
Sharon Phillips – *Community Health and Health Science*

Peer-reviewed Research Publications

1. **Phillips, S.R.**, Bernstein, E., & Silverman, S. (2019). Upper elementary school student perceptions of physical education: High attitude and moderate/low attitudes. *The Physical Educator*, 76(4), 1064-1085.

SUMMARY: This study examined the perceptions of upper elementary school students toward physical education (PE). High and moderate/low attitude students (N = 16) participated. Two themes emerged: (a) it is important to have fun in PE (students are excited to go to PE, PE is their favorite class, the teacher influences perceptions of fun) and (b) class activities are important (moderate/low students enjoyed team problem solving, fitness activities were controversial). The results suggest that class organization and content influence perceptions.

2. Marttinen, R., Fredrick, R., Johnston, K., **Phillips, S.**, & Patterson, D. (2019). Implementing the REACH after-school program for youth in urban communities: Challenges and lessons learned. *European Physical Education Review*, 1-19.

SUMMARY: This research sought to uncover challenges that arose in the implementation of the Reflective Educational Approach to Character and Health (REACH) after-school programme in a low-income public school in New York City. Additionally, we wanted to find and share some of the lessons learned, to help others avoid our pitfalls when implementing quality after-school programming. At the conclusion of the year-long REACH programme that was preceded by a year-long pilot, the lead researcher interviewed six key stakeholders: (a) the coach; (b) an academic tutor; (c) the director of REACH; (d) two after-school teachers/leaders within the school; and (e) the assistant principal of P.S. 780 (pseudonym). We employed a qualitative case study approach. Field notes from observations, researcher journals, emails, and multiple interviews were used to triangulate data. Two coders first independently coded and analyzed the data using the constant comparison method, followed by a peer reviewer to further establish credibility and trustworthiness. Three themes are presented from the data analysis: (a) bridging community dynamics and REACH; (b) needing community involvement; and (c) role modeling through cultural competence. These three themes are analyzed through a lens of culturally responsive pedagogy and a new theory of positive youth development through sport. These data present a detailed account of the implementation of a sport-based after-school programme in an urban environment. The paper presents the challenges faced in the implementation of such programmes as well as lessons learned in the process.

3. Marttinen, R., Johnston, K., **Phillips, S.**, Fredrick, R., & Meza, B. (2019). REACH Harlem: Young urban boys experiences in an after-school PA positive youth development program. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 24(4), 373-389.

ABSTRACT: Background: After-school approaches offer a viable solution to the current challenge of physical inactivity among many adolescents; however, availability, cost, transportation, and interest limit many youths' choices during non-school hours [Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray, and Foster 2003. "Youth Development Programs: Risk, Prevention and Policy." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 32 (3): 170–182]. In addition to these limitations, safety concerns in urban communities act as barriers to participation in both after-school programs [Sanderson and Richards 2010. "The After-School Needs and Resources of a Low-income Urban Community: Surveying Youth and Parents for Community Change." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 45: 430–440] and physical activity [Moore, Roux, Evenson, McGinn, and Brines 2010. "A Qualitative Examination of Perceived Barriers and Facilitators of Physical Activity for Urban and Rural Youth." *Health Education Research* 25 (2): 355–367]. Purpose: This year-long qualitative case study sought to explore young urban boys' experiences in an after-school program that aimed to empower young men through the sport of basketball. Method: Two coaches facilitated weekly sessions for 5–20 young men of color in an urban, public school after-school program in Harlem, NY. The program recruited young men to an after-school program that offered basketball instruction in a safe space. During the program, students worked on basketball skills as well as reflective reading and writing through weekly journals and

immersive conversations that revolved around weekly themes such as sportsmanship, culture, power, and communication. At the conclusion of the study seven boys aged 10–14 agreed to be interviewed about their experiences in the REACH program. Sources of data include journals, interviews, and observations. These data were coded by two independent coders, peer reviewed by a third researcher and analyzed using the constant comparative method. Findings: Theme one: Shooting guns (violence) is a barrier to shooting hoops at local courts. Analysis of the data highlighted violence as an always-present barrier to playing basketball, specifically, and physical activity, generally speaking. Theme two: Future plans, the NBA. The vast majority of boys discussed joining the NBA, either directly from high school or after a year at a college. The NBA dream operated as a perceived pathway to a safer future and higher education. Theme three: Having and being role models. Analysis of the data also pointed to participants both being and/or having a role model. These relationships impacted them in a variety of ways and not only helps us better understand their experiences in the program but also elucidates how barriers to physical activity were alleviated. The young men who participated in this after-school program were able to engage in interest-based physical activity and academic learning tasks, thus creating a peaceful space to develop positive associations between school, physical activity, and community. Conclusion: Closely examining the lived experiences of the REACH participants is significant for understanding their barriers to physical activity and how REACH, as a PYD sport program, alleviated those barriers. Examining the data around these issues also expands on the need for PYD programs [Wright and Li 2009. “Exploring the Relevance of Positive Youth Development in Urban Physical Education.” *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 14 (3): 241–251] and extends understandings of the PYD framework put forth by Holt et al. [2017. “A Grounded Theory of Positive Youth Development Through Sport Based on Results From a Qualitative Meta-Study.” *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology* 10: 1–49]. Specifically, our study demonstrates the reciprocal and iterative nature of PYD climate, life skills focus, and PYD outcomes. Our study also expands on the understandings of PYD climate, extending the focus beyond relationships to also including participants’ experiences and perceptions.

