



Teaching Social Responsibility: Feasibility of the Right to Play Playbook

Enseignement de la responsabilité sociale : Efficacité du cahier d'activités de Right to Play

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of the Right To Play Learning to Play: Playing to Learn (Playbook) educational resource on fostering social responsibility in a single class of grade six/seven boys and girls. A secondary purpose was to examine the sustainability of the Playbook as an effective educational resource. Within a qualitative case study design, the teacher implemented several lessons from the Playbook over the course of four weeks. Data collection methods included student focus groups and work samples, teacher interview and journal entries, and observational field notes. Data were analyzed using constant comparison. Findings suggested that the Playbook learning activities provided the students with opportunities to practice building positive relationships, communicate in various forms, develop cooperation and teamwork skills and recognize and discuss issues of social justice. Comments and journal entries made by the teacher highlighted the Playbook as being a sustainable educational resource.

Résumé

Cette étude visait à déterminer l'efficacité de la ressource pédagogique Learning to Play: Playing to Learn (cahier d'activités) du groupe Right to Play sur la promotion de la responsabilité sociale dans une classe unique de filles et garçons de 6e année et de 7e année. Elle avait pour but second d'établir l'utilité du cahier d'activités en tant que ressource pédagogique. Dans le cadre d'une étude de cas qualitative, l'enseignant a présenté, sur une période de quatre semaines, plusieurs des leçons du cahier d'activités. On a eu recours à diverses méthodes pour recueillir des données, y compris la tenue de groupes de consultation avec les élèves, des échantillons de travail, des entrevues avec l'enseignant, des écritures de journal et des notes d'observation sur le terrain. Les données ont fait l'objet d'analyses comparatives constantes. Les résultats portent à croire que les activités d'apprentissage du cahier d'activités ont donné l'occasion aux élèves de nouer des relations positives, d'explorer divers modes de communication, d'apprendre à mieux collaborer et de valoriser le travail d'équipe tout en s'ouvrant aux questions de justice sociale. Les commentaires et les écritures de journal de l'enseignant indiquent que le cahier d'activités constitue une ressource pédagogique efficace et viable.

Introduction

School systems in Canada have traditionally promoted socially responsible behaviors such as cooperation; caring for others, dispute resolution, inclusion, and the development of moral character (Council of Ministers of Education [CMEC], 2008). The term social responsibility refers to the idea that every person is responsible to society as a whole. An individual must act and behave in the most appropriate way for the betterment of the self, while simultaneously considering the results of their actions and behaviors on the rest of society (BCME, 2008). The BC Ministry of Education created a four-component definition of social responsibility accompanied by standards for achievement, it defines a socially responsible student as (a) one who contributes positively to the classroom and school community, (b) solves conflicts in peaceful ways, (c) values diversity and defends human rights, and (d) exercises democratic rights and responsibilities (BC Ministry of Education, 2001). The standards are included within the learning outcomes of a range of course curricula, language arts, fine arts, career and personal planning, physical education (PE) and social studies. Thus, there is a clear message that learning social responsibility is not restricted to a single subject, but is a cross-curricular goal (Angell & Avery, 1992; BCME, 2008). The BC Ministry of Education four-component definition of social responsibility, and accompanying standards of achievement guided the selection of the educational resource examined in this study; the Right To Play (2006) *Learning to Play: Playing to Learn (Playbook)*.

The Right To Play organization (www.righttoplay.com/canada) developed the *Playbook* as a cross-curricular resource that combines PE with other school subjects. The *Playbook* lists various outcomes related to healthy childhood development that are expected to be achieved through participation in the lessons. In relation to these outcomes, the BC PE curriculum also highlights learning outcomes related to the development of social responsibility such as promotion of fair play, positive conflict resolution and cooperation, recognition and acceptance of individual differences in physical activity settings, for elementary-aged students in grades four through six (Physical Education K to 7, 2006b). To date, the effectiveness of the *Playbook* in

fostering social responsibility has not been investigated.

Research on Social Responsibility in Physical Education

One school subject that has valued the development of social responsibility as a learning outcome for some time is physical education (PE). The development of positive character traits such as teamwork, fair play, sportspersonship, and respect have been highly valued by physical educators as outcomes of participation in physical activity and sports (Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995; Hassandra, Goudas, Hatzigeorgiadis, & Theodorakis, 2007; Hellison, 2003; Romance, Weiss, & Bockoven, 1986).

Both researchers and educators have employed intervention strategies in PE contexts in order to explore the notion that PE is a valuable arena for helping students learn social responsibility. One of the more notable programs is the *Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility* (TPSR) model (Hellison, 2003). Studies that have used the TPSR model have found enhancements in the following areas of social responsibility: helping and respecting others, interpersonal relationships, teamwork, conflict resolution and pro-behavior (Escarti, Gutierrez, Pascual & Llopis, 2010; Hellison & Walsh, 2002; Lee & Martinek, 2009).

Other elementary PE-based programs have provided positive results in the development of socially responsible behavior. For example, Hassandra et al. (2007) promoted increased fair play behaviors after combining an *Olympic Education* program with a fair play program. In a program designed to develop pro-social skills, leadership behaviors, and conflict resolution strategies, Sharpe, Brown and Crider (1995) found an increase in the use of conflict resolution strategies and leadership behaviors by the program participants. Overall, the use of the PE environment has shown promise as an effective context for children to learn and practice socially responsible behavior.

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Educational Resources

The reasoning behind why a resource succeeds in achieving the learning outcomes or why it fails should be addressed when examining the effectiveness of an educational resource. Many teacher-level and school-level factors can affect the achievement of learning outcomes during an intervention (Beets et al., 2008; Han & Weiss, 2005). One significant teacher-level factor that was addressed in this study was the teacher's perception of the sustainability of the *Playbook*. Han and Weiss (2005) identified four factors that they believe determines a teacher's loyalty to a program, which consequently leads to the sustainability of the program. A teacher must see a program as acceptable, effective, adaptable, and feasible.

