'Can we play the real sport?' Co-creating a student-centered after-school sports club

Oscar Nuñez Enriquez & Kimberly L. Oliver

Published online: 31 Dec 2020.

Submit your article to this journal ⧉

View related articles ⧉

View Crossmark data ⧉

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Check for updates

'Can we play the real sport?' Co-creating a student-centered after-school sports club

Oscar Nuñez Enriquez [a,b] and Kimberly L. Oliver [b]

aFaculty of Physical Culture Sciences, Autonomous University of Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico; bDepartment of Kinesiology and Dance, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM, USA

ABSTRACT

Background: : For years, physical activity settings had portrayed a discourse that does not allow to add new and different elements in its practice. This discourse established a status quo that has affected in many ways the structure, the pedagogy and practice of physical activity settings. This is the case of out-school programs.

Purpose: : The purpose of this paper is to understand the process of co-creating an after-school sports club implementing a student-centered pedagogy.

Methods: : This was an activist research project framed in two semesters. A key aspect of activist research is rooted in social interaction and a student-centered pedagogy is central in its framework. Participants included a doctoral candidate (lead author), a university professor (peer debriefing and second author), 3 college graduate and undergraduate students and 13 middle school students. Data collected included 11 peer-debriefing meetings, 22 youth debriefing meetings, 22 researcher journal entries and 13 debriefing meetings with the college adult participants.

Findings: : Implementing a student-centered pedagogy such as the Student-Centered Inquiry *as* Curriculum approach helped to co-design and co-create this process within the sports club, which are divided into three sections: (1) design process of a student-centered sports club, (2) challenges and successes process of a student-centered sports club design, and (3) 'Can we play the real sport? – Co-creating a student-centered sports club curriculum.

Conclusion: : Co-creating a student-centered after-school sports club had two key elements: collaborative work and time. These two key elements helped a student-centered pedagogy central to an activist approach to become the bridge that facilitates youth engagement in out-school settings such as an after-school sports club.

Introduction

> What I liked about today's games was that we all got the opportunity … we kind of switched, so … for example in soccer sometimes you never get passed to. But in this game, you always got a turn. (Patrick, age 11; sports club debriefing with youth, week 11)

As is expressed in Patrick's quote, youth appreciate opportunities to engage in physical activity, especially when the environment allows everyone's participation. This also depicts how providing opportunities for students to share their input help to understand what would be behind their experiences that can either facilitate or hinder their engagement in physical activity. However,

understanding the meaning and identifying the value behind students' input and participation in physical activity is not yet a common practice. One reason is that for years physical activity settings have portrayed a traditional discourse that is based on the student–teacher power relationship (Kirk 2010). A characteristic of this power relationship is that teachers are expected to have full responsibility and authority over the content planned for a class. At the same time, students are expected to follow the leadership of teachers without hesitation. According to Kirk (2006), this type of discourse is known as a 'top–down' approach. A top–down approach can be described as a hegemonic way of teaching, which has been established as a status quo affecting in many ways the structure, the pedagogy and practice of physical activity settings (Vertinsky 1992; Larsson, Fagrell, and Redelius 2009).

There is now evidence suggesting that using a traditional approach in physical activity/education hinders children and youth engagement (Oliver, Hamzeh, and McCaughtry 2009; Hastie and Casey 2014). This is an important aspect to consider, because, there is an increasing number of children and youth disengaged from physical activity (Cappuccio et al. 2008; Janssen and LeBlanc 2010; Tremblay et al. 2011; Kohl et al. 2012). Thus, it seems important to explore different ways such as an organizational setting and pedagogical approach that facilitate children and youth commitment to physical activity. This scenario can be provided by an after-school physical activity (ASPA) club. An idea behind designing and implementing ASPA clubs surged with the intent of promoting additional out-of-school environments encouraging children and youth to engage in physical activity (Halpern 2002; Garn et al. 2014).

An ASPA club can be defined as an organized physical activity setting that invites children and youth to participate outside of the regular school time, before or after school and/or during holidays or vacation periods (Halpern 2002). A characteristic is that provides an opportunity to engage in physical activity within a safe, fun and enjoyable environment (Garn et al. 2014). An advantage of this characteristic is offering the opportunity to create a link and/or partnership within the community building a bridge in the long run (Afterschool Alliance 2017). Another characteristic is offering endless possibilities with regard to its design, types of activities (e.g. sports, games), programs goals, and pedagogical approaches since there is a strong line of research that had used an ASPA club as a way to help children and youth engagement (Garn et al. 2014; Maljak et al. 2014; Marttinen and Fredrick 2017; Marttinen et al. 2019, 2020). Additionally, an ASPA club offers a non-traditional structure and environment different from regular school, thus becoming attractive, fun and enjoyable for young people (Beets, Huberty, and Beighle 2012). As such, it seems pertinent to say that ASPA clubs can be a place to explore the use of a non-traditional approach for working with youth as a way to understand what facilitates and/or hinders their engagement in physical activity.

An activist approach through a student-centered pedagogy

In this section, we want to describe how an activist approach can help facilitate youth's engagement in physical activity clubs. An activist approach allows ASPA clubs facilitators the opportunity to better meet the needs of the youth with which they work (Oliver and Kirk 2015). According to Fine et al. (2007), an activist approach focuses on shifting practice in order for individuals to work collaboratively toward change. In this way co-creating a space where knowledge and understanding are also co-produced and individuals involved follow and lead and both learn to resist the imposition of oppressive, disempowering, and commonly accepted practices (Freire 1994; Cook-Sather 2002; Luguetti et al. 2015). In some ways an activist approach seeks change starting from micro levels in specific contexts (Oliver, Hamzeh, and McCaughtry 2009; Enright and O'Sullivan 2010).