Professional Presentations

1. Marttinen, R., Simon, M., & Phillips, S.R. (2019). Latina elementary school girls’ experiences in an urban after-school physical education and literacy program. Presented at the International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education annual conference, Garden City, NY.

SUMMARY: The purpose of this research was to understand the experiences of young, mostly Latina, girls during a full-year implementation of the REACH after-school curriculum. The specific research questions were: (1) What effect, if any, did the REACH program have on the girls’ participation in physical activity (PA)? (2) Where and how are girls able to be physically active outside of the REACH program? (3) What are barriers to PA that young Latina girls face?

2. Marttinen, R., Frederick, R., Phillips, S.R., Patterson, D., & Johnston, K. (2019). Implementation of an after-school literacy and physical education program for urban youth: Challenges and lessons learned. Presented at SHAPE America national convention, Tampa, FL.

SUMMARY: This paper discusses challenges that arose in implementing a year-long, after-school program in a low-income public school in New York City. Additionally, we share key lessons learned through program implementation to help others in successfully implementing quality after-school programming. The specific research questions that guided this study were: 1. What challenges arose when trying to implement an after-school program in an urban low-SES community? 2. What lessons were learned through program implementation that could help REACH grow in a positive direction and could help others avoid the same mistakes?

3. Marttinen, R., Frederick, R., Phillips, S.R., Patterson, D., & Johnston, K. (April, 2019). REACH Harlem: Young urban boys’ experiences in an after-school PA positive youth development program. Presented at American Educational Research Association, Toronto, Canada.

SUMMARY: This year-long qualitative case study explored young urban boys’ experiences in the REACH program which aimed to empower young men through sport. Two coaches facilitated weekly sessions for young men of color in an after-school program in Harlem, NY. Data (journals, interviews, field notes) were coded by two independent coders, peer reviewed by a third researcher, and analyzed using the constant comparative method. Three themes emerged from the data, two are highlighted in this paper. Themes discuss issues of violence and safety for youth participating in PA in a dangerous neighborhood and the presence

of role models in the youths' community. This study highlights the potential positive impact that programs such as REACH can have on youth.

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Peer-reviewed Research Publications

1. Hill, J., Philpot, R., Walton-Fisette, J.L., Sutherland, S., Flemons, M., Ovens, A., **Phillips, S.R.**, & Flory, S. (2018). Conceptualising social justice and sociocultural issues within physical education teacher education: International perspectives. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 1-15, 23(5), 469- 483.

ABSTRACT: Background: Physical education (PE) and physical education teacher education (PETE) have a substantial literature base that advocates for students to develop a critical consciousness, appreciate multiple perspectives, and engage in actions to enhance social justice. Analysing sociocultural issues, critically reflecting on beliefs, knowledge, biography, and values, and developing a sense of agency to enact change, have been recognised as an integral part of the PETE knowledge base for some time. However, there remain differences in how social justice itself is conceptualised and enacted. Social justice is aligned heavily with critical and 'post' theories where taking action for justice, democracy, and power is central; but social justice is also found in humanist beliefs in student-centredness and equality and has been co-opted by neoliberal forces that promote individual responsibility. While a lack of consensus is not in itself a problem, diverse definitions might contribute to confusion and lead to uncertainty over what and how to teach for social justice. Purpose: In order to work towards greater certainty around concepts of social justice in the PETE community, this project sought to map variations in definition and conceptualisation of social justice and sociocultural issues among physical education teacher educators (PETEs) and physical education and sport pedagogy (PESP) educators, as part of a wider project on social justice and sociocultural perspectives and practices in PETE. Methods: PETE and PESP faculty (n = 72) in North America, Europe, and Australasia engaged in an in-depth interview, during which they were asked how they define social justice and sociocultural issues. Additional information about participants' social identity was collected. A constant comparative method of analysing participants' definitions mapped a range of concepts building on the theoretical framework of neoliberal, humanist, critical, and 'post' approaches to social justice. Findings: The data demonstrate that there are a range of understandings about sociocultural issues and social justice. Most commonly, some participants articulated a humanist approach to social justice by encouraging their pre-service teachers (PSTs) to have awareness of equality of opportunity in relation to gender, sexuality, and/or racism. Less prevalent, but strongly stated by those who conceptualised social justice in these terms, was the importance to take action for democracy, empowerment, or critical reflection. The terms diversity and equality, framed in neoliberal and humanist discourses, were most commonly used within the United States (US), while critical pedagogy and alignment with critical and 'post' theories were more prevalent in Australia and New Zealand. Conclusion: Differences exist in the ways social justice is conceptualised in PETE. While this can be attributed to the influence of local issues, it is also reflective of what intellectual tools, such as humanism or critical theory, are available for problematising social issues. The range of non-critical concepts found raises concern that PSTs are not getting the tools to enact social justice or tackle sociocultural issues.