Datnow and Castello (2000) found that those educators who embraced the ideologies of a resource and felt that the proposed instructional strategies fit with their particular teaching style would be more likely to support the use of the program, i.e., the resource is "acceptable". They further suggested that if an educator holds a negative view of the program content, goals, and instructional strategies, the effectiveness of the program might be compromised.

Several researchers highlight the importance of the second factor "effectiveness" identified by Han and Weiss. For example, Datnow and Castellano (2000), and Keatley, Peterson, Gaul, and Dihn (2000) both found that if an educator is able to observe noticeable changes in their students' behavior after a reasonable amount of time, their commitment to the program will increase. Accordingly, the stronger the belief in the effectiveness of the program the longer the educator will sustain its use, thereby creating a greater opportunity to achieve the intended outcomes (Han & Weiss, 2005).

In terms of adaptability, the third factor, if an educator can adapt a program to the changing circumstances of a classroom by modifying parts of the lessons without affecting the lesson's core principles the educator would be more likely to continue with or re-use an education resource (Han & Weiss, 2005). Similarly, according to Keatley et al., (2000), no two classrooms are the same and many students have different needs and ways of learning, so if the educator is unable to alter a lesson's activities to meet the needs of his or her students, the outcomes of the lessons may not be achieved or the educator may drop the use of the program entirely.

Finally, a program must not require too many resources, so that it is feasible to implement long term (Han & Weiss, 2005). Interventions that require a lot of equipment or money have a greater chance of being discontinued (Atkins, McKay, Arvanitis, London, Costigan, et al., 1998; Datnow & Castellano, 2000).

In summary, if a program is accepted by the educator, is perceived to be an effective resource that is adaptable to a variety of circumstances, and requires few resources, the program will have a greater chance of being delivered with commitment by the teacher and being sustained over time. The result will be an increased opportunity for students to achieve the learning outcomes through the program.

The BC Ministry of Education (2008) emphasizes that the development of socially responsible students is one of its top priorities. It also highlighted that this overarching learning outcome is best learned across the curriculum rather than achieved in one particular subject. The *Playbook* is well situated as a cross-curricular educational resource that combines the power of sport and play with global issues while meeting Ministry of Education priorities. The experiences and perceptions of both the teacher and the students will provide valuable insight into the contribution of the *Playbook* in the development of social responsibility.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of the Right to Play *Playbook* on fostering social responsibility in elementary-aged children. In particular, how effective the learning activities were in fostering the intended social responsibility-based learning outcomes (BC Ministry of Education, 2008) including developing positive relationships; cooperating and working together as a team; improving communication; and learning to recognize and advocate for social justice. A secondary purpose was to understand the teacher's perceptions of the sustainability of the *Playbook* with regards to its acceptability, the effectiveness of the activities at meeting the learning outcomes, the adaptability of the activities, and the feasibility for continuing the program.

Methods

Design

A case study design was chosen for this investigation. According to Merriam (1998) and Yin (2008), a case study is an appropriate design when the researcher is interested in illuminating, exploring, and interpreting a phenomenon in context. The design requires the researcher to explore the case over time in its natural setting, employing multiple data collection methodologies, to highlight the phenomenon with rich description (Creswell, 2007). This design was selected to provide insight into both the students' and teacher's perceptions of Right To Play *Playbook* learning activities and the learning outcomes in an elementary school context. The "case" involved in this study was one female middle school teacher and her students. This class

was invited to participate because the *Playbook* was academically appropriate for the grade level of the students. Within this qualitative case study design, the teacher implemented four lessons from the *Playbook* over the course of four weeks. Prior to visiting the site, approval from the school district and the Human Research Ethics Board was obtained.

School. The participating class was located within an English and French Immersion Middle School, consisting of grade six, seven and eight students, located in a city of roughly 60,000 people in the BC Lower Mainland. As of 2010, the school population was made up of 627 students and approximately 60 staff members. The school's mission and values highlight its dedication towards developing students into responsible citizens by instilling them with a balance of personal and social responsibility. The intervention took place every Tuesday afternoon during the students' scheduled social studies and exploratory class blocks.

Teacher. The participant teacher (Ms. Jacobs¹) involved in this study was a female teacher in her eighth year of teaching. Ms. Jacobs was invited to participate in this study because she taught a variety of courses such as PE, social studies, language arts, and career and health education, which was imperative due to the cross-curricular format used by the *Playbook*. The philosophy behind Ms. Jacobs' instruction is a strong belief that all kids want to be liked, loved, and cared for, which drives her to educate her students about being responsible for their behavior. She also values physical activity and strives to engage her students in physical activity throughout the school day. The possibility of increased physical activity during class time and the development of socially responsible behaviors were two main factors that influenced her choice to participate in this study.

Students. The participant teacher's class consisted of 28 grade six and seven students, the majority of which were middle class and Caucasian, the minority was comprised of students of Asian Canadian and Latin American background. Every student was invited to participate in the study. The number of students who returned the required consent forms determined the final sample size. Sixteen students (nine males and seven females) out of the 28 students participated in the study. All students participated in the lessons just as they would participate in any other class, however only those students who returned both signed consent forms participated in the focus groups sessions and had samples of their work analyzed.

Description of the Right to Play *Learning to Play: Playing to Learn Playbook*

The *Playbook* was designed specifically for Canadian elementary school teachers in grades four through six. The resource includes a series of interdisciplinary educational activities designed to foster the healthy development of students. Five colored ball symbols represent cognitive and affective learning outcomes. The expected learning outcomes are: improved concentration, memory skills and creativity (Red Mind Ball); understanding of the body and fitness (Black Body Ball); building positive relationships, cooperation, communication and teamwork (Blue Peace Ball); knowledge of proper nutrition, hygiene and health (Green Health Ball); and increased development of self-esteem, confidence and positive emotions (Yellow Spirit Ball). For this project, only the Blue Peace Ball outcomes of building positive relationships, communication, and cooperation and teamwork were of interest because they are outcomes related to social responsibility. The additional outcome of social justice, which wasn't highlighted under any of the colored balls, was of interest also because the content of a number of the *Playbook* lessons involve experiencing and learning about global injustices.

