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NAVIGATING THE EVERCHANGING LANDSCAPE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND YOUTH SPORT

Book of Abstracts





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Symposia

An introduction to pedagogies of meaningful physical education

Déirdre Ní Chróinín, Grace Cardiff, Richard Bowles, Maura Coulter

Background: This one-hour symposium is an introduction to Meaningful Physical Education (PE). Meaningful PE is a contemporary approach to teaching physical education that prioritises the quality of children's participation experiences (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín, 2022). Meaningful PE responds to criticisms of contemporary physical education that it lacks personal significance or influence on the quality of children's everyday lives. Meaningful PE represents a repackaging of some well-established ideas related to meaningfulness together with an explicit focus on how to promote meaningful experiences. Guided by the findings of a major review (Beni et al., 2017), teachers are encouraged to pay attention to the features of participation that matter to participants – fun, challenge, social interaction, motor competence and personally relevant learning. Democratic and reflective pedagogical principles provide direction on approaches teachers can use to amplify these features and promote experiences that matter to participants.

Overview: The symposium consists of three parts: First, an overview of Meaningful PE through four mini-presentations. Second, four small-group interactive activities to scaffold application of these ideas to practice. Third, a whole group discussion of how Meaningful PE might influence policy and practice.

Conclusion: Participants will leave with an introductory knowledge of Meaningful PE and direction on how to build these ideas into their teaching of physical education.

Making Space for Play: Realising Children's Right to Play in Irish Schools

Christina Duff, Michelle Bergin, Orla Kelly

Background: Active play outdoors is fundamental to children's health, learning and wellbeing and is recognised as a basic human right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2013). Wider societal restrictions on children's play and access to outdoor spaces have resulted in greater attention to schools' obligations to provide sufficient space, time and opportunities for play.

Overview: This symposium explores children's right to play in relation to educational policies and practices in Ireland. The symposium aims to make the case for active outdoor play in both primary and post primary schools with a focus on three key themes: (1) Play and Physical Activity (2) Playful Pedagogies and the Irish Curriculum, and (3) Play During Breaktimes. Following an introduction on Article 31 of the UNCRC in the context of schools, the presenters will explore the three themes drawing on exemplars, including a) DCU Institute of Education's A.P.O.L.E. (Adventurous Play and Outdoor Learning) Erasmus+ project at primary level; b)How student voice influenced a post primary school lunchtime play initiative as part of the Irish Heart Foundation's WHO Schools Health Literacy Project; c) UCC's Research Ireland project evaluating and

creating conditions for play in Irish Schoolyards. This interactive symposium will encourage dialogue connecting international research with Ireland's policy and practice context. The discussion will explore how we as educators, researchers and practitioners can harness the power of play in children and young people's physical activity to enhance enjoyment, motivation and holistic skill development, to lay the foundations for lifelong health.

Conclusion: The session will conclude with a call to action, positioning play as a public health issue. The presenters will signpost to resources and approaches that support adults to create conditions that support diverse forms of play outdoors.

Oral Presentation Abstracts – Parallel Session A

A Scoping Review on Exploring the Quality of Physical Education in Initial Teacher Education

Catarina Andrade, Wesley O'Brien, Fraser Carson, João Costa

Background: UNESCO (2015) developed a Quality Physical Education (QPE) policy to assist national physical education (PE) policies towards enhancing the subject's educational outcomes, and the subject's contribution towards inclusive and child-centered teaching. Aligned with this premise, Charalambous and Praetorius (2020) developed a general teaching quality framework, known as the Main-Teach Model, which represents a cross-cultural evidence-based model to inform PE initial teacher education (ITE) programmes.

Aim: Conduct a scoping review on teaching quality approaches in PE ITE.

Methods: Adopting the PRISMA protocol, four databases were searched for empirical research papers addressing features of teaching quality in PE ITE in the last decade. From an initial identification of 2764 papers, the final included research papers comprised of 17 documents, which were subsequently analysed in terms of the study focus, research design, and teaching quality features.

Results: The most salient features of teaching quality were pedagogical practices and teaching strategies, as seen through the perspective of student teachers. The papers mainly focused on university studies rather than school placements, and a large portion of the studies were reliant on adopting a qualitative research design.

Conclusion: Investing in ITE is fundamental to achieving the desired outcomes in PE. Research on ITE programmes would benefit from adopting a cross-cultural framework on teaching quality in PE, specifically to frame its approaches, while closely monitoring student teachers' teaching competence.

LÉIM: Léargas, Éabhlóid, Idirghníomhú, Muinín: the development of multilingual disciplinary literacies in PE through CLIL, and a scoping review of current practice.

Tomás Dowling, Craig Neville, Conor Philpott, Hillary O'Connor, Diarmuid Lester

Background: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a common pedagogical approach adopted principally in Europe for the teaching of subject disciplines through a foreign or other language. Commonly applied to subject disciplines such as natural sciences, social studies, and technology, CLIL-Physical Education (CLIL-PE) is less prevalent and is only occasionally found in secondary education. Nonetheless, research in the education and motor development points to the beneficial nature of teaching language through context-embedded play and movement skills, which, when combined with metacognitive reflection, can support the development of language output, vocabulary retention, motivation and cognitive development.

Methods: In this presentation, we will present an overview of the LÉIM (Léargas, Éabhlóid, Idirghníomhú, Muinín): Foghlaim le Gluaiseacht, Teanga agus Machnamh programme, a teacher professional development programme that supports primary teachers in English-medium school DEIS contexts to develop CLIL pedagogies for the teaching of fundamental movement skills in multilingual contexts through Irish. We will outline our proposal for the theoretical and pedagogical principles of CLIL learning in PE for the development of multilingual disciplinary literacies in PE as well as a theoretical profile of CLIL-PE teachers in Ireland. It will also address the question of what multilingual disciplinary literacies look like at primary level and providing current evidence of best practice within this space.