Another characteristic of an activist approach is that focuses on a process that engages participants in practical outcomes that are related to their experiences while listening to their voices (Cook-Sather 2002; Oliver and Kirk 2015). This means that facilitators seek to understand what Freire (1994) identified as 'silences' and pedagogical gaps in participants' involvement. It is

important to say that besides listening to participants voices, responding to these voices is a fundamental scaffold to take in order to facilitate engagement in physical activity. Cook-Sather (2001) argues that responding to students' voices requires a deep understanding of the situation but also being able to translate the meaning behind it. A reason is because teachers/facilitators can be lost in 'translation'. Cook-Sather uses the metaphor of translation not only because the 'real' meaning behind how to respond to students is in words used but also because it is important to see beyond their learning process and understand ways to get closer to their true meaning. This is consistent with Fine et al. (2007) mentioning that in an activist approach individuals involved must go beyond the possible outcome and must look into different directions in order to respond appropriately to the given situation since an activist approach forges a dynamic between participants as co-creators of a variety of possibilities, transforming their realities through education, inquiry, reflection and action (Freire 1994; Fine 2007).

A student-centered pedagogy is central to an activist approach because it focuses on listening and responding to students' voice in order to better understand what facilitates and hinders their engagement (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013). A student-centered pedagogy creates an alternative to help students' engagement, finding appropriate ways of working, where teachers/facilitators and students co-create the class environment. A characteristic of a student-centered approach is offering the potential to identify gaps in students' learning process and how this may facilitate or hinder their performance (Tannehill, Van der Mars, and MacPhail 2013). This is consistent with Fisette and Walton (2014) mentioning that a student-centered pedagogy promotes changing the focus on the individuals producing these outcomes.

Another characteristic of a student-centered pedagogy is that challenges the traditional aspect reproduced among physical activity settings since it could be considered a disruptive approach (Oliver and Kirk 2015). There is currently a strong body of research, suggesting that a student-centered pedagogy promotes children and youth engagement in physical activity (Oliver and Lalik 2001, 2009; Enright and O'Sullivan 2010; Fisette and Walton 2014; Luguetti and Oliver 2019).

An example of a student-centered pedagogy centered in an activist approach for working with youth is the Student-Centered Inquiry *as* Curriculum (SCIC) (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013). The SCIC is an activist approach for working with youth that emerged from the need to listen to students' voices in physical education (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013). A characteristic of the SCIC approach is that works in a four-phase cyclical process: *Planning, Responding to Students, Listening to Respond and Analyzing Responses* (Figure 1). Each one of these phases generates the opportunity to co-create along with youth an appropriate, fun and enjoyable environment. We believe there is value in using this approach in physical activity settings such as an ASPA club (Luguetti et al. 2015; 2017; Lamb, Oliver, and Kirk 2018; Nuñez Enriquez and Oliver 2020) because it creates opportunities for students to participate in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the SCIC allows students' voices to become a transformative learning process for both teachers/facilitators and themselves. Although there is growing evidence suggesting the benefits of an activist approach (Luguetti et al. 2015, 2017; Lamb, Oliver, and Kirk 2018), we need more research looking at how this process might work in after-school physical activity clubs. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to understand the process of co-creating an after-school sports club implementing a student-centered pedagogy trying to answer these research questions: (a) How does a student-centered after-school sports club looks like? and (b) What challenges emerged to co-create a student-centered after-school sports club curricula?

Methodology

This was an activist research study (Fine 2007). A key aspect of activist research is that it is an 'epistemology that assumes knowledge is rooted in social relations and most powerful when produced collaboratively through action' (Fine et al. 2001, 173). Data collection happened from August 2018 to May 2019 once Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. Participants
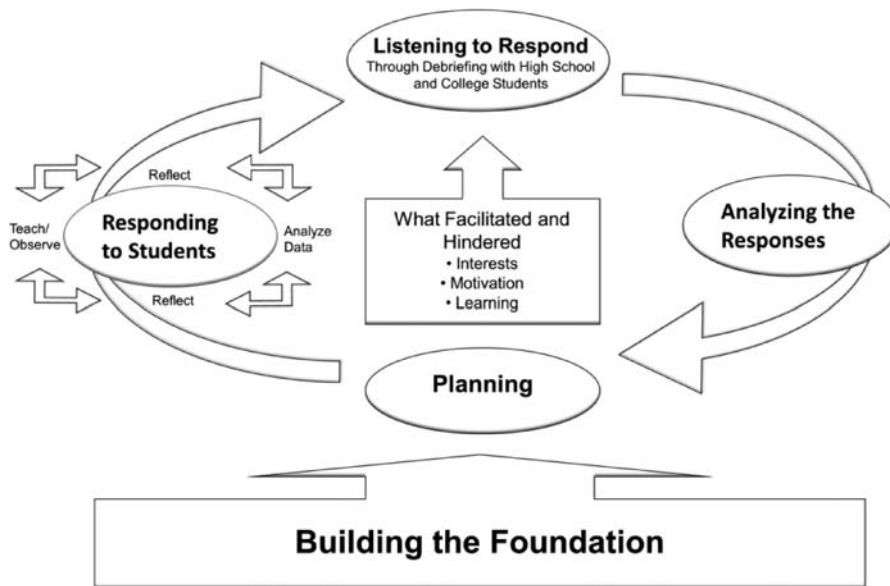
Figure 1. Student-centered inquiry as curriculum approach (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013).