2. Walton-Fisette, J., Philpot, R., **Phillips, S.R.**, Hill, J., Sutherland, S., & Flemons, M. (2018). Implicit and explicit pedagogical practices related to sociocultural issues and social justice in physical education teacher education programs. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 23(5), 497- 509.

ABSTRACT: Background: For many years, scholars in Physical Education Teacher Educator (PETE) have argued for the importance of educating pre-service teachers (PSTs) about equality, sociocultural perspectives and issues, and critical pedagogy. Despite this advocacy, we would argue that there are significant differences in how faculty teach about sociocultural issues, and for, social justice. The pedagogical actions through which PETEs do this work is the focus of this paper. Purpose: We investigated the pedagogical approaches and strategies used by PETE faculty to address and educate PSTs about social justice and sociocultural issues related to gender, race, sexuality, (dis)ability, socioeconomic status and religion in their individual PETE programs. In this study, we draw on transformational pedagogy as a framework for theorizing the data. Through this study, we highlight the pedagogical practices espoused as those that engender

transformative learning. Data collection and analysis: Data for this interpretive qualitative research study was collected primarily through in-depth semi-structured interviews with over 70 PETEs who work in 48 PETE programs across Australia, Canada, England, Ireland New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States. Furthermore, an informational survey was used to gather demographic data of the participants. The participants, all current PETEs, had a wide range of professional experiences, which included the length of time in the profession, the type of institution employed, educational backgrounds and courses taught. Data analysis was completed using the processes of content analysis and the constant comparative method. Findings: Three major themes represent the findings. In the first theme, 'Intentional and Explicit Pedagogies,' we provide descriptions of the approaches and strategies used by PETEs in this study that were planned in advance of the learning experiences. In the second theme, 'Teachable Moments,' we provide examples of how PETEs utilized 'teachable moments' in implicit and explicit ways to educate PSTs about sociocultural issues. The third theme, 'Resistance and Constraints' captures the individual challenges PETE faculty faced within their courses if, and when, they teach for equity and social justice. The findings suggest that social justice struggles to find an explicit presence within many PETE programs and that educating PSTs about sociocultural issues and social justice is lacking in many PETE programs.

3. Ovens, A., Flory, S.B., Sutherland, S., Philpot, R., Walton-Fisette, J.L., Hill, J., **Phillips, S.R.**, & Flemons, M. (2018). How PETE comes to matter in the performance of social justice. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 23(5), 484-496.