Conclusion: This presentation intends to highlight how a CLIL approach could be a novel way of teaching fundamental movement skills through the integrated development of both language and content, promoting both cognitive and motor development.

Development and Content validation of an instrument to evaluate Physical Education preservice teachers' self-efficacy and outcome expectations of implementing Pedagogical Models

Carmen Barquero-Ruiz, João Costa, João Mota, Paul McFlynn

Background: Physical Education (PE) preservice teachers (PSTs) in Ireland rarely implement pedagogical models (PMs), despite their importance for fostering skills like creativity, autonomy, and social development. PMs are central to post-primary PE curricula and initial teacher education (ITE) standards. Structured supports are needed to help PSTs adopt PMs and reduce the "wash-out" effect seen in practice. Aim: To develop and content validate a tool evaluating PE PSTs' self-efficacy and outcome expectations regarding PM implementation in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland (NI).

Methods: Tool development involved three steps: 1) adaptation of the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES), and creation of items for PM outcome expectations (PMOE), self-efficacy beliefs (SEB), and intention of use (IU); 2) content validation by 7 experts using Cohen's κ for item relevancy and clarity; 3) cognitive interviews with 8 PSTs from ROI and NI.

Results: Guided by Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and the Integrative Model of Behaviour Prediction, a Likert-type tool was developed with: a) general self-efficacy (12 OSTES-adapted items); b) PMOE and SEB for six curriculum-aligned PMs (48 items); and c) general IU (2 items). Expert review showed acceptable relevancy (κ = .41–.85) and clarity (κ = .21–.85). Items with low κ were revised, and 6 new PMOE items were added. PST interviews confirmed clarity, with minor feasibility issues resolved.

Conclusions: The tool shows strong content validity for assessing PSTs' beliefs and intentions to use PMs. Next steps include construct validation with a larger PST sample. Findings will inform strategies to strengthen PM integration in PE ITE programmes and reduce the wash-out effect.

A Scoping Review on Quality Physical Education Programmes and Their Outcomes on Primary-Level Pupils

Úna Kingston, João Costa, Emmanouil Adamakis, Diarmuid Lester

Background: A scoping review was carried out on the literature relating to the evaluation of the implementation of quality physical education (QPE) programmes and related outcomes on final-stage primary-level pupils' attitudes towards physical education (ATPE), physical activity behaviour (PAB), mental wellbeing (MWB) and academic achievement (AA).

Methods: The scoping review included studies published between 2000 and 2020 in the PubMed, Elsevier, SCOPUS and CINAHL databases and was completed in accordance with the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews' guidelines. Based on the inclusion criteria, 15 out of 2869 studies were included in the review. A thematic analysis was used to inductively and deductively analyse the studies for common themes of features of QPE programmes in primary schools, arising from nine different countries, considering the four outcome dimensions (ATPE, PAB, MWB and AA).

Results: The common themes identified as features of QPE across all four dimensions were as follows: (1) government leadership; (2) PE curriculum; (3) school principal and leaders; (4) organisational management from leadership in school; (5) teachers; (6) parental involvement; and (7) community partnerships.

Conclusion: Based on these findings, recommendations were made for an evaluation framework on QPE in primary education.

Supporting Teachers to Include a Child with Visual Impairment in the PE lesson

Niamh Boylan, Frances Murphy, Sinéad McCauley Lambe

Background: Research indicates that mainstream class teachers need further support to include a child who is blind or visually impaired (BVI) in physical education (PE) lessons (Grenier, Lieberman & Beach, 2023). The objective of this study is to identify supports that teachers in primary schools require to be able to adapt PE lessons to include children who are BVI, informed by the literature and preliminary findings from the study. *Methodology*: A qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with 11 primary school teachers who taught children with VI was used. These online interviews were conducted with participants using Zoom and probed teachers' knowledge, experience and understanding of teaching a child who is BVI with a focus on their teaching of PE and any supports that they accessed related to including a child who is BVI in PE.

Results: Initial findings indicate that (a) teachers require further knowledge of how to support and successfully include children who are BVI in their PE lessons, (b) teachers are unaware of adapted equipment which can be used in the PE lessons to support children who are BVI, (c) although teachers are willing and eager to develop their understanding of how to include a child who is BVI effectively in the PE lesson, teachers

were not aware of any PD (professional development) specifically related to BVI which was available to them.

Conclusions: Overall due to the gaps in knowledge related to inclusion in PE, it is clear that teachers need to gain a greater understanding of strategies to support inclusion of children who are BVI and the resources and equipment that are available to them through their engagement in some form of PD. Innovative means of providing inclusive and universal supports must be addressed. Inclusion of children who are BVI in mainstream PE classes is a crucial component of navigating the ever-changing landscape of PE in primary schools.

Student Reactions to the Use of Cooperative Learning and Digital Technologies in Physical Education

Karl Cortis, Antonio Calderón, Ann MacPhail

Background: Integrating cooperative learning (CL) and digital technologies in Physical Education (PE) has the potential to enhance student engagement, teamwork, and skill acquisition. There is limited research examining the students' reactions, despite their critical significance as primary stakeholders in education. Understanding student reactions to these instructional methods is crucial for effective implementation.

Methods: Part of this study examined students' responses to a six-month PE program incorporating CL strategies and digital technologies. The research employed a qualitative approach, including collaborative instructional approaches with six physical education teachers, lesson observations, and post-implementation focus groups. PE lessons integrated digital technologies such as video analysis apps, translators and projections, entangled in CL. Observations provided insight into student engagement, while the six student focus groups captured student reflections on their experiences.