included 13 middle school students (3 females and 10 males) from a local independent public school or charter school, a university professor serving as peer-debriefer (Kim), a doctoral candidate as a facilitator of the sports club (Oscar), one graduate and two undergraduate students from a physical education teacher education program as volunteers. An in-class open invitation to all middle school students (6th–8th graders) was made once having approval from the school administration. This particular charter school was chosen because it offers after-school programs (e.g. enrichment), but none that included physical activity as their main purpose. Thus, we believed by offering an opportunity for students to engage in physical activity after school would be beneficial. All adult participants (2 females and 3 males) were at the same institution located in the southwest border-land of the USA. This study took place in the play area of the local charter school where the after-school sports club was implemented.

Data collection and sources

Sports club met every Wednesday except the first Wednesday of the month from August 2018 through May 2019 when school ended at noon. Each club session ran 60 min and included the 13 middle schoolers, a doctoral candidate as the facilitator of the sports club, and the undergraduate and graduate university students as volunteers. The day after each club session, the doctoral candidate and the university professor met for an hour to debrief and conduct an ongoing analysis of data.

Data sources included: (a) A total of 22 weekly club sessions and debriefing meetings with middle school students. These sessions and meetings were video- and audio-recorded and transcribed in order to better understand the appropriate environment, structure and curricula required to facilitate students' interest, motivation and learning in the after-school sports club; (b) a total of 13 debriefing meetings with undergraduate and graduate physical education teacher education students as volunteers followed at the end of the sports club sessions. These conversations created the opportunity to reflect on different aspects that were noticed in the sports club. This allowed us to share the challenges and successes faced while implementing the SCIC approach in the after-school sports club. All sessions were video- and audio-recorded and transcribed; (c) a total of 22 entries in

a researcher journal where the facilitator wrote down his observation notes, feelings, successes and challenges experienced in his participation in the sports club sessions; (d) teachers artifacts. All sports club sessions were brought to the weekly debriefing meetings; (e) A total of 11 weekly debriefing 60 min meetings in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges and successes faced each week within the sports club. The structure of these meetings helped to create an environment for the facilitator and the peer-debriefer to engage in a better understanding of the use of the SCIC in the sports club. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Data analysis

Data analysis was twofold. The first phase was ongoing across the duration of the study (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Each week, all debriefings with the middle school students, debriefings with the graduate and undergraduate students and researcher journals were transcribed verbatim and discussed in the weekly peer-debriefing meetings. The video recordings were utilized for the doctoral candidate and facilitator of the club better remember what happened in every session and to understand the dynamic of the sports club. During the peer-debriefing meetings was discussed (a) how does a student-centered after-school sports club looks like? and (b) what challenges emerged to co-create a student-centered after-school sports club curricula? The peer-debriefing meetings were used to look across all data gathered and guide to use meaningful sources that could help for future sports club sessions in order to better understand the students' interest, motivation, and learning in the after-school sports club. The second phase of data analysis was conducted post culmination of the study. All data were arranged chronologically and segmented by week. All data were read and re-read by the lead author in order to identify aspects that were not discussed in the peer-debriefing meetings.

Findings

Using the activist approach, student-centered inquiry *as* curriculum (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013) within the after-school sports club allowed us to implement a student-centered design and co-create a specific process to better meet the needs of the youth. In this section, we will describe findings divided into three sections: (1) design process of a student-centered sports club, (2) challenges and successes process of a student-centered sports club design, and (3) 'Can we play the real sport? – co-creating a student-centered sports club curriculum to answer the research questions of this project: (a) how does a student-centered after-school sports club look like? and (b) what challenges emerged to co-create a student-centered after-school sports club curricula?

Design process of a student-centered sports club

When used in physical activity and physical education contexts, one characteristic of a student-centered pedagogy is that facilitates students' interest, motivation and learning (Enright and O'Sullivan 2010; Oliver and Hamzeh 2010; Fisette 2011; Luguetti et al. 2017). In this section, we describe the design process of using the student-centered inquiry as a curriculum approach (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013) to co-create the after-school sports club. We will depict how the SCIC phases such as building the foundation, planning, responding to students, listening to respond, and analyzing helped to co-create the after-school sports club structure and environment (see Table 1).

As shown, implementing the SCIC approach helped to design a student-centered process that seeks to understand the students' interest, motivation and learning. However, understanding and building this process takes time. Through time, the cyclical process of the SCIC helped us to build a relationship that strengthens the already existing student–teacher connection and challenges the traditional aspect embedded in it. It also helped us to reaffirm that this cyclical design process is in constant change that considers the in-time-specific needs. It also helped us to understand that

Table 1. Sports club week-to-week process.