ABSTRACT: Background: For over four decades, there have been calls for physical education (PE) and physical education teacher education (PETE) to address social inequality and foster social justice. Yet, as numerous studies demonstrate, attempts to educate for social justice in PETE are infrequent and rarely comprehensive. This raises the question why it appears to be possible in some situations but not others, and for some students and not others. Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the multiple socio-political networks or assemblages in which PETE is embedded and explore how these shape the possibilities for students to engage with the concept of social justice and sociocultural issues (SCI) when learning to teach PE. Two research questions guided this study: How does an orientation for social justice education (SJE) within education policy affect the standards for enacting PETE programs? How is SJE encouraged within PETE programs? Methodology: Drawing from a broader study of over 70 key personnel in more than 40 PETE programs, we examined how faculty in PETE understand their professional world, identify their subjective meanings of their experiences, and address SCI and SJE within PETE. Data sources included an initial survey, a semi-structured interview, and program artifacts. We analyze the ways that SJE/SCI was represented in three national settings (England, the United States, and New Zealand) and identified common themes. Results: Examination of each national setting reveals ways that SJE and SCI were enabled and constrained across the national, programmatic, and individual level in each of the countries. The coherence of explicit National policy and curricula, PETE program philosophies, and the presence of multiple individual interests in social justice served to reify a sociocultural agenda. Conversely, possibilities were nullified by narrow or general National Standards, programs that failed to acknowledge sociocultural interests, and the absence of a critical mass of actors with a socio-critical orientation. These differences in assemblage culminated in variations in curriculum time that served to restrict or enable the breadth, frequency, and consistency of the messages surrounding SCI in PETE. Conclusion: These findings highlight the importance of acknowledging socio-political networks where PETE operates. The agency of PETEs to enact pedagogies that foreground sociocultural interests is contingent on congruity of the networks. The authors caution that although the 'perfect storm' of conditions has a profound influence of the possibility of transformational learning of SCI in PETE, this arrangement is always temporary, fluid, and subject to changes in any of the three network levels. Additionally, the success of PETE in enabling graduating PE teachers to recognize the inequities that may be reinforced through the 'hidden curriculum' and to problematize the subject area is contingent on the expectations of the schools in which they teach.

4. Bernstein, E. & **Phillips, S.R.** (2018). The intersection between attitude, secondary student education, and competitive activities. In Popović, S., Antala B., Bjelica D., & Gardašević, J. (Eds.). *Physical Education in Secondary School Research- Best Practice- Situation*. Montenegro: Faculty of Sport and Physical Education of University of Montenegro, Montenegrin Sports Academy and FIEP.

ABSTRACT: Attitude and beliefs of both students and teachers can play an important role in future participation of physical activity. Therefore, the beliefs of both students and teachers should be examined during the implementation of competitive activities during physical education class, as these activities are used world-wide. It is crucially important to understand how

these activities might be shaping students' attitudes, and possible future participation. This chapter will outline some of these considerations that might be overlooked during the implementation of activities that are competitive in physical education class, such as considering (a) teachers' beliefs toward competitive activities, (b) students' experiences in competitive activities, and finally, (c) the use of modern curricular models that address individual student needs during competitive activities.

Conference Poster Presentations

Walton-Fisette, J., Sutherland, S., Flory, S.B., **Phillips, S.R.**, & Lynch, S. (2018, March).

Exploring social justice issues in PETE programs in the U.S.A. Poster presentation at SHAPE America National Convention in Nashville, TN.

ABSTRACT: This research looks at physical education and physical education teacher education in the United States of America through the lens of social justice, or lack thereof.

Professional Presentations

1. Flory, S.B., **Phillips, S.R.**, & Ovens, A. (2018, April) *Social justice and cultural diversity in health and physical education*. Presented at the American Educational Research Association annual conference, New York, NY.

ABSTRACT: Effectively educating for social justice in physical education (PE) and physical education teacher education (PETE) depends on multiple political, institutional, and cultural contexts. The purpose of this work is to examine socio-political networks where PETE is embedded and explore how these shape possibilities for engaging in social justice and sociocultural issues. Drawing from a broader study, we examined how PETE faculty address sociocultural issues (SCI) and social justice education (SJE) within PETE through a survey, a semi-structured interview, and program artifacts. Case studies were constructed about PETE in England, the United States, and New Zealand. Examination of each case study reveals ways that SJE and SCI were enabled and constrained across the national, programmatic, and individual level in each country.

2. Walton-Fisette, J., Flory, S. & **Phillips, S.R.** (2018, July) *Exploring social justice issues in physical education teacher education*. Symposium presented at the International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education annual conference, Edinburgh, Scotland.

ABSTRACT: Physical education and physical education teacher education have a substantial literature base that advocates for students to develop a critical consciousness, appreciate multiple perspectives, and engage in actions to enhance social justice. Analysing sociocultural issues, critically reflecting on beliefs, knowledge, biography, and values, and developing a sense of agency to enact change, have been recognised as an integral part of the PETE knowledge base for some time. However, there remain differences in how social justice itself is conceptualised and enacted. This presentation looks to explore these differences.

3. Sutherland, S., Walton- Fisette, J.L., Flory, S.B., **Phillips, S.R.**, & Lynch, S. (2018, March) *Developing social justice in physical education teacher education*. Symposia presented at SHAPE America National Convention in Nashville, TN.

ABSTRACT: In this presentation we looked at social justice, defined as everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. We teach in a dynamic society where unfortunately not all students have equal access to resources, rights, and opportunities. We are quick to judge others, social media makes easy to criticize others who are different from ourselves. We need to highlight commonalities and create community and understanding in our classrooms to raise the critical consciousness of our students to stand up for others.