Results: Findings indicate that students responded positively to the combination of digital tools and CL, highlighting increased motivation as well as enhanced peer collaboration. Many appreciated the interactive nature of digital feedback and the opportunity to take on different roles within group activities. However, challenges emerged, including initial physical activity decrease, varying digital literacy levels and concerns with data usage. Some students expressed a preference for traditional instruction (without the use of digital technologies), underscoring the need for gradual implementation and differentiated teaching approaches.

Conclusion: Overall, the study highlights the benefits of a structured, teacher-supported integration of CL and digital technologies in PE. The findings suggest that co-teaching and other interactive elements enhance learning, while the focus groups and observations acted as feedback loops that refined the instructional strategies in a much dynamic educational system.

Oral Presentation Abstracts – Parallel Session B

Development and evaluation of an assessment rubric cocreated with students for practical modules in sport coaching, pedagogy and fitness instruction.

Thomas Broderick, Con Burns, Eimear Foley

Background: The aim of this Intervention is to develop and evaluate a criterion-based student led assessment rubric for modules with practical components in the areas of sports coaching, pedagogy and fitness instruction in Munster Technological University.

Methods: Participants were a student (n=148) cohort who were currently completing 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year courses. Data was collected anonymously using an online questionnaire after students had time to reflect on their experience of co-creating rubrics. This questionnaire was an adapted version of the Assessment Experience Questionnaire. This data was then exported to excel for descriptive statistical analysis. Open ended questions where inductively coded with key themes identified, categorised and reviewed separately with quotes used to illustrate the findings.

Results: Results highlight the effectiveness of developing performance criteria with students in a process of whole class cocreation. This process can enhance both assessment and feedback by fostering greater clarity, student engagement, and understanding of assessment criteria and performance. However, attention must be paid to the design of rubrics to ensure they are not overly complex or difficult to interpret. By simplifying rubrics and incorporating more class-based discussions, educators can make these tools even more effective in supporting student learning.

Possible dropout reasons in fitness centres: case study.

Diogo Aveiro, Daniela Almeida, Eduardo Caleiras, Filipe Verissimo, Hélio Neto, Leonardo Ratola, José Aleixo, Francisco Campos

Background: Retaining gym members is a key challenge for fitness organisations, especially with low annual retention rates. This study aimed to identify and characterise potential dropout reasons in fitness centres, based on the perceptions of active users. Understanding these factors helps managers create better loyalty strategies, particularly in Portugal, where 73% of the population does not engage in sport or exercise, and retention rates remain low: 37.5% (2021), 25.4% (2022), 54.7% (2023).

Methods: An online questionnaire was completed by 540 members from five gyms in Portugal (ages 18 – 80; M=43.17±11.96), 417 female (77.22%) and 123 male (22.78%). Data were collected from users of group classes, personal training, exercise room, and physical assessments. Participants reported possible dropout reasons, which were categorised using content analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentage) were used.

Results: The main reported reasons were: service-related issues (32.04%), health problem (27.96%), financial difficulties (17.96%), lack of professional support (16.30%), distance (12.96%), lack of time (9.44%), low motivation (2.96%), and personal reasons (2.78%). Some categories had sub-reasons, such as distance caused by professional (3.33%) or personal life changes (7.59%).

Conclusion: Dropout from regular exercise is influenced by multiple personal and structural factors. These findings provide useful guidance for fitness managers to implement retention strategies – such as revising schedules, enhancing support, and improving communication – to increase satisfaction and reduce dropout.

STEPs: A Social cognition Theory aligned programme to Encourage Physical, Social and mental health.

Alison Chambers, Andrea Bickerdike, Con Burns, Alison Merrotsy

Background: Baseline research to inform Munster Technological University's (MTU's) 'Healthy Campus' initiative revealed sub-optimal health profiles of students. In an analysis to investigate perspectives of MTU students and staff regarding the structure of a 'Healthy Campus', participants suggested that it should prioritise interventions which allow for short bouts of physical activity. STEPs was a physical activity (PA) programme embedded into the curriculum at MTU.

Methods The evaluation encompassed a non-randomised controlled trial (intervention n= 32; control n= 45) and consultation with up to 32 ambassadors and 2 facilitators. Quantitative outcomes (self-efficacy, PA levels and wellbeing) were self-reported on a web-based questionnaire instrument at baseline (T1) and post-intervention (T2). Qualitative assessment measures including focus groups and open-ended survey questions.

Results: There were no statistically significant changes in PA or wellbeing from T1 to T2. Feedback in the post-intervention questionnaire completed by the intervention group revealed positive changes (n=19) whereby 47.4% stated that their daily sitting time had decreased. Further, 26.3% reported that their stress levels had decreased and 47.3% stated that their sense of belonging and integration had increased. In total, 57.9% stated that they were motivated by the programme, 73.7% replied that they would likely continue PA after the programme, 54.9% said that they would likely take part in the programme again and 84.3% said that they would likely recommend it to a friend. A thematic analysis yielded further insights to guide adaptations of STEPs by considering the following recommendations: an 'icebreaker' session, improved communication and planning, adapting the recruitment process and reconsidering the ratio of the groups and the timing of the sessions.

Conclusion: Practice-based intervention studies like STEPs are integral to navigating the ever-changing landscape around the provision of PA opportunities for youth in today's sedentary climate given a gradual move towards pro-active healthcare.

