of teaching PE where there are a substantial number of refugee students. Data collection was conducted in three continuous phases that were often progressing simultaneously:

Phase One – Securing consent and making an introductory contact was the initial

step. I determined to introduce myself, establish a rapport and to determine if they taught refugee students (Lester, 1999). After getting names and contact information from the district coordinator, and agency or the school website, potential participants were contacted by email. After contact was made, an appointment was set up for an introductory meeting. This introductory meeting was highly valuable because it was important to put a face with the email communication and establish a relationship. I attempted to create what Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) described as a “conversation with a purpose” (p.57), allowing each participant to communicate their story by asking simple open questions. I would introduce myself, talk about the purpose of my study and again ask if they would be willing to participate. As participants agreed to be in the study, an appointment was established to return to the school for the interview phase of the data collection. For those participants who expressed their willingness to participate in the interview via email or phone, a face-to-face introduction was not necessary and I proceeded directly to the interview and observations. Following this introduction a short demographic survey (Appendix B) was sent to each of the participants to obtain basic demographic information so that this would not have to be discussed in the interview. Fifty-three percent of the participants completed the survey to complete the data collection. For those who did not complete the survey the information was covered in the interview.

Phase Two – A face-to-face follow-up to the introductory contact to discuss the study, explain the written consent form and to gather demographic and contextual information about the participant and school if it was not previously provided. During

this meeting, the background and process for the study was explained, the role of the researcher was established and the consent forms were shared (Appendix A). After reading the form, the participants were asked to either participate or decline participation in the study. It was explained to participants that their identity will not be attached to the data collected and his or her personal name and information will be replaced with a descriptive ID tag or name, and in any results or publications all names will be replaced with pseudonyms. All forms were kept in a secure, private place for confidentiality purposes. All of the information from any communication or conversations was recorded as field notes to be analyzed at a later time. For the remainder of the study it was easy to communicate via email to set up any further meetings or clarify any questions. Establishing these relationships made for timely communication and purposeful conversations (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Phase Three - A semi-structured interview was conducted to obtain a narrative of experiences related to teaching refugee students and a discussion as to how this phenomenon influences the participant both personally and in his or her teaching practices. All but two of the interviews took place in person at the participant's school. Two of the interviews were completed over the phone. In three cases participants were not ready to conduct the interview and asked for a delay so that a better time and location could guarantee a quality interview. At the beginning of each interview I expressed my thanks for their willingness to participate in this study and that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the interviews, observations, transcriptions and analysis process. Each participant had my contact information and

could reach out to me if they had any questions or concerns. They were also informed that they could stop the interview or participation in the study at any time they wanted to. The interview questions focused on the teacher's descriptions teaching practices, cultural experiences, personal behaviors and perceptions toward refugee students. An interview protocol was utilized as a guide to ensure questions were covered in a consistent manner for each participant (Appendix C). In eight of the interviews digital recordings were not used, thus the researcher's notes of the interviews were recorded and transcribed after the interviews were completed. The remainder of the interviews were recorded and transcribed for a more thorough analysis.

Observations - The physical context is important to the overall PE teacher experience, so this study aimed to pay attention to the observed teaching episodes, the dialogue between the PE teacher and students, and the PE teacher and other teachers. This study involves individuals who share in the phenomenon of refugee resettlement in large school districts, thus these PE teachers are the source of the data, and therefore the unit of analysis (Trochim, 2006). The most common units of analysis are individuals, groups, organizations and social interactions, and are defined by the location where the researcher gathers the data for the study (Cole, 2018; Salkind, 2010). Thus, to conduct observations of PE classes in EC-12 schools where the participant teaches refugee students, the gym, a classroom or outdoors becomes of great value to the study. These observations allowed me to investigate practices, behaviors and attitudes of participants towards refugee students.

The primary goal was to make simple observations of PE classes where the participants teach refugee students in all locations used for teaching PE. The observations allowed me to investigate multicultural perceptions, pedagogical practices and behavioral attitudes displayed by the participants. I created an observational instrument, with a rubric, and made notes as soon as the class was concluded (Appendix D). I determined that this was a better method than observing and writing during the class, which seemed to possibly interfere with the student's attention to directions and activities. I decided to take an observer, non-participant role in each class, where permission was granted, to observe students and teacher interaction. I wanted to bring the least amount of attention to myself, and the goal was to have no interaction with students or teachers, other than what might be normal and professional for a visitor in the classroom context.

The number of observations and the duration of each varied with each participant. An effort to observe anytime that I visited a school was made so that all aspects of the context could be recorded and analyzed. I took notice of the school surroundings and location, including the neighborhood and types of nearby housing. I observed the layout of the school, the location of the office, the outdoor play areas and the location of the PE class space, or gym, in relation to the rest of the school. In several cases I made cold calls to the school to meet the PE teacher so I observed every encounter, not just the official observation time. Observations, formal and informal, were made before and after interviews and notes were recorded each time in my journal before leaving the school. As a result, for a few participants, I conducted the

interview, observed and left the school. For others, I came to meet the teacher, observed, returned to observe, returned to interview, returned to follow up and, for a few, returned again to say express my appreciation for participating in my study. The longer the visit the more I learned and the greater the experience. Thus, multiple observations were made; notes were taken accordingly and compared to previous observations.

Observations focused on the interactions between teacher and students. I wanted to observe two areas; first, when the teacher was engaging the students with various teaching strategies, and two, situations where the teacher demonstrated cultural interactions with students. Often the observations encouraged me to formulate additional questions either for that teacher or for subsequent interviews. Notes were kept on the observation instrument and in my field notes journal to be included in the final analysis. Observations were used to provide rich details of each case and to confirm or explain comments made during the interviews.

As a researcher, I wanted to explore any other possible data, including artifacts that may add to the richness of the interviews. Maintaining appropriate IRB protocols, I collected public artifacts that included the district curriculum guide/syllabus, the PE teachers' class syllabus, and communications to parents, the school handbook and the district's handbook on refugees/newcomers. I described in my field notes each of the physical activity areas, and when possible I took photos so that I could further analyze the data from an environmental perspective. Personal note taking in my journal,

observation notes and artifacts were used to enhance the interviews, observations, and general perspectives to add depth and richness to the study. It should be noted that no photos of participants or students were taken. During the observations, participants were asked to share any articles that would be of interest for the study. The participants did not have any articles that could be submitted for further analysis, only articles that were displayed in their classrooms.

For the one participant in the Southwest, after the interview was conducted by phone, the participant suggested that in the absence of a personal observation I could view a YouTube video that had been previously recorded of him teaching his class. My observations were recorded in the field notes of the video presentations. In all other cases observations were made and notes recorded.

If the participant chose not to be recorded or if the interview was not conducive for a recording handwritten notes were taken and kept in the research journal. Every attempt was made to be the least disruptive to the teacher and to the class. In two cases it was impossible to be in the class and stand by as an observer. As a result it became necessary to participate in the class as a guest teacher so the children would not be significantly distracted from the activity. This also put the teacher at ease and made the observations more interesting.

### **Data analysis**

Glesne (2011) pointed out that data analysis is simply organizing what has been seen, heard and read in order that the researcher can make sense of what they have

learned. Throughout this data collection process it was important to not only explore the phenomenon and answer my questions, but to discover something about myself as a researcher. According to Merriam (2009) data analysis is the process of making meaning from the interviews, observations and all other collected data. The qualitative data, all of which is being analyzed during this on-going process, has been analyzed using a comparative process, determining themes and identifying patterns. As the data is being collected I want to focus on descriptive patterns and themes as they present themselves or simultaneously as data is being collected (Merriam, 2009; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). As soon as the interviews were completed and transcribed I began to examine the text line by line, on a sentence level or with each paragraph. This level of examination is what DeCuir-Gunby, et al. (2011) described as “the level of meaning” (p.145). This allowed for the identification of patterns and themes, to organize the data into a structure, such as a table, to reflect on the variations and similarities and repeat the cycle as often as needed (Glesne, 2011; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). Transcripts were examined to identify any oppositional themes or meanings that were not fully understood. The process of data analysis during the data collection provided insights into the data as it was organized and reflected upon. According to Glesne (2011) this direction allows that the “study will be more relevant and possibly more profound” (p.188). The artifacts and observation notes were coded and patterns or concepts were discovered. This procedure of analysis was ongoing and cyclical providing for a challenging yet rewarding experience. With every completed interview, transcription and recorded observation notes, new insights to the phenomenon were discovered or



themes were supported. The data analysis was powerful just as the stories and observations were engaging.

### **Coding**

In this phenomenological study, I was striving to access the experience with my participants as an investment of time and relationship, not just data collection. I wanted to develop a trusting relationship with each one so that we can both have a better understanding of this refugee experience (Merriam, 2002). I wanted the participants to see me not only as a researcher and professor in higher education, but as a friend and colleague in physical education. Finding myself coming from a more sociological tradition, I listened to the conversations and read the transcribed text to get a glimpse into the human experience. Thus I preferred to use a more thematic analysis for analyzing the data (Glesne, 2011) understanding that this thematic analysis utilizes “techniques for searching through the data for themes and patterns” (p.187). The primary technique utilized in this analytical work is data coding. According to DeCuir-Gunby, et al. (2011), “coding is the assigning of codes to raw data” (p.138.). Codes are like tags or labels that are used to assign meaning to chunks of data, usually phrases or sentences. Creswell (2009) defines coding as a process of organizing data into discrete statements before assigning meaning to it. After the transcriptions are completed I highlighted segments of data by color and categorized the data into workable tables. Coding the data as it was collected allowed for case comparisons and a consistent reflection of the data.

To code the data I highlighted sentences and segments of sentences from the notes and transcriptions using colored markers. Table 3.1 demonstrates the colors and corresponding codes used in the open coding process. When the transcriptions of the interviews were returned the written narratives were reread while listening to the audio recording to ensure an accurate transcription. Comments were written in the margins of the transcriptions representing the context of the conversation, my own impressions or impressions of body language during the interview. As thoughts were developed during the analysis process I wrote memos in my observation field notes to help me think about the interview and additional questions (Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2002). The coding process was creative and allowed me to see the connections and relationships of the data.

<b>Color</b>	<b>Code</b>
Black	Cultural competency and/or experiences
Red	Teaching practices and pedagogy
Green	Adverse childhood experiences
Purple	Challenges and barriers
Orange	Personal beliefs and worldview
Blue	Professionalism and professional development
Other	Other / New and significant

Table 3.1 Coding

During the open coding process and as the data was analyzed, categories were developed, searching for patterns among the highlighted sentences and segments

(Seidman, 2013). I conducted coding several times throughout the data collection to ensure accuracy and consistency. I coded the notes and transcripts myself and enlisted one non-researcher to code. The results were consistent and it was determined that no other coders were needed.

The next step in this process was to group the highlighted segments into themes and groups. These themes were compared to the literature, the theoretical framework and the research questions. As a result, the following themes were identified:

Theme 1	<i>The presence of refugee students shapes teaching practices in PE</i> Refugee students influence the quality of the teacher’s pedagogical practices, the adaptation of instructional methods and the ability to assist students in constructing PE knowledge and skills.
Theme 2	<i>Language and culture are connected</i> The presence of refugee students reveals that language is a part of culture and communication is vital to student learning.
Theme 3	<i>Professional Development for PE teachers is deficient</i> Pre-service training did not prepare PE teachers for teaching this unique student population, nor is there appropriate professional development for the challenges of teaching refugees and immigrants.
Theme 4	<i>Refugee students enlighten a PE teacher’s worldview</i> Diversity in the form of refugee students enlighten PE teachers about their philosophy of education, the needs of students and their own worldview.
Theme 5	<i>Ethnic diversity reduces prejudice</i> Student ethnic diversity enhances the ability of PE teachers to recognize and accept the cultural differences of their students, and creates a learning environment where prejudice is reduced.
Theme 6	<i>Acknowledging adverse childhood experiences</i> PE teachers are able to discern the connection between behavior and adverse childhood experiences in refugee students, and respond with proper care befitting their personality and experience.
Theme 7	<i>Cultural competency and equity matters</i> Refugee students prompt the PE teacher to possess some measure of cultural competency.

Table 3.2 Themes

As the themes were developed, sub-themes also began to emerge, and further comparisons were made to the literature and to the theoretical framework of Banks' Multicultural Education. This process of coding led to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and the effects of refugee students on a PE teacher's behavior and teaching practice.

### **Trustworthiness and validity**

Trustworthiness is established through observations, artifact collection and in-depth interviews as a way of assuring regularities in the collected data and to determine if similar themes and patterns keep occurring. Merriam (2002) maintains, "you look for meaning in the data and for its repetition and redundancy across cases. You see whether there are patterns to the data, and whether you can match the data with emerging meaning and take the meaning and impose it back on the data to see whether it holds up" (p.140). Although validity has been the subject of debate by many in qualitative scholarship, it was my intent to demonstrate "due diligence...having established a rationale for the study, a clear description of the data collection procedures and data analytic methods" (Williams & Morrow, 2008, p.576).

To contribute to the trustworthiness and validity of this study every effort was made to spend significant in the field with participants, use multiple data-collection methods, reflect on my own bias, request participants to review transcripts and provide rich descriptions of the research (Glesne, 2011; Shenton, 2004). This includes a conscientious analysis, thorough explanation of meanings and a well-developed

methodology toward describing the steps taken to discover significant results.

Yardley (2017) suggests four broad dimensions to demonstrate that useful results have been developed with high standards in the qualitative analysis. These include “sensitivity to the context; a commitment to rigor; transparency and coherence; and impact and importance” (p.1). The goal was to bring validity to this study by considering these dimensions carefully in the observations, interviews and interactions with participants. By being attentive to the participant’s perspectives as they related to the research questions and to be open to any sensitive subject matter. I had to demonstrate rigor in all aspects of the data collection and analysis making sure that I was extracting correct meanings from what was shared and from observations. I attempted to illustrate transparency and coherency throughout the entire project, the culmination of which includes this document and future publications.

In order to check the validity of the research, triangulation methods were utilized to further analyze the data from different perspectives. To accomplish this, interviews, observations, artifacts and the demographic survey were implemented. Recordings of eleven participants were transcribed, and for member checking, the transcriptions were sent to them to give them an opportunity to add or change anything that was on the transcription. No one returned the transcriptions with corrections, and nine sent emails saying they got the transcriptions and nothing further was to be added or deleted. Glesne (2011) stated that “to try to get at the deepened, complex understanding, three data-gathering techniques dominate in qualitative inquiry:

observation, interviewing and document collection” (p.48). Using different methods of collecting data and combining them together compensates for any limitations that might arise from using only one or two methods (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation therefore benefits this study by providing an opportunity to obtain trustworthy results.

### **Positionality**

Positionality describes a researcher's world-view and the position that has been adopted in relation to the research study, the participants, the context and the methodology (Foote & Bartell, 2011; Sikes, 2004). It is important to understand myself as a researcher, and to know how my values and beliefs will possibly impact this study; from the initial development of research questions to the data collection and to the final interpretation of the results. Bourke (2014) stated: “The nature of qualitative research sets the researcher as the data collection instrument. It is reasonable to expect that the researcher’s beliefs, political stance, cultural background are important variables that may affect the research process” (p. 2). Every educator has perspectives on the profession based on their family values, cultural instruction, training and work experiences. As we develop questions and determine to know or understand something of interest, we are led to those that have previous experience. Hopkins, Regehr and Pratt (2017) ask, “what do we do with all our ‘baggage’; that is, what it is we carry or bring with us into our research study – our previous education, experiences, and beliefs” (p.22)? We have to put aside our own baggage so that we don’t influence our participant’s responses or the interpretations of the analysis. This I attempted to do.

I am a middle aged, heterosexual, white male and I grew up in the State where the research and data collection occurs. I am familiar with the urban centers, with the exception of the Southwest region, in which the participants live and work. I have experienced and followed closely the immigration of foreigners to this State for most of my life. I also have lived overseas for close to seventeen years and observed people from very different nations and cultures. I know what it means to move to a country where you can't speak the language and you don't know the culture very well. I am well educated and worked hard to understand the cultures I moved into. However, I have never been a refugee, an asylum seeker, an immigrant or an internally displaced person. I made a decision to move to a foreign country and did so legally with the intent to work and live there for a short period of time on a visitor's visa. I have attempted to learn three different languages; to try and fit in without being noticed as a foreigner; and to find a place to live and a car to drive. I do have a small idea of what some of these refugees have gone through. I am a sports coach and a PE teacher. I have had to learn how to make modifications to my PE lessons for my students and I know what it means to fail. I value education, cultural competency and language acquisition. I learned to appreciate ethnicities and cultures that are very different from the one I grew up in. I have a low tolerance for those who cannot show kindness and patience to refugees and immigrants who are simply trying to do what's best for them and their families.

I also understand my role as a member of higher education, and as a professor in a university in pursuit of a PhD in Education. I know that most of my participants only have a bachelor's degree and don't have a strong connection to any university outside

of the one they attended as a student. Most of the PE teachers I met are not pursuing a graduate degree and they don't understand the value of research as I do. I value education and I have a goal to achieve the highest degree available to me, and I know that positions me in a place that is different than many of my participants. I aim to establish trust and rapport with my participants, and to share with them my final results in order to help them feel as if they were a significant part of this study.

I am proud of my rich and diverse experience. I taught PE; I have international coaching experience; and I have lived overseas. My social-cultural experiences can greatly affect my questions and create a bias on issues regarding PE and refugees, as well as the interpretation of my results. It has been my goal from the beginning to conduct a study that was international in scope, local in practice and to produce results that will add to the physical education body of knowledge. I want my positionality to create trust with my participants, not division. I want my participants to understand the value of their story and practice on our profession. In future research with refugee students I want this same positionality to allow me the opportunity to learn about, and understand, their perceptions of PE in our U.S. schools. My further aim is to express my reflexive thoughts and comments in the final results section of this dissertation.

### **Limitations**

It is vital to express the limitations situated within the study. While working under a time constraint, both external and self-imposed, I was only able to conduct one face-to-face interview with each participant. To increase the richness of the data, it would have been more meaningful if one more interview could have taken place



(Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Interviews were conducted during the spring semester, or during the last part of the school year. Another forty-five minute interview in the fall of the school year would have resulted in some rich data possibly giving participants to express their thoughts at the beginning of the year when students are either new to campus or students are new to the teacher in a different context. Notes from interviews not recorded had to be written quickly and often leaving out comments vital to the study. Some notes had to be made after the interview because the location and setting of the interview did not allow for me to take good notes. I had to sit down and think through the conversation and record those thoughts and ideas that I could remember as significant. In the pilot study the processing my field notes was more of a challenge. I did not have recorded interviews to transcribe and thus, the data was not laid out in sentences or paragraphs of text. I only had my notes to go by which consisted of phrases, words or concepts. It was necessary to read and re-read my notes, makes additional memos to myself about what happened and how the participant said it (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011). It was necessary to revisit the data and rework the patterns to make sure that I was getting reliable results.

Additional field observations would have provided greater insight to the interaction between teacher and student. With more time in multiple classroom situations participants could have been observed expressing cultural competencies and their behaviors toward students. Most of the observations took place during a set time of forty-five to fifty minutes and only one class of students were observed. The participant established the time set for me to observe, depending on their schedule and

mine. Field notes were made relying on my memory of the situation and responses, unless I was in a situation where I could observe and not be distracted, or be a distraction to students.

Artifacts were primarily collected from the school website and these did not truly provide a good representation of instruction or behavior of the teacher in the classroom. Artifacts of value were most often found in the form of English vocabulary or pictures on the walls in the classroom. Photos were made of these when it was appropriate to do so. Teachers did not have specific curriculum or lesson plans that were designed for refugee students. District curriculum and outcomes were the primary guides for instruction.

### **Bias in the analysis**

I had to be careful not to allow my own bias of PE pedagogy and knowledge of refugees to impose itself on the data analysis. Perhaps the most significant part of this study, to me, is the potential of how useful this knowledge will be to others. If the results of the data analysis are not clear or if it does not prove to be useful, then I may conclude that I have wasted a lot of time and energy. However, I firmly believe that this study is very significant and will be highly useful to many teachers and pre-service teachers in our profession. The presence of refugees in PE classes impacts physical educators not only in the schools under this study, but in many schools and school districts all over America. The perspectives from multiple teachers and the meanings they construct are worthy of the research, and it is vital to conduct an analysis that will

allow for those perspectives to be expressed. Glesne (2011) summed up the importance of these perspectives, stating that “doing so widens the horizons for experiencing life around us while demonstrating more fully how knowledge is socially constructed” (p.216). I agree that this phenomenological study and its methods can, and will, provide a useful tool for understanding physical education teachers’ experiences with refugee students.