¹ Pseudonym

The *Playbook* contains a total of 16 two-part cross-curricular lessons. The typical format of each lesson begins with the teacher setting the background and introducing the overall theme of the lesson. This is followed by a student-centered physical learning activity, which is facilitated by the teacher. The activities were designed to have the students experience a simulated version of the lesson's theme, such as volunteering or communicating. A post-discussion then follows the activity, which may help the students establish a connection between their experience in the activity and theme. The connection with the theme and goals of the lesson are further established through a worksheet activity, as the students are required to respond to questions that get them thinking about how the theme affects their lives and/or the lives of others. The duration of each lesson is not specified in the *Playbook* and left to the discretion of the teacher.

Implementation of the Playbook

In order for this project to be deemed acceptable, it was established that Ms. Jacobs would implement a minimum of four *Playbook* lessons. Both components of the lesson were required to have been taught, the physical activity and the written component. Ms. Jacobs chose the four lessons she felt best suited the needs of her class and was able to alter them as long as the core principles were maintained. Allowing Ms. Jacobs to choose the lessons supported a natural educational environment and reduced bias imposed on the research. It was important that at least half of the selected lessons had a focus on social responsibility, which Right To Play (2006) labeled "Blue Peace Ball" activities. In the end, the teacher selected three lessons from the *Playbook*, two of which were Blue Peace Ball lessons. The third lesson selected by Ms. Jacobs was a Green Health Ball activity. Ms. Jacobs then allowed the researcher to select the fourth lesson for implementation. The researcher selected the lesson *Former Liberian Refugee Gives Back* based on the fact that the lesson was labeled with a blue peace ball and that it seemed like an interesting lesson. Over the course of the four-week intervention four full-lessons were implemented. These lessons were: (a) *Are You a Survivor?* (b) *Operation Immunization*, (c) *Former Liberian Refugee Gives Back*, and (d) *Everybody's Voice is Important*.

Data Collection

Data collection in this study involved five different techniques. Focus group interviews and analysis of lesson materials along with samples of students' work were used to gain insight into the participants' experiences during the intervention. An interview with the teacher and her journal entries were used to understand the teacher's perspectives regarding the sustainability of the *Playbook* as an educational resource. Finally, participant observation was used to gain insight into the learning environment and the lesson content.

Focus group interviews. Focus group interviews were used to gain insight into the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of learning activities in the *Playbook* with respect to content, learning environment, and learning outcomes. Focus group interviews are an efficient form of data collection because the researcher can gather data from several participants in one session (Thomas et al., 2005). Focus group interviews offer an additional benefit, as participants are able to interact with one-another on a topic of interest with the researcher, which can enhance data quality (Patton, 2002). These interviews followed a semi-structured format, which provided time for the participants to engage in a discussion and allowed for the researcher to probe and explore points of interest. The duration of the focus groups did not exceed 45 minutes. As well, focus groups of no more than six participants were determined to be more beneficial for this

particular case study due to the relatively young age of the participants (Myfanwy, Gibbs, Maxwell, & Britten, 2002). All of the volunteering students who returned two signed consent forms were permitted to sign up for one of three focus groups. Each focus group included boys and girls. The following are examples of questions and probes used in the focus group interviews: (a) Did you enjoy the *Playbook* lessons? What did you enjoy? Not enjoy? (b) During the *Playbook* lessons were there times when you had to work together as a team to achieve a goal? Did you enjoy working as a team? Why or why not? (c) Were there times in the *Playbook* lessons when communicating clearly was important? What forms of communication did you use? (d) What are some of the things you learned about other countries from the *Playbook* lessons?

Lesson materials and samples of the students' work. The collection and analysis of lesson materials (e.g. worksheets, instructions to teacher) and samples of the students' work is a commonly used method of data collection in case study research (Yin, 2009). Patton (2002) highlights the importance of student work as not only being valuable because of what it tells the researcher directly, but that the findings may also affect the path of inquiry during observations, interviews and focus group interviews. At the end of the activity, the activity worksheet was collected from all of the students. Each activity worksheet focused on the major lesson outcomes goals. For example, in the lesson "Former Liberian Refugee Gives Back" where a major goal was to appreciate the importance of volunteerism, some of the worksheet activities included: (a) Make a list of all the ways you volunteer in your home and community (e.g. litter pick up, walking your neighbour's dog), (b) How are chores different than volunteering? (c) Tell about a time you were of service to someone and how it felt. By collecting all of the students' work, the participating and non-participating students remained anonymous to the teacher and to their classmates.

Participant observation. Participant observations allowed the researcher to obtain a first-hand view of the participants in their natural setting (Patton, 2002). These field notes provided a description of the setting, participants and program, and observer thoughts, feelings and interpretations of what was observed. Specific observable behaviors in relation to the purpose and content of the lessons were pre-determined to focus the researcher's observations. This also provided the researcher with the opportunity to discover things that the participants may not have been willing to discuss (Patton, 2002). The following are examples of specific observable behaviors used in the participant observation: (a) Does the lesson involve group interaction? If so, how are students interacting with one another? (b) Are the students working in groups? Describe. (c) Does the activity require communication between the students? If so, what form?

Interview with the teacher (Ms. Jacobs). A one-on-one semi-structured interview was conducted within the week following the conclusion of the intervention. The purpose of conducting the interview is to gather information from the participant, which can't be observed directly (Patton, 2002). In addition, interviewing allows the researcher to understand another person's perspective of the world around them (Patton, 2002). Ms. Jacobs (the teacher) received the list of questions prior to the scheduled interview to allow her time to prepare and reflect. Information gathered from the interview was used to help understand Ms. Jacob's perspective with regards to the Han and Weiss (2005) four factors of sustainability (acceptability, effectiveness, adaptability and feasibility) of the *Playbook* with this particular group of students. To ensure that the interview remained focused on these four factors of sustainability, an interview question guide was created (Patton, 2002). The interviewer chose the sequencing and wording of the questions, and probed topics further to illuminate and elucidate responses. The

interview was recorded with the use of a digital voice recorder.