Fuelling Active Competence, Empowering Success: Evaluating the FACES intervention in Irish Primary School Children

Keith Costello, Philip E. Kearney, Ciaran MacDonncha, Alan Nevill

Background: Physical literacy involves the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to engage in lifelong physical activity. Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are central to physical literacy, supporting children's physical, cognitive, and social development. However, Irish children, like their international peers, often lack FMS proficiency and fall short of the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous daily activity. There is a need for inclusive, school-based interventions to improve physical literacy. This study examined the short- and long-term impact of "FACES" (Fuelling Active Competence, Empowering Success), an 8-week physical literacy programme, on the FMS proficiency of 101 Irish primary school children in Years 3 and 4.

Methods: Participants (n = 101; aged 7–8) from Year 3 and 4 classes were assigned to a control (n = 51) or intervention group (n = 50). Control groups followed standard P.E., while intervention groups replaced this with two 30-minute FACES sessions weekly for 8 weeks. Each week included focused skill instruction (Day 1) and applied activities like stations and obstacle courses (Day 2). The FACES programme had five components: FMS instruction, active yard/homework, classroom movement breaks, parental and community engagement, and subject integration. FMS proficiency was assessed using the short form of the TGMD-3 at pre-test, post-test, and 6-month follow-up.

Results: No significant baseline differences existed between groups in age, gender, or motor skills. An ANCOVA (Group x Gender x Test) with age as covariate showed significant improvements in the intervention group's FMS scores at post-test and follow-up compared to the control group. Although scores declined slightly from post-test to follow-up, intervention scores remained above baseline and higher than the control group's. The control group's scores were stable from baseline to post-test and showed a modest increase at follow-up but still lagged behind. Age was significantly correlated with FMS at baseline (r = 0.331), but not at later assessments.

Conclusion: FMS proficiency among Irish children is below ideal levels, reflecting global patterns. The FACES intervention significantly improved FMS skills, with large effect sizes sustained over six months. These findings support implementing multi-component FMS programmes in primary schools to enhance physical literacy and promote lifelong activity and health.

Convergent validity between two fundamental movement skills assessment tools: the Test of Gross Motor Development-3 and the Canadian Agility and Movement Skill Assessment.

Conor Philpott, Xiaojin Mao, Wenhao Li, Botian Wang, Yunjiao Yang, Han Xie, Lixia Fan

Background: The Test of Gross Motor Development-3 (TGMD-3) and the Canadian Agility and Movement Skill Assessment (CAMSA) are two widely used assessment tools for fundamental movement skills (FMS), this study aimed to investigate the convergent validity of these two tools. Global evidence indicates that FMS performance is declining, with low levels of movement ability reported across childhood cohorts. Ascertaining which toolkits are most appropriate and suitable for use in large testing settings e.g. schools, is a key component to identifying, and addressing such movement deficiencies.

Method: A random sample of 134 9-10 years old children were tested with both the CAMSA and the TGMD-3.

Results: The outcomes from both TGMD-3 and CAMSA revealed a significant correlation between the two testing measures across the locomotor, object-control, and overall subsets ($r=0.265-0.482$, $P<0.01$). Additionally, the Kappa correlation coefficient between total CAMSA scores (n.b. inclusive of timing component) and TGMD-3 was 0.397, while the Kappa correlation coefficient between CAMSA total skill scores and TGMD-3 was 0.654.

Conclusion: The assessment tools demonstrated correlation and consistency within acceptable ranges, however variations and scoring differences remain. Given the ease of administration, the CAMSA may be a more viable tool for larger scale testing with minimum personnel. Considering the slight variations in scoring methods, it is recommended to employ a variety of assessment tools in future evaluations of children's FMS to enhance the overall comprehensiveness of the assessment.

Oral Presentation Abstracts – Parallel Session C

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Gaelic4Mothers&Others Programme in Ireland: A Thematic Analysis of Participant Perspectives

Glynis Gardiner, Wesley O'Brien, Irene Hogan, Conor Philpott

Background: The Gaelic4Mothers&Others (G4M&O) programme aims to promote physical activity among women aged 25 years and older through fun, non-competitive Ladies Gaelic Football (LGF). This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of the G4M&O programme in Ireland, by providing research informed evidence to support the programme's impact on participants, clubs, and communities.

Methods: A mixed-methods research design was employed, with data collected through a validated, self-reported online survey. This study specifically analyses the self-report responses from 382 participants who provided open-ended feedback on their experiences and perspectives of the programme. The qualitative data were thematically analysed following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework.

Results: Thematic analysis identified five key themes within the dataset: (a) Structure and Rules, (b) Enjoyment and Fun, (c) Community and Friendship, (d) Equality and Inclusivity, and (e) Breaking Barriers: Cost and Access. Findings indicate that the G4M&O programme is highly valued for its emphasis on enjoyment and fun, the emerging participant health benefits (physical and mental well-being), and the overall targeted community engagement. Challenges regarding the G4M&O programme do persist in terms of factors relating to structure, access, and inclusion.

Conclusion: Addressing these concerns through greater programme-related flexibility, enhanced support systems, and increased funding has the potential to be crucial for sustaining and expanding wider G4M&O participation on the island (and more globally speaking).

Uneven Fields: Gender, Structure, and Alignment in Gaelic Games Development Pathways

John Murphy, Hilary Fitzgerald, Jean McArdle

Background: This presentation outlines Phase One of a national research study commissioned by the Camogie Association and Sport Ireland. The study investigates the structures and practices shaping talent development environments (TDEs) within Gaelic Games, specifically focusing on hurling and camogie, with Phase One employing a case study approach across five county contexts on the island of Ireland.

Methods: The primary aim was to assess current practices in relation to best-practice frameworks for athlete development. Guided by Martindale et al.'s framework for effective TDEs and the Football Association's Four-Corner Model, the research focused on the extent to which counties are supporting the technical, tactical, physical, and psycho-social development of young athletes. Semi-structured interviews were

conducted with Games Managers and Development Officers in each county, and data were analysed through a content analysis approach structured around key TDE principles such as long-term development planning, alignment, coherent messaging and support, and holistic development.