Week	Sports club week process	Challenges	Successes

1	Building the foundation
	
	• Ice-breaking/introduce
	• Sampler lesson – Cooperative-like games
	   ○ *How would you describe a physically and emotionally safe sports club environment?*
	   ○ *What kind of issues normally arise between your peers that may influence the sports club to be safe physically and emotionally?*
		• Broadening students' perceptions about sports-like games Not having volunteers to join the club	Aspects of the sports club environment emerged

2	Building the foundation – Ways of working
	
	• Sampler lesson – sports-like same skill games
	   ○ *I have fun when?*
	   ○ *I get frustrated?*
		• Safety around games
		• Broadening students' perceptions about sports-like games
		• Students' overtaking games and leaving peers out
			Clear aspects of the structure of the club
			Having volunteers as co-participants within the club

3	Building the foundation – Ways of working • Sampler lesson – Different sports-like games	• Reinforcing ways of working for everyone to play	Identifying sports-like games must be different in skills Letting adults participate as team members Adding rules while playing the sport-like game
4	Building the foundation – Broadening students' perspectives • Sampler lesson – Small-sided vs large-sided games	• Students' overtaking the game and wanting to play with friends only	Identifying that small-sided games increased students' participation
5	Responding to students – Sports-like games • Volleyball related games	• Students kept asking for sports, even when they didn't have the skills to play and modified the rules of the game	Everyone was willing to try, regardless of skill level Students' leadership skills
6	Responding to students – Sports-like games • Ultimate Frisbee, Soccer	• Some students willing to lead, others to follow while gameplay	Students roles in gameplay Rotating positions during gameplay
7	Responding to students and listening to respond – Sports-like games • Racket sports and Volleyball	• Misbehavior of students	Small-sided games
8	Responding to students and listening to respond – Sports-like games • Handball and Basketball	• Remanding ways of working while gameplay	Simultaneous games and rotate to a different game
9	Responding to students and listening to respond – Sports-like games • Football	• Playing only one game	Clear leadership in the form of positive feedback emerged during playtime
10	Listening to respond – Sports-like games • Baseball and soccer	Students overtaking the games	Wanting to play a similar/related game before the 'real' sport game Games for the next class

Table 1. Continued.

Week	Sports club week process	Challenges	Successes
11	Listening to respond – Sports-like games. • Baseball, Football, and Handball Mid-project Debriefing • *What aspects of the sports club facilitated your interest, motivation and learning? Why?* • *What aspects of the sports club hindered your interest, motivation, and learning? Why?* • *Is there anything else you would like us to know that we haven't asked?*	Finding ways to handle continuous misbehavior	Structure and curriculum of club is set
12	Building the foundation – Sport-Like games • Baseball, Soccer, and Handball	• Renegotiate and remind ways of working	Suggesting to play new sports (Golf and Cricket)
13	Sports-like games • Cricket and Cricket-like games	• Funds for the reward system • Students' taking over games	Suggested to add a reward system (snacks, before or after sports club)
14	Sports-like games • Lacrosse and Lacrosse-like games	• Suggesting new sports-games (such as biking and swimming)	Sense of belonging in sports club emerged (possible name)
15	Sports-like games • Ultimate Frisbee and Hotbox	• Pushing to 'play' new sports-games such as biking	Sense of belonging in sports club increased (name, t-shirt and hoodie)
16	Sports-like games • Soccer and soccer/modified games	• Volunteers having an irregular participation	Sports club kids wanting to recruit more peers
17	Sports-like games • Danish, longball, and Hockey	• Find other 'new' sports to play	New adult volunteers joined the club
18	Sports-like games • Indoor games Ping-Pong	• Weather did not allow us to play outdoors. Modified the sports, games and rules	Club kids suggested new games, alternating indoors and outdoors if the weather allows it
19	Sports-like games • Ultimate, Frisbee, and Soccer	• Resistance to repeat sports-like games	Collaboration between peers. Rotating between games
20	Sports-like games • Ultimate soccer	• Grouping with peers	Rotating
21	Sports-like games • Ultimate football	• Grouping	Rotating between groups
22	Final sports club session • Free day (water games)	• Goodbye to kids	Potluck party

this process can be rearranged or re-negotiated since there were several occasions where different aspects of the club needed to be adjusted in order to keep a student-centered focus.

Challenges and successes process of a student-centered sports club design

To begin with the process of co-creating a student-centered sports club, it was necessary to establish a presence at Modern World charter school as a way to begin recruitment among middle school students and possible volunteers to join the club. This presented the first challenge faced during Week 1 of the sports club since no adult volunteers from Modern World joined the club. An initial intent was to invite parents from the charter school during Parental Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings; however, none showed any interest in joining the club. As a result of not having volunteers to help within the sports club, this pushed us to look into different directions. One solution emerged when adult volunteers from a local university joined the club in Week 2. This allowed us to keep a student-centered focus since the facilitator of the club wanted to control the environment going against the nature of an activist approach such as the SCIC and going back to a traditional way of teaching that allows him to feel comfortable with (Nuñez Enriquez and Oliver 2020).