Teacher journal. Ms. Jacob's journal entries were used to understand her perspective of the Playbook as a sustainable education tool. Journals are used to describe an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs through a first-person approach (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992). Ms. Jacobs was asked to record her observations and reflections on each implemented lesson by responding to questions outlined by a teacher journal response guide. The questions focused on the four factors associated with sustainability described by Han and Weiss (2005). Ms. Jacobs wrote four journal entries; one for each lesson implemented. Each journal entry was typed up and sent to the researcher via email.

Background of the Researcher

Aspects of qualitative inquiry are subjective as the researcher is a primary data collection instrument (Thomas et al., 2005). It must be acknowledged that the manner in which the researcher interacts with the participants, and the way in which the researcher processes observations and responses influences the quality of the data and conclusions.

Prior to the start of this study, I acquired several years of experience in both research and teaching. My research experience included involvement with both quantitative and qualitative research projects. For example, I was involved with two large prospective observational cohort studies in which I administered questionnaires, conducted focus groups and organized interview data into themes and categories. Through my experiences as a teacher, I realized that not all children think, learn or behave in the same way and that every child's needs are different. I believe that with a positive learning environment, PE can be a subject in which students are willing to participate. PE lessons should not only benefit students physically, but should also support cognitive and affective development. For this reason, I chose to examine the effectiveness of the *Playbook* and its physical activity-based lessons in promoting socially responsible behaviors.

Data Analysis

Due to the nature of qualitative research, data analysis is not a procedure that begins after the completion of data collection. Rather, it is a process that involves continuous reviewing and interpretation of data throughout the data collection period (Thomas et al., 2005). In this study, the collection, organization and interpretation of observational field notes, samples of student work and teacher journal entries occurred from the very beginning. The teacher interview and focus groups, were transcribed verbatim immediately following collection and reviewed for categories and emerging themes. Each participant was given a copy of the comments they made to verify the accuracy of the transcription. All of the transcripts were imported into the qualitative research software NVivo 8.0 to assist with the management and conduction of thematic analysis.

The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to compare findings from the first set of data to the second, the third and so on (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Merriam, 1998). Consistent with Corbin and Strauss (2008) when utilizing constant comparison "as the researcher moves along with analysis, each incident in the data is compared with other incidents for similarities and differences. Incidents found to be conceptually similar are grouped together under a higher-level descriptive concept" (p.73). This type of comparison, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008) "is essential to all analysis because it allows the researcher to differentiate one category/theme from another and to identify properties and dimensions specific to that

category/theme” (p.73). Once all of the data were collected, findings were organized into categories and subcategories to best address the research questions and support the purpose of the study. The final step involved grouping categories across the data sources into recurring themes. As already described, the questions posed during the teacher interview and within the teacher journal were primarily designed to gather information regarding the sustainability of the Playbook as an educational tool. Therefore, it must be noted that a section on sustainability was preconceived prior to data analysis and was not an emergent theme. The sustainability of the Playbook was examined using the four factors of a sustainable educational resource as indicated by Han and Weiss (2005). The various data sources were triangulated to confirm findings across the study and to increase the trustworthiness of the data.

Results

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of the Right to Play Playbook on fostering social responsibility in elementary-aged children. Three themes were identified in the data to address this purpose. These themes are described using notes and comments from the data sources to illuminate the context and provide insight into the experiences and perspectives of the teacher and students. A section of results on the sustainability of the Playbook based on Han and Weiss’s (2005) four factors of a sustainable educational resource is also described. Data sources included field notes from four observation periods (OB), four samples of the students’ written work (SWW) and course materials (CM), three focus groups (FG), four teacher journal entries (TJ) and one interview with the teacher (TI). Table 1 presents the three themes.

Table 1
Recurring Themes from Qualitative Data Analysis

Theme 1:	Learning through Physical Activity
Theme 2:	Stepping into the Shoes of Others
Theme 3:	Developing Social Responsibility Skills

Theme 1: Learning through Physical Activity

Theme 1 describes the students’ overall feelings towards the Playbook lessons. Overall their comments revealed both positive and negative aspects of the lessons. The written activities were perceived to be hard and boring, whereas the physical learning activities were perceived to be interesting and enjoyable.

Student: I liked the outside lessons, but I didn’t really like the inside lessons because it was kind of hard and boring.

Moderator: What was boring about it? Just the topic was boring or . . . ?

Student: Yeah, and it was kind of annoying because I couldn’t get most of the questions. (FG1)

During one of the observation periods, it was obvious that the students were having a lot of difficulty trying to understand and answer the written worksheet. While the students were working on the worksheets the teacher was walking around the classroom trying to help students answer the questions. The following student comments were recorded during this period:

I need help.

I can’t understand the question.

This doesn't make sense. (OB4)

Whereas negative sentiments towards the worksheets were shared, not all of the students gave reasons for disliking the written activities. Probing questions did not elicit additional information.

Not all of the students shared those sentiments that the physical learning activities were more enjoyable than the written worksheets. A couple of students explained that it wasn't the worksheets that they disliked, but the group work that accompanied them. This was because their group members failed to work well together, which created problems in their group dynamic. The following excerpt highlighted this sentiment:

Student: I liked most of the ones that involved worksheets. Those were ok, I don't mind worksheets. But some of my partners weren't very nice. Like one person did everything and the rest of them did nothing, just sat there.

Moderator: What did you do, or what could you have done in that situation?

Student: Well I asked them if I could see the sheet, like see what our answers were, but they wouldn't let me see it. (FG3)

Problems related to teamwork and cooperation during worksheet activities were also recorded during observation sessions. In many instances group members were off-task, over-controlling, or unmotivated to take part.

In some groups all of the students appeared to be on task and were engaged in sharing, in other groups one or two individuals took control, while the rest of their group members focused on something off task or sat there staring blankly. Some groups shot down the ideas of others, while other groups accepted anything that came up. (OB1)

Some students identified the physically active learning activities as a form of play. One student in particular described this style of learning as "weird" but "interesting" because it was a unique way of learning.

Student: They (the Playbook lessons) were interesting.

Moderator: Why were they interesting?

Student: Well, I've never done anything like it before, 'cause it was like learning but not learning.