Results: Initial findings indicate variable implementation of best-practice TDE principles across counties, with notable inconsistencies especially evident in Camogie. Crucially, gender emerged as a significant axis of divergence, with differences evident in both resourcing and approach across male and female development pathways. Across all five cases, there was limited evidence of vertical and horizontal alignment, particularly in relation to Camogie-specific structures.

Conclusion: The presentation will highlight core themes and contrasting approaches drawn from the county case studies, illustrating systemic challenges and recommendations for improvement. These findings contribute to a broader understanding of how talent development is currently operationalised in Gaelic Games and provide a foundation for enhancing policy coherence and strategic investment across both GAA and Camogie pathways with integration looming.

A longitudinal approach to embed social justice pedagogies within a PETE programme: Preservice teachers and teacher educators' experiences

Carmen Barquero-Ruiz, Antonio Calderón, Brigitte Moody, Ursula Freyne

Background: This study examines how physical education pre-service teachers (PSTs) and teacher educators (TEs) engage with social justice through a multi-phase instructional approach. While research highlights the potential for PSTs to act as agents of change and benefits of integrating social justice in physical education teacher education (PETE) programmes, a theory-practice gap remains. This study aims to generate empirical data on PSTs' experiences of addressing social justice issues during school placement, informing the enhancement of pedagogical process in PETE.

Methods: A longitudinal three-phase research design was employed. Phase 1 investigated PSTs' experiences with social justice during school placements, using focus groups (n=9), reflective journals (from two TEs), and student-generated teaching artefacts (n=61). Phase 2 focused on designing evidence-informed teaching resources, developed collaboratively by TEs (n=4), and a visual designer. Phase 3 involved implementation and evaluation of the resources in the PETE programme through PSTs' focus groups (ongoing) and TEs' reflective diaries (n=2). Data analysis followed reflexive thematic analysis.

Results: Phase 1 revealed PSTs' challenges in translating theoretical knowledge into practice, highlighting gaps in confidence and preparedness. Visual case studies were found as a valuable resource in assisting PSTs. This insight informed Phase 2, where

pedagogical resources were developed. Phase 3 preliminary results indicated their effectiveness.

Conclusion: This study underscores the importance of long-term approaches to embed social justice pedagogies within PETE programmes. The findings suggest that structured experiences, such as collaborative learning communities, scaffolded reflection tools, and visual case studies, can enhance PSTs' ability to advocate for social justice in physical education. Future research should explore the scalability of these pedagogical resources across diverse educational contexts.

Resistance Training for Teens StrongHER Muslim Girls: A Culturally Responsive Resistance Training Program

Niamh O' Loughlin, David Lubans, Nema Hayba, Trent D. Brown, Emiliano Mazzoli, Michael Duncan, Lisa M. Barnett

Background: Resistance Training for Teens (RT4T) is a school-based foundational resistance training program that demonstrated improved physical and psychological outcomes in Australian adolescents. However, its suitability for underrepresented populations is unknown. The aim was to assess the appropriateness of RT4T for Muslim girls in Victoria, Australia.

Methods: Three groups were recruited: i) Muslim female students in Victoria (aged 14–16; n=12), ii) female physical education (PE) teachers from Islamic Victorian schools (n=7), and iii) Australian-based Muslim Community Leaders (MCL; n=5). Participants engaged in workshops, focus groups, or interviews to share views on RT4T. Data from student drawings, written responses (students/teachers), and transcripts (teachers/MCL) were analysed using the Ecological Validity Model (EVM) and thematic analysis. EVM explores context-goals-content-methods-persons-metaphors-language-concepts.

Results: For context, all groups noted that while Islamic teachings promote physical activity, cultural factors like gender roles, finances, and identity conflicts, can hinder participation. All groups agreed RT4T's goals, like promoting strength, aligned with student needs. Representation was the main content theme for all, with suggestions to align nutritional information with Islamic dietary practices and include female-only, modest representations. For methods, teachers and MCL emphasised the importance of gaining parental support for RT4T's success. For persons, students emphasised the need for encouragement and autonomy from the teacher facilitator. Considering metaphors, the students and MCL favoured program names that emphasised strength - reflecting student goals.

Conclusion: Engaging Muslim girls, teachers, and MCL was crucial in informing key areas for adapting RT4T to be culturally responsive. By considering the shifting dynamics of PE, this study underscores the importance of inclusivity in adapting programs to diverse needs.

Sex-specific socioeconomic inequalities in physical activity trajectories from late childhood to early adulthood: a prospective cohort study

Prachi Sharma, Kate O'Neill, Joice Cunningham, Farzana Ferdous, Linda M. O'Keeffe

Background: Physical activity (PA) is a modifiable risk factor for cardiovascular disease, yet sex-specific patterns across adolescence and early adulthood remain underexplored. This study examines sex-specific associations between socioeconomic position (SEP) and PA trajectories.

Methods: Data were from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), a UK birth cohort (1991/1992). SEP was measured via maternal education; PA was assessed using accelerometers at ages 11, 13, 15, and 24 years. Measures included total PA (counts/min, CPM), moderate-to-vigorous PA (MVPA), light PA (LPA), and sedentary time (SED). Associations between SEP and PA trajectories were analysed using sex-stratified linear spline multilevel models.