The nature of the qualitative pilot study is exploratory, thus no theories have been posed. Qualitative research is a scientific approach to understanding, describing and interpreting a unique culture, group, or phenomena (Yin, 2003). There is no reason to suggest that PE teachers would not also respond to their experiences as they develop. They will establish knowledge throughout their lifetime as they interact with others in various environments, as they teach physical education and as they make meaning of their knowledge. I believe these qualitative methods will allow for an interpretation of the experiences of the participants within their context and influential environment, without trying to prove or disprove a predetermined theory (Glesne, 2011). The description of the school settings, the narrative text of the participants and observations of the class proceedings, upon analysis, will provide significant and valuable findings from this multiple case study. The results, to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and the practical implications to be considered, will be made available to the districts, the schools, teachers and members of higher education specifically working with PETE pre-service teachers.

As a researcher, I believe it is important to know and be aware of one's positionality, as discussed earlier, and any biasness in the analysis of the data. I chose the topic for this study for several reasons. I wanted my research study to address three components: an international population, physical education/educators, and to be practically convenient. I spent seventeen years from 1992-2009 as an international missionary serving in several foreign countries. As a result of living and working overseas for this length of time I became very aware of various people groups, cultures and challenges that many face each day. From Malawi to Russia to Turkey I experienced a close proximity to poverty, death and the difficulty of living in a foreign country. I understand how refugees coming to this country must learn to adjust to a new society and new way of living because I had to do something very similar. I took my family to countries with different languages, and sometimes very different cultures. Therefore I have a unique attachment to immigrants, aliens and refugees that inspires me to know more about their resettlement to America. Secondly, I am a pre-service teacher educator with a desire to know how PE teachers think, teach and behave. It is this quest for knowledge and understanding that helps me become a better teacher and trainer of pre-service PE teachers. I want to know how PE teachers handle unique situations, including refugee students and immigrants. I want PETE pre-service teachers to have an awareness of schools that are very diverse so that they will learn to be culturally sensitive and possibly give consideration to teaching in such schools. My own international and diverse experiences are getting more outdated with every passing year. I want to offer my pre-service students fresh, up-to-date data and experiences that

will help shape their own pedagogical practices. Thirdly, I started off thinking of how I could do this research in a foreign country but came to realize that it was better to do it locally. A study that is convenient also lends itself to becoming practical in its methodology and application. It also allows itself to be more relational. I want my study to provide valuable insights to the PE teacher and to add further support to Banks' idea of content integration (Banks & Tucker, 1998). Conducting the study in a local school district will provide some realistic and practical applications. I am discovering that many of these teachers have their own professional struggles and I believe that I will be an encouragement to them by observing what they do day in and day out and listening to their stories. I know that my positive bias towards refugees and immigrants puts me in a position of wanting the best for them. As I look at the world news I am eager to read about what is happening with refugees from Syria, Myanmar, Afghanistan and El Salvador. I am aware of what our own government is doing in regard to refugees and immigrants (Rosenberg, 2018). With every passing day I become more knowledgeable of the struggles and difficult situations that refugee families find themselves in. My experience in life and equipped me with compassion, and a desire to speak out for refugees and for the teachers who serve them everyday. I have come to know the resettlement organizations and ministries in the South and Southwest that assist refugees. I applaud the work they do to help resettle refugees. It is great to see so many give of themselves for the lives of these "huddled masses" (Lazarus). As a result I want to help new PE teachers know how to teach these children with compassion and using best practices. I want refugee families to feel welcome and to achieve the goals and

dreams they have set for themselves. Yes, I am an advocate for refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers, and because of that, I am sure it makes me somewhat biased.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

A researcher attempts to enter into a phenomenological case study without pre-conceived results in mind. The plan is to allow PE teachers to tell their stories, construct the meanings of those stories and determine from those stories how refugee students in PE might affect a teacher's teaching practice and behaviors. I was interested in learning how the results might be explained from Banks' Multicultural Education theoretical framework. Although not one single teacher knew of Banks' work, the results will identify, to some degree, a description of how these teachers are practicing some of those very dimensions (Banks, 2008). To practice the concepts laid out by Banks without being aware of it would not be unusual because most pre-service candidates preparing to teach physical education may not go into depth in studying multicultural education theories. Gay & Howard (2000) stated it strongly; "We seriously doubt that existing preservice programs are adequately preparing teachers to meet the instructional challenges of ethnically, socially, and linguistically diverse students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (p. 1). Agreeing with Harrison, Carson & Burden's (2010) study on PE teachers' cultural competency it could be assumed that many pre-service teachers are introduced to multicultural education theories, diverse student populations and cultural competency but still lack the knowledge and experience to teach PE effectively in diverse schools. Most are trained to work with one socioeconomic group; limited in the study of ethnic

diversity; unable to recognize a students' ethnicity or culture; and lack of exposure to diversity in urban communities (Burden, Hodge, O'Bryant & Harrison, 2004; Choi & Chepyator-Thomson, 2011; Sliwa et al., 2017). This study attempted to test this assumption. All of the participants had taken educational courses, either at a university/college or in an alternative program, and agreed that most of what they retained was the sports, games and activities they learned and practiced in PETE courses. In the discussion that follows, Banks' dimensions of multicultural education will be identified as they relate to the themes explored.

This chapter will give a brief overview of each of the participants. Each teacher found himself or herself in the midst of this phenomenon either by choice or by chance. The refugee phenomenon has created a situation where each one is learning and becoming something more than just a normal PE teacher. From the interviews, observations, survey questions and collected artifacts themes emerged giving meaning to the research questions and to the theoretical framework. Those themes will be discussed in this chapter.

### **Participant overview**

The number of schools where refugee students are present is limited as discussed earlier. Thus, the number of PE teachers available for participation is also limited, compared to the total number of PE teachers in the selected districts. For example, in the Southern region school district there are a total of 12,227 teachers in 284 schools. PE teachers are not identified separately but included in the regular teacher category that accounts for two-thirds of all teachers. It can be assumed that



every school in the district would have at least one PE teacher. Given this assumption, the eight PE teachers interviewed in one city in the Southern region would represent 0.028% of all PE teachers in the district. In this study, the eight PE teachers represented five schools because three of the selected schools employed two PE teachers, both of whom were interviewed. Five schools would account for 0.017% of all targeted schools in this region. In the neighboring district two PE teachers were interviewed representing one school, and in the other large district, seven teachers were selected representing five schools. This district reported 87,233 students in the 2016-2017 school year and 5,689 teachers. The participants represented 0.00123% of all teachers in the selected district.

This study targeted select schools where there were substantial numbers of refugees. As previously stated, neither the school nor the district identifies students as refugees, immigrants or asylum seekers, but simply as students based on the general identifying categories of race or ethnicity. The only method of determining which schools or teachers have a substantial refugee student population was to talk to administrators or teachers. PE teachers could not identify the exact numbers of refugee students specifically due to the nature of reporting a student's ethnicity or race. Thus, the term 'substantial' refers to schools where a teacher would identify refugee students by saying that they 'have a good number of refugees,' or 'we have a lot of refugee students' or 'there are many different languages spoken here.' In one of the targeted districts, as an example, one of the elementary schools selected reported 518 total students, of which 401 were identified as African American. As reported by the PE

teacher this number does not recognize that any of those African American students are refugee students who came to the U.S. from various African countries. Another example would be the school in the Southern region that enrolls students for bilingual and English language learning programs. The school identified significant numbers of Hispanic and Asian students. Almost all of the refugee and immigrant students are enrolled in this school because they have limited English proficiency (LEP). The PE teacher could not be certain about the exact number of refugee students, but was certain that many of the students had come from other countries and fit into the category of refugee or immigrant. It is obvious that the school districts maintain strict confidentiality of their students when making the demographic numbers public.

### **Participant description**

To fully understand this study a brief description of each participant and their school is provided below. The purpose of the description is to provide clarity and understanding beyond the demographic information provided in Table 4.1. Each participant is unique, with a unique story to tell. The descriptions are given in the order in which the interviews were conducted. Each of the participants were given pseudo names to protect their identity.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>School Level</b>	<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>District</b>
Able	Male	African American	Junior High	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Southern
Beatrice	Female	African American	Junior High	11 years	Southern
Clara	Female	White	Elementary	20 years	Southern
Donna	Female	African American	Elementary	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Southern
Eduardo	Male	Hispanic	Junior High	10 years	Southern
Fiona	Female	White	Elementary	24 years	Southern
Ginger	Female	White	Elementary	31 years	Southern
Helen	Female	White	Elementary	27 years	Southern
Ingrid	Female	White	Elementary	19 years	Southern
Jared	Male	African American	Elementary	19 years	Southern
Kendrick	Male	African American	Junior High	9 years	Southern
Lilia	Female	Hispanic	Junior High	7 years	Southern
Matt	Male	White	Elementary	10 years	Southern
Natalie	Female	African American	High School	8 years	Southern
Oscar	Male	White	Middle School	1 <sup>st</sup> year	Southern
Paul	Male	White	Elementary	8 years	Southwest
Rosa	Female	African American	Elementary	7 years	Southern

Table 4.1 Participants

Beatrice

Beatrice’s junior high school is located in the southwest corner of a large school district in the Southern region. The building is old and typical of a school built six decades ago. The only other structures near the main school building were portable classrooms and a small church. Directly across from the school was a large open field, with a typical suburban two-lane street running in front of the school with no drive or

parking area. As one enters the school, it is obvious that the school is older, without any of the newer amenities that are seen in schools built today. The crowded office, just beyond the front door entrance, was full of students and a number of busy adults coming and going or standing around. The receptionist recorded my name and purpose for being there and one of the student-aids provided an escort to the gym. The gym was simple, with only one basketball court with two goals on each end and wooden bleachers on one side. The opposite side of the gym had large opaque windows, and it was under these windows that I found Beatrice sitting behind the scorer's table with her co-teacher, Abel. The time was 1:30 in the afternoon and as I made my way across the gym, it was clear that she was busy watching a gym full of students. The interview context was less than ideal. Beatrice explained that she had been in the district a few years, having returned to the area after college because she wanted to be close to home. She informed me that she had grown up in the area, went out of state to attend college, and was happy to accept a position in the district so she could be close to home. She was the girls PE teacher and the girl's athletic coach for basketball, volleyball and track. Beatrice started teaching at this school three years ago and explained that she had seen the demographics change during her time here. When she came to work at the school, most of the students were African American and Hispanic. She noted that in three years there has been a significant number of Asian refugee students attending, and less Hispanic. On visiting the school one year later, in an attempt to follow up, Coach Beatrice had left and taken a new coaching position in another school in the area.

## Abel

Abel was in his first year of teaching at the junior high school with Coach Beatrice. He is the boys PE teacher and boys athletic coach for football and basketball. Abel attended a university in the South on a football scholarship. After completing his degree in kinesiology and obtaining his PE teaching certificate, he moved back to the city he grew up in and began substitute teaching in the local district. He also wanted to be closer to his home and family. After two years he was offered a position at the junior high. He said he was grateful to have a mentor teacher like Coach Beatrice, and attributed a great deal of what he had learned over the year to her. He knew this was a challenging school to work in because he had been a substitute teacher here. Nonetheless he agreed to take the PE teacher's position and felt that it was a "pretty normal" situation, similar to schools he had attended. He described the school demographics much the same as Beatrice, but that the number of Asian students were the same when he started coming to this school. One year after the interview, during a follow-up visit, Coach Abel was still at the school. On the day I visited he was by himself in the gym with a number of students. He said that the school has a hard time getting substitute teachers and that he was the only boys' coach at the school that day, and the girls' coach was somewhere in the building. During our conversation he described his second year of teaching and coaching as much better due to the new administration and a positive vision for the students and the school. The interview with Beatrice and Abel was conducted at the same time; Beatrice is conversing, while Abel was up and down

attending to students in the gym. Students asking questions often interrupted us, but I continued to ask my questions since there was no time constraint for them or me. I had not planned to interview Abel, but when he found out why I was there, he asked if he could also respond to my questions. Of course, I said yes, and after explaining the consent form protocol, I included him in the conversation.

### Clara

Clara started out as a softball coach in an area high school after completing her university education in the South. With ten years of coaching behind her, she decided to take a position as an elementary PE teacher. She has been the PE teacher for ten years and has an assistant who has been working with her for eight years. She said they make a good team. Clara's school is located closer to the city's downtown area and has a significant number of refugees and immigrant students. This suburban sixty-year-old school has plenty of outdoor space for recess and PE, and the gym is an add-on to the original building. The gym is not as big as a regular size basketball court but sufficient for her PE class size. The building includes a storage area, offices and bathrooms for students. At one time this elementary school was the largest elementary school in the district due to the growth in this part of the city. When she came to the school she was not fully aware of the diverse student population and has seen the numbers of refugees grow each year she has been there. The interview took place in the gym after the final class of the day. The assistant PE teacher, also female, was present, but did not participate in the conversation.

## Donna

Donna was educated in a nearby university and grew up in a community just south of where she was currently teaching. She started out as a substitute teacher in the district and after getting to know the district PE coordinator she was offered the physical education job at the elementary school. Her degree was in PE pedagogy and she is currently working on a masters degree. She has a desire to continue her education and eventually teach in higher education. Donna's school is somewhat more modern and located in the southern part of the district. There are over eight hundred students attending this elementary school that sits across the street from an apartment complex, a church and one of the larger high schools in the district. The school has two parking lots, a covered drive-through and several portable buildings in the back for additional classrooms. The gym is large, combined with a stage and a storage room, office space and bathrooms. They have some space outside for play, but it is limited due to the portable buildings and the area designated for recess. On the day of my observation, the students went outside to practice some skills, staying primarily on some small concrete surface areas and sidewalks. This elementary school is designated as an English language center for students in grades 2-5 who are not sufficiently proficient in English to be successful in their assigned school. Students who are diagnosed as needing ELL training are transported to this school until they develop proficiency. Sixty-five percent of the students are enrolled in the bilingual and English language programs, almost one-third of the students are considered to be Asian, and there are over forty different language dialects spoken. Pre-kindergarten and first-grade students do not attend the language

program classes but go straight into their assigned classes, learning English with the other students. Donna talked to the principal about the diversity and language issues at the school during her interview, but she said that she didn't fully understand the situation until she started teaching. Our interview took place in her office during her conference and lunch period.

At the time of the interview and observation, Donna had a young, white male working with her as an assistant, however he did not participate in the interview. He was energetic and I observed that he got along quite well with the students. One year later I returned to Donna's school to find her busy teaching, doing her best since she was about seven or eight months pregnant. She has a new co-teacher, Matt, who also agreed to participate in the study. A description of Matt is below.

#### Eduardo

"Family got me here," was Eduardo's words to me describing how he came to this district from the Southwest. Eduardo completed his PE training at a large university in the Southwest, taught elementary school for eight years and then moved to the larger southern city to begin his new position. He was in his third year at his school when the observation and interview were conducted. Eduardo made it clear that it was his family that encouraged him to come to this city, knowing that he might have to take a slight cut in salary to move. He said that he has really enjoyed his school and is often surprised that he wound up working in this district. Eduardo calls his school a 'half-way' school because students in grades 8-10 are only here for about two years until they can be proficient enough in English to return to their designated school. Students are bused



to this school from all over the district and it is the only school in the district that offers English assistance to students at this age level. The school building was developed and repurposed out of a former retail-shopping complex. It is located among small stores and businesses along a busy street. The only PE facility Eduardo has is an inside room not any larger than half of a regular sized gym; with pillars in the middle of the play space. From my observation he has learned to be quite creative with space and to be flexible. There is no outside space for activity, and he often shares the physical activity space with another program housed in the complex. The interview took place in the teacher's lounge area since another teacher was using his office and activity space. It was quiet and provided a location for an interesting conversation. Eduardo did not have an assistant, but since his class sizes are small, he didn't feel that he needed one.

#### Fiona

Fiona teaches PE in a suburban K – 5 elementary school near the heart of the city. She has been teaching for twenty-four years, first as a fifth grade teacher then as a PE teacher. Fiona has been at her current school for six years. "I never wanted to teach," was her initial response to how she got into teaching. She has a background in sports management and radio, but because of her active lifestyle she wanted to get into teaching because being in a gym seemed to be a good fit for her. Fiona and Ginger have been working together for the past six years in a school with plenty of space for physical activity. They have a large gym with an equally big covered space just outside the gym with basketball goals and play space. The gym is comprised of office space and storage rooms for equipment. They also have a large, soccer sized, outdoor field, surrounded by

a running track, and a fitness area with various types of apparatus for students. A metal fence with a few gates that have to be opened each morning and afternoon for students to enter and exit encloses the entire outdoor area. The entire school complex is laid out with plenty of open space between buildings, without the traditional hallways inside, but rather covered outdoor passageways from room to room. The school is in a residential neighborhood with houses on one side and several apartment complexes on the other. It is from these apartments that most of the refugee students come from. When Fiona came to this campus most of the students were primarily white, with a few Hispanics and African-Americans. There has been a transformation from primarily white to students of many cultures and ethnicities. Over sixteen percent of the students are enrolled in the bilingual and English language learning programs and twenty-six percent of the students are considered to be non-white; twenty percent of whom are listed as Asian. The change in demographics has been slow and steady, and many of the students are not refugees but immigrants from Asia. The interview took place in the teacher's office at the end of the school day. On this particular day some of the students were involved in the after school running program, so during the interview a number of students would come to the office to check in and record their times. The interruptions were did not negatively impact the interviews and I was able to observe interaction between the teachers and the students. I was able to observe the PE classes on two different occasions, and met two other teachers who work with the students in art and music. They were not officially interviewed but in our general conversations they provided additional insights to teaching refugee and immigrant students. Fiona

expressed great satisfaction in her current PE role and appreciates the support of the school administration for PE and health related fitness.

### Ginger

Ginger is the co-teacher at the elementary school with Fiona. After reaching out to Fiona and visiting the school, Ginger also agreed to be a participant in the study. My interview included both of these teachers, which provided for lively conversation.

Ginger started out her career in business and had a passion for physical activity and the outdoors. She has been teaching for a total of thirty-one years with eleven of those years at this elementary school. Ginger spent twenty years in another school, battled cancer and decided to make a change. She was here when Fiona joined her six years ago. Ginger is very friendly and outgoing and made me feel very welcome to the school and to the class. She introduced me to the students and made sure I met several of her outstanding PE students. As previously mentioned, the interview took place in the teacher's office, at the end of the school day. I observed their classes on two different occasions. The second time I talked with Ginger as we walked out to the large field and on to one of the gates to let students exit and to greet parents. Ginger came to the school when it was over ninety percent white, and in her time there she has seen the demographics of the students change. Now there are more Hispanics and Asians, which she enjoys. She believes that anyone from Japan, South Korea or China who moves to this city wants to live in this school district. When I asked why, she said, "this is where they wanna be because they talk to each other and want to live in the same area."

Ginger wanted to introduce me to other teachers, specifically the art and music

teachers, and she wanted me to meet the school principal. Since the interview and the two observations I have visited the campus two other times to say hello and tell them how much I appreciated their participation. The last time I visited the school Ginger told me she was going to retire at the end of the year. She wanted to inform me about this so I could come and “interview the new teacher” for my study. I am grateful for the relationship with these two excellent PE teachers.

### Helen

I was referred to Helen and Ingrid’s elementary school by the district PE coordinator because of the significant number of refugees in the school. This school is located on the east side of the city and is one of the oldest campuses in the district. Now over one hundred years old, it is also one of the largest elementary schools with more than one thousand students. Over seventy percent of the students are enrolled in the bilingual and English language-learning program. The school is located in a wooded residential neighborhood with single-family homes on all sides. The attendance zone for the school however, encompasses several large apartment complexes. Most of the refugee students are Hispanic or Asian in origin. Although the school is over seventy-five percent Hispanic, the students not only come from Mexico but from all the Central American countries and some from the northern countries on the South American continent. The Asian students make up almost ten percent of the student population. Helen grew up in Europe and studied at a university for elementary school teachers. She described herself as “always very active and very sportive” and into all kinds of sport, especially track and running. She passed not only the exam for physical education, but

for many other content areas as was the norm for her European university. After graduating, she came to the U.S. through an exchange program and began teaching in a large city in the Midwest. After moving around for several years she came to the U.S., obtained her green card and began teaching PE in this district. Helen's classroom is a portable building that is clustered among eight other buildings just outside the walls of the larger school building. The one room building is about twenty-four feet by thirty-six feet, with no furniture except one teacher's desk and chair. Equipment is crowded into the corners of the room or stored in large bins just outside the door. These storage bins can be pushed inside the room each day after classes and are under awnings that cover the wooden walking areas and entrances to the rooms. Just beyond the PE classroom is the outdoor open play area with playground equipment and a covered pavilion that is roughly the size of a basketball court. A large wooded area is for PE and recess and on the day of my observation there were several classes meeting outside participating in various activities. Before coming outside Helen led the class in a health-related activity game that incorporated English vocabulary, followed by some stretching and warm-ups. The students then lined up and went outside to run, jog or walk the trail laid out around the boundaries of the school play area. As they finished they lined up for a drink of water and then prepared to return to the class. The interview took place in the classroom after the final period of the day. Both Helen and Ingrid wanted to be interviewed and were quite comfortable to conduct the interview together.