It is important to say that all phases of the SCIC are implemented in every week of the sports club; however, an special emphasis on one or several of these phases is used as a way to understand what facilitates or hinders students' interest, motivation and learning to engage. The building of the foundation phase was implemented in the first four weeks of the club. During this process, a goal was to co-create the 'rules' or ways of working that will shape a safe, fun and enjoyable sports club environment. To co-create these ways of working, different questions while debriefing with the youth participants of the club were asked at the end of each club session. Questions such as: 'How would you describe a physically and emotionally safe sports club?' 'What does bullying look like in sports club?', 'What can teachers do to prevent it?', and 'What can you do to prevent it?' Based on students' answers, common themes were identified, establishing that the sports club environment should be safe, allowing everyone participation, being respectful at each other, cooperate during game time and being friendly with everyone:

> Oscar: So, lets set up our ways of working for this sports club … Keep in mind that we need to set our ways of working and we're going to co-create them together.
>   Let me ask you … How would you describe an emotionally and physically safe sports club environment? … you can either write it down or speak up, whatever makes you feel more comfortable. (Kevin handed me his answer, which was only Yes) …
>   Yes to what Kevin? …
> Alberto: (While laughing) … You might want to explain what this means …
> Gerardo: You put yes, you need to put more than only Yes … (referring to Christian)
> Oscar: Yes, doesn't tells us anything … and I need to get to know you … I cannot not read your minds
> Leandro: Not playing rough …
>   (Debriefing with youth, week 1)

Once the different ways of working were established, reminding them during different weeks of the club was a constant challenge, because some students tended to overtake different games leaving peers out, even though we had agreed that everyone should participate. Thus, it was important to remind and reinforce these ways of working as a way to respond to students' interest, motivation and learning process in the sports club:

> Oscar: Did you like when some, where overtaking the game?
> All: Yes and No …
> Kevin: Yes, because we can learn …
> Oscar: Alberto brought to my attention that some of you were over taking the games, and leaving people out while playing. Alberto also mentioned that those games are fun, but sometimes aren't as fun, because we were leaving people out. So, probably is something we might consider for the future. Do you think leaving people out could be an issue for the sports club?
> Preston: Yes …

Oscar:	Why? Why is it an issue?
Kevin:	Because not everyone gets the experience while playing.
Oscar:	What can we do about it? What can we do to include everyone while playing?
Kevin:	Just tell us … include everyone in the game … rules of the rules …
	(Debriefing with youth, week 3)

Another goal of the building the foundation phase is to provide sampler lessons as a way to understand the possible content and an adequate curriculum for the sports club. During the first weeks, sampler lessons with sports-like games were presented to students. It was evident that naming these activities like games, instead of the 'real' sport name, was an important aspect for youth to engage in the activities, despite the fact that sometimes students modified the rules to fit their skills level. This provided the opportunity to understand an initial aspect that naming the activities as the 'real sport' should be included as a way to respond to students and listen to respond to co-create the sports club curricula.

In the following weeks, as a way to respond to student participation in the sports club, the structure of the club shifted to include small-sided games, instead of large-sided games. It was evident that letting everyone to participate through small-sided games was an interesting structural aspect of the sports club:

Oscar:	Did you like the idea of playing with different types of groups?
Kevin, Preston, Kendrick:	Yes …
Oscar:	What was interesting?
Preston:	To build more teamwork …
Oscar:	What was interesting about playing with different people?
Kevin:	Lot of stuff with the same people …
Preston:	Teamwork with different people …
Kevin:	Teamwork …
Alberto:	Because we can learn from each other's weakness and strengthens in a game.
	(Debriefing with youth, week 3)

However, this also presented another challenge, since the 'real sport' is usually played in a large-sided form. This behavior was misunderstood, since some students were more willing to step up than others, although having college students as co-facilitators of the club provided an opportunity to address this issue:

Oscar:	Okay … One of the things that you all said was … you liked when everyone participates. Let me ask you … Did you like the idea of having college students playing with us?
All:	Yes …
Oscar:	What was interesting thing about having college students?
Alberto:	Because it adds more tall people and more experienced people …
Kevin:	Otherwise it will be just us …
Alberto:	It'll be more challenging or easier …
Kevin:	Yeah …
	(Debriefing with youth, week 3)

Responding to students' interests, allowing different aspects to be woven together as part of the structure of the club, pushed some middle school kids to lead and support each other. It was important to understand the difference between leading and overtaking a game, and this difference was offered through the ways of working established as part of the clubs' environment.

Giving an especial emphasis in the listening to respond phase gave a clear idea of the structure and possible curricula needed for the sports club. Specific characteristics such as the ways of working and types of sports-like games were identified. In the following weeks, a challenge as a way to respond to students and listening to respond was to add new sports:

Oscar:	What do you think of today's games?
Alberto:	Fun …
Oscar:	Why?

Alberto:	Because we got actually to play the sport …
Oscar:	You actually got to play the sports … What else? What else Andrea?
Andrea:	They were fun … They were as different as usual … were as different …
Kendrick:	Play the sport …
Oscar:	They were more … Leon …
Leon:	I think it was fun because … I think the physical activity was fun when you had everyone inter-acting like when someone hits the ball … But also, how kind of different …
Oscar:	So, you liked it when everybody participated … When everyone was involved but actually like the regular type of game …
Leon:	Yeah, like when you hit the ball you had to be all by yourself …
Andrea:	I am just glad that you modified them, that actually made it better. Because a lot of games you just try and … I don't want to say try … That usually are very fun and makes it more rulie (rules) … And the rules to it is actually not fun …
	(Debriefing with youth, week 4)

Finding new 'sports' that students had never played before was a challenge but at the same time a success, since this shows that they were willing to broaden their perspective about playing. Even though there is not a specific number of weeks or sessions that each of the SCIC phases should be implemented, by week 11, the structure and curriculum of the club were set. This allowed us to focus on other aspects that emerged within the sports club structure and environment.