Results: 5,693 participants (10,624 PA measures) were included. Males had higher CPM, MVPA, LPA and lower SED than females. SEP disparities in CPM and LPA were evident at 11y and 14y respectively, widening over time with opposing patterns between sexes. By 25y, CPM was 39.6 (95% CI: 31.2, 47.0) higher in males but 43.7 (95% CI: -19.9, -67.5) lower in females with low vs. high SEP. LPA was 60.9 min/day (95% CI: 54.9, 67.1) higher in males and 37.3 min/day (95% CI: -18.8, -55.8) lower in females with low vs. high SEP. Among females, SEP disparities in MVPA emerged at 15y and widened; by 25y, MVPA was 15.3 min/day (95% CI: -5.6, -24.9) lower in low vs. high SEP, with minimal differences in males. In males, SEP disparities in SED appeared from 11y; by 25y, SED was 24 min/day (95% CI: -31.9, -9.5) higher in low vs. high SEP. In females, SED disparities attenuated and were negligible by 25y.

Conclusion: Socioeconomic disparities in PA emerge early and widen into adulthood, with opposing sex-specific patterns. Targeted interventions during adolescence are needed to address these gaps.

Oral Presentation Abstracts – Parallel Session D

Understanding the intentions and perceived enactment of policies in Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sport by National Agencies: A preliminary analysis

Mairéad Grogan, Ann MacPhail, João Costa, Brendan O'Keeffe

Background: This study examined how national agencies in Ireland conceptualised and enacted policies designed to enhance the health and wellbeing of young people within the domains of physical education (PE), physical activity (PA) and youth sport (YS). Through an exploration of the perspectives of policymaker representatives within national agencies, the research aimed to identify alignment, gaps and challenges in policy formulation and execution across these interconnected domains.

Methods: Semi-structured interviews with three key policymakers identified during an initial content mapping phase were conducted. Data were transcribed and analysed through live coding to extract preliminary themes.

Results: Four core themes emerged, informing the development of refined interview questions for the next phase of policymaker engagement. Preliminary findings highlighted complexities in aligning investments and energies across the domains of PE, PA and YS. Policymakers emphasised the role of 'trusted sources' in policy formation while navigating challenges such as resource constraints, varying interpretations of policy directives and limitations in cross-sectoral collaboration. Key themes indicated the need for greater coherence and integration in policy application to achieve intended health and wellbeing outcomes.

Conclusion: This study sheds light on the complexities of policy enactment within national agencies, revealing tensions between strategic intentions and practical realities in PE, PA and YS. As the research progresses, further interviews will refine these insights, deepening understanding of how national agencies interpret, implement and navigate policy within these domains. By examining the roles, priorities and interactions of such agencies, the findings will help identify opportunities for more coordinated and effective policy action across the domains to enhance the health and wellbeing of youth in Ireland.

Examining the alignment between policy and practice within UK Physical Education policies and practice in the classrooms in the lower secondary school age.

Pippa Best, Conor Philpott, João Costa, Paul McFlynn

Background: This project aims to engage Physical Education (P.E.) educators from all four United Kingdom (U.K.) jurisdictions in interjurisdictional analysis and discussion. Both terminology and structural approaches to P.E. appear inconsistent across both international and UK contexts, reflecting differences in curriculum labels, delivery methods, and policy implementation.

Methods: This study will incorporate 3 key phases: Phase 1 entails a thematic analysis across key curriculum documents across Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. This thematic analysis lays the foundation for further work by mapping out each curriculum and analysing similarities and differences in P.E. policy across these four jurisdictions. Phases 2 and 3 consist of interviews with teachers (phase 2), and students (phase 3) across each country of the U.K. Data collection includes conducting individual interviews with the Head of the P.E. department, another P.E. staff member, and a focus group interview with six students. These interviews were based on the following categories: Aims, Objectives, Content and Assessment within P.E. Conducting these interviews has been valuable in uncovering both the similarities and differences across curricula and jurisdictions.

Results: In the curriculum analysis to date, key points of insight include the distinction between Health and Wellbeing and traditional Physical Education, the contrast between holistic approaches and lifelong healthy lifestyle promotion, and the impact of different learning domains on physical literacy. These results show there are multiple areas of differences in relation to the main aim of P.E. across each country and the alignment between policy and practice in each jurisdiction.

Conclusion: The purpose of this research is to encourage dialogue between the four nations, and to facilitate learning opportunities, encouraging educators to further bring policy in the U.K. together and contribute to subsequent policy developments in P.E.

An insight from teachers on post-primary health education in Ireland.

Lorna Burke, Craig Smith, Nathan Gavigan, Sarahjane Belton, Hannah Goss

Background: Health education in post-primary schools in Ireland is delivered within the Wellbeing programme for 12- 16-year-olds. The aim of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of health education in Irish post-primary schools. Specifically, we sought to understand the importance attributed to school-based health education, examine current teaching practices, identify barriers, and explore possible improvements.

Methods: Post-primary teachers, with previous experience in delivering health education within the Wellbeing programme in Irish secondary schools, were approached via email. Ten participants agreed to take part in online individual semi-structured interviews. Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. ~

Results/Findings: Three main themes were identified: (i) Teachers' perceptions of behaviours impacting adolescents', such as vaping and nutrition. (ii) The perceived status of health education in Irish post-primary schools, where teachers spoke both about themselves, their colleagues and students in relation to the lack of importance within schools for health education subjects such as SPHE. (iii) Challenges for teachers delivering health education, for example a lack of resources to support the delivery of health content in schools was highlighted consistently by the participating teachers as a barrier to delivering impactful health education within the Wellbeing Programme.

Participants mentioned the difficulty of finding time, to sieve through available resources, and to find effective material. Findings suggest potential recommendations for improving health education, particularly in an Irish context.

Conclusion: This study highlights teachers' perspectives on the need for health promotion programmes in school to be relatable and relevant to young people. Teachers also must be supported in the delivery of health education through resources and training.