## Ingrid

Ingrid, like Helen, came to the U.S. after completing her university training in Europe. She too was very active in high school with a focus on track and field, and when making plans about university she said, "I decided that I want to become a teacher and I chose physical educational sports." There were no available jobs when she graduated so she too came to the U. S. through an exchange program. She taught elementary school for several years and then switched to PE. After teaching first and second grade in another district she ended up at this same school because of her long friendship with Helen. There was an opening and Helen encouraged her to apply for the job. They have known each other for over fifteen years. Ingrid teaches her class in another portable building located next to Helen's room. They teach classes independently of each other but often work together on activities outside in the play area or under the large pavilion. Our interview was very much like a conversation with two good friends who know each other well, being open and honest about their feeling and opinions. They are both very polite, and even though they both speak with a slight accent, the conversation was easy to understand. They did not mind going over the time limit because it was the end of the day and I genuinely believe they enjoyed telling their story. It was also fascinating to hear their perspective, having been trained outside of the U. S. and now working with students who have come to this country to live.

## Jared

Jared was inspired to teach PE by his high school PE teacher. Although baseball was his passion he realized in college that baseball wasn't going to take him where he

really wanted to go. He wanted to serve and give back to kids in the same way that his coaches gave to him. While going through his education program at university he had opportunities to help out at the elementary school and after that experience he knew that teaching elementary PE was what he wanted to do. "I wanted to go back and do the same thing (i.e. PE) for other kids" was his comment. He has now been doing that for nineteen years. Another teacher knowing that Jared taught in a very ethnically diverse school in the district recommended Jared to me. As an African-American Jared relates well with his students; they find him easily approachable and welcoming. Jared's school is a large school with over eighty percent of the students enrolled in bilingual and English learning programs. Almost eighty percent of the students are listed as Hispanic, many of those coming from Mexico and several of the Central American countries. Six percent of the students are Asian and eleven percent are listed as African American, although most of these "African American" students are primarily refugees and immigrants from Africa, not born in the U.S. When Jared started teaching at this school over eighteen years ago, most of the students were Hispanic, but they are getting more and more new students from other countries due to the resettlement of refugees in the neighboring apartment complexes. Jared says, "now it's a school of many nations" and he attributes the ethnic diversity to wars and complications in countries around the world. Families arrive in this city and the Catholic Charities organization resettles many of them nearby and into Jarod's school zone. I arrived early in the morning before school to conduct the interview and then to stay and observe his first period class. It was quiet and students were beginning to trickle into the gym where they would stay

until classes began. The older brick building is located on the west side of the city with apartment complexes on every side and only two blocks from a major interstate highway. Public buses were moving up and down the street in front of the building and I noticed parents, primarily men, walking down the sidewalk with children of various ages, either headed to the school or to the bus stop so the older students could make their way to school. The school no longer has suitable outdoor play areas, most of the area being taken over by portable buildings. Jared was quick to point out that the best thing about his school, and its age, is that it has a gym. The school started out as a junior high school and later was transformed into a elementary school. He said that he is one of the few elementary schools in this district that has a gym, with office space and storage space. He also has use of some green space outside, but he rarely uses it due to the movement of students going to the portable buildings or because of the weather. A high chain link fence with barbed wire on the top separates the school property from the public street. The area along the fence is littered with broken glass and trash. The interview took place on a park-like bench on one side of the gym. Jared calls this bench his "peace bench" because it is the place that students can come and sit when they are stressed out. As we talked students began to make their way into the gym, sitting in predetermined rows by grade. Whenever someone was not in the right place Jared would gently remind him or her where he or she needed to be. Fortunately we did not have that many interruptions and although it was shorter than some of my other interviews it was a rich experience. Near the end of the interview the early breakfast team made their way into the gym to distribute fruit, milk and a muffin to each student.



Most of the students here are on free or reduced breakfast and lunch. The students were very polite and orderly, and after receiving their breakfast they went to class. The students in PE stayed in the gym, ate their breakfast and prepared for class. On this day Jared taught a lesson related to his fitness unit and because the weather was a bit cooler he took them outside to walk around a modified walking track to warm up. After the warm up he brought them into the gym to finish the lesson with various fitness activities. The students were physically active and having fun. Jared normally has a co-teacher but on this day the co-teacher was out and a woman, apparently of South Asian descent, was substituting in the class. She sat on the peace bench and observed. Later Jared told me that this was typical for PE; substitute teachers are usually from the refugee community and don't teach or lead the class. However it is an opportunity for them to earn a little money and they are most often parents of some of the students. Jared thinks he probably will retire from here since he loves the school and the students.

### Kendrick

Kendrick teaches PE and coaches athletics in a junior high school on the west side of the city within this large school district. Kendrick is originally from the Midwest and "always enjoyed health and physical education." He grew up as a minority student in the schools he attended and recognized that "there really wasn't anybody that was teaching that looked like me." Because of this Kendrick has a good understanding of what many of these kids go through when they see themselves as a minority due to their race or ethnicity. While going through his university program he observed in an

inner city school and he concluded that “this is where I want to be, this is where I can make a change.” Kendrick has been at this school for five years and taught in another school for several years before this one. He has seen the school’s refugee and immigrant student population grow during his five years and he finds his school very appealing and interesting. The junior high school is thirty-eight years old, with 1,250 students and recently designated as a magnet school for science, technology, engineering and math. The school webpage describes the faculty and students as those who “come from many backgrounds, neighborhoods and countries representing a United Nations of cultures.” The PE program is more progressive than some other schools in that they offer traditional PE classes, dance and martial arts. They have two large gyms, locker rooms, storage rooms for equipment and two offices, one for the male teacher and one for the female teachers. The PE program has access to a large football field, a six-court basketball area and a large field area for outside play and activity. The football field is enclosed by a cinder/dirt track and the property was surrounded with a chain link fence. Kendrick told me that during Hurricane Harvey the entire field was covered with about a foot of water, coming all the way up to the threshold of one of the gyms. He said they were fortunate not to have damage to the gyms. Shaking his head in disbelief, he said that they had set out football pads and uniforms in the locker room to air out over the weekend that Harvey struck, not knowing the severity of the storm. Due to unforeseen leaks in the locker room most of that equipment was wet and damaged. It was a heart breaking loss for him and the students.

The entire school seems to have plenty of space for growth and a large parking area. An elementary school sits adjacent to the junior high, and there are apartments next to the school and within the area. It is these apartments that are used for refugee resettlement by various agencies. The school offers a dual-language program allowing students to maintain their first language, customs and traditions while learning English. On the walls inside the entrance of the school are greetings written representing the twenty-five or so languages spoken by students and teachers in the school. Students were moving up and down the hall in their school uniforms of khaki pants or skirts and red or blue polo-type shirts. I had visited the school on two occasions before the interviews took place to meet the principal and PE teachers and arrange for interview times. On the day of my interview I met with both Kendrick and Lilia, the head PE teachers for boys and girls, in the coach's office. I would come back on another day to observe PE classes and the teachers. The office was crowded with boxes of apparel, sports equipment, a small couch and two desks. The noise from one of the activity classes was easily heard from the office and occasionally a student or another teacher would come in to ask a question or pick up something. The interview lasted for over an hour, but both Kendrick and Lilia were at ease and willing to talk as long as I asked questions. I did not have to prompt either one with answers or comments; they seemed eager to share their stories. I followed my protocol but wanted to make sure that both teachers had the opportunity to answer my questions and talk freely about their experiences. On a later date I came back to observe the PE classes. Kendrick had his students outside in a sports unit. Some were playing flag football, some basketball and

some soccer, as there was plenty of room for all. There were lots of students and most of the interaction was administrative or corrective with little to no actual teaching. The students were having fun and being physically active, and most appeared to have a positive relationship with Kendrick. His laid back style indicated that he was respected and had worked hard to keep that number of students active.

### Lilia

Lilia is one of the female PE coaches at the same junior high as Kendrick. She grew up in a family with active siblings who were her role models. She said as the youngest I was “just trying to keep up with them” as they played different sports. Lilia attended schools where “the minority was always the majority” and she is able to communicate fluently in both English and Spanish. While in college she had to ask herself “what makes you truly happy?” and for her it was sports, exercise, family and kids. She also felt a strong desire to be “that strong female role model image to girls.” Coming from a Mexican culture, her father approved with hesitancy but her mom gave her positive support. Lilia has also been at this junior high school for five years, having come the same year as Kendrick. It is obvious that they have a good working relationship and Lilia is quick to say that she relied on Kendrick’s experience a lot in the first year. Her first job was in a charter school that was “a sheltered environment for a teacher.” Coming to the junior high school was “really an eye opening experience” because this was the first time for her to be exposed to refugee students. Her first principal at this school impressed her because he could speak six languages, which was a huge advantage for working with this diverse student population, teachers and parents.

Lilia appreciated his support and he helped her make a good transition. She enjoys the coaching side of her job, being able to interact with student-athletes and encouraging success. On the day of the observation the students were participating in a special day that included an obstacle course and various water-related events with water balloons and wet slides. Her interaction with students was positive and friendly. She stated that the ability to communicate with refugee and immigrant students in Spanish resulted in the students being more active. Students were excited because it was easier for them to express themselves to Lilia in their first language. Lilia can respond to students in both languages interchangeably as needed; a useful skill in multi-lingual schools. Our interview was conducted with Kendrick and it was interesting to get the perspective of a Latina PE teacher alongside her male African-American counterpart.

#### Matt

After my initial pilot study with several of the teachers in the Southern region district, the PE coordinator introduced me to Matt during the next school year. I did not know at the time we met that he was the new co-teacher with my other participant, Donna. It had been almost a year since I had visited Donna's school and in that time Matt had been offered the position of co-teacher due to the size and diversity of the student population. Matt did his undergraduate work at a university in the Southwest and upon graduation he began teaching school in the urban city area. After five years he moved to another school district in the central part of the state, married and started his family. Three years later he moved to the city and was recommended for his current position. In the time between my visits to this elementary school the refugee

population has increased about ten percent, still with about forty different languages being spoken. Matt was aware of the diverse student population at this school “because I had done my research.” I understood what he meant because before my interview I had prepared myself by looking at the student demographics of Matt’s school. His response for wanting to come to this school was that “it interests me, the challenge of it and the chance to get to teach kids from all different parts of the world. It was intriguing to me.” Our interview took place on the stage area in the gym as described earlier under Donna’s description. The curtain was pulled so we didn’t have any distractions except for the announcements over the loud speaker. The speakers were on full volume so every time there was an announcement we had to stop talking because we could not hear each other. Trying to pick up the conversation after some long announcements became a challenge. Overall the interview went very well. The observation was conducted on a fitness theme day. About eighty students came into the gym in a very orderly way and started with a warm-up led by Matt and Donna. This was followed by a fitness lesson using modified yoga. Every day of the week the lesson is on fitness and the activities correspond. After the lesson, the students participated in a cool down which is also quiet and stress relieving. Matt then talked to them about the importance of flexibility, stretching and de-stressing through yoga. It was late in the school year because it was obvious that the students had been through these lessons before because there was little instruction and more activity as directed. Although the gym seemed very full, the students knew their self-space and stayed on their spots. Matt moved in and around the students helping some with their poses and correct form.

Students responded very well to the help and all appeared to enjoy the lesson. After the closure, the students got into their lines, according to their class, and prepared to leave the gym. Teachers began to appear at the door, the bell rang and the students filed out. It was an impressive display of positive classroom management and physical activity.

### Natalie

I wanted to interview at least one high school PE teacher for this study and Natalie was the one. She is originally from this local area and went to college in the Midwest. She studied psychology, played basketball and enjoys sports in general. When she returned to her home area, after graduation she had plans to become a school counselor but needed teaching experience first. Her first job was teaching elementary in a neighboring school district while obtaining her alternative certification. Later she became certified in PE and moved to a junior high school as a PE teacher and coach. When a position to teach character development became available at her high school she knew that she wanted to work here and accepted it. Due to the diversity of the students the position was initially funded by a grant, however when the grant funding ran out she accepted the open position as PE teacher and girls sports coach. She still has the desire to work as a school counselor or teach team leadership so she is willing to get more experience and wait until something opens up in her school. She is already passing on some of the coaching responsibilities to other coaches while she retains her position as PE teacher, coach and girls athletic director. Natalie's high school is located in one of the most ethnically diverse areas of the city. The school itself recently received an impressive makeover by the district, and although the school building is completed,

much of the outside fields and parking areas are still under construction. The building looks fresh and inviting with modern architecture. It stands in stark contrast to the nearby apartment buildings; strip shopping centers, and local businesses. One of the school mottos is *Where the World Comes to Learn*, and this would appear very true. As I walked into the building I noticed right away the many ethnicities of students including Asian, African American and Middle Eastern. Upon entering the front office I was greeted by a female office worker wearing a hijab. The school website indicates that there are over 1,800 students that represent over seventy different countries, speaking over forty different languages. The school not only serves a significant number of refugees but many different immigrant students. Natalie said that due to the large numbers of refugees and immigrants, "it is the white kids that tend to stand out, but they generally get along." The principal of the school was himself a refugee, having come from Southeast Asia in the late seventies. He was also in the military so he understands being strong and proper discipline. Natalie believes that the presence of this principal in the school is why so many foreign students come here; he understands them and makes them feel welcome. On the day of the interview and observation I met Natalie in the gym that had the appearance of being brand new. The students were in the bleachers while she made announcements and took the roll. After this brief time she allowed them to get out some basketballs and play or hit the volleyball around. Most often the volleyball was being kicked around like a soccer ball, which is understandable since the most popular sport in the school is soccer. The gym floor was covered with a large tarp and Natalie explained that the gym is the largest meeting space and there had



been a meeting of students earlier but the custodial staff had yet to come and fold it up. She was content to let the students play on the tarp. There was no instruction or lesson. The day, according to her, was really out of sorts because of the meeting and other activities that disrupted her regular classes. I inquired about outdoors and she confirmed my observation that the outdoor fields were not ready for the students to play on due to new grass being planted and lack of proper fencing for safety. I conducted the interview in the area that would be considered the entrance to the gym. She had a tall rolling flat top desk on which she set her tablet and badges for students leaving the gym. Since the students were not engaged in any formal physical activity she said we could stand in the doorway and monitor students going in and out, of whom there were plenty. I asked questions and she answered them while handling the small interruptions about every three minutes. Students were polite and cordial to both of us, often saying 'yes miss' or 'thank you.' It was obvious that many of them did not speak English as their first language because they sometimes had difficulty explaining what they wanted or where they needed to go. As we talked about the students she said "listen...hear that? We are standing here having a conversation and we can do it without having to shout at each other!" After observing her with the students I could see why she said they were "great kids...respectful and friendly." The observation of her class was not what I really wanted; little activity and interaction in a PE setting. However it seemed to exemplify a typical high school PE class. As I walked down the hall headed back to the front office I heard several groups of students chatting and not any of them were speaking English.

## Oscar

Oscar is in his first year of teaching, having gone through the alternative certification program to become certified in all-level PE. He grew up with the desire to be a police officer and he graduated from university with a degree in criminal justice. After college he joined the local police force and served the public in that capacity for several years. However he came to realize that this was not his dream and he decided to become a teacher and make a difference in the lives of kids. He said that he “enjoyed teaching even in the police academy. It showed me that I love to teach and teaching in a middle school setting seemed right to me.” Oscar found the open PE position on the district website, applied and was asked to participate in a mock interview. He was hired and is looking forward to his second year at the school. The school is a newcomer school in the district for students in fourth to eighth grades. This middle school has a little less than three hundred students and all of them are considered at risk of dropping out and all are enrolled in the English language learning program. Oscar explained that students are evaluated in the school district where they live and if they have no English or are unable to be successful at the basic level of communication they are assigned to this school. Eighty percent of the students are Hispanic, four percent Asian, and twelve percent African American. Oscar pointed out that all of the students are either refugees or immigrants. The school sits adjacent to a junior high school and many of the students from Oscar’s school will eventually attend that school once they have proficiency in the English language. The school started out as an outreach to Hispanic students in a nearby apartment complex and after five years was moved into the portable buildings the

school occupies. The teachers share parking with the junior high as well as outdoor play space. Oscar teaches his PE class in one of the portable buildings. It has about twenty student chairs, and a teacher's desk and chair. His classroom shares a storage room with another classroom, but he has plenty of space for storing his PE equipment. The outdoor space is very big and includes basketball courts, two large football fields and other space to play. Oscar says it is great because he only uses part of it and his students are very surprised by how much area there is for PE, which is uncommon in the places where they have come from. He uses his classroom to teach English terms and concepts utilizing letters, words, numbers and animated pictures to demonstrate and teach parts of his PE lesson. The observations took place on two different days. On the first day Oscar had the students inside the classroom and he was teaching them words related to his fitness lesson. Most of the students had very little English, but they knew his routine of pointing out the word and pronouncing it and asking them to repeat it. It was difficult to not be a distraction but the students participated and, perhaps, wanted to show off a little. After about twenty minutes he said they had earned the privilege of going outside, so we all went to the big field. Oscar had them get in lines and they worked on locomotor skills such as running, skipping and jumping. He then let them run and pass the soccer ball between them. This he said it is the carrot on the stick because they love to play soccer and they know if they do well they get to play some. On my second visit the students were practicing throwing a football and catching. Again the students were highly engaged in the lesson of throwing and catching even though many were unskilled in this activity. On the day of the interview Oscar decided that we would meet in the

building that serves as a teacher's work area and meeting space. This worked well and we had little interruptions with the exception of occasional messages coming over his mobile communication device. As a former police officer, Oscar also provides security for the students after school. The school has its own security system that allows visitors to enter. Because this school does not have one large building, the entry gate is outside and one enters by pushing the buzzer and getting permission from the school secretary through the intercom. Oscar is on duty every day after school to make sure his students are secure and able to meet their parents or to get on the proper bus. He said he enjoys it because he finds opportunities to interact with students and sometimes with parents. On the day of our interview he informed me that he would have to go after forty-five minutes to carry out his duties. I conducted the interview in the allowed time and he got a message from the secretary asking if he was headed out to the pick-up area. We concluded our conversation as we walked out together. I had the opportunity to meet the principal of the school on one of my visits and found her to be very energetic and proud to be leading this special school. All of the teachers and students I met on the days I visited seemed equally happy and welcoming. Oscar summed it up well when he said, "I try to become that welcome center in my own school." From my brief observation of his duty outside the school, it appears that he does the same thing each day when they leave.

#### Paul

Even though he doesn't teach in either of the two large urban areas of the Southern region included Paul in my study because he teaches a significant number of

refugees. I became aware of Paul at a meeting and after hearing his story I knew that I wanted to interview him and get his perspective on this phenomenon of teaching refugee students. Paul teaches elementary PE in an urban school located in a large city in the Southwest. He has been teaching for eight years after obtaining his masters degree in education. Teaching was not his first career choice, but Paul came to it later after realizing the impact he could have on students. Twenty different languages are spoken in his school and refugee students come from nearby housing areas referred to as a barrio, even though students from non-Hispanic cultures live there. Our interview took place on the phone after I explained the consent form. He verbally agreed to conduct the interview even though I was not able to record it. Notes were taken and later transcribed and analyzed along with the other transcriptions. I mentioned that I would like to see his school and PE classes, but due to time and distance that didn't seem possible. Paul informed me that because of some notoriety in his district and state, there were several videos on YouTube that I could watch to get an idea of what his classes were like. There were other videos of Paul being interview by local news agencies and he said that those might also help with gathering information for my study. After our conversation I went to YouTube straightaway and watched the videos. These artifacts provided more data, somewhat like a secondary interview and an opportunity to observe his PE class. On why he decided to become a teacher, Paul said, "It took me later in life to realize that I had a skill for this and I was good at this. If I applied myself then I could make an impact." Transcribing the YouTube videos added richness to my interviews and an understanding of Paul's teaching experiences.