Moderator: So learning and playing combined?

Student: Learning, and yeah like actually playing, so that's weird . . . while learning.

Moderator: So you don't normally do that in other classes?

Several students in unison: No. (FG3)

Interestingly, another student's comments reflected the idea that the physical learning activities might have been so enjoyable that some of the students didn't even realize that they were learning while they were participating.

I liked the Playbook lessons because I got to do activity while we were supposed to be learning. (FG3)

Theme 2: Stepping into the Shoes of Others

Many of the Playbook's physical learning activities were designed to give students an opportunity to experience some form of social injustice by creating a simulation based on a real crisis in Asia, Africa, or the Middle East. The students' experiences with these activities were often strong enough that many of them were able to envision the people and situations they were learning about. A major factor in creating the connection between the students and the lesson was the way that the activities were designed and outlined. In some of the activities the students

became quite frustrated and upset because of the inequity created between groups. However, as Ms. Jacobs pointed out, the intention of the games was just that-- to create controversy.

I think that the point of some of the games is to give that perspective on what they were learning . . . to have it be a frustrating game, and to have one side really feel dejected and like this is unfair, because that's what the lesson's about. (TI)

One physical learning activity that caused some controversy amongst the students was the scavenger hunt in the Are You a Survivor? lesson. Prior to the lesson the students were organized into small groups. Ms. Jacobs explained that they would be going on vacation to a place with limited resources, which meant that they had to pack bags with items that they thought were essential. This included the five basic survival needs. Each group was allowed to pack a maximum of 20 items. Before the students started packing their bags, Ms. Jacobs explained that she had hidden five sets of cards around the classroom that contained the five basic needs. There were enough cards for each group of students to collect all of their basic needs. If they found the cards, the students would not need to pack them in their bags and could take additional items instead. The scavenger hunt would end when one group could present her with one of each card. During the teacher interview, Ms. Jacobs describes this activity as being enjoyable for her class even though it was initially met with a lot of anger and frustration. They liked that one (scavenger hunt) as well. They seemed to really enjoy the whole idea of searching things out. But what they didn't like about it was when I said, "once one group has everything everybody else has to stop." That was not fair, that wasn't . . . which was funny because that's the point. It's not fair. But it took them a long time to figure out that it was supposed to be an example of why life isn't fair. (TI)

Following the physical learning activities, a post-game discussion was designed to help students connect the main message of the lesson to their own lives or the lives of others.

Ms. Jacobs: How many of you felt that the game was unfair?

Student: It's more about what we're learning. If people get less and less medicine they will get sicker and sicker and die. (OB2)

During the focus group discussions it was clear that the students enjoyed making connections with the activities. Several students described their experiences in the activities as if they had stepped into the shoes of the people they were learning about.

Student: I liked how we were able to do activities and like learn at the same time about people in different countries. Like it was a fun way of learning about it.

Moderator: How was it different from a regular class?

Student: Because usually we just like read out of the textbook or something, but this time we actually got to feel what it would be like for other people in different countries. (FG2)

Ms. Jacobs' own observations support this finding:

The students seem to have a beginning understanding that immunization for all is not a universal act, and they recognized that they are fortunate to live in a country where they have a choice whether they want to receive immunizations or not. (TJ2)

Opportunities to explore aspects of social injustice were also evident in the lesson observations and lesson worksheets. For example, in lesson two, the students participated in a physical learning activity in which they learned about and experienced the inequity of immunization practices in developing countries. A snippet of a discussion during the post-game wrap-up highlights the social injustice experienced by the students.

Ms. Jacobs: How did the grade sixes represent a rich country like Canada and the grade sevens a poorer country like Mali?

Student: Grade sixes had a cup, like good access to medicine. Grade sevens didn't have a cup, so they got more and more sick. (OB2)

The written worksheets also provided an avenue for students to increase their knowledge of social justice issues. In written lesson four, the students were instructed to provide examples of actions they (a child) and their parent(s) (an adult) could take to protect the rights of all children. Table 2 shows sample questions and student responses from the activity.

Table 2

Samples of Rights and Responsibilities Worksheet Questions and Student Responses

Child's Right	Child's Responsibility	Adult's Responsibility
To believe what we want as long as it does not stop others from enjoying their rights.	- stand up for what you believe - think, before you say; respect others choices	- support your child's choices - to make sure they feel comfortable practicing their religion
To be educated. Discipline in schools should respect human dignity.	-do your best and try hard - to respect their teachers; to follow through with punishments	-to help your child if they need it - to make sure they get to school on time

The post-game discussion was perhaps the most opportune time for developing social justice principles. These discussions followed the physical learning activities and were used to help the students reflect on and connect with the purpose of the games and overall themes of each lesson. The following is an example of a question asked by Ms. Jacobs along with some of the students' responses.

Ms. Jacobs: In some parts of the world are there children who do not have the survival basics?

Response from some students was "yes," but there was no further elaboration.

Ms. Jacobs: What are the consequences?

Student: They might die because they get sick. (OB1)

Although the students appeared to have an interest in social justice issues and were keen to participate in the activity and discussions, Ms. Jacobs did not notice any profound changes in their everyday behavior. She thought that this might be because the lessons did not have a strong connection with the students' lives in the school environment.

The things that they were concerned with . . . the injustices that they suffer at school are not quite connecting to (their lives). I would have expected somebody to even in a cheeky way pull out their needs and wants, but honestly they haven't. (TI)

Theme 3: Developing Social Responsibility Skills

The Playbook listed several social responsibility outcomes within the Blue Peace Ball lessons. These skills were: positive relationships with others, communication, and cooperation and teamwork. Three out of the four lessons implemented by Ms. Jacobs were tagged as Blue Peace Ball lessons.

Positive Relationships. Positive relationships were defined as interacting with others in a mutually beneficial and friendly way. The Playbook activities provided an opportunity for students to work with fellow classmates in a variety of different ways. One way that students

were able to interact with each other was through the physical learning activities. In these activities Ms. Jacobs arranged the students into groups.