In conclusion, using the SCIC approach was the bridge that allowed us to cross through different aspects to co-create the process of designing the after-school sports club. From an activist approach point of view, it allowed us to understand what would be the best way to increase students' interest, motivation and learning for engaging in physical activity, since it pushed all participants to look into different directions as a way to maintain the appropriate environment, ways of working, and curricula needed within the sports club. This is consistent with Fine et al. (2001) since it is important for an activist researcher to look beyond the expected outcome and must search further into a different direction when a challenge is faced, because understanding one process and establishing another takes time.

'Can we play the real sport?' Co-creating a student-centered sports club curriculum

In this section, we will explain how the use of the SCIC approach helped different aspects to emerge becoming the structure of the sports club curricula (Table 2).

We will also explain how these aspects interacted with one another regularly allowing us to make appropriate pedagogical decisions for the sports club curriculum. We would like to highlight the importance of having a presence at the local charter school in prior years volunteering and implementing the after-school sports club becoming a strong contributor:

Kim:	It is important to show the developmental process of the club across the three years. It's helping with the curriculum design and with the structural design. You cannot lose the fact that you have done this for three years priors to the semester. That is important.
Oscar:	Those three years actually helped me to set …
Kim:	Build relationships and curricula
Oscar:	Curricula and having a presence at Modern World, so the kids can identify me as …
Kim:	That's relationships. So, you have relationship with the teachers, with the administrators, the parents and with the kids. That takes time.
	(Peer-debriefing, week 6)

Building relationships is an aspect that has proven beneficial in physical activity, physical education and sports contexts (Siedentop and Locke 1997; Chambers et al. 2012; Tannehill, Van der Mars, and MacPhail 2013). It is important to acknowledge and understand that time is required to engage in physical activity, and it is also an essential activist approach aspect. For instance, Marttinen et al. (2020) mentions that using an activist approach in an after-school activity club designed for girls helped them to build a trustworthy relationship. But, building these relationships took time,

becoming a required aspect that helped them to co-construct a relationship along with the girls enrolled in their club.

The main aspects that formed the sports club curricula emerged within the firsts few weeks of implementing it. The first one identified was a recurrent aspect happening in prior years, since a characteristic of an ASPA club offers a non-curricular structure (Portman 2003; Jago and Baranowski 2004); thus, middle school students were 'expecting' to have a different structure offered to their regular physical education classes. As such, starting 'right away' without any type of lecture or instruction was a way to respond to students that helped us to engage in the activity. This did not mean that instructions or ways to explain the purpose of these activities were taken out completely, although these were delivered after an initial activity:

Oscar:	Since it's after-school, they're wanting to just go out and play …
Kim:	So, go and play right away.
Oscar:	Some kind of instant activity … that …
Kim:	Yes …
Oscar:	To take away …
Kim:	Here's one way to do it or a way to start think of doing it … Have a game and start immediately, no conversation … then come back and say something … and then play your other two games … and then debrief …
	(Peer-debriefing, week 1)
Oscar:	Did you like the idea about starting right away?
All said … Yes …	
Oscar:	Why'd you like the idea of starting right away with a game instead of having an introduction?
Kendrick:	Because all your energy just calms down … Then we get tired and want to sit down …
Alberto:	I liked the GoPro idea; I just think we need to remember to take it off
	(Debriefing with youth, week 2)

This also allowed all participants within the sports club to interact and work collaboratively which goes against a traditional perspective developed in physical activity settings (Patton and Parker 2017). A second aspect identified within the first week was that students' kept asking the following weeks what they identify as 'the real sport'; this helped us to respond to students and develop the activities part of the curricula since youth were constantly asking to play:

Kevin:	I have some feedback … I would like to play some real sports because I think that could be really constructive and fun for all …
Kendrick:	Can we actually play real sports?. Like soccer
Leandro:	Hockey …
Oscar:	We're going to play different sports …
	(Debriefing with youth, week 1)

It seems that playing sport-like games was not the same as playing the 'real sport'. Thus, listening to respond allowed us to find a way to respond to students' that can facilitate their engagement in physical activity:

Table 2. Sports Club Curricula week-to-week process.

Week	Sports club week process	Curricula aspect
1	Building the foundation	• Playing the 'Real Sport'
2	Building the foundation	• Starting right away
3	Building the foundation – Ways of working	• Two or three games per session
	• Sampler lesson	
5	Responding to students – Sports-like games	• Adding rules while playing
6	Responding to students – Sports-like games	• Skills to play

Kevin: Are we going to play some real football?
Oscar: We're going to get to that … BUT we need to settle somethings first. That is going to help us to
            work in a better way in sports club.
Kendrick: Different types of games but sports like baseball or archery …
            (Debriefing with youth, week 2)

It can be said that this aspect let us to navigate through a different perspective, which is consistent
with an activist approach focus. An interesting characteristic of this aspect happened in playtime,
because even though the activities planned were sports-like games using the sport's rules, students
modified the rules and settings to match their skill level, modifying the rules to fit their abilities and
increase their interest while still identifying and calling these games a 'real sport':

Oscar: Lynn approached me and said 'Can I tell you something about sports club?' … Yeah, sure … 'I liked
            the way it was structured' … What do you mean? … 'Yeah, like, we played some sports-related
            games and we played the actual sport.'
Kim: What do you mean you played the actual sport?
Oscar: We played some sports-like games … and then we played 3 on 3 football.
Kim: Okay, so that's still a modified game …
Oscar: Yeah …
Kim: But she thought it was playing …
Oscar: A sport …
Kim: That's interesting, so they liked … so she liked small-sided games that were called football or soccer
            or basketball even though it was not football, soccer, basketball. It was small-sided.
Oscar: Yeah …
            (Peer-debriefing, Week 1)

It seems that the idea once these characteristics were identified allowing us to begin drawing a path
as a way to facilitate sports club students' engagement, a third aspect emerged as part of the
curricula.