Enhancing Assessment Practices in Primary Physical Education: Insights from a Virtual Community of Practice

Frances Murphy, Sinéad Molloy

Background: Assessment is a crucial component of navigating the ever-changing landscape of PE in primary schools. This study explores two interconnected aspects of assessment in primary PE: teachers' self-reported use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies and changes in their assessment practices following participation in a virtual Community of Practice (vCoP).

Methods: Six primary school teachers engaged in a vCoP over a defined period. Their use of AfL strategies was measured using a validated survey instrument alongside individual interviews conducted at both the beginning and end of the study. Throughout the process, participants contributed weekly reflective diaries and took part in collaborative Zoom meetings, which provided a window into their evolving understanding of AfL.

Results/Findings: Preliminary findings indicate a shift towards more intentional and formalised AfL practices. Teachers described a refinement in their assessment approaches and increased confidence in implementing AfL strategies. Despite this progress, several persistent challenges were identified, including time constraints, large class sizes, and workload pressures.

Conclusion: These findings highlight the potential of professional development models such as vCoPs to support teachers in adapting their assessment practices to align with evolving curriculum policies and contemporary research. In doing so, this study contributes to the wider conversation around bridging the gap between policy and practice in primary PE, offering practical insights for educators and policymakers alike. Professional learning communities such as the vCoP may be key in equipping teachers to navigate the shifting terrain of primary PE assessment.

Teachers' Perspectives on Incorporating Muscle Strengthening Exercise in Physical Education: A COM-B Model Analysis

Darragh Collins, Brendan O'Keeffe, Elaine Murtagh

Introduction: Muscle strengthening exercise (MSE) is a critical component of adolescent health, with demonstrated benefits for physical fitness, cognitive function, academic performance, and classroom behaviour. Despite its importance, little is known about the factors influencing physical education (PE) teachers' ability to integrate MSE in the Irish PE context. The COM-B model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation–Behaviour) provides a framework for understanding these factors. This study examined Irish PE teachers' perspectives on MSE delivery, identifying enablers and barriers to implementation within secondary school settings.

Method: A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining an online survey (n = 104) and semi-structured interviews (n = 7). The survey, tailored to the Irish PE context and structured based on the COM-B model, assessed teachers perceived capability, opportunity, and motivation to deliver MSE. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively, while interview transcripts underwent reflexive thematic analysis to explore underlying themes.

Results: Nearly all teachers (97%) reported incorporating MSE into their PE programmes. Self-reported capability was high, with mean scores of 8.06 (SD = 1.51) for knowledge and 7.94 (SD = 1.77) for skills (scale: 1–10). However, key barriers hindered implementation: 69% cited inadequate facilities, 82% highlighted scheduling conflicts with concurrent lessons, and time constraints were a significant concern (M = 6.19, SD = 2.18). Motivation to teach MSE was strong, particularly for bodyweight (M = 9.05, SD = 1.71) and free-weight exercises (M = 8.33, SD = 2.34). Qualitative findings emphasised the importance of teacher competence in demonstrating MSE techniques and the need for continuous professional development (CPD), with unanimous demand for in-person MSE-focused workshops.

Discussion: PE teachers in Ireland demonstrated strong support for MSE, aligning with recent findings in England. However, systemic barriers—such as limited facilities and curricular time—impede optimal delivery. The WHO's guidelines suggest 3x weekly exposure to muscle and bone strengthening exercise for adolescents, yet this study highlights a gap between policy and practice.

Conclusion: PE teachers in Ireland are highly motivated to deliver MSE but require additional support and professional development to aid with logistical challenges. Future initiatives should prioritise professional development of teachers in relation to MSE.

Lightning Talks Abstracts

An Irish case study on the quality of teaching Physical Education in one Initial Teacher Education programme

Catarina Andrade, Wesley O'Brien, Fraser Carson, João Costa

Background: It is well-established that Physical Education (PE) scholars have been researching what constitutes the quality of teaching PE. The Quality of Teaching PE (QTPE) framework delivers an observation tool for preservice teachers (PSTs) in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) across the varying types of teaching environments, including peer-teaching and school placement. The QTPE observation tool requires three self-reported perspectives to be completed in tandem: PST, PST Placement Tutor, and the secondary school students' themselves.

Aim: To pilot the QTPE observation tool in one Irish PE ITE program in two specific undergraduate modules, relating to curriculum and school placement. Methods: Within the QTPE tool, six domains were selected to be piloted across these two modules: one focused on the curricular teaching of Personal Exercise and Fitness during a second-year peer-teaching assessment event, and the other focused on a final-year school placement module. A total of 45 PSTs completed the QTPE tool in the peer-teaching module 1, simulating the three required stakeholder perspectives. An additional 12 PSTs completed the QTPE tool during their final year school placement, whist again meeting the required three stakeholder perspectives. Post-observation, two focus groups were organized with some of the selected PSTs to collect their opinions about the learning and overall observation tool user experience.

Findings: While data analysis is presently ongoing, the QTPE observation tool pilot has the potential to contribute to identifying the teaching quality domains in which PSTs, Placement Tutors, and Students can either align or misalign their viewpoints in practice. Findings will be presented in June at the upcoming PEPAYS conference.

Conclusion: This QTPE observation tool can provide critically important information about our subject of PE in terms of good practice from three differing viewpoint lenses.

Chinese Physical Education Teachers' Professional Development Through Social Media: A Preliminary Report

Yue Xu, Ann MacPhail, Ash Casey

Introduction: Social media can be used to build professional learning communities that align with school responsibilities and support professional development opportunities among physical education teachers worldwide. While most studies exploring cultural differences in social media usage have been conducted in the USA and UK, this study examines the extent to which Chinese physical education teachers engage with social media platforms as a community for learning.