The students were broken up into six groups (five groups of four students; one group of five students). This was done by numbering the students one to six with the remaining student being given permission to choose a group. (OB1)

One student highlighted that because Ms. Jacobs formed groups for the students they got to know each other better.

When we were doing the paper work I sort of thought it was friendlier, because sometimes Ms. Jacobs would split us into a group, not you find a group. So when people would be split up from their friends it would be difficult but it would be more friendlier to know each other. (FG1)

Student comments made during the focus group interviews suggest that the Playbook activities were also effective in fostering a positive, friendlier classroom environment. Several students explained that because the physical learning activities were fun, the students were generally friendlier with one another.

I think it's maybe because of the physical activities. So we get to learn, as we were saying before, while doing fun things, but also because usually when we are reading it's everybody's just staring at a book, where with that we actually had to do teamwork and everything. (FG2)

Some of the grade six students highlighted the interactive nature of the Playbook lessons as being a supporting factor in forming new friendships.

I found that um, this is probably for me and other grade sixes too, since we're kind of going to a new school and you don't know as many people in your class, so when we were kind of doing these . . . since everyone is kind of on a team, you know, we talked to more people and we made a few more friends. (FG2)

Communication. Communication was defined as, the ability to express oneself clearly when conversing and interacting with others, such as when reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding non-verbal communication (BC Ministry of Education, 1999). Each of the Playbook lessons contained a written activity in which the students practiced reading and writing skills. Every lesson also contained a group discussion session, which provided the students opportunities to practice speaking in front of others and listening to their classmates. During the teacher interview, Ms. Jacobs described the importance of communication in the Playbook lessons.

Pretty much every single time there was something that was required. They needed to communicate their ideas more clearly, or in the games, ideas about the games needed to be communicated clearly. Sometimes explanations of why did we just do that needed to be explained clearly. (TI)

When the students were asked what types of communication they used during the Playbook activities and whether or not they experienced any communication problems most of the students commented on the lesson, Everyone's Voice is Important. In this lesson, the students were placed into one of three groups and were instructed to arrange themselves in order by age. First, they had to complete the activity without any form of verbal or non-verbal communication. Then, they were put into new groups and were instructed to arrange themselves in order by age using some form of non-verbal communication. Finally, the groups were re-arranged a second time and students were told that they could organize themselves by talking. In the focus group discussions students highlighted several struggles that emerged during this activity.

Although the experience was difficult and fraught with frustrations, the students learned the importance of clear communication. At the end of the activity they realized that without cooperation and clear communication skills, things could become disorganized and frustrating. These sentiments are evident in the following interaction:

Student 1: What I also learned is that you need to cooperate with each other in that one.

Moderator: What happens if you don't cooperate?

Student 1: Then everybody is like kind of yelling at each other like trying to boss everyone around.

Student 2: Yeah and messing up. Or maybe if they yell at each other it will be like youngest, old, young, old, young . . . (FG2)

Ms. Jacobs also pointed out improvements in communication. She described the students as being more cooperative with each other during activity discussions, in such a way that the students were more patient and tolerant when listening to the ideas of others.

Teamwork and Cooperation. Teamwork and cooperation were deemed to be similar outcomes and defined together as the collaborative effort of a group of people who work together for a common purpose. Opportunities to work cooperatively as a team were found during all of the physical learning activities and during most of the written worksheet activities. Observational field notes reflected a mix of both positive and negative cooperation and teamwork skills exhibited during the physical and the written activities.

In some groups all of the students appeared to be on task and were engaged in sharing. In other groups one or two individuals took control, while the rest of their group members focused on something off task. Some groups shot down the ideas of others, while other groups accepted anything that came up. (OB1)

The students described a variety of experiences in which they felt that their team members failed to cooperate and work well together. Many of these negative experiences were related to one or two students taking control of an activity.

Um, with the disease one (lesson two), most of the people (groups) in the class, like one or two people would take over and then you wouldn't really get to say anything. (FG3)

Sustainability of the Playbook

A secondary purpose was to understand the teacher's perceptions of the sustainability of the *Playbook*. Han and Weiss (2005) stated that in order for an educational program to be sustainable, the teacher implementing the program must find it to be effective, feasible, acceptable and adaptable. Comments made by Ms. Jacobs during the interview and from journal entries highlighted the overall sustainability of the *Playbook* as a teacher's resource.

Effectiveness. Before the intervention began, Ms. Jacobs believed that the *Playbook* would help her students' cognitive and affective development and felt that it helped to achieve the social responsibility outcomes in the school curriculum. She further explained that although she believed the *Playbook* would be beneficial, the changes she saw in her students as a result of the program were greater than she originally anticipated.

I would say possibly on a little bit shallower level than I think I'm seeing now. At first I was like ok cool, it ties into needs versus wants and they need to understand that and it's good for them to see that not everybody is getting what they need and then the idea of responsibility for others, because we are learning social responsibility in school, middle school especially. It is a huge part of what we are trying to instill in the students. (TI)

Feasibility. Ms. Jacobs described her difficulty in securing resources as

“inconveniences.” Journal entries highlight these inconveniences and show how Ms. Jacobs was still able to implement the lessons without the suggested resources.

We do not always have access to computers, so I needed to modify the work page to suit the work that could be done in class. As well, the Right To Play website did not have the information cards about the diseases they wanted the children to discuss, so I had to create the information cards myself. (TJ2)

Acceptability. Ms. Jacobs’ comments highlight the Playbook as an acceptable educational resource, a resource in which she believes as well as aligned with her teaching philosophy. Several of the Playbook lessons paired well with the learning outcomes of particular subjects.

It really did tie into the curriculum with what we have to do, so that was nice because it meant that even though they were sometimes taught as like an outside lesson from what we were working on exactly at that time, it is a part of the grade six and seven curriculum to look at rights and responsibilities. There is a part to determine what are basic needs and what does every person need to survive and what are those important items. (TI)

Aside from fitting within the curriculum, Ms. Jacobs explained that the Playbook lessons would benefit students by helping them to improve their behavior.