## Rosa

I met Rosa through the district PE coordinator several months before we scheduled the interview. I learned that she taught refugee and immigrant students in an elementary school in the district not too far from some of the other participants. I did not know her when I conducted the pilot study so it was great to add her into the final study. Rosa had been very athletic growing up, had a love for children and wanted to attend a large university where she could study physical education. Unable to find the program she wanted at the large university in her state, she opted for a smaller school and completed her undergraduate degree. After completing her bachelors' degree she was offered a graduate assistant position and stayed an extra two years to complete her masters. Knowing that her state did not pay as well as her current district she moved and took a position in her current elementary school. With help from the district PE coordinator she interviewed with the principal and was offered the job. On accepting the position, "The principal was very blunt. She told me it would be like no other school I had ever taught at, unlike any other circumstance for any other school. I saw it as a challenge and it definitely was a challenge for the next five years." My first visit was to observe her PE class. On the observation day she had a motor skill activity set up for kicking and throwing with first graders. The students were having fun and curious about the older white guy in their space. To make things smoother, Rosa introduced me as another PE teacher who wanted to learn how to play this game. The students were excited to involve me in the game and made sure I knew how to kick and throw the balls at the bowling pins set up on the other end of the floor. Although I would have

preferred non-participation, the small gym did not allow me a place to casually watch without being noticed. The gym is a separate metal building similar to other gyms I had visited in the district. It was added to the property after the original building was completed. It was not a full size gym but had two basketball goals, lines on the floor, and bathrooms for students, an office for the teacher and plenty of storage space. Outside the gym there are two basketball hoops, a foursquare, other types of play equipment and a large recess area. The recess area was as large as two football fields and on one corner was a modern playground with slides and places to climb. The sixty-year-old school is a traditional one-story brick building with a parking lot for teachers and a drive through, pick up area for students in the front. The school population is a little over five hundred with over seventy percent being at risk and twenty-five percent being enrolled in the English language learning programs. Seventy-seven percent of the students are considered African American, although many of those are African refugees. Across the street from the school is a large apartment complex where the African refugees are resettled. The area around the school also includes single dwelling homes and a large park. The entire school is fenced in with a three-foot chain link fence. Rosa said that when the weather is good, playing outside is great for the kids because they have plenty of room to run and play. She went on to say that “many of the refugees have never seen a school with a play area such as this. They are truly amazed.” I observed her class on another day, later in the school year, with the intention of getting the interview completed. However, plans changed and I only was able to observe her class. This time it was kindergartners learning motor skills with drumsticks and learning

rhythm while standing and sitting. Again on this day I was encouraged to play along with the students and I was happy to oblige. Rosa worked around the students with a very pleasant attitude and an understanding that refugee students are often behind in basic motor skill development. Another skill that they are lacking when they come to this school is basic life skills. She said, "Students not knowing how to use the restrooms correctly...hand washing, basic hygiene...things like that you wouldn't think to teach necessarily in PE," were added to the daily lessons and procedures. The students were respectful and obviously happy to be playing and Rosa did not have to discipline anyone. She made it clear that it took a lot of work to get them to this point and, here, at the end of the year things went very smoothly. I had three separate conversations with Rosa during the last three months of school but could not work in the structured interview that I wanted. Finally we agreed to talk on the phone and I could ask the questions from my interview protocol and add it to my field notes from our previous conversations. The phone call came after the school year was finished and she could give attention to the questions. She agreed to let me record the conversation and upon the completion of the interview I had it transcribed and added it to the ongoing analysis of data. The conversation with Rosa was the seventeenth and final participant interview.

In summary, there were a total of seventeen participants in this study - ten female and seven male. Seven were African-American, two Hispanic and eight white. There was a total of two hundred and thirteen years of teaching experience with this group of participants (See Table 4.1). Six of the participants chose not to be recorded; eleven gave permission to be recorded. The six participants who were not recorded



gave permission for me to take notes of the conversation, which I did during the interview or immediately afterwards. It should be noted that six other PE teachers were approached and asked to participate in the study, but due to various reasons they declined either verbally or by not responding through email. Four other teachers were contacted either by email or in person and it was determined that their schools did not have a significant number of refugees as required for the study, only immigrants or low socioeconomic status students. These teachers were not invited into the study.

### **Thematic expressions**

From data collected through the demographic surveys, interviews and observations of the PE teachers, artifacts and field notes, seven themes presented themselves from the analysis. Each of the themes ensued from the participant's perceptions of themselves and the knowledge they constructed based on the presence of refugees in their classroom or gym. The first theme, the presence of refugee students *shapes teaching practices in PE*, described how the participants felt about their own pedagogical practices, content knowledge, passion for PE and instructional methods. This theme encompassed Banks' Multicultural Education dimension of knowledge construction and equity-based pedagogy (Banks & Banks, 2005; Banks, 2006). The second theme, *language and culture are connected*, revealed that PE teachers need to understand that communication and an understanding of a student's culture is vital to the success of the student and the teacher. The third theme, *professional development for PE teachers is deficient*, described how participants realized the need for pre-service and in-service training on diverse student populations and refugee resettlement. The

fourth theme, *refugee students enlighten a PE teacher's worldview*, showed participants that the presence of refugee students opened their eyes to a broader worldview and to the needs of students. The fifth theme, *ethnic diversity helps to reduce prejudice*, also finds its position in Banks' dimension of prejudice reduction (2002, 2006), in that PE teacher's journey with their students in developing positive attitudes toward various racial groups. The sixth theme, *acknowledging adverse childhood experiences*, provides the PE teacher with a deeper understanding of a student's history, enabling the teacher to demonstrate a caring behavior (Van der Kolk, 2014; Gehris, 2014). Theme seven, *cultural competency and equity matter*, also situates itself with Banks' dimension on promoting equity for students within the school culture and community. Teachers that can demonstrate some measure of cultural competency have the opportunity to promote a sense of equity with their refugee and immigrant students. These students come from circumstances that are very inequitable because of their race, religion or parent's affiliations. It is usually this lack of equity that drives them from their homes and countries.

This phenomenological case study provided for rich discussions, and the methodology allowed participants to share their thoughts and opinions freely. Below is a thorough description of each of these themes, including personal comments and examples from participants. In addition to the descriptions of each theme, short discussions of Banks' Multicultural Education dimensions are made where applicable.

## **Theme 1: shaping teaching practices in PE**

Theme 1 describes how the participants felt about their own pedagogical practices, content knowledge, passion for PE and instructional methods. This theme revealed Banks' second dimension of multicultural education - that being knowledge construction. In this dimension, PE teachers can help students examine, experience and understand the new social reality in which they now live. It is the processes of taking what a student knows or perceives and gives it meaning within the knowledge constructed by the society at large (Banks & Banks, 2005; Banks, 2006). This theme also answered the first research question: How has the refugee resettlement in this community and school affected the physical education teachers' instruction and teaching practices? Most of the participants recognized the limitations of their educational training when it came to working with refugees or immigrant students. In the conversations concerning teaching practices, participants expressed that teaching PE should have certain characteristics. These characteristics have been divided into six sub-themes.

### **Sub-theme 1: teaching must be high quality, requiring time and experience**

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Physical Education Standards (2016) provided Five Core Propositions that define high quality teaching: Teachers should be committed to their students and to learning; they should know the content they teach and how to teach that content; they must be responsible for all aspects of student learning; they must give sincere consideration to their teaching

practice and learn from their experiences; and finally, they should be members of learning communities. In describing a multicultural school, Banks (2008) pointed out that teachers must demonstrate attitudes and actions that communicate to students that they have high expectations for teaching and learning. He wrote, "Teachers have to believe that all students can learn, regardless of their social class or ethnic group membership" (Banks, 2008, p. 41). It is these attitudes, beliefs and actions that promote high quality teaching. The PE teachers in this study not only expressed these attitudes, but also maintained that their content knowledge and their instruction must be of high quality. Throughout the interviews it was communicated that they strive to become not just better teachers, but excellent teachers. Matt expressed it this way:

You gotta go in there and have that confidence. It's your classroom. You know, if you want it done a certain way, you got to create the classroom that you're okay with living and teaching in every day. I want a classroom where things are happening...that I'm ok with.

Ingrid said,

You see yourself as a PE teacher. You have to stand out. You need to be in front of the students and you need to be able to do everything you are asking them to do. You need to show them what you love and you need to support the profession.

Teachers work to construct socio-cultural knowledge through content delivery and daily experiences. It was observed that there was intent to be culturally relevant as much as possible with students. Teachers made an effort to listen, to be patient and to answer questions with clear English. They recognize that high quality teaching requires good communication skills. It was observed that they were relational and understood the value of being personal. They have learned to be resourceful.

The final aspect of high quality teaching is being patient and willing to get further experience. A review of the longevity of tenure for most teachers and one can see that many of these teachers have been teaching for a number of years and most in the same school. Overall, they take pride in teaching PE and in being knowledgeable of their content. Ingrid put it this way:

We like what we do and we take it seriously...you have to be physically active yourself... show your passion and know your stuff (PE content). You need to show that you can walk forward, backwards, that you can run, that you can jump, that you can throw a ball, that you can swim...it's not easy.

Helen added,

I do know there's a lot of excellent teachers in the district but also there's a lot who don't really know what they're doing. They're just being placed or just saying 'okay, this is an easy subject, I'll go for that.' They take the test to be a PE teacher, and they literally have no clue what they're doing. I mean, I'm speaking from experience.

The participants realize that with experience and time, teaching practices get better for them and thus instruction is better for the students. Research has shown that teacher training in formal education is best, although some would suggest that alternative education and on the job training is good enough (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Preparation for teachers of diverse students and training in culturally relevant teaching is either non-existent, limited in its implementation or there is lack of exposure to relevant experiences (Columna, Foley & Lytle, 2010; Dagkas, 2007; Gay & Howard, 2000; Harrison, Carson & Burden, 2010). This was discovered to be true in this study. However, given proper training, teachers perform better and students have greater success, even in situations they were not totally prepared for (Gay, 2000; Milner, 2012; Stewart, 2011). When questioned about training, the conversation almost always

turned to experience. When discussing the communication challenges, participants often referred to the need for showing patience. Clara said, "It takes patience and I have learned to identify class leaders who can help with language and instruction." In some way there was this idea of taking time to get to know their students and the refugee community in which they live. Natalie made the point by saying, "It takes time. As they get to know me and understand that I am trying to help them, they do better and my instruction is better." Matt expressed it this way: "It's all about doing. If you could watch me, then you could do it. And everything is based right off the lesson cycle. We still teach; we're using what best practices should be for learning and for PE and it works." Kendrick realized that it takes time and patience, stating,

It's not going to happen in a day, it's not going to happen in a year, but I think it's something that you work towards, and then hopefully you can increase and just kind of show...showing people, that you know, teaching is a good profession.

For Rose, time improves things. She said,

Every year it got better. I would say the first year I struggled more with just the student population. My first year, it was horrible. I mean, I couldn't pronounce any kids' names, didn't know who was a brother or a sister...it was me, music and art teacher bouncing ideas off of each other.

In his interview, Jared suggested that,

It was more of one day at a time and learning by experience. One day at a time...it turned out pretty well for me. I learned a lot about their culture, they learned a lot about my culture. And nothing could probably train me unless it's the experience of first hand on hand.

Most teachers expressed that there were times when you are not sure what to do, but you have to do something. Ginger realized that adjustments have to be made along the way. She commented that,

You have to allot for accommodations that don't exist. They don't exist! There's no accommodation that says, 'they came a day ago off the plane, let them sit by the wall and cry because they don't understand a word you're saying!' You have to give them a fair chance. You have to be able to modify for that child and understand where they come from.

Situations change. Students come and go. Lessons have to be taught. Oscar, as a first year teacher, realized that,

I had to really adapt it (PE) to these kids and how they learn. For here, it's more lesson based where if I do basketball, I have to do basketball for a full week because they have to learn the word 'bounce.' They have to learn to bounce a ball and walk. And so it's a full week...it's very different.

While most of the teachers expressed a need to challenge the students with high expectations in PE, they realized that as teachers they are challenged as well.

### **Sub-theme 2: teaching excellence**

PE teachers want to not only have a quality PE program but they want to be seen as excellent educators. Ferguson, in Darling-Hammond (2010), conducted research on student learning and, "found that the single most important measurable cause of increased student learning was teacher expertise, measured by teacher performance on a statewide exam measuring academic skills, and teaching knowledge, along with teacher experience" (p. 105). Darst & Pangrazi (2006) stated, "The instructor is the most important factor in the learning environment. An effective teacher creates a teaching-learning atmosphere that is both positive and caring" (p. 19). Study participants, along with research, recognize that PE is often seen as a profession that is not equal to other teaching positions. They often feel isolated and struggle with perceptions of being less valued than other teaching colleagues (Beddoes, Prusak, & Hall, 2014; France,

Moosbrugger & Brockmeyer, 2011; Lux, 2010; Rink, 2010). Therefore, they recognize that their teaching practices have to be excellent. Each teacher is an individual with varying abilities, skills and personalities. No two are the same. Those individual characteristics influence the way they teach in relation to their students, the environment and the content objectives. They motivate students differently and positively. They express themselves through their teaching with the desire to enhance student learning (Darst & Pangrazi, 2006; Rink, 2010). The limited observations made it difficult to recognize the desire to be excellent; that was expressed through interviews. However, observations did reveal that most teachers were content with their positions and willing to be professional, and to be seen as good people doing a challenging job.

PE teachers recognize themselves as professional educators. Lilia said, "I have to try to change the mindset of other teachers...being labeled as a coach not a teacher. I am proud to teach all the kids and do what we do." Most all of the participants believe that they are excellent PE teachers. They have had professional training and most have sufficient experience; they know how to teach the content; they are passionate about the content and they know how to construct content knowledge so that all of their students are learning. Paul explained, "Being a teacher-leader is being true to myself...making my vision become a reality everyday. You need to have a passion and heart behind all you do...it is a big responsibility." Excellence in teaching also requires teachers to be physically and mentally prepared. Throughout the observation experiences most of the participants gave every indication that they are physically active and good role models for their students. Although they were not asked directly about



their own physical activity and health, it was obvious that they took this aspect of their teaching seriously. Observations affirmed this. Almost every teacher appeared to be fit and able to demonstrate skills. They were moving around with their students and were good examples to their students.

### **Sub-theme 3: working together leads to knowledge construction**

In Banks' (2002, 2008) work on multicultural education, knowledge construction is delivered to students in a manner that enables them to comprehend the meaning of race, diversity and social ideologies that come from lessons, curriculum and social interaction. Teachers work together with diverse students helping them to get along, to communicate and to understand their new American identity. Banks (2008) maintains:

When teachers engage students in knowledge construction, the students are given opportunities to participate in building knowledge and to construct their own interpretations of historical, social and current events. Knowledge construction is a powerful idea in multicultural education because it can be taught in all disciplines and content areas (p.64).

In physical education the teachers provide opportunities for refugee students to construct knowledge concerning a previously unknown social environment and help them to begin to interpret new games or activities in light of the rules, the competition and the organization. Most of the PE teachers identified their schools like Jared did, as "a school of many nations." They worked hard to involve refugee students in lessons, in activities and in helping each other. Clara sought out class leaders and empowered them to help teach and translate instructions when needed. This improved relationships and social interaction between different groups.

Observations confirmed this desire to work together. Teachers and students were learning from each other and about each other. Teachers gave refugee students responsibility and helped them learn to lead. It was fun to meet elementary students who were class leaders, when only a year or two before they couldn't speak the language and had no friends. It was these relationships, opportunities for leadership and interactions that led students to formulate knowledge of their new surroundings and society. Being a teacher that can deliver PE content, mentor student leaders and be a person who is willing to learn something new is vital to a student's success. Natalie expressed it by saying,

They come here and I have to figure out how to help them succeed. They can choose to go to a newcomer school, but they prefer to come here. I love working with these kids. We have certain knowledge that can help them. We have to teach them what to do to be useful members of society.

Donna said, "I want to keep the kids involved. To do so I had to elongate the lesson and try new ways of teaching the lesson. I strive to make the lessons appropriate."

Modification of lessons and teaching content that was new to most of these students allowed refugee students to situate physical literacy into their knowledge or awareness.

Matt added, "You're scared that you're not gonna be able to teach a certain population, but then you realize that you can, and they can all do it, and they can all be successful."

Knowing how to deliver that content to a group of diverse students is a challenge to many of the participants. They learned how to do it from experience; not from special training. This was observed over and over, and when asked to share where they learned to do that, they maintained that it was a learned skill. Paul said,

Teachers need to know that they are more powerful than they think they are and when we come together we can see great changes. As a teacher I get to come in everyday and get to know my students and what they need. That's an amazing opportunity as a teacher and as a PE teacher I get to teach them about something that they don't get in the classroom. I am lucky in that sense, but I believe it's a big responsibility.

PE teachers learned the value of teaching physical education content by engaging diverse learners in a new way and by being an advocate for them. In this way teachers could ensure a positive environment where students can learn.

#### **Sub-theme 4: relational teaching**

Participants stressed that quality teaching must be relational and personal.

Teachers understand that teaching must allow for relationships to be developed between them and the student, and with the larger community. Caring is an essential part of being an excellent teacher and of effective instruction (Gay, 2000; Darst & Pangrazi, 2010; Larson, 2006; Noddings, 2005; Noddings, 2015). Ladson-Billings' (1994), in her research on teachers who exhibited caring attitudes and behaviors maintains, "Culturally relevant teaching fosters the kinds of social interactions in the classroom that support the individual in the group...teachers encourage the sense of belonging that young people crave" (p.76). Ginger said, "It all comes down to no matter who they are, it's a relationship that you have to build with each one. You have to find some connection with each one of them." Matt supported this by stating,

It's those relationships...anything with learning always goes back to the relationships and having that mutual respect between teacher and student and making sure that they feel a part of what's going on...and they know you care and you're watching and you are a part of it as well. It's not just all you or all them. It's kind of a mutual thing.

In working with diverse students this can be complicated by language and lack of understanding. Relationships with students allow teachers to see situations that need to be addressed and diagnose problems. Fiona related this experience:

Last year we had a kid...he was causing us problems one after another after another...he liked chocolate and so do I...When there was a problem I said get in here I have something for you and I would offer him a piece of chocolate. So we just became friends with him and he eventually calmed down for us. It's just about building individual relationships with as many people as you can.

Jared expressed his thoughts:

Especially being male and a lot of these kids don't have male figures in their houses. They tend to grab on to us and we'll say, come here and just cool down, so they'll just come here and sit, and you can see the frustration on their face and after about 20 minutes they are like...Coach, I'm ready to go back to class, I'm okay. I say okay, anytime you feel like you wanna come back just come back and see us. And the teachers know it too, so that's no problem.

The teachers noticed that most of the refugee students need personal attention, much like a one-on-one relationship when possible. They go out of their way to get to know them personally and some of their history. Because of smaller classes they can often do things that teachers of other classes can't do. Jared went on to say, "You have to bond with kids...maybe eating together...it shows you care. I might have lunch with them or they with me. And we'd just talk...that's how I get to know their lifestyle and they get to know mine." Rosa said, "I try to teach them like they're my own. I think: you're here and I care where you're from."

Caring is a big part of this relationship building, and letting students know that the teacher does have their best interest in mind (Noddings, 2005). Kendrick's point was well taken: "We have to keep an open mind...we have to know our population. Getting

to know the student's names...and pronounce them correctly. Get to know the brothers and sisters...not knowing was a barrier." Lilia added, "We are their parents at school, we have conversations, we tell them how to treat others. You have to try to understand where they're coming from...ask questions. And most of the parents know that we are trying." It was observed that most every teacher chose to express a caring attitude for his or her students. That caring attitude was seen in the form of compassion, understanding, patience, kindness and sympathy. These PE teachers are relational and that would lead to expressing the truest form of care: love.

#### **Sub-theme 5: Resourcefulness**

Quality teaching of PE in a diverse situation requires resourcefulness or making the best out of what is available. Gehrke (2005) wrote,

Effective teaching, as defined by student outcomes and improvement, is a result of the right combinations of methods, materials, student characteristics, teacher characteristics, and the context in which teaching and learning occur. Those assigned or choosing to teach in urban schools, where not only students but also the schools themselves typically have fewer resources than suburban middle-class schools, face a challenge much different than other school environments (p. 15).

Recent research supports the environmental situations described by participants. Urban settings with limited resources and diverse student challenges influence instruction and attitudes. It was observed that teachers developed strategies to overcome the challenges, which led to positive attitudes toward students and the teaching situation

(McCaughtry, et al, 2006; Sliwa, Nihiser, Lee, McCaughtry, Culp & Michael, 2017). The participants represented a wide variety of facilities and resources. From those who had to use portable buildings for a PE classroom to those who had full size gyms to work in, no one complained. My first observation of a PE class in a portable building made me wonder if it could really be done this way, and I felt a bit sorry for them. Oscar saw the bright side of things when he stated, “The possibilities are limitless with physical activity, and if you have limited equipment, you can still have a day full of fun.” The focus was on physical activity and if they had a place to move, then it was good. Some teachers had more space than they could use and some had a little space, but made it work. Helen and Ingrid both teach in portable buildings. Ingrid remarked,

I’ve gotten use to having my own little space and my little area and basically I’m on my own...you adjust and you get used to it and I think over all we still have a pretty decent PE education...even if don’t have a lot of equipment, we try to do the best. Here you have to scramble for each and every piece of equipment.