A characteristic of this aspect was established due to the time constraints of the sports club, since
this only allowed us to play two or three games, and a very unique feature of these games surged
when students were asking not to repeat similar activities but rather to have 'sports' with different
skills and characteristics:

Oscar: Did you like the idea of having different games … I am asking everyone …
Alberto: Different games and skills and different options …
Andrea: Different games instead of playing something over and over and over …
Oscar: That is good to know.
            (Debriefing with youth, week 2)

Thus, by listening to respond and in response to these comments, two or three activities with differ-
ent skills, structure, and rules were presented for each sports club session, increasing engagement.
Once these three aspects were identified: starting right away, playing the 'real sport' and two or
three games per session, a fourth aspect emerged.

This aspect presented two opposing perspectives of the same situation, and at first was similar in
characteristics to when students modified the rules of the 'real sport' to fit their skills. These two
opposites increase a chance for everyone's participation and reinforce the ways of working co-cre-
ated for the sports club:

Oscar: So, we started with the soccer game. Everyone was participating and having fun … Alberto, while
            playing, said to me, 'This game is fun, but is boring' …
Kim: That makes no sense …
Oscar: I asked him, 'Why? Why is this fun and boring?' … 'Well it's fun because everybody is playing and
            it's boring because not everyone has a chance to actually have the ball.'
            (Peer-debriefing, week 2)

Thus, allowing them to modify the rules of the 'real sport' regardless of the already used ones while playing it helped us to establish as a fourth aspect of the sports club curricula. It also allowed everyone's participation without considering their skill level, and it was a very effective way to respond to students.

Lastly, a fifth aspect of the curriculum emerged in the sports club and this characteristic was a solution to an issue that arose when high-skilled kids were taking over the game, leaving low-skilled students out. Scaffolding the rules of the game while playing deconstructed a traditional aspect of playing a sport allowing and having everyone participating with similar circumstances for all. Constructing their own ways of playing allowed them to have a better understanding of the rules and the game itself. This is an example of how a challenge and a success aspect becomes part of the design process of a student-centered sports club. When this aspect emerged, it was identified as another successful piece for the sports club, facilitating student's engagement, positive behavior, and broadening students' perspectives within sports club:

Oscar: Okay, but as far as today, what was interesting about having three different types of games?
Alberto: We get to do more of what we wanted in an easy and fun way. I liked how we built to the actual game like adding more rules to it.
Oscar: So, you liked the idea of adding more rules while we were playing?.
Alberto: Yeah, because it keeps the games interesting, and, like. learn the skill while you are part of the game.
   (Debriefing with youth, week 3)

These five aspects: starting right away, two or three games, the 'real sport', rules and skills (See Figure 2) provided the basis that co-created the appropriate curricula for the sports club with a student-centered focus. It is important to say that despite the fact these aspects were found in different weeks, once all were identified, all were applied in all sessions in any given order. These aspects are a cyclical process that can change since a characteristic of a student-centered pedagogy such as the SCIC approach is to understand student's interest, motivation and learning to engage in physical activity.

As such implementing the SCIC approach within the ASPA club allowed us to understand how to co-create and design different aspects interacting as a way to co-create an appropriate, fun and enjoyable sports club environment since an activist approach uses time as a way to tear down traditional aspects that are embedded in the practice, teaching, pedagogy and teacher education built across and around the student–teacher power relationship held for decades (Vertinsky 1992; Larsson, Fagrell, and Redelius 2009; Kirk 2010).

Conclusion

It is important to say that collaboration and time became aspects to consider in a student-centered design while implementing an activist approach for working with youth to overcome traditional aspects embedded in pedagogy and practice, allowing us to understand how the different challenges and successes co-created an appropriate environment that helps students' engagement in physical activity. Collaboration goes beyond only meaning that individuals are gathered together following what is already established as a way of working. There is now a consistent body of research suggesting that being part of a community or network offers powerful ways of collaboration (Barak, Gidron, and Turniansky 2010; Parker, Patton, and Tannehill 2012; MacPhail et al. 2014). Because collaboration challenges traditional aspects such as power relationships, providing an opportunity for learning between members. Co-creating the ways of working also provided a way that built a trustworthy environment working collaboratively that scaffolded a student-centered structure. The combination of time and collaborative work helped to maintain the sports club with a student-centered focus.