My students struggle at times with listening to others and valuing the ideas of their classmates. I felt this lesson would benefit my students in helping them recognize a situation in which it would help to listen thoughtfully and cooperatively. (TJ4)

Not only were the Playbook lessons acceptable in regards to how they benefitted the students, but also in the way that they aligned with the teacher’s own philosophy.

I do think that it goes along with my beliefs and what I hope to see within my students like what they’re growing towards. They really do tie into a lot of things that I try to talk to the students about, not just on a one day basis but throughout the whole year. And what kind of a person do they want to be? And, are there things that they can do so that they can achieve that? (TI)

Adaptability. Within every lesson Ms. Jacobs was required to adapt the activities to the specific circumstances of her classroom. Despite numerous barriers to overcome within the school and classroom, Ms. Jacobs was able to implement the Playbook lessons and achieve the primary goals of the lessons.

Whenever I want the gym it’s not always available or the computer lab isn’t always available. When I checked the website some things weren’t there, but most of the time I was able to work around it. It wasn’t like I was so stuck that I had to cancel a lesson. So, as I said they were inconveniences but nothing that was so bad that it ruined the lesson. (TI)

Ms. Jacobs also highlighted the strength of the core principles in the Playbook lessons.

I don’t think there was anything in the lessons that was so tied in . . . I mean the core principles are going to stand whether you divide the class into three groups or four groups. They just seemed to work. (TI)

Although Ms. Jacobs saw the utility of the Playbook in a variety of courses (social studies, PE, health, and language arts.), she did not view some of the lessons as being a great fit with PE. She felt that some of the physical learning activities would not have provided the students with enough physical activity in order for her to consider using them in PE class time.

It could be used in PE, my only difficulty is that some of the games aren’t active enough. Yes, I want them to learn certain skills, but I want them to get moving. And there were

times when, I mean . . . it can be hard to get them motivated to go, so you want to get as many kids involved as possible, for as much time as possible, for as long as possible. And I don't know if every one of these would really work that way. (TI)

Aside from being adaptable to a variety of courses, Ms. Jacobs also believed that the lessons could be used with a range of age groups as well. In the discussion below, Ms. Jacobs describes why the lessons might work well for some grades and why they may not work as well with other grades.

For different grades, for younger classes these would actually be more effective. I think grade sixes would actually be at the limit and the grade sevens would have been on the border. I think in terms of the discussion pieces, you could use it with a grade eight group, but the activity would be harder. You could still do the activities but I think it's on the same lines as . . . sometimes my kids were against it on principle. The grade eights also kind of have that too cool for school attitude. (TI)

Not only did Ms. Jacobs see the lessons as being adaptable to the specific demands of each class, across different courses and throughout grade ranges, but she also felt that she could use the lessons repeatedly throughout the year to assess the development of her students.

I think it would be good to revisit some of them (Playbook lessons) later on in the year and see what kind of changes have happened. I do that as well also in my other subjects. I mean we always revisit topics. You always want to see how they have developed in their thinking and if they are moving forward. (TI)

Discussion

Overall, the information gleaned through our analyses showed promise for the learning activities in the Playbook to contribute to a range of learning outcomes associated with social responsibility. As well, the results provided several reminders about general aspects of effective educational practice.

Theme 1 – Learning through Physical Activity emerged from the students' responses to questions about what they liked and disliked about the *Playbook* lessons. Their comments highlighted two sides of the *Playbook* activities: the enjoyable physical learning activities and the less desirable worksheet activities. Interest in an activity can predict the choices that a student will make during a learning activity. Interest affects what a student focuses their attention on, their motivation to participate, and the intensity of their participation (Winne & Nesbit, 2010). If an individual does not find an activity or topic interesting or enjoyable they are unlikely to invest much energy into participating or learning more about it. Conversely, disinterest in an activity could then create low levels of motivation, which may lead to lower academic achievement. These findings highlight the importance of capturing and maintaining the students' interest if the teacher hopes to optimally achieve the learning outcomes.

Theme 2 - Stepping into the Shoes of Others provided insight into how the student-centered instructional strategies and structure of the *Playbook* lessons may have been able to bring about feelings of connectedness. For the most part, the *Playbook* lessons used student-centered instructional strategies that enabled the students to learn for themselves through participation in the physical learning activities and classroom discussions. Angell and Avery (1992) suggested that elementary school students be introduced to social justice issues through teacher facilitated student-centered activities, such as group discussions and role-playing activities; these are a fundamental part of the *Playbook*. Many of the students who participated

in these lessons expressed that they felt as if they had stepped into the shoes of the people they were learning about and that they could actually feel their struggles. These feelings were generated through the activities where some of the students were subjected to restrictions, which their group could not recover from and as a result lost the competition. Initially the students felt frustrated and upset, but after the activity and post-game discussion the students understood that the lesson was educating them about unfair situations around the world. For a short period of time the students in this study were able to envision the difficulties facing other people in the world and were able to feel how hard life must be for them.

Theme 3 - Developing Social Responsibility Skills provided insight into the effectiveness of the *Playbook* on fostering social responsibility in elementary-aged students. Specifically, the building of positive relationships, improvements in communication, and teamwork and cooperation skills were of interest because they were explicitly stated as secondary learning outcomes in the *Playbook*. The ability to recognize and advocate against social injustice was also an outcome of interest due to the content and theme of the *Playbook* lessons.

During the *Playbook* lessons many students reported that they felt their class had become friendlier and more connected during the implementation of *Playbook* lessons. A few students in this study also highlighted that the physical learning activities may have been the catalyst for increased cooperation and encouragement among team members. These types of interactive group activities are the backbone of PE programs that focus on the development of affective learning outcomes, such as in TPSR (Hellison, 2003), and *Fair Play for Kids* (Gibbons et al., 1995).

Effective communication was perhaps the most important aspect of the *Playbook* lessons. Ms. Jacobs described communication as being an integral part of every lesson and activity. The students were able to practice and observe all forms of communication when speaking and listening to each other and the teacher, writing answers during worksheet activities, and using non-verbal communication to give instructions or express emotions.