Methods: Purposive sampling was used for participant recruitment, with the inclusion criteria as follows: (1) teachers hold a registered teaching certificate in school physical education in Shanghai; (2) teachers actively use social media for professional learning purposes; and (3) the school has established regulations, policies, or workshops to enhance teachers' use of social media for professional learning. Interview questions were informed by a range of previous research study protocols. Two pilot interviews were conducted to adapt the interview questions to the Chinese context. Five participants were selected for semi-structured individual interviews conducted via Tencent Meeting (Voov). Data analysis was guided by elements from various models of learning communities, including Communities of Practice, Teacher Professional Communities, Professional Learning Communities, and Powerful Learning Communities.

Preliminary Results: In response to the research question, eight codes were identified from the interviews and subsequently collapsed into three main themes: group chat, learning outcomes, and learning approaches.

Conclusions: The findings of this research will inform the most effective support needed for Chinese physical education teachers to maximise the use of WeChat as a professional learning community. Initial results suggest that such support should include access to practical teaching approaches for daily physical education classroom settings, as well as opportunities for teachers to share their challenges and expertise in teaching practice.

Perceived quality, loyalty and recommendation intentions in fitness centres.

Diogo Aveiro, Guilherme Reis, João Borges, Daniela Almeida, José Aleixo, Fernando Martins, Francisco Campos

Background: In the fitness sector, practitioners' perceptions of instructor behaviour directly affect their experience, perceived quality, loyalty and recommendation intentions. Identifying which aspects of instructor performance influence these outcomes is essential for service management. This study aimed to associate the perceived quality of fitness instructors with practitioners' loyalty and recommendation intentions in group activities, personal training, and the exercise room.

Methods: An online questionnaire, adapted from an existing questionnaire, was applied to 441 users from five gyms in Portugal, aged 18 – 79 years (M=42.64; SD=12.78), 345 female (78.23%) and 96 male (21.77%). Perceptions were collected across three contexts: group activities (n=270), personal training (n=60), and exercise room (n=111). Associations between instructor quality and loyalty/recommendation were analysed using Spearman's correlation (r), with IBM SPSS v.28, at a 5% significance level ($p<.05$).

Results: In group activities, all 10 quality indicators (communication, mood, sympathy, image, motivation, instruction, planning, punctuality, knowledge, dedication) showed positive and significant correlations with both loyalty and recommendation intentions. In personal training, only sympathy showed a significant association. In the exercise room, nine indicators were significant, except punctuality.

Conclusions: The findings emphasize the instructor's impact on loyalty and recommendation, especially in group activities and the exercise room. In personal training, sympathy stood out as more influential than technical skills. These insights support fitness professionals and managers in adopting strategies that improve retention in a sector with traditionally low adherence rates.

Co-constructing a CPD experience for the integration of digital technologies and cooperative learning in Physical Education

Karl Cortis, Antonio Calderón, Ann MacPhail

Background: Incorporating digital technologies and cooperative learning in Physical Education (PE) has the potential to enhance student engagement, collaboration, and skill development. However, PE teachers may face challenges in integrating these approaches due to a lack of specific training, infrastructure or resources. This study explores a co-constructed teacher training model designed to support PE educators in using digital tools and cooperative learning strategies.

Methods: The training program was developed through a cooperative approach, involving six Physical Education teachers and researchers. It focused on interactive workshops, hands-on practice with digital tools as well as strategies for cooperative learning. Teachers actively contributed to shaping the training content based on their needs, ensuring relevance to their specific school contexts on a period nine months.

Results: Findings suggest that co-constructing training enhances teachers' confidence and competence in using digital technologies and cooperative methods in PE. Participants reported improved ability to design inclusive and engaging lessons, facilitate peer interaction between students, as well as assess student performance using digital tools. Additionally, the collaborative nature of the training fostered professional learning communities, enabling sustained knowledge exchange beyond the initial program.

Conclusion: This study highlights the importance of participatory professional development in adapting Physical Education to modern educational needs. It recommends that future training initiatives should emphasise teacher collaboration, practical application, and ongoing support to ensure successful integration of digital technologies and cooperative learning in PE.

The Use of Photovoice in Youth Health Education Programs: A Systematic Review

Lorna Burke, Nathan Gavigan, Sarahjane Belton, Craig Smith, Hannah Goss

Background: Photovoice is a group analysis method, which falls into the category of Participatory Action Research (PAR). The aim of PAR is to reflect on data that is collected through the collaboration between the researcher and the participants, and use it to create changes within the participants' lives. Photovoice combines group work and photography in order to allow people to record and reflect on their daily lives.

Photographs enable participants to express ideas, emotions and opinions in a unique way. Photovoice has been used in a diverse range of health and public health initiatives, and as a methodology provides adolescents with a platform to express their lifestyles and health issues. This study will present a review of the literature on photovoice projects relating to health, such as health literacy and physical health, involving adolescents.

Methodology: Nine electronic databases were systematically searched and screened using specific predetermined criteria. Data, such as intervention characteristics, methodology, and analysis, were extracted and narratively analysed.

Results/Findings: A total of 96 studies were included. Photovoice was used in a wide variety of health programs such as obesity prevention and physical activity promotion. Thematic analysis was generally used to analyse the use of photovoice; other measures of effectiveness and impact were rare.

Conclusion: Visual methods such as photovoice are emerging as a valuable tool to use when delivering health education programs to young people. If selected as a method, it is critical that it be adapted to suit participant needs, in order to optimise engagement in the specific project. This study emphasizes the importances of follow up action projects with students to showcase their views with key stakeholders in the community. Photovoice is a powerful tool which can amplify student voices within health education design.