Helen explained,

The challenge is what you can do and what you can’t do. What you would like to do and obviously you can’t because it’s not available. Sometimes I wish we had a gym because of the weather, the heat. I wish we had maybe another cover outside because we are such a big school and that would help.

Often the cultural differences are reflected in the spaces for physical activity. An in-depth description of physical activity spaces was discussed above in the description of each participant. The descriptions were not intended to be exhaustive but to provide a glimpse of the varied teaching spaces utilized by each teacher in the study. Fiona remembered when some students first see the school, “We get Arab kids and they’ve never seen a gym. Never seen a track, they don’t know how to run!” Ginger added,

“They don’t want to be outside. I think some of these cultures, they’ve not had the chance to go outside...to be outside...to play with basketballs and interact with each other. Some of them are afraid of outside.” Resourcefulness was not always about facilities and equipment, but often about lessons, extra programming and the challenges a PE teacher is presented with to provide physical activity experiences for students. Rosa expressed her thoughts about physical activity space and activities in this way:

I took it upon myself...I realized that a lot of our students enjoy running and they were really good at it, so I did a running club and we would practice in the mornings before school...this provided them with a pair of shoes, the opportunity to run in an actual race and the ability to learn what its like to train for a race...one of my biggest outside activities, outside of just doing PE.

Jared explained his situation saying,

We have one class for a full week now, then the next rotation will come for a full week. So I don’t like it because you don’t get to have the kids till another seven weeks. They don’t get enough physical activity and that’s one reason we do a running program, a walking/running program every 10 to 12 minutes before class. Either we do that or a yoga thing, just try to get those kids moving.

Most all of the participants expressed various challenges in teaching diverse students.

Beatrice summed it up this way: “You can’t allow yourself to be overwhelmed by the challenges each day...sometimes it is overwhelming, you have to be flexible...there is a lot of self-reflection and making adjustments.” Teaching large numbers of students with limited resources and being confined to limited spaces is a challenge and teachers who perform their jobs well are to be commended (Baldwin, 2015; Graham, 2008; McCaughtry, et al., 2006). It was observed that most of these teachers were awesome in meeting the challenges. It was also observed that most of the students were happy and enjoying the opportunity to play.

### **Sub-theme 6: teaching with high expectations**

Participants in the study recognized that to be successful teachers they have to set and maintain high expectations. Students, even those who have not grown up in our American education system have to be challenged. In spite of the difficulties in language and culture, PE teachers know that high expectations have to be established. This includes learning language, activity lessons and behavior. According to Ladson-Billings (2001), teachers must have high expectations for academic achievement in the classroom. She identified five indicators of student achievement that teachers should expect this way:

Teachers have to presume that students can be educated; the students know exactly what success entails; the teacher knows the content, the learner and how to teach content to the learner; teachers know how to help students raise critical questions and search for multiple perspectives; and students have an opportunity to demonstrate what they know through samples of their work, performances and exhibitions (pp.75-75).

When teachers set high standards and require that students, and themselves, are to meet those standards, learning most often takes place. Matt shared his perceptions saying,

The bottom line is that I'm here to teach, students are here to learn, and that's what's going to happen. We're gonna do whatever it takes for that to happen. It may be a slower process than everybody else, but it doesn't matter. They're still learning and you can prove that they're learning. In PE we move and play. Moving and playing are universal. It's all about doing. We use best practices...follow the lesson...and it works.

Rosa realized that she had to make some personal adjustments:



Talking with other teachers to understand why a student is misbehaving in one class and not in another. I had to loosen up a bit. I transitioned their personalities into leadership qualities. Find ways to improve and increase positive performance in PE and around the school.

Lilia has high expectations for herself. She stated,

If they (administration) never come to observe, that's fine. They don't have to come and observe. But we're still gonna be teaching. We're still gonna be educating these kids. We're still gonna be showing them different ways they can improve themselves, you know.

Each teacher had certain goals for their classes and for themselves. They were not all the same. Oscar revealed that,

My very first goal even in PE is for learning English...that's really my number one goal. We're forcing them, and we're only speaking English to them...so the benefit to the PE class – and the kids know this – is that when they do the work (inside) and they're learning at the proper rate, they get the privilege of going outside.

Paul has high expectations for his students, regardless of their situation. He said,

Everyone has the same opportunities and same choices. I'm the kind of teacher that wants to know my students and I want to know their needs. I get down on a knee and listen to my students. I want to push them, to make them try. I know their weaknesses and their strengths. That's the kind of teacher that I am.

When teachers have low expectations of certain students, these perceptions can set students up for failure. The opportunity to teach refugee and immigrant students allows the teacher to see all the positive qualities that can be brought to the classroom, not just the challenges and liabilities (Dagkas, 2007; Milner, 2010; Sliwa, et al, 2017). It was observed that expectations for diverse students were no different than expectations for any other student. Teachers appeared to set the bar high and expected their students to reach it. Not only did they set the standard, but also in most cases they demonstrated to their students how to reach that standard. Leadership by example was observed often.

## **Theme 2: language and culture are connected**

This theme revealed that PE teachers understand that communication and an understanding of a student's culture is vital to the success of the student and the teacher. In Gay's (2010) excellent work on culturally responsive teaching, she states that, "a semiotic relationship exists among communication, culture, teaching, and learning, and it has profound implications for implementing culturally responsive teaching" (p. 76). Johnston (2004) wrote, "If we have learned anything from Vygotski it is that intellectual life is fundamentally social, and language has a special place in it. Children, in their own ways, teach us about the language of our classrooms" (pp. 2-3). Communication comes primarily through language and when a teacher cannot communicate with a student because they don't speak the same language then there will be challenges. All of the participants had a good understanding of the challenges brought about through language differences. The challenges not only included class instruction, but also included communication with parents and dealing with normal issues that happen daily in the school environment. Lack of language impacts the instruction of lessons and directions. Clara said, "The biggest problem is communication, the language, and the vocabulary. So I have to demonstrate my instructions. It takes patience. I have no issues with the international kids and no cultural problems." It appeared through observations that most all of the teachers had come to a stable place in teaching refugees and non-English speakers. Lilia talked about her first year:

My first year was an eye opening experience because I wasn't exposed to refugee students, or to students that didn't really understand English, or to students, you know, that came in speaking Mandarin and there's absolutely

nobody on campus that can effectively translate what they were trying to communicate.

Teachers are adapting and making modifications to their lessons, but still language and culture together made teaching a challenge. Paul put it this way: “English is not the boundary, accepting cultures is.” Kendrick said,

With us, we understand that not every kid speaks English, not every kid’s going to understand what we’re saying. And so we’re big on the whole auditory, visual, kinesthetic, like, we’re telling you, we’re showing you, and then we’re all doing it. And then after a while, we show them, yeah, you are smart enough to understand this!

Although some teachers did not fully understand everything about a student’s culture, nor did they speak all of the languages represented, they do the best they can. Helen put it this way:

Just to be aware of how they learn the language, because you know, our first language is not English, so I know how hard it is to learn a language. I had to go through it, so it’s easier for us to understand these kids anyway because we know what you go through.

Most of the teachers knew that it was part of their responsibility to help these students learn English. They affirmed the value of PE but realize that students need a chance to learn many things, such as art, music and life skills. For students to be successful in school and in life they need to learn the language, so teachers embrace the task of teaching English and PE to these life-long learners. Teachers often adapt their teaching methods to include media and other visual tools to enhance language learning. Eduardo’s role as a PE teacher led him to realize, “Language is key. There needs to be quality teaching for the ELL’s. I use the Fitnessgram and videos to go along with it to help with reading and seeing. It is all about them understanding.” Teachers also dealt with other challenges such as students with special needs. Fiona shared these thoughts:

“The biggest challenge? (chuckles) Language! But you got Google Translate. We had one little Japanese boy who came a couple of years ago and he didn’t speak English, and he was autistic...that was challenging!” Another challenge is communicating with the refugee community or with parents. Rosa shared this story of trying to invite parents to a school event:

We had a Back to School-Meet the Teacher Night at the beginning of the year. And I had been there three years and we’d hardly gotten anybody to show up at the beginning of the year. We didn’t do much...we didn’t pass out any flyers. So last year I invited all the new teachers to pass out fliers with me and meet some of the kids, and get to know the neighborhood. So we went out before the meet the teacher night, about a week before, passed out some flyers...we introduced ourselves and split up and went out in the neighborhood with teachers who had been on campus for a few years and knew the area. In my first year here we tried this formula, it was like, oh okay, I’ll walk across the street ‘cause the Russians lived in those apartments across the street. We then realized that English is not their home language. Okay, who will we get to translate? It was definitely a barrier for sure. And then we tried the other apartments where the Africans lived and when we got there we were told that we needed to see this man who was identified as the Chief of the complex. He told us that anytime we needed to announce something to this apartment complex, we should come to him first and he will make sure everyone knows. After that we always had a pretty good response.

According to Abel even simple tasks can be a challenge: “Communication is the hardest thing and calling parents is an issue. Trying to figure out how to grade them when they don’t fully understand the lesson...you can’t allow yourself to be overwhelmed by the challenges each day.”

Relationships continue to be key to learning in every respect and all of these teachers recognized the need to demonstrate that they care and they wanted to learn about the different cultures represented in their classrooms. Because language and culture are connected to each other, some teachers found themselves pressured to

focus on teaching English in their PE class. Three of the participants maintained that they are there to teach PE, not English, and that is what's going to happen. They insisted that English language learning should take place in other classes, but in PE the students would put their limited English to use and be physically active. Five of the teachers maintained that their responsibility was to teach PE as well as language. They incorporated English language learning into their lessons and made it a priority. The other teachers either did not express their opinion one way or the other. They indicated that teaching PE involved using English as the language of instruction, and that was enough.

Language cannot be separated from culture because it represents the identity of the student. Natalie summed it up by saying, "At first I didn't understand cultural issues or language, but language and culture are tied together. Challenges...language barrier for sure. Them understanding me and me understanding them." Teachers know and understand the expectations of the administration for the students. They know when their own American culture clashes with those cultures that are different from them. As Lilia pointed out, "You can't label a person because of their color...you can't see their culture sometimes." Helen added, "Knowing your own cultural identity and diversity helps to understand others." She made the point, as many did, that even though students can sometimes hide their culture, they usually can't hide their language. It was observed that there were very few problems between students of different cultures or ethnicities. They appeared to get along. Abel noted, "Students often self-segregate by language or nationality, not by color or looks...like the Asians. Some cultures mix well

and some don't." Overall the PE teachers could not separate culture from language. They saw it as connected, as a challenge to teaching but something that could be understood with time and patience. Gay (2010) maintained that communication cannot be separated from culture, and culture is known through those who communicate it. Thus effective teaching and learning is dependent on culturally responsive communication. The teachers in this study, without reading Gay's work, have come to experience this and are learning from it.

### **Theme 3: professional development for PE teachers is deficient**

The third theme described the need for training on diverse student populations and refugee resettlement. Gay (2000) stated, "too few teachers have adequate knowledge about how conventional teaching practices reflect European American cultural values. Nor are they sufficiently informed about the cultures of different ethnic groups" (p.22). Every participant made it clear that they did not receive any type of training for working with a refugee/immigrant student population. National data has reported that excellent professional development is rare. Most teachers participate in some kind of professional development each year as required, but most do not get more than a day or two. Most do not research or read from dedicated journals, nor do they engage in any type of study related to teaching. Most are not involved in mentoring, coaching pre-service or new teachers, or research (Darling-Hammond, 2010). When asked about training Fiona exclaimed, "Training? NO! And we still have not had it even in this time that we have been here. We have not received it at all." They also were quick to add that they don't get any training for cross-cultural teaching in

their school or district. From the short survey given to all participants, less than half of the participants identified themselves as members of the state organization for physical education (i.e. TAHPERD); attending statewide PE conferences or workshops once a year. The others are not members and only attend district professional development workshops that are usually designed for all teachers. Everything they know about working with diverse students, such as refugees and immigrants is all self taught or learned by experience. Natalie said, "I was not preparing to become a teacher, so I didn't receive any formal training at my university. I've not had any training on cross-cultural or multicultural education...it has been all on the job." Matt expressed similar feelings coming out of university:

I don't think we were really prepared. And even after working with inner city kids, or urban kids, or kids with emotional and behavioral disorders and that kind of thing, no real training there. Everything was based off best practices, and so it was wonderful, thorough training, but it didn't give you...it gave you the education, but it couldn't give you what an experience could give you.

Jarod was surprised as he commented:

No way would I ever have thought I would be here. In student teaching they had us going to a small school. It was pretty much an African American school so it was most of the kids that was there, that's what we were trained on there. It's a big difference.

For teachers with only a year or two of experience they could remember talking about diversity in their educational programs, but it did not stick. Some could remember talking to the principal before taking the job, but not always understanding the full extent of the situation. Donna described her interview this way:

In my job interview we talked about diversity and language. In college I took a class on diversity, but it was just a class, nothing more. As a new teacher I really didn't know fully what I was getting into.

Rosa explained,

I should've done some more cultural research on some of the countries that my students were coming from. Knowing their cultural norms and comparing them to what my expectations are, or our cultural norms, and finding a happy medium. I think I was expecting a temporary population. I think it was my principal who said in my interview, 'You know, I leave home every day and I drive 30 minutes to a third-world country.' I thought, what is she talking about? In that first week I realized what she meant.

This theme exposed the lack of in-depth cross-cultural training for those preparing for a career in education. Stewart (2011) suggested that,

school has been identified as the most important ecological system for the refugee family: all of the children and their families will have some form of contact with the school. The challenge that has been identified is that the school does not have adequate resources and the personnel does not have the training to identify or respond to all of the issues (p.86).

Some maintained that it should be teacher education programs while others believed that all they needed to know would be available on the job. Fiona said, "Universities need to prepare pre-service teachers for diversity, international students, diverse ethnicities...at all levels." Kendrick expressed another point of view, "Somebody at your school will teach you how to teach the cultures, so that you can...not embrace it, but be aware of the best ways to approach those students or even the parents." Matt agrees, "Keep doing what you're doing. Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are a lot of people out there who can and will help you." It appeared that a hands on experience has been the best teacher. Some teachers have ESL certifications, which helps with language objectives. Some remembered university class discussions, some have conversations



with other teaching colleagues and some acknowledged that training would have been helpful. However, all agreed that there is really nothing that could have helped them prepare for this phenomenon. The phrases and comments on professional training included: Kendrick: "From school? No. From life? Yes." Beatrice: "Nothing could probably train me unless it's the experience." Rosa: "Definitely a trial by fire...this school is unlike any other I had taught at." And Ginger: "No! And none up to now!" Of all the themes analyzed, this is one all participants agreed on - there was little to no training before teaching; training could have helped and might help; and learning by experience is the only way to really learn it.

#### **Theme 4: refugee students enlighten a PE teacher's worldview**

This theme demonstrated that the presence of refugee students in PE allowed for teachers to expand their worldview. Furthermore teachers had their eyes opened to the needs of students. This theme addressed the second research question: How has the physical education teacher adapted his or her own personal worldview and cultural experience to the behaviors of refugee students and interactions with refugee families? Banks (2006) described worldview this way:

Certain perspectives, points of view and frames of reference are normative within each culture and microcultural group. This does not mean that every individual within a particular cultural or microcultural group endorses a particular point of view or perspective. It does mean, however, that particular views and perspectives occur more frequently within some of microcultural groups than do others (p.76).

Teachers recognized the various languages, cultures and diversity. Even if they didn't really know what they were seeing or hearing, their expanding worldview informed them that their students were different and had something rich to add to their PE classes. Each teacher had an awareness that the presence of refugee and immigrant students was bringing about change in their own perspectives towards the world and diversity. Their point of view towards peoples of the world was changing as the result of their students. Banks (2007) maintains that, "Teachers need to develop reflective cultural and national identifications if they are to function effectively in diverse classrooms and help students from different cultures and groups to construct clarified identifications" (p.27). The participants recognized cultural differences in their students. They understand that diverse students cannot all be treated the same. Nor could they be approached and treated as if they were African American, or Asian American or Muslim American. For most teachers each culture was seen as unique and something worth understanding. Fiona commenting on her students, said:

It's like the UN here. I'm looking at my fifth grade track list that I made today. We've got white kids, we've got Hispanic kids. We've got umm...Chinese. We've got Japanese, we've got Vietnamese. We've got half Chinese, half American. But we don't have a lot of Blacks...except for two students. I'm looking here and there's like fifteen different...fifteen kids on our track team that...you know...they're either mixed...we have a lot of mixed Asian and white kids here too.

Jared shared that,

We don't understand where they're coming from, but you're still learning. I've seen pictures of kids from Congo, where they live in actual huts that we see on TV and we're like, 'oh, that's not real.' Oh, that's really real! They're staying with cloths of clothing on, they're in the woods. You see the jungle and you see the monkeys, everything and

you're like, 'no this cannot be real.' It's a big difference. I learned a lot about their culture, they learned a lot about my culture.

Letting the students know that the teacher cared helped move the relationship process forward, which in turn, led to successful teaching and learning. Eduardo said,

I really had to reinvent myself to teach here. I knew what I was going into, but I was confident I could do it. I have to be serious and stern, but also understanding. I have to put myself in their shoes.

Paul and Rosa were moved with compassion and wanted to both understand and meet the needs of their students. Caring often involved using simple, kind gestures; speaking slowly and clearly; and attempts to know their student's cultural norms and family language. Paul shared:

I had to understand my kids, my kid's needs. I began identifying needs of my students and realizing that differences are strengths. I included diversity in my lessons. There are different religions that require unique navigations. I'm the kind of teacher that wants to know my students and I want to know their needs. I get down on a knee and listen to my students. As a teacher I get to come in everyday and get to know my students and what they need. I get to learn their cultures and backgrounds. That's an amazing opportunity as a teacher.

Rosa responded by saying,

Their basic needs aren't met. They don't have toothbrushes at home. Or they do and they've had it for who knows how long or they might share it. They don't know any different. So being able to provide them with some of those things that they may not normally have to start the school year off. It didn't cross my mind to teach them...let them explore the bathrooms in the beginning of the year. Letting them explore a little bit and reiterating, okay, what's the procedure when you go in there? Hand washing, basic hygiene, things like that you wouldn't think to teach necessarily in PE...I realized, okay, I'm missing something.

Many of the teachers shared that they had international experiences that led to a desire to know more about other cultures. Matt and Kendrick find their student's culture

interesting and are challenged to learn more about the languages and cultures. Matt explained:

To be honest, it interests me. The challenge of it, and the chance to get to teach kids from all different places in the world. It was kind of intriguing to me. We talk to the kids like, yeah, if you have music from your culture that you like, let us know. We'll play your music. Cause I'm...that's the thing...interested. We're probably more interested in their culture than maybe, I don't know, other teachers. But we're interested just to know their world...their point of view, you know. It's pretty interesting to me. It's nice. You get to come to work and teach, but also learn as well.

Kendrick said,

The school I came from is very similar to this. The only difference is how many kids from other countries, or refugees that we get here. Um, that was...to me, I don't think it was scary, that was kind of more appealing. Because then you can ask kids, like hey, what did you do? What was your class like? What are some things that you did in class? Did you even have PE? You know. And it's just interesting to get that perspective from kids.

Participants demonstrated and communicated the changes they have made in their own thoughts and actions due to their students. Even though they didn't fully understand the phenomenon of refugees in their school, most have allowed their worldviews and behaviors to be reshaped for the success of their students. Observations proved in every case that teachers were kind, caring and attempting to understand their students. They further demonstrated their knowledge of a changing worldview by the way they decorated their teaching space or classrooms. It was observed that in most every gym and office there was something on the wall or on a shelf that had been placed there by the teacher to express an expanding worldview and awareness. There were flags from different countries along with pictures and small displays. Oscar stated it this way:

I'm the very first teacher, and I'm the very first face they see when they come to school. So I have to be that model of what their new life...they could've only been four days in the country...what that new life could be so it's very positive. Very happy, smiling, welcoming them into the class and letting them know that it will be difficult to understand me, but they are gonna learn. It is going to be fun and it doesn't have to be scary like where they came from. So I try to become that welcome center in my own school.

### **Theme 5: ethnic diversity helps to reduce prejudice**

In Banks' work on multicultural education he maintains that lessons and activities that promote the development of attitudes among students that are responsive to diversity, race, ethnicity and cultural differences can help with the reduction or elimination of prejudice in the learning environment (2002, 2006). In this study the participants were able to identify that teaching refugees and immigrants assisted them in developing positive attitudes toward various racial and cultural groups. Matt maintained "in PE we move and play. Moving and playing are universal. It's all about doing. Communicate that we're a team...we're a family, we do this together." Paul advised that teachers should "include diversity in lesson planning," and shared that "we have after school activities which creates good relations with kids and parents." This attitude was observed in many classes as the teachers made sure students were engaged with each other without conflict. Ginger's gym has a big stuffed animal in one corner that serves as a comfort to students who are stressed or need a safe place. She said,

You have to find some connection with each one of them. Because what may work with one cultural student may not work with another. And you have to just listen to what their concerns and their fears are and go with that.