The *Playbook* lessons provided the students with many opportunities to work together in group and team situations, such as in the physical learning activities, which were designed to teach students how to work together cooperatively to achieve a group outcome. In addition, the instructional strategies inherent in the *Playbook* activities contained similar instructional strategies to those in several elementary education programs that focused on aspects of moral reasoning and behavior (e.g. Gibbons et al. 1995; Gibbons & Ebbeck, 1997; Hassandra et al., 2007). Gibbons and Ebbeck (1997) stated that to facilitate moral reasoning educators should create situations that allow students to practice discussing and resolving moral dilemmas. Some of the *Playbook* physical learning activities were designed to place students in situations that were socially unjust, where one of the teams/groups was at a distinct disadvantage. Inevitably, these activities caused the disadvantaged students to become frustrated and upset with the activity. The discussion was used to link the experiences during the activity to a larger social issue (e.g. unequal immunization practices in Africa).

Although some promising positive results were found in this study, Ms. Jacobs did not feel that students transferred the idea of recognizing social injustices to other areas of their lives. She offered the explanation that this may have been because the injustices in their own lives were far removed from the lives of the people they had learned about. The global issues highlighted in the *Playbook* lessons are not easily addressed through in-class discussions. A way to address this challenge may be to localize the issues. For example, in the lesson *Are You a Survivor?*, one of the main goals of the lesson is to understand that access to basic needs is not

equal between developed and developing countries, which is a complex issue; however the issue could be localized to a relevant community issue such as homelessness. The lesson could facilitate an in-class discussion on actions the students could take to help the homeless, and come to a consensual resolution on what action to take. To go even further, the students could then put their plan into action through activities such as a fundraising campaign or food drive. Hellison (2003) suggests that in order to encourage the transfer of a learned behavior from one situation to another, behavior change needs to be a concept adopted across the entire school curriculum. This is important to reinforce and promote similar values and behaviors. A longer intervention in the future would allow for a more in depth examination into the development of understanding to action.

The responses to questions during the teacher interview and reflections written in the teacher's journal provided details on the teacher's commitment to the program and the possibility of any long-term sustainability. Han and Weiss (2005) described acceptability, effectiveness, feasibility, and adaptability as essential ingredients of the sustainability of teacher-implemented educational programs.

In order for a program to be deemed acceptable by the teacher, the program must overcome a myriad of contextual factors such as aligning with the outcomes of the curriculum and teacher's educational philosophy. Ms. Jacobs highlighted ways in which the outcomes of the *Playbook* coincided with the outcomes of the curriculum. She mentioned that the *Playbook* helped the students determine what the basic needs of all people were and how to differentiate between needs and wants. The *Playbook* activities also matched her teaching style and philosophy. She stated that the lessons "went along" with her beliefs and that they "tied into a lot of the things" she discusses with the students over the course of the school year.

To be sustainable it is vital for a resource to be easily adapted to changing circumstances without sacrificing the core principles of the program (Hans and Weiss, 2005). Comments made by Ms. Jacobs described the *Playbook* lessons as being adaptable to a range of subject areas. She believed that the lessons were most suitable for the subject areas of language arts, social studies, and career and health education. Although the *Playbook* was also designed for implementation in PE, Ms. Jacobs felt that PE was not the most acceptable context for the *Playbook* lessons.

In terms of feasibility, Han and Weiss (2005) suggested that the potential for long-term sustainability is increased if an education program requires minimal extra resources. The *Playbook* lessons required few resources. Many of the resources suggested for the lessons were supplied in the *Playbook* package. On the other hand, facilities such as the gymnasium and computer labs were very difficult for Ms. Jacobs to reserve. Not having these facilities were described by Ms. Jacobs as inconveniences but nothing so bad that not having them ruined the lessons. Although the focus of our discussion is on the factors associated with the sustainability of the *Playbook* resource, we would be remiss in not commenting on the willingness of the teacher to be adaptable and flexible with the range of daily challenges (e.g. gym bookings) that were not directly related to the *Playbook*, however they impacted its overall usability. As stated by Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991), it is the individual teacher who makes the effort and choices that ultimately determine the effectiveness of any program and/or educational resource.

Conclusions and Future Considerations

The findings from this case study have highlighted the promising potential for the *Playbook* to foster the development of social responsibility as well as the utility of the *Playbook* as a sustainable educational resource. Qualitative data from this study revealed increased

opportunities for students to interact together in group and team settings while working toward the achievement of common goals. Subsequently, these opportunities allowed the students to experience, practice, and observe valuable social skills including the building of positive relationships, empathizing with others, communicating effectively in a variety of ways, working with others cooperatively toward a common goal and recognizing and discussing issues of social injustice. Based on specific criteria described by Han and Weiss (2005), the findings from this study also highlighted the possibility of the *Playbook* as a long-term sustainable educational resource. Evidence gathered from the teacher suggested that she considered the *Playbook* to be acceptable, effective, adaptable, and feasible, which highlighted her commitment to continue using the resource. As this is the first ever examination of the *Playbook* further investigations on the effectiveness and sustainability of the *Playbook* are warranted. As mentioned, a limitation of this study was its short duration and use of only one quarter of the *Playbook* lessons. The next step in research on the *Playbook* may be to examine the effects of implementing the *Playbook* in its entirety.

This study investigated a resource that may be useful for teachers to foster positive classroom attitudes and behaviors, which revealed several implications for teachers. The participant teacher's perception of the resource revealed that the *Playbook* was acceptable for students in grades four through six and across the curriculum in courses such as language arts, social studies and a health and career education class. However, what was surprising was that the teacher felt many of the activities did not physically engage enough of the children for a long enough time for her to consider including this resource in her PE class. In the future when developing more lessons for Canadian elementary school teachers, Right To Play may suggest ways for the teacher to alter the lessons to increase the level of physical activity.

The school is one of the most influential contexts for the development of children in our society (CMEC, 2008). They have the difficult task bestowed upon them of balancing the learning of academic skills while providing multiple opportunities for students to experience, practice, observe and learn valuable social skills. Implementing a sustainable educational resource such as the *Playbook* that combines the learning of academic materials and the development of social skills across the curriculum may be an effective means of achieving this vision.

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