



The Use of Reflective Pedagogies in Physical Education: Teachers' Enactment and Students' Experiences

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Abstract

Background: Reflection is an intentional and structured way of thinking that helps individuals make meaning of their experiences to learn from them (Rodgers, 2002; Dewey, 1933). In physical education (PE), reflection helps students connect movement experiences to personal values, social relationships, and long-term goals and promotes metacognition, transfer of learning, and personal engagement, helping students move beyond surface-level participation towards deeper, more meaningful movement (Rodgers, 2002; Bjorke & Quennerstedt, 2023). While there has been extensive research on the role of reflection for teachers, there is little on the role of reflection for students. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine how teachers utilize pedagogies that promote student reflection in PE.

Methodology: A qualitative case study design was used, with three PE classes representing each case. Data was collected through classroom observations, semi-structured teacher interviews, and student focus group discussions. Ethical approval for this study was granted as part of a larger study. The data was analyzed using Stake's (2006) cross-case analysis approach, where patterns were identified on how teachers enacted reflection and how students interpreted and engaged in those practices.

Results: Across each case, teachers enacted reflective pedagogies primarily through structured and intentional questioning, though each approach varied. Teacher 1 utilized reflection throughout the lesson, integrating them within and between tasks. Teacher 2 emphasized reflection at the end of the lesson, using a closing activity to prompt meaning making. Teacher 3 tended to use the beginning and ending of the lesson as "bookends" for questioning. Importantly for this research, their style of questions were not focused solely on tactical thinking (for example), but helped students connect their movement experiences to emotions, values, and personal goals for inside and outside of PE.

Significance: This research demonstrates how reflective pedagogies can support deeper learning, personal growth, and meaningful engagement in PE. By exploring how reflection is utilized as a learning tool by teachers and how students responded, the findings highlight strategies for helping students make sense of their movement experience. Further, these insights offer ongoing efforts into how PE can support deeper learning, personal growth, and lifelong engagement in physical activity.

Keywords: reflection; pedagogy; physical education; meaningfulness; enactment

References

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