Matt has found several ways to assist students and he maintains,

There are challenges, like with many kids, but there is nothing that stops class, that doesn't allow you to have a productive classroom. You can still do what you need to do. It works. I mean the talking, the social behavior, that's still taking some time, and its gonna take time, the social aspect of it. Being on teams, trying to do cooperative stuff, that's always gonna be a work in progress. But having them buddy up, having them with the people that have been here, it really helps. It really helps.

Female teachers, especially those who are African American, learned how gender differences in other cultures can impact a teacher's authority. They were confronted with unique societal norms that were embedded in one culture and expressed through interactions in the classroom. Helen explained,

In elementary school you can feel that there is a different attitude toward women and authority from some Middle Eastern cultures, you know, they have a different mindset about women and then women in charge. Asian kids are usually very polite, very settled most of the time and Middle Eastern boys are a bit more...not aggressive, but you know what I mean.

Other teachers found themselves in parental roles or in roles where they could greatly influence students. Oscar related this encounter:

With some of the kids that they don't have the father figures at home. I've had one particular student who's in middle school who said that she came here six months ago, her mother was killed on the way over and her father was deported. So to me, she's like, 'You are my father and I thank you for that.' That just blew me away and I'm just trying to teach her how to play basketball and soccer and hand-eye coordination and so by they way I treat the kids, I am that figure for them and I don't think they get that anywhere else. And they're learning because they think of me that way.

Some teachers became peacekeepers to help students of different ethnicities and cultures to get along with each other. Natalie said,

Yes, I do have to keep peace. We are in a high gang area, but we rarely have problems. Relationships are key to maintaining peace. I have come to understand the differences in the Hispanic community and the influence of the gangs. I think if they are not in the same gangs or if they really don't like a certain group, they just stay clear of each other. It's rare that we have fights in school.

Several of the female teachers had their worldview challenged when refugee students questioned their authority based on their gender. Donna was learning that gaining respect was an issue, especially with older elementary boys. She said, "culturally a woman is to show these older boys respect, and they expect it. Is it race? Is it gender? I'm trying to figure that out and also show them that I am in charge of this class." Some teachers became substitute parents. In several cases they were role models for refugee students who were seeking help in figuring out this new country and culture. Lilia related that,

As a strong female role model I am able to build a better one-on-one relationship with the girls soccer team. We have conversations about dating and we explain to them, and we kind of install our philosophy in them, and we don't say 'this is what we think, this is what you have to do...we're giving you our opinion.' Even our boys, there's times where I say, 'hey this is how you treat a woman, this is what it is to be a gentleman.' You know, this is acceptable, this is not acceptable. This is what I would expect. We're their parents at school, we have their best interests in mind.

In PE students interact with each other and learn about other cultures. The teacher uses the classroom and teaching strategies to promote new attitudes and positive interactions. This allows teachers to reduce prejudice and conflict among students, whether they are refugees or immigrants. Being a role model, a substitute parent or a type of cultural informant, it all helps the teacher to understand themselves and their students. Kendrick shared,

We had a kid last month and he spoke French...you were just like okay, this is just a normal white kid, right? So he comes up and I'm talking to him and he's just like...just staring at me, and I'm like, understand? I threw out some Spanish, and no, okay that's obviously not it. So one of the office workers is like, 'yeah, he speaks French.' And I'm like, alright...is there anyone here who speaks French? And so a 6<sup>th</sup> grade Hispanic kid steps up, 'oh yeah, I can speak French.' I was like cool, this kid knows three languages, awesome!

Teachers with many years of experience strived to use their knowledge of the student's culture, their own culture, and relationships to help students relate to one another and with their new environment. Ingrid wishes she could be more of a resource person for her school:

I think sometimes they should utilize us more because we do know the kids better, seeing them grow up and seeing family connections...I think the administration, they miss out on not asking us 'cause we can tell easily sometimes if there are problems or not.

Confronting race identity in her elementary school, Rosa said, "I would hear the African American students talk about the African refugees, saying 'well at least I'm not African' or making comments. I would remind them that they were African...they thought they were black." When asked for what advice they might give to a new or pre-service teacher wanting to teach in a school with student diversity, Ginger replied, "find someone on your campus who's of another nationality and learn...get to be friends with them. Be more empathetic, be more kind, put prejudice aside and just...we're all the same." Teachers asked questions. They went to great lengths to try and understand. They worked at trying to develop activities and an environment where prejudice is reduced or eliminated as much as possible.



## **Theme 6: acknowledging adverse childhood experiences**

“Working with war-affected children brings individuals closer to the harrowing atrocities of violence and terrorism in the contemporary world” (Stewart, 2011, p.182).

This theme identified the need and ability of the PE teacher to demonstrate a caring behavior as they gained a deeper understanding of a student’s personal story. Oscar explained,

They don’t tell us, really, the backgrounds of the students...but they have PTSD. If you slam a door too hard, some of the kids may think it’s a bomb that went off, and they...they flip out. And so you just don’t know, because those kids are from Afghanistan and they may be used to that. And that...that’s an eye opener. They come from an abusive family, and you’ve told the kid over and over, ‘put away your phone’ and then you yell at that kid, the kid shuts down and they don’t move, and now you have to call the resource officer. So, just making sure it’s...you know, the kids are gonna learn whenever they feel they’re in a safe environment.

Fiona related,

a kid gets off an airplane and goes to school the next day and doesn’t speak a word. You have to sympathize with that kid, first of all, and, you know, do what you can to help them feel comfortable and that you’re here to help them. You’re not their enemy, you’re their friend. Someone that can help them...that they can look up to.

Most participants agreed that they had little knowledge of what the refugee or immigrant student endured before coming to the U.S. Helen said,

they have never been to school. They have lived in tents somewhere, but they are normally very responsive and very happy, too, to be exposed to school in America and they enjoy it a lot. It’s nice to give them, you know, something different. They have seen things we don’t want to know about.

According to Strekalova & Hoot, (2008) refugee students that go through traumatic experiences may manifest various behaviors at school, including “explosive anger,

problems with authority, inability to concentrate, rule testing, withdrawal and lower academic achievement” (p.3). Having witnessed some of these behaviors, Ginger remarked, “They’re just kids. They didn’t ask to come here, they were brought here and it’s our job to educate all kids the same.” Most described their role as PE teacher to help address physical activity, provide a safe learning environment and ensure student success. Observations did not reveal any such trauma or experiences. This theme was expressed totally from the interviews. Behaviors resulting from traumatic experiences would have to be observed over a much longer period of time; most likely requiring one to be embedded with a class or in the school.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America Facts & Figures (2019), “anxiety disorders affect 25.1% of children between 13 and 18 years old” (Children, para. 10). Anxiety is often a result of fear from being the new student in school or becoming a part of a new social setting. Older students may be more adept in hiding anxiety but anxiety can manifest itself when compounded with other traumatic experiences (WHO: Mental Health, 2019; Fazel & Stein, 2002; McCloskey & Southwick, 1996). When a student seemed upset by something that was unknown to the observer, a casual observation revealed that the PE teachers demonstrated understanding by talking to students; speaking in affirmative language; and clearly showing the student that they cared.

Stewart’s (2011) study on refugee children supported the feelings of many of the participants in that teachers learned how to be empathic, humble, compassionate and patient from teaching refugee students. He stated, “they (teachers) learned how to be

better human beings” (p.180). The participants in this study demonstrated that they care deeply for the well being of all of their students. Paul recognized that, “Kids come to school with embarrassment, fear and failure,” and he had to identify those Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) while demonstrating that he cared for his students (NCTSN, 2018). Not every teacher could specifically communicate a story of ACE occurring with their students, but those who did could identify physical abuse, parental divorce, violence and emotional trauma. Two dramatic stories are described here: first by Kendrick,

So we’re in class and all of our kids are doing the same thing. I have a sixth grade girl who is standing, and we’re doing planks, so we’re on the ground with our forearms ready. She’s standing and she has like this...Blair Witch Project face come over her and she’s just looking like...and I’m like...’Are ya’ll messing with her?’ And they’re like ‘No, we haven’t said anything to her’...and then all of a sudden she just screams. Several war cries. I’m talking about like ‘AAAAaaahhhhhh!’ You know, and I’m like...everything went out the window. And she did it like, four times. Obviously there’s something wrong, so I’m like do you want a drink of water? Do you need to step outside? And she screams again. Now I’m like, ok let’s go out in the hallway. I start talking to her and showing her like, ‘Hey if something’s going on you’ve got to talk.’ She’s like, ‘My parents are going through a divorce.’ She just moved here from Dallas and so it’s a new school. She’s been here for maybe a week, and so it’s just a lot of emotions built up and she broke down. She started crying and I just talked to her. You know, you have to be ready. You just never know.

A second situation described by Lilia:

It’s true, we don’t know what trauma they’ve gone through, and for example, one of my soccer players – last year we did a camping trip with the girls and this year we want to do one with the boys. And so obviously, you know, a lot of these kids have never gone camping. So I’m giving out the forms and one of my boys comes up and is like ‘Coach, I don’t wanna go.’ And I was like ‘Are you sure? Are your parents not gonna let you?’ I’m like, it’s really fun, were gonna be out in a tent. And he’s just like, ‘No, I just really don’t want to go. I’ve had enough camping.’ I was like, ‘Hang

on, what?' He's like, 'Yeah, I camped out for ten months.' And that's when it hit me. You lived in a tent for ten months because you were a refugee...you had to. This trip seems exciting for us, but for him it's a traumatic moment that he'd just rather not have to experience again. So that one was like, I get it. I completely understand.

Jared added this explanation,

It's hard to explain, just...I think our first kids we had were from...I wanna say Serbia or something. And the stories they can tell you about crossing dead bodies to come to the United States, just to get out. We're talking about eight and nine year old kids telling you that they had to use a machine gun just to survive.

Rosa expressed it this way,

I'm not going to assume every student has the same situation every morning. They may or may not have had breakfast. Okay. Well, how's that affect their attitude? They may or may not have been up all night having to feed their little brother or sister. Is it mom and dad, aunt and uncle had a fight last night and police were at the house until three in the morning? So for me, I think just having a different set of eyes walking into the classroom.

It could be assumed that every student has a story to tell although that story is often locked away behind an inability to speak the language or a lack of trust. In support, Stewart's (2011) research found that,

students are capable and they demonstrated that they had the remarkable ability to adjust to a completely different country, culture, environment...and were hopeful that their current situation would improve and what they had worked so hard to achieve would be accomplished (p.185).

Little by little these PE teachers have been able to provide a safe space for some of those stories to be shared and to acknowledge that their students have endured very difficult, and sometimes horrific, experiences to find a new life in this country.

Observations and short conversations supported this theme because teachers were

quick to point out students who came to their classes unable to communicate, afraid to leave a brother or sister to go to another classroom, or just unusually shy. While observing in one elementary school I noticed a female student sitting in the corner by herself and not engaging in the activity. The teacher told me that this is where she sits everyday, just watching the other children. This teacher also introduced me to several students who had a difficult transition when they arrived but are now getting along very well in class. In another school I saw artwork on the classroom wall and the teacher pointed out what appeared to be a scene with a family running through rugged country. He said this was the student's family escaping war. I was great to observe how these teachers spoke clearly and kindly to their students. My observations led me to believe that these PE teachers took the trauma and difficulties of their students seriously.

### **Theme 7: cultural competency and equity matter**

All of the participants admitted that they had no formal training or understanding of what it means to be culturally competent or how to utilize cross-cultural pedagogy. They recognized in themselves that they had become more sensitive to the needs of their students and that all of their perceived knowledge in this area had come through experience and on-the-job training. Banks' (2002, 2006) multicultural education dimension on how to promote equity among students within the school culture and community was revealed in various ways. When schools are serving and supporting significant numbers of refugees and immigrants there are opportunities for teachers and administration to promote equity for all. According to Sutliff & Perry (2000), "teachers who are sensitive and aware of the challenges all students' face

develop connections that assist in the entire educational process” (p.36). PE teachers, over time, learned to become responsive to cultural differences among their students. They learned to pronounce their names. They learned about the country that they came from. As they became more knowledgeable in their pedagogy, they began to enlighten their classes and the school to diversity and ethnic differences. They challenged their own biases, prejudices and how to interact with each student and family. They reviewed their materials and made accommodations to lessons that ensured classroom success. They were willing to freely discuss issues such as racism, poverty and prejudice when it was appropriate to do so during the course of our interviews. Fiona said, “I think you have to be open minded. You cannot have discriminatory views towards kids at all.” Paul expressed it by saying, “Everyone is treated with equity and equality. Equity to me means to provide my kids an opportunity to pursue what they want to and to help them be prepared for roadblocks that they may come to.” Concerning poverty, Jared described his students: “About 95% of our kids are in the low income apartments, and there’s no room to play. The parents are usually working, so they go straight home. They have nothing to do but stay in that apartment.” My observations led me to believe that they are not only learning how to reject the myth of colorblindness and deficit ideology, but they are attempting to demonstrate it through teaching PE (Gay, 2000; Gorski, 2010; Banks, 2008; Sutliff & Perry, 2000). This theme identified the various ways that PE teachers were influencing the school culture and addressed the third research question: To what degree does a physical education teacher’s educational philosophy and physical education teacher education experiences affect the development of cultural sensitivity

and pedagogical practices? The question that most often elicited a response for cultural competency was in regard to recommendations that they would make for a pre-service teacher as they prepared themselves for teaching. A most common response was, as Matt put it,

Get to know your kids. The kids that you don't like...get to know them better than anybody else in your class. You gotta learn their names but you have to find out something about them. You have to build some kind of relationship with them because if you don't, you can't come to work and do your job, because you don't like certain kids, so you have to find something that you like about them. And you have to...the ones that are pushing you away, are the ones you have to bring the closest. Those are the ones that you need to get the closest to if you wanna have a successful class.

A second response was about being open minded and flexible. The teachers expressed it in these ways: Jarod maintained that one must "Be open, be patient and caring; knowing you're going to spend a lot of time. You're going to spend a lot of time. Patience and listening, that's one of the biggest things with these kids." Ingrid said,

You have to be very flexible and open-minded. So you have to try to learn about the other cultures that you're dealing with, and that's just a learning process. It's hard sometimes, not knowing the cultures they are coming from. You have to be really interested in them.

These comments are supported by Hansen's (2014) research on cultural competency in PE. He stated,

Today's teachers are more inclusive than ever before in history, but the integration of cultures is also far more complex than ever before in history. If teachers are to be truly effective in multicultural and ethnically diverse settings, it is essential to cross the threshold of ethnic diversity and learn what it means to be a culturally competent teacher (p.13).

It was observed in the PE classrooms that teachers were presenting themselves as culturally relevant and their perspectives were consistent with multicultural education literature. They used their students' experiences, language and knowledge for learning purposes. They recognized the ethnic diversity of their students and demonstrated respect for those cultural differences by being patient with language expression and by explaining activities slowly. It was noticeable at the end of the school year that they had built upon a foundation of respect and trust, and developed relationships with students in order to understand them (Ladson-Billings, 1995; McCaughtry, et al, 2006; Pantic & Wubbles, 2012).

Often the lessons may not center around PE, but around other skills that students need to know in order to be recognized as regular, normal students. Oscar said,

I teach more life skills, not curriculum. So I'm teaching them...it's a newcomer school and the kids are fresh in the country and know zero to little English. So I teach them what soap is, how to use deodorant and things of that nature. It's just some life skills. Things of that nature and so it's very unique, and we teach all those things up front and then we'll work in the language and curriculum. We're helping them get started in a brand new country. It's a school to teach you how to be a participant and a community member.

Another way to help the class and the school accept cultural differences is to allow students to be active members in selecting and teaching games they know. Beatrice confessed that, "I probably need to do some research on ethnic games." Donna also admitted, "I need to learn more culturally appropriate games." Others shared the similar thoughts. Jarod said,

We do a lesson where the kids teach us. They have a class period to get a game, we put them in groups, they make up a game and next time they come to class



we present one game to the class and we do that game the whole time and they love it.

Rosa related this:

Getting to know their names is important and grouping them together and having them present something from their country that maybe other students don't know about. They present a game or an activity or something simple. Our students like to sing when they do long rope. Our African students had totally different songs that they would sing. So small things like that will make them feel included.

Perceiving that they were doing whatever was appropriate for the situation, teachers saw the value of relationships with students, parents and colleagues. It is important for teachers to be sensitive to the needs of the entire refugee family even if communication is difficult. Many students are here without their immediate family due to various circumstances, so the school becomes their family. At school they learn respect, how to listen, how to speak, how to be involved with activities and they get the support they need to succeed (Stewart, 2011). Regarding student's relationships with teachers and with other students, Fiona said,

It all comes down to no matter who they are, it's a relationship that you have to build with each one. You have to find some connection with each one of them. Because what may work with one student may not work with another. And you have to listen to what their concerns and their fears are and go with that.

At the junior high school, Beatrice observed that, "the students usually self-segregate....no need to group them up. Most of our kids seem to have similar backgrounds and ethnicity, mostly Asians with some Africans...they mix with our Hispanic kids pretty well." At the high school, Natalie remarked that,

There are so many immigrants and refugees that they really don't stand out from the others. It is the white kids that tend to stand out, but they generally get along. Students are respectful and after they get to know me and understand

that I am trying to help them, they do better. Some do well, others struggle. Everyone does a pretty good job at accepting each other. The refugees really make us an international school. Kids are coming from everywhere in the world. I think that they really love our new building, our teachers and the administration. It is new and modern and that creates respect. We used to have graffiti all over the place, in locker rooms...outside it was bad. Now we have almost none. It has changed the attitudes of the students.

Sometime students get confused about their identity as well as the teacher's identity, but this can lead to something positive. Lilia shared,

I had kids saying...thinking that I'm white, and that I speak no Spanish. I have kids that walk up and down the hall, and I was like 'hey, no, no, no' and he's like, 'you understood what I said?' I was like 'yes, I speak Spanish.' 'I had no idea' and then they feel...it's like this...it's an acceptance.

Parents and the local community are a part of this understanding of equity.

Helen recognized that there is a lack of economic equity by saying,

You know our kids, they're not from rich parents so they're not taking them to art lessons or, you know, soccer practice after school. They cannot afford it. So giving them the chance to actually really go through the school here and really learn these things.

Rosa shared a story that emphasized what the community around her school was thinking:

I don't know if the members of the community that had already been there, that were already settled prior to the African refugees coming in, I don't know if they were even made aware of what was happening or what was going on, because there was a lot of disagreement and this came out at school. The kids heard their parents using certain terminology...so just sitting down and having simple conversations, but an entire class at times, breaking it down for them and trying to make those refugees feel welcome, the most that I could in the gym. I would say it made a small difference in the school and the community... it was going to take time either way. So trying to make everyone feel most welcome while they were in the gym for that hour or 45 minutes.

Helen added that colleagues needed to understand the importance of equity in PE especially when teachers keep students out of PE or recess:

I wish they sometimes would enforce it more that they teachers also have to bring the kids to PE. They need to be here right now. They need to work out and have some fun and learn some other skills.

Kendrick shared that,

Not everyone's going to feel the same way I'm going to feel. So you kind of have to be open and kind of willing to understand other people's perspectives. Instead of being, like, no, my thought process is the right way. This is the only way. You can't...it forces you to not think like that. Obviously there are teachers that do think like that, and still...but for me it kind of helped me open up my eyes. Just kind of understanding all these kids that are confused about me, and then me trying to explain, like, you know, I'm just another normal person just like you are. Except you're just learning from me, I'm teaching you. I just think it's exciting. You know, every day is different. You just...you know, you never know. And so you just have to be ready.

Paul had a good grasp on what it means to be culturally competent in the context of helping refugee students understand equality in the school culture. He stated,

For me as a teacher, it's being culturally responsive to conflict regarding equality in the classroom. I am teaching life-long learners. I get the privilege to teach them those skills and social tools to pursue whatever they want to. I do nothing different. Everyone has the same opportunities and the same choices.

Most of the teachers see their role as PE teacher as a privilege. They expressed satisfaction in their jobs, not only because of the challenges, but because they recognize it as being of great value to students and to education as a whole. Oscar summed it up well by saying,

I love to teach. I've seen what people can become without proper education, without a proper mentor, without a father figure in their life, and so teaching here seemed right for me. I have loved it here since day one. It's been amazing

to see kids grow, to be able to be a mentor for them, a father figure in a way and it's been excellent.