Through time it was possible to broaden students' perspective, this was allowed through providing positive feedback while peer interaction in order to maintain a student-centered focus, in a way, it allowed students to step-up and take a role in a different direction. It was through time that a trustworthy and co-created environment was built, allowing us to work collaboratively as well.
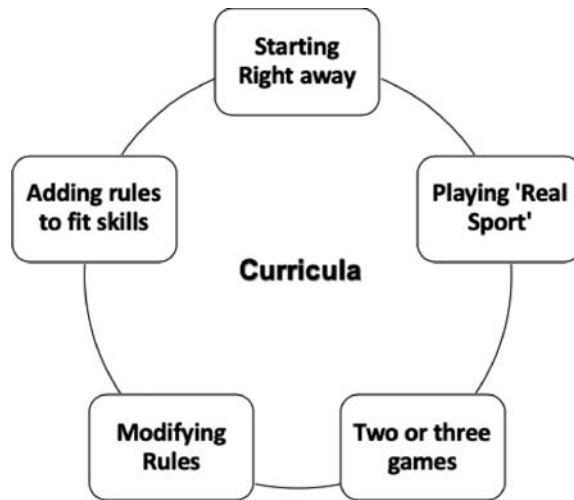
Figure 2. Sports club curriculum aspects.

According to Dyson (2002), collaborative work can be described as a dynamic format designed to learn, which leads to a more significant role. A characteristic of an activist approach is rooted in social interaction; thus, learning is a cooperative process (Fine et al. 2001). This collaborative work and time let the sports club become a dynamic and activist practice laboratory that formed the environment for different aspects of interaction to emerge. This is consistent with Ennis (2000) mentioning that collaborative work pushed individuals to create and find solutions to different possibilities since social interactions allow individuals to find and design their roles within their environment.

Although teaching and learning require a shift in how teachers present their information and how students learn this information (Dyson 2002). The SCIC approach became this bridge that connected how the facilitator of the club, volunteers and youth found different ways of working in order to understand what would be students' interest, motivation and learning. This can be a difference between other pedagogical approaches (e.g. Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)) and a necessary link to help students' participation in physical activity. Despite the fact there were challenges at the beginning of the club, such as not having volunteers, this pushed us into a different direction trying to go back to traditional ways of working. But having college students' as volunteers helped an overwhelming and isolation feeling to decrease and beginning to focus on the students, instead of the practice and also allowed all middle school participants to engage and co-create different ways of interaction. Because having college participants motivated middle schoolers to increase their participation in the club at different levels.

Thus, it can be said that an activist approach for working with youth (Oliver and Kirk 2015) such as the SCIC approach (Oliver and Oesterreich 2013) is a relevant pedagogical instrument to be implemented into the structure, the pedagogy and practice of physical activity settings either traditional or non-traditional such as an after-school sports club. Helping to tear down one step at a time, traditional ways that facilitators and participants portray as a result of an established status quo, but becoming a powerful pedagogical tool in-school and out-school to overcome an increased number of children and youth disengaged in physical activity.

Disclosure statement

ORCID

Oscar Nuñez Enriquez *ID* http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6573-6762
Kimberly L. Oliver *ID* http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6017-7420

References

Afterschool Alliance. 2017. *Federal Afterschool Policy*. Washington, D.C. http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyFederal.cfm.

Barak, J., A. Gidron, and B. Turniansky. 2010. "'Without Stones There is no Arch': A Study of Professional Development of Teacher Educators as a Team." *Professional Development in Education* 36 (1-2): 275–287. doi:10.1080/19415250903457489.

Beets, M. W., J. Huberty, and A. Beighle. 2012. "Physical Activity of Children Attending Afterschool Programs." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 42 (2): 180–184. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2011.10.007.

Cappuccio, F. P., F. M. Taggart, N.-B. Kandala, A. Currie, E. Peile, S. Stranges, and M. A. Miller. 2008. "Meta-analysis of Short Sleep Duration and Obesity in Children and Adults." *Sleep* 31 (5): 619–626. doi:10.1093/sleep/31.5.619.

Chambers, F. C., K. Armour, S. Luttrell, W. Bleakley, D. Brennan, and F. Herold. 2012. "Mentoring as a Profession-Building Process in Physical Education Teacher Education." *Irish Educational Studies* 31 (3): 345–362. doi:10.1080/03323315.2012.710061.

Cook-Sather, A. 2001. "Between Student and Teacher: Learning to Teach as Translation." *Teaching Education* 12 (2): 177–190. doi:10.1080/10476210120068066.

Cook-Sather, A. 2002. "Authorizing Students' Perspectives: Toward Trust, Dialogue, and Change in Education." *Educational Researcher* 31 (4): 3–14. doi:10.3102/0013189X031004003.

Dyson, B. 2002. "The Implementation of Cooperative Learning in an Elementary Physical Education Program." *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 22: 69–85. doi:10.1123/jtpe.22.1.69.

Ennis, C. D. 2000. "Canaries in the Coal Mine: Responding to Disengaged Students Using Theme-Based Curricula." *Quest* 52: 119–130. doi:10.1080/00336297.2000.10491705.

Enright, E., and M. O'Sullivan. 2010. "'Can I do it in my Pyjamas?' Negotiating a Physical Education Curriculum with Teenage Girls." *European Physical Education Review* 16: 203–222. doi:10.1177/1356336X10382967.

Fine, M. 2007. "Feminist Designs for Difference." In *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, edited by S. Nagy Hesse-Biber, 613–620. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Fine, M., R. Roberts, M. Torre, and D. Upegui. 2001. "Participatory Action Research Behind Bars." *The International Journal of Critical Psychology* 2: 145–157.

Fine, M., M. E. Torre, A. Burns, and Y. A. Payne. 2007. "Youth Research/Participatory Methods