The final chapter of this dissertation will discuss how the themes relate to the research questions and the implications for PE teachers' practices and behaviors. The results of this study will hopefully prove to be applicable to current and future PE teachers who find themselves in schools with refugees, immigrants and diverse students in general. Highly qualified, multicultural, culturally competent PE teachers are going to be needed to step into 21<sup>st</sup> century schools that continue to meet the needs of a growing diverse student population.

## Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

### Questions

This dissertation has its foundation in questions. Questions began with a junior high school teacher who explained that she had over forty different languages spoken in her class. That led to asking the where, the why and the who questions (Wright & Li, 2009; Yin, 2003). Further inquiry led to asking questions about the phenomena of refugee students and their effect on physical education teachers. Finding a few answers generated questions that led to research, and research led to more answers and to more questions and research. Three primary questions emerged to give me direction for this study. They were:

1. How has the refugee resettlement in this community and school affected the physical education teachers' pedagogy, specifically their instruction and teaching practices?

2. How has the physical education teacher adapted or modified his or her own personal worldview and cultural experience given the presence of refugee students and interactions with the refugee community?

3. To what degree does a physical education teacher's educational philosophy and physical education teacher education experiences affect the development of cultural sensitivity and pedagogical practices?

Throughout this study, and with the support of research identified in this dissertation, I have concluded that refugee students, along with other immigrants, do indeed effect the physical education teachers' instruction and teaching practices.

Throughout the interviews and observations it has become clear that the presence of refugee students shapes, and to some extent, re-shapes pedagogy. Student presence influences the quality and practice of teaching, encouraging the teacher to set high expectations for themselves and for students. This unique teaching situation promotes resourcefulness, enhances relationships and gives life's experience an opportunity to effect change. To one degree or another, every participant agreed that they had to modify the way they taught previously or in the way they were taught to teach PE. They made adaptations in their perspectives and attitudes toward refugees and immigrants and in their own understanding of themselves as human beings (Esses, Hamilton & Guacher, 2017; Fussell, 2014). This study allowed me to explore the phenomenon of refugee students effecting PE teachers, and to discover the multiple facets that expressed themselves throughout the research (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Language and communication is at the heart of teaching and the teachers have learned to understand this. Teaching and learning doesn't happen without communication. They also realized that language and culture come in the same package. You can't have one without the other. This didn't mean that they had to learn another language, although Spanish has been useful to some (Robertson, 2016). It was understood that a major goal of the refugee student is to learn English and the PE teacher is one member of the language learning team (Dwyer & McCloskey, 2013; Robertson & Breiseth, 2008). Being unable to speak a student's language is challenging. It leads to behavior issues, misunderstandings and the slow process of relationship building. Understanding the language learning issue opens up the door for the PE

teacher to learn about the students' culture. It is here that the teacher begins to interpret their own understanding of education, community relationships and religious practices that can impact learning. Merryfield and Kasai (2004) stated, "Teachers are influenced by their own experiences, knowledge and their comfort level, cultural diversity, ambiguity and critical thought" (p.358). These PE teachers are learners themselves, and in spite of the challenges, they enjoy learning about their students and becoming knowledgeable of other cultures.

Regarding the second research question, I observed and listened to how the PE teacher has adapted his or her own personal worldview and enhanced his or her own cultural experiences because of interactions with refugees and other diverse students. A person's worldview is based on what they have experienced and what they believe due to societal influences. Nelson & Guerra (2014) maintain, "Beliefs are deeply personal, individual truths one holds about physical and social reality and about self. As such, personal beliefs are powerful filters that shape how an individual see the world" (p.70). This worldview, when confronted by people and places that are much different than what we are used to, often changes. Those changes can be seen as positive or negative and are usually supported by appropriate behaviors (Merryfield & Kasai, 2004). These PE teachers are on the journey of discovering and understanding their own worldview, and most are enjoying the process. They have encountered students who are very different from themselves. Refugee students have come from places in the world that most teachers could not find on a map. These students express themselves linguistically, culturally and religiously in ways that most people, let alone teachers, don't fully

understand (Collet, 2010; Li, 2008; McBrien, 2005; Nelson & Guerra, 2014). The teaching-learning experience is greatly confused when there are thirty to forty different languages or cultures represented in the classroom. The teachers have recognized these differences and have chosen to be, for the most part, open-minded and flexible about it all. They have learned how to make adjustments to rules and procedures, modifications to lessons and activities, and how to develop relationships.

An issue that developed from this question on cultural experience was one that I was not really seeking but it presented itself midway through the study. This was the issue regarding adverse childhood experiences (ACE), or trauma. Teaching is a challenge for anyone and when you add ACE to the learning environment, teaching becomes even more complex. Teachers recognized students' ACE in forms of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, selective mutism and emotional behavioral issues (Measham, et al, 2014; Misra, et al, 2015; Rotich & Fuller, 2016). To learn about and then come to know the impact of trauma, rejection and abuse was painful (Pipher, 2003; Wilson & Drozdek, 2004). The teachers knew about it and expressed it in the interviews without any direct questioning. From these experiences with refugee students they concluded that it was necessary for them to get to know the basic needs of students, and that it was important to let students know that they cared (Pantic & Wubbels, 2012). The teachers all have to wear different hats from time to time; from teacher to coach to disciplinarian to parent to interpreter to peacemaker. They find themselves standing in the gap between the community and their students. Through experience most of these teachers expressed an emotional understanding of refugee students as well as a



superficial understanding of the difficulties and challenges of resettlement in an urban school (McCaughtry, et al., 2006). This area of inquiry was not developed to its full extent because I did not ask them to describe how all these challenges and ACE affected their thoughts about their students.

Concerning cultural competency, Hansen (2014) stated, People's values and belief systems are rooted in their own experiences. These experiences include upbringing, relationships, education, and media, among others. It is these experiences that not only define who people are as individuals (and as teachers), but at times, they limit people in their thinking in relation to the diversity around them (p.13).

Banks (2006) in *Race, Culture and Education* further develops the framework of multicultural education in order to give teachers a tool to help diverse students have access to equity in education. Teachers would assist students in gaining the knowledge and attitudes necessary to function successfully in American society. It is also the intent that diverse students would learn how to interact with others in order to create a civil and moral community. These PE teachers had no knowledge of theories regarding cultural competency, culturally relevant pedagogy or multicultural education. However most of the participants were already practicing many of the concepts formally identified by outstanding scholars such as Banks, Gay, Milner and Ladson-Billings. Teachers simply learned from experience and figured out the best way to teach, communicate or interact with their students. They had little to no interaction with other PE teachers or any type of cultural informants to help them (Pipher, 2003). They took

what they thought was the best course of action. It might be concluded that many of these teachers had personal experiences that allowed for their success towards cultural learning; nine of the participants were teachers of color, either African American or Hispanic, and two were immigrants from Europe. Although none of the teachers of color grew up outside of the U.S., they have a unique worldview and an understanding of cultural differences.

Finally, in answer to the third research question concerning the PE teacher's educational philosophy and professional training it was discovered that their training and ideas about education did influence their cultural sensitivity and pedagogical practices. Teachers see themselves as a part of the educational process and they understand that education is more than just PE. All of the teachers see their profession as important and that PE is vital to teaching the whole child. They communicated the importance of knowing the needs of individual students and that each individual student must learn. They not only learn about physical activity and health, but they also learn English, art, music, science and history. Most agreed that their philosophy of education has not changed over the years, but that it has come into focus for them. They recognize the international environment they are now in and how important it is for students to be successful.

As for pre-service training, not one teacher could look back to their university or college experience and remember anything significant that might have helped them in this unique situation. Banks (2006) and Harrison, Carson & Burden (2010) maintained that pre-service teachers need a broad foundation of cultural knowledge and experience

in developing their own methods for culturally responsive teaching. Lockwood (2010) stated that, “Teacher education programs in our society are responsible for preparing future teachers to promote meaningful, engaged learning for all students, regardless of their race, gender, age, ethnicity, or cultural background.” The PE teachers agreed in principle that this was a theoretical goal of their educational institution and had a general understanding of this. However, they firmly expressed that they were not fully prepared at the beginning of their career, and even now, as in-service teachers, they do not get any professional development that would be considered helpful for working with refugees and immigrants (Baldwin, 2015; Strekalova & Hoot, 2008). These findings also support the findings from the study conducted by Harrison, Carson and Burden (2010) that measured cultural competency between two groups of PE teachers. Their study pointed out that there is a “need for in-service training to improve the delivery of culturally responsive teaching strategies to current teachers who may have limited exposure to students of different cultures” (p. 195). Many of the teachers in this study didn’t feel prepared for this unique challenge. They had not received culturally responsive teacher training. Some accepted their position knowing that it was going to be very different and trusted in their experience to meet the challenges.

It could be concluded that many of these teachers, due to their years of experience, are highly qualified to lead professional development training for any teacher working among refugee students. These PE teachers are proud of what they are doing. They feel successful. Their pedagogy consists of sound PE knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and a healthy respect for the needs and perspectives of students (Ladson-

Billings, 1995; Pantic & Wubbels, 2012). They are passionate about teaching PE and are good role models for students. Most of them appeared to be comfortable in their teaching roles and with their identity as someone who knows how to work with refugee students. They are secure, yet are humbled by the knowledge of what their students have endured as refugees. These teachers are relational and willing to work with others, and to learn from others. It could be concluded that most of the participants are, although unknowingly, culturally relevant teachers; helping refugee students achieve success, encouraging students to maintain their own culture; and leading refugee students to be themselves (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These teachers exemplify what it means to be a professional educator.

The PE teachers in this study were the center of this phenomenological research. They welcomed me and were very patient to sit and answer my questions. Almost all of them would have kept talking and sharing their experiences if I didn't bring it to an end. They have learned a great deal and I believe they enjoy telling their stories. Not a single person refused to sign the participation form. They actually didn't seem concerned about being anonymous or where this research study was going to go. Most of them have requested that I notify them when articles are published and many said if I had any further questions to come back for more. Since the interviews, I have seen several of the teachers and they all enquired about the progress of the study. These professionals were fun and engaging, with lots of experience and knowledge to share.

## **Refugee students**

In this study refugee students were not the focus of observations nor were they interviewed, they were considered to be part of the background context. However, they were always present during the observations, but only in a peripheral way. They were present; they were often the subjects of the conversation, but not participants as the teachers were. I intended that during my observations, described above, I would be able to observe each teacher interacting with students and teaching the PE lesson. I wanted to see and hear how they adapted their instruction, how they responded to questions, to challenges, and how they reacted to student behavior. These situational observation experiences allowed me to triangulate the interviews along with the teaching environment or artifacts, providing a richer understanding of these teachers (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The students simply moved around in the learning environment as they would normally. The teachers would introduce me as a visitor and except some kindergartners and first graders, the class would seemingly move on as normal. The teachers would later comment that my presence didn't affect the students nor keep them from playing. My biased thoughts usually led me to think that many students were not used to seeing a white, middle-aged man around the school. Perhaps it was unusual in a school where most of the teachers and administrators are women.

On occasion a student would come to the teacher with a question or comment and to show respect, the teacher would introduce me to the student. This frequently took place in the elementary schools where the students are more inquisitive. Some of

the teachers in the secondary schools did not introduce me to the class or say anything about my presence. It was as if I was just another educator or administrator coming in to talk about some issue. The students carried on their conversations and the activity.

Overall it was interesting to conduct the study where a primary subject of the phenomenon was the refugee student, but the focus of the study was on the teacher. The conclusive thoughts to my observations of teacher and student interaction are that wherever there was greater interaction and communication between the two, a higher level of cultural understanding was present. The next step in this research would be to focus on the student's point of view to discover their perceptions of PE and the PE teacher.

### **What does it really take to teach PE to refugee students?**

In many ways, teaching PE to refugee students is no different from what is required to teach any other student. Teachers have content knowledge they want to teach, and they have the skills necessary to demonstrate various forms of movement. Through multiple forms of assessments the students demonstrate their knowledge and skills. All of this is foundational to any person trained to become a PE teacher. However, from this research it appears that something else is needed to teach refugee students, or students from diverse backgrounds. Through the observations and interviews it became evident that the majority of these teachers possessed unique skills and knowledge that enabled them to teach refugee students, often in the midst of other students. Most of these teachers demonstrated the characteristics of an effective teacher that are described by Wong & Wong (2001) in their book *The Effective Teacher*.

First, effective teachers develop and maintain a climate of control. From observations in the classroom during this study the majority of the PE teachers were practicing excellent classroom management through appropriate rules and procedures. Learning how to maintain control in a classroom takes time and experience. The majority of these teachers have learned how to do this and they practice this skill each and every day. Even when the students don't all speak the same language or understand English that well, they learn how to follow rules and procedures.

These teachers have success in their classrooms because they created a plan, explained or demonstrated the plan to the students, and are willing to make adjustments as needed. At one elementary school the teacher discovered that some of the refugee students did not know how to use water fountains. On the first or second day of school, without knowing the students, she would allow them to go to get a drink. She began to wonder why it took so long for them to accomplish such a normal task, and then came to realize that the refugee students had little to no practice in using a water fountain. Other students would become impatient for their turn and refugee students became embarrassed because of their lack of experience. The teacher adjusted what would have been a normal trip to the water fountain to teach her students how to use this common school feature. This was a lesson in developing a climate of control because she didn't want to allow for negative comments to come from other students and she didn't want the refugee students to feel like they had done something wrong.

Secondly, teachers are doing the right things with consistency (Wong & Wong, 2001). Throughout the study it was observed and supported in the interviews that these

teachers had learned to practice doing the right things over and over. They had learned to do the right things with unique students who needed a teacher that made good decisions, taught appropriate PE lessons, showed compassion and did these things each day. This was observed many times as teachers would go to great lengths to utilize visuals on the walls of their classrooms, or by making new students feel welcome with a special introduction to the class or by making sure they had plenty of equipment for the PE lessons. Most of the teachers shared that they had learned what right things to do through their own experiences. They expressed that they weren't always sure if they were doing the right thing, but through trial and error they learned how to do the right things for their students and for their schools.

Finally, effective teachers affect and touch the lives of their students. Wong & Wong (2001) stated,

You affect the attitude of a student...you were hired to affect lives. You were hired not so much to teach third grade, history, or physical education as to influence lives. Touch the life of a student, and you will have a student who will learn history, physical education...and turn cartwheels to please you (p. 7).

Teachers in this study all showed a caring attitude. They are impacting the lives of not only refugee students, but all students. I heard words of encouragement. I observed a teacher stopping our conversation so they could listen to an excited student tell them about running around the track. I observed a teacher kicking the soccer ball with some African students and all laughing at the poor foot skills of the American teacher. Most of these teachers have embraced the idea that they are not just PE teachers or coaches but



they are human beings who have been entrusted with the lives of students who need a kind voice, from someone who believes that they can succeed. It was evident that most of the teachers truly cared for their students, just as it was evident that there are some who didn't seem to care. I hope that those who demonstrated indifference or a lack of compassion were simply tired. Most of the participants demonstrated that they believed that their students could succeed. They worked hard to keep them engaged and they reflected on their pedagogical practices and behavior (Lumpkin, 2007). Noddings (2005) states, "caring is the very bedrock of all successful education" (p. 26). If this is true, then successful education is flourishing in a number of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools in some obscure places.

### **Research limitations**

A description of the contextual factors including schools and districts was discussed in Chapter 1. In addition to the context of this study it is important to mention the presence of gatekeepers and their role in this study. Gatekeepers have been defined as:

the small group of managers and administrators within an organization who screen prospective researchers seeking funding, entry into the organization itself, or access to data already collected. This small group of gatekeepers has a central role in deciding the fate of those who desire to conduct social research (Broadhead & Rist, 1976, p.327).

Gatekeepers impacted this study, especially at the beginning. The research process was initiated with an application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB), as all research

projects must do. This was the first gatekeeper. The IRB has the ability to either allow you to move forward or to go back and review the study proposal. The IRB requires a valid proposal with all the surveys, protocols and letters of informed consent needed to describe and begin the study.

All aspects of the proposed study are to be submitted for approval (Bolker, 1998; Wanat, 2008). In this study there was no denial of the proposal by the IRB, however I needed to have a letter from the proposed school district. I began to research and contact the school districts where I wanted to conduct the study. It was at this point that another set of gatekeepers confronted me - the district department director and the principal. I was instructed on the website to write a letter to the district director giving the details of my study in the form of an application. A minor roadblock came when I was informed that I must have the IRB approval. IRB approval was contingent on a letter of acceptance by the district. Fortunately there was a way out by providing both the IRB and the district with a statement that approval was supported upon the complete review of the IRB and that participants are protected and risks are minimal. For two school districts that I contacted, after completing all necessary documentation I was denied support to conduct the study. I moved on to another school district. In one district I received verbal support from the district office, but was told that I needed to have the permission of the principals of the schools proposed. The principals in this district were extraordinary gatekeepers and they kept the gate firmly shut, either by not responding to my emails or refusing to see me with an appointment. One principal did agree to see me, and after we visited they wanted to have a letter from the district and

from the IRB saying I had approval and support. Even with this, they refused to allow me access to the PE teachers.

One targeted city and district appeared to be another closed gate until I was able to get the support of the PE coordinator of the district. They helped me get the gate open and gain access to the proposed schools. It was a similar situation with other local schools; the PE coordinator gave their full support to the study and my application was accepted. The lesson learned in all this was that district coordinators, directors and principals could be gatekeepers who either close the gate or open it. The difference was in knowing someone and using their name to get through the door. The game is still about whom you know.

On most occasions, I would contact the PE teacher through email or by face-to-face contact. Most teachers were willing to talk and to be in the study. In another Southern region school, I met several times with two teachers and observed their classes. On my last visit to that school, a gatekeeper - the assistant principal, confronted me. She asked me lots of questions about my study and work at the university. Later I explained the study to the two PE teachers and invited them to participate in it. They seemed willing and would let me know soon. It was after that visit that all communication ended. I could not identify what the issue was, other than an unidentified gatekeeper. Although the teachers had been very interested in the study and welcomed my visits, they refused to return my calls and emails. I decided not to push it. At that point, I had enough participants for the study without them. Personally, and as a researcher, that closing of the gate can leave you either sad or angry. It

disappointed me that a gatekeeper felt that it was their job to keep me away from the teachers. I often did what was necessary to walk right in and meet the principal and explain my study and purpose for being on their campus. My approach was peaceful yet shrewd. As a university lecturer with a business card and a title, I was able to introduce myself as someone who had a viable interest in their school, their students and their PE teachers. This approach was well received and I developed good relationships with teachers and principals alike.

The gatekeepers made a difference in the selection of schools and ultimately the teachers I chose to interview. The result was that I obtained rich data from those that have experienced the phenomena of educating refugee and immigrant students.

By conducting qualitative research, I understood that even though participants agree to be interviewed and answer your questions, there is a high probability that they will only tell you what they want to tell you, or they may tell you what's happening in their lives at the moment. As a researcher, you don't know if you caught them on a good day or not. Maybe the day of the interview didn't start well and the teacher was ready to find someone to listen. This is where multiple interviews and observations are best for a qualitative study such as this. For teachers who have been teaching for many years, it is possible that the memories all run together. It is only by asking specific, prompting questions and following up with subsequent questions over some time that a researcher can get to the deep, thoughtful perceptions of the phenomena. After going back through the recordings and the transcriptions it seemed that there were plenty of stories about the good things that happened while teaching refugees. Perhaps it was a

case of telling the researcher what he expects to hear; then again, perhaps not.

However it did not escape me that there were relatively few descriptions about any bad teaching days or a time when the teacher failed miserably in relating culturally to a student. These teachers felt comfortable to share their struggles and challenges but time constraints kept me from digging for more.

The interview and observation represented a snapshot in time. I have no doubt that if this study had been longitudinal, conducted over several months or a couple of years, stories of success and failure would have come to light. The interviews conducted in this study utilized open-ended type questions and the participants had a great deal of control over their answers. Regardless of how specific the questions were, participants could answer directly or they had the choice to deviate from the question and say whatever they had on their mind to say. The limitation of this qualitative study was that there was only one interview and one observation with each teacher. Most of the interviews were at least forty minutes, some were longer, and the observations were usually only one class period – approximately forty-five to fifty minutes. An ideal research study would have allowed for longer periods of observation and several interviews over a longer period of time. This type of research makes it difficult to verify the results because there is no way to check the stories against actual occurrences. The researcher has to accept the answers and experiences as perceived truth. You have to take what is given you and do your best to analyze the results. It was my hope that I could uncover enough worthwhile nuggets of data to make this study significant.

Teachers had their limitations as well. It was greatly appreciated when teachers agreed to the interviews and observations. They made time in their day for the interview, when they could have been doing something else. Half of the participants made accommodations to meet and talk with me in a private setting. For these interviews it was normally quiet and there was little to no interruption. These interviews usually went over the scheduled time because the teacher had time and was willing to talk. These conversations were longer, with participants providing deep thoughtful answers to the questions. The more they talked, the better the interview. The other half of the participants simply included me in their space. There would be people moving around and interruptions from students and other teachers. The conversations were limited in length and in depth. It seemed like the teacher could never get into a train of thought, or they were afraid to say much around other students. Sometimes it seemed that they were more inhibited. In four situations I had two participants together because they either wanted to conduct the interviews together, or because there was no other way to do it. As I began the interviews I thought that they might not express themselves as openly as they would individually, but I found that three of the pairs worked off each other. Two of the pairs had been together for over ten years and they helped each other remember stories about students or a teaching episode. One pair had not worked together for so long, but they demonstrated a trust or bond between the two of them and they were free and open when talking about shared experiences. The other pair were interviewed together because there was no other time to meet them but during a class period. They were willing but not interested, had only known each

other for about a year and didn't seem confident to share much about their experiences with each other. This was one of the less profitable interviews during the study. Too many distractions from students, the timing was not the best, their teaching situation was not very positive, and it was the end of the school year. Having willing participants doesn't always mean that you are going to gather rich data.

Overall it was much work to get past the gatekeepers, set up the interviews by visiting schools multiple times to get participants to agree to be in the study, and to conduct the interviews over a great distance and lots of time. I came to understand my own limitations over time. I initially believed in my own strong personality and communication skills. I believed that if I could just talk to them for a few minutes, I could convince them to be in my study. That was not the case. I was not the salesman that I thought I was and felt a bit defeated whenever a gatekeeper would put up the stop sign or a teacher would not answer my emails. Perhaps my strong personality limited the responses of some of the teachers.

As a matter of professional practice, I don't do individual counseling or conduct personal interviews with females in a private setting. I have preferred that an interview with a female colleague or teacher be done in an open setting with other persons around or to be done with another person in the room or a group. During my research I had one private interview with a female teacher. I limited the number of questions; I did not make as many field notes and kept the interview about forty minutes. Perhaps I limited her responses. In other interviews I may have limited responses by conversing about the subject matter instead of asking questions. At the beginning of my research

interviews I allowed a participant or two get away from the point of my questions. It was a challenge, but with every interview it became easier to direct the conversation and keep participants focused on my questions.

My skills as a researcher and interviewer improved over time. I was frustrated with my own inability to establish an ideal location to interview teachers, i.e. in the gym with students everywhere and teachers engaged in some other activities was not ideal. In the first interview I defaulted by meeting with them where they were and trying to be as accommodating as possible. This did not produce the quality interview that was desired. I became better at keeping the participant on topic by asking the important questions in the protocol or by asking probing questions based on their answers. I also learned to talk less and ask more. I knew that the number of participants and location of the schools was going to make for lots of data, which in turn would require more time in analysis and interpretation. This turned out to be true. Having a full-time teaching position at a university opened many doors for me and provided me a position of authority. I communicated as someone who is really interested in what these teachers were doing with refugee students because of my own interest in diversity and refugees. The project was a great exercise in humility for myself because I was often in awe of these wonderful teachers. I was happy to meet them, hear about their experiences and discover the number of similarities that existed between teachers who did not know each other or know that there were other teachers in comparable situations. I was honored to encourage them.



Based on my international experiences and research on refugees I knew that I carried some bias into this study. I had learned much about the resettlement process from attending orientation meetings for refugees and volunteering with a local refugee assistance group. I volunteered with an afterschool mentoring program for refugee students and found myself becoming increasingly more vocal about the inconsistencies in the resettlement process. From these different groups I heard despairing stories about the treatment of refugee students at the hands of local groups, apartment landlords and schools. I deplore the way that our current government is denying them entrance to this country. I am sure this has biased my attitude and interpretation in some way.

Over time I have come to understand that not all of these teachers do their jobs the way I would do it. But they are there, in that school, doing the best they can with what they have. When I perceived that someone's pedagogy was lacking, they usually made up for it by demonstrating how much they care for their students. It confirmed to me that most often caring is more important than the pedagogy (Lumpkin, 2007; Noddings, 2005). I was impressed that there were several in this study who are doing it right. I sat there observing or listening and wishing I could come and hang out at their school to learn from them. From this experience I learned to be a better listener and observer. I discovered that with some participants it didn't take much to get them talking. For others I had to stay with the script to keep things moving. I was glad that I was able to be a learner and I hope all of my participants regarded me as one, and as someone who cares for them and their teaching.

When you think you know something about a subject and you have emotional feelings towards a people, this can also work as a bias. I have spent the past several years reading everything I could about refugees and their plight. I find myself drawn to the foreigner in the room, no matter if they're a refugee, an asylum seeker or a legal immigrant. I want to sit down and hear their story. I walk down the halls of these schools, looking at the faces of students, thinking about where they have come from and what is their story. I listen to the news, being drawn to any story about current events regarding refugees and immigrants. My heart is broken by immigrant students who face the uncertainty of finishing school; over the losses of thousands of people who drown in the Mediterranean each year; and the imprisonment of children separated from their parents on the border. These concerns have created an emotional bias in me that surely impacts my questions, my attitude and my ability to analyze and interpret data objectively. This is the messiness of qualitative research, but I really enjoyed it and found my time with teachers, surrounded by supporting actors, to be a fantastic experience.

### **Implications for practice and future research**

Throughout this study I have maintained that my research, all this effort, had better be useful to somebody somewhere. From the time that the idea for this study began I knew I wanted the results to bring added value to the profession and to fill the gap in the research. I believe that it has accomplished the latter because there is little to no research on the effects of refugee students and resettlement on the teaching practices and behaviors of PE teachers. Dagkas (2007) wrote, "There is a dearth of

research on the relationship between Physical Education teachers' subject matter knowledge and the teaching of PE to culturally diverse classes" (p. 432). The literature review discusses this in great detail and I believe that there is going to be room in the PE profession for the results of this study. There are many PE teachers throughout this country who are teaching refugees and immigrants and I believe they would be encouraged by the results and comments of these teachers. Primarily, resettlement is taking place in the larger cities because the job and housing opportunities for refugees are abundant there. But some PE teachers are teaching in small towns, such as Cactus, Texas where refugee populations of Burmese, Sudanese and Somali have resettled to work in the meat packing plant. Resettlement happens all over America in big and small ways, and always with students to enroll in school. If it is not resettlement, then it is the immigrant student who moves here from Asia so the parents can work, or it is the child of a migrant worker who moves across the southwest and the west coast looking for seasonal work. These students make up a large number of special populations being served by our schools and taught by our teachers. These sometimes-isolated schools are the places where this research can be used to shed some light upon culturally relevant teaching practices, multicultural education, and teacher attitudes and behaviors. It has the potential to send the message that teachers who teach refugees are not alone, and they can rise to the challenge of teaching with passion; setting high expectations for themselves and their students; accepting the changes they see in themselves; demonstrating a caring attitude; and believing that they can make a difference in the lives of these special students.

The results should send a message to the institutions where pre-service PE teachers are being taught and prepared. These institutions teach pedagogy and they teach PE, they teach about diversity, but it doesn't seem to be meaningful to students. Instructors should teach using culturally relevant pedagogy, helping students understand what that really means. Dagkas (2007) found in his study that, "The first and foremost issue raised in this study referred to inadequate initial teacher training on pedagogical matters related to multicultural education and the teaching of culturally diverse PE classes" (p.436). Universities and colleges cannot claim that teaching about diversity is the only answer to this unique student diversity situation. Instructors have to move beyond race, gender, minorities and ethnicity. They must broaden their own view of diversity to include refugee, immigrant and other special student populations. McCaughtry, et al. (2006) presented a similar message over a decade ago saying, physical education teacher education programs must do a much better job of informing future urban educators about the realities of the work environment and arm them with the instructional, cultural and political weapons they will need to survive (p. 496).

This same message continues to echo from this study. Pre-service teachers are not prepared to teach the diverse classrooms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. This study continues to push open the door towards training in culturally relevant pedagogy and multicultural education. Education cannot be taught the way it was ten or twenty years ago; we must continue to conduct research among the refugee, the immigrant and the PE teacher to make sure future PE teachers are adequately prepared. The participants in

this study maintain that their role is significant, maybe one of the most significant and influential of all educators on their campus. A study such as has given some a small voice to express their desire to improve our profession and to help students be successful.

Considering all that was heard and seen, the most important take-away from the teachers in this study has been: a willingness to try even when its hard; becoming a person who demonstrates a caring attitude; and, knowing that PE is valuable as content and as a lifestyle to be taught. I often thought that these teachers have awesome jobs, but that was my bias coming through because it is a job I would enjoy having. I had to check myself to say that these are jobs that most recent graduates would not want. The realization is that most of our young graduates are not prepared for this type of challenge. Most of the participants would agree that it takes time to get it right.

There is still much to learn that can help both the experienced and the novice teacher. Most importantly we learn from each other. Teachers advocated experience through student teaching, volunteering and mentoring programs. Because they did not learn how to be effective teachers of diverse students in the university, they are strong proponents of experience. Let's not assume our pre-service teachers are going to read about it, talk about it or even listen to someone discuss it, they must get into those schools, walk along side these teachers and let experience be their guide.

Not a single teacher in this study refused to share some secret to success for working among ethnically diverse students. They simply shared their stories, challenges and successes with the hope that it would be useful to someone. My hope is that this

dissertation will contribute to the important work of communicating and interpreting this phenomenon to the academic and teaching communities.

# Appendices

## Appendix A. Consent for Participation in Research

### Consent for Participation in Research

#### **Title: Effect of Refugee Resettlement on Physical Educators' Behaviors and Teaching Practice**

Research to be Conducted By: Jack Sears, PhD Candidate of The University of Texas at Austin, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, under the supervision of Dr. Louis Harrison, PhD., Faculty Advisor  
Telephone: (cell) 817-480-9341(offices) 512- 232-4785 Email: [jacksears@utexas.edu](mailto:jacksears@utexas.edu)

#### Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

#### Purpose of the Study

You have been asked to participate in a research study, the purpose of which is to discover the perceptions, opinions and potential implications from those who teach physical education in a school located in a refugee resettlement area.

#### What will you be asked to do?

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Participate in informal interviews that allow you to share your thoughts, perceptions and attitudes concerning refugee resettlement and physical education in your school. This interview will be audiotaped, unless you choose not to.
- Allow the researcher to observe your physical education classes so that he can see you teach and interact with students.
- Take a short survey that asks about your personal background, physical education teaching history and experience. Answers are optional.

The total time to participate in the study is one-hour and forty-five minutes. The estimated time to complete the survey is 15 minutes, the initial interview 45 minutes, and the final interview is 45 minutes.

What are the risks involved in this study?

- The risk associated with this study is no greater than everyday life.
- This research may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

Benefits of being in the study include:

- Better understanding of yourself as a professional educator.
- Providing reliable research on the implications of refugee resettlement on physical education to the physical education profession.
- Allowing Physical Education Teacher Education faculty to evaluate training programs for pre-service teachers.
- Adding to the body of scholarly knowledge in this field. Do you have to participate?

No, your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with The University of Texas at Austin. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation.

If you would like to participate, you simply read this consent form, sign it and return it to the researcher. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

Will there be any compensation?

You will not receive any type of payment for participating in this study. However, if you so choose, your name will be entered into a drawing for a gift card, to be conducted after all interviews is completed.

How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you participate in this research study?

- Your name and identifying information will be immediately changed to an ID number. Your identification will never be reported or available to anyone except the researchers.



- Interviews will be digitally audiotaped and audio files will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. Files will be kept in a secure, password-protected computer and UT server. Tapes will be heard or viewed only for research purposes by the investigator and his associates. To make possible future analysis the investigator will retain the recordings.
- The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

If you choose to participate in this study, you may choose to be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the research team will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept for 10 years and then erased.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?

If you have any questions about the study please contact Jack Sears, Student Researcher, as soon as possible at (817) 480-9341 or email: [jacksears@utexas.edu](mailto:jacksears@utexas.edu). If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researcher conducting the study.

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, concerns, or questions about the research please contact the Office of Research Support at (512) 471-8871 or email: [orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu](mailto:orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu).

Participation

If you would like to participate, you simply read this consent form, sign it and return it to the researcher. *You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to

ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study in the following way(s):

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to be audio recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not want to be audio recorded.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

As the representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and the risks involved in this research study.

Printed Name of Person obtaining consent:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person obtaining consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B. Demographic Survey

### DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Title: Effect of Refugee Resettlement on Physical Educators' Behaviors and Teaching Practice

Student Researcher: Jack Sears, PhD Candidate, PETE Program, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, The University of Texas at Austin

Faculty Advisor/: Louis Harrison, PhD

Demographic Survey Questions for pre-interview survey

The content of the questions, which are to be kept in confidence, will seek to gather information concerning the participant's background with an option to not answer.

### Physical Education Teachers 2017-18 Demographic Survey

Thanks again for agreeing to participate in my PE Teachers teaching refugees study. Please take a moment to help me know a little more about you. One goal of our Physical Education Teacher Education program is to support pre-service PE teachers and provide relevant information about those who teach in diverse schools. This information will help support our efforts to provide a quality program. Please fill out the areas applicable to you or that you feel comfortable answering. When you're done, please email the completed form back to me. I really appreciate it!

#### Demographics:

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Gender:	I Currently Teach:	Age Range:	How would you describe your Ethnicity?
<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 30	<input type="checkbox"/> African-American
<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> High School	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 40	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic
	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 - 50	<input type="checkbox"/> White
	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior. High	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 +	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian

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#### Professional Training:

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Education - I have a:	My physical education certification came through:
<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree	<input type="checkbox"/> My college/university program
<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree	<input type="checkbox"/> An Alternative Certification program
<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree	<input type="checkbox"/> I have more than one certification.
<input type="checkbox"/> I took graduate classes without graduating	List content areas you are certified to teach:

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Currently working on a graduate degree

---

I usually attend some type of professional development conference or workshop every year.

- Yes  
 No

I normally attend my district professional development meetings.

- Yes  
 No

I would like to attend more professional development workshops for physical education.

- Yes  
 No

I believe my university/alternative certification program prepared me well for my current job?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure.

---

Professional Organizations:

- I am a member of TAHPERD  
 I am a member of SHAPE America.

I normally attend annual conferences for TAHPERD.

- Yes  
 No  
 I have at least once.
- 

### International Experiences:

I have traveled internationally:

- Yes  
 No

I have traveled outside of the USA for:

- Less than a week  
 1 – 2 weeks  
 More than 2 weeks  
 I lived overseas for 6 months to a year  
 I lived overseas for more than a year

I can speak another language besides English.

- Yes  
 No

- I often have to use another language when teaching  
 I know a little of another language, but I am not fluent.

Why did you go overseas or travel outside of the USA?

- Vacation  
 Study Abroad program  
 Business / work related  
 Military service

The following is true about me:

- My family immigrated to the USA before I was born  
 My parents immigrated to the USA when I was a child  
 I was a refugee  
 I was an asylum seeker  
 I have friends who are not the same ethnicity as me.  
 I am proud of my ethnic heritage  
 I like to learn about different cultures and countries.

I would recommend to a pre-service teacher to travel internationally if they have the chance.

- Yes
-

- 
- No
  - Not sure

---

**Teaching:**

Altogether I have been teaching for:

- 1 year
- 2 -5 years
- 6 - 10 years
- 11 - 20 years
- 21 - 30 years
- 31 + years

The things I like most about teaching is:

- My students
- My school
- I get to teach PE
- The money
- Having summers off
- My administration

How long have you taught Physical Education?

- 1 - 3 years
- 4 - 8 years
- 9 - 15 years
- 15 + years

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**Professional Development and participation**

- I'd like to become more involved TAHPERD or SHAPE America.
  - I'd be interested in professional development that could help me know more about other cultures, people groups and diversity.
-

## Appendix C. Interview Protocol

### Interview Protocol

#### Title: Effect of Refugee Resettlement on Physical Educators' Behaviors and Teaching Practice

Researcher: Jack Sears, PhD Candidate, PETE Program, Department of Curriculum & Instruction, The University of Texas at Austin

Faculty Advisor: Louis Harrison

This purpose of this interview protocol is to discover the effects of refugee resettlement on physical educators and physical education by investigating questions in three areas: 1) Physical education teachers' experiences in a school servicing a refugee resettlement community; 2) circumstances and contexts influencing physical education teachers' teaching behaviors, teaching philosophy, and practices with regard to refugee students; and 3) physical education teachers' professional training and personal worldview.

Using the demographic information from the survey (See Appendix C) as a starting point, the researcher will formulate questions to determine the participants' background, worldview and teaching philosophy. The survey questions/answers will not be revisited in this portion of the interview unless there is some area that needs to be clarified. The evaluation seeks to address the following items:

#### Background/personal:

- Tell me about yourself and how you decided to become a physical education teacher.
- Tell me about how you became a teacher at this school.
- Tell me about your university experience or teacher preparation background.
- Did you receive any training on working cross-culturally, or with multicultural education? If so, explain what you learned. If not, do you think it would have helped
- Do you think, as a physical education teacher, you have an important role to play in discipline and resolving conflicts in your school? Why?
- How does physical education, physical activity and sports fit into your worldview? Why is what you do as a physical educator so important to your students and to you?

#### School cultural context:

- Tell me about your school.

- How do you think your school compares to other schools in the district?
- When did you first become aware of the refugee student population in your school and what were your initial thoughts? Have those thoughts changed?
- Tell me about two or three of the most meaningful encounters with refugee students.
- Describe how you think your school community receives the refugee students as newcomers.
- Tell me about the students in your physical education classes.
- Describe your physical education classes. In regard to teaching the district content, and State TEKS, what do you enjoy teaching and what are the challenges?
- What do you do to create a school culture that promotes life-long physical activity? Among the students, the staff, and the community?

Physical education instructional strategies:

- Characterize your teaching style. What kind of adjustments have you had to make to the way you teach since coming here or since the refugees became a part of the school body?
- How would you define multicultural education, and describe in what ways your teaching is influenced by multiculturalism?
- What kind of modifications to teaching practices have you had to make for newcomer students, both refugee and immigrants?
- What are your biggest challenges in teaching refugee students? What kinds of problems do you encounter regularly? How do you solve them?
- How does the refugee resettlement community, including students and families, influence what you do, or want to do, as a PE teacher?
- Explain how the refugee resettlement in your school zone has changed your school, changed you, and influenced the community around your school.
- What would you change, or do differently, in your physical education program, if you had no barriers to doing so?

Due to the nature of this qualitative study, the researcher may choose to reword the questions, and ask follow-up questions developed from the answers provided.

## Appendix D. Observation Instrument

Proposal: *The Effect of Refugee Resettlement on Physical Educators' Behaviors and Teaching Practice (024-16)*

Principle Investigator: Jack Sears

### Observation Instrument

School:	Teacher:
Approx. No. of Students:	Grade(s):
Length of Observation:	Time/Period:
Brief Description of PE Lesson/Activity:	
Student Groupings and Interactions:	
Teacher Behavior & Interactions with Students:	
Teacher's Primary Form of Instruction: (i.e. direct, groups, practice)	
Classroom Management: (Rules, Procedures, Discipline)	
Active Participation Level of Students with Lesson/Activity: (high to low)	
Other observations:	
Observer:	Date:

### Rubric for Observation Instrument

Brief Description of Lesson/Activity:	Describe the PE lesson or activity of the
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	class. Are objectives clearly stated?
Student Groupings and Interactions:	Describe the groupings of the students. Are students working in groups, pairs or individually. Does the grouping seem appropriate for the lesson and for the age of the students? Does the grouping appear to be culturally sensitive?
Teacher Behavior & Interactions with Students:	Describe how the PE teacher interacts with the students. Is there any difference in the interactions based on ethnicity or race? What is the overall behavior of the coach toward all students? Does the teacher have to adjust behavior with any particular student(s)?
Teacher's Primary Form of Instruction: (i.e. direct, groups, practice)	Describe the teacher's primary form of instruction. Is it direct some or all of the time? Does the class work in groups with the teacher moving around to each group or station? Are the students practicing skills or working independently with little teacher instruction? Does the teacher have to use any other language besides English?
Classroom Management: (Rules, Procedures, Discipline)	Describe the way the teacher manages the class. Are class rules posted? Only in English? Are there procedures that appear to be used by all students? What discipline issues occur and how does the teacher deal with it? Are the discipline issues related to one set of students more than others?
Active Participation Level of Students with Lesson/Activity	Describe the participation level of the students. Are all students active, giving moderate to vigorous effort? Are any students not participating? Describe motivation techniques employed by the teacher to get all students actively participating.

Other observations are described here.

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## VITA

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This manuscript was typed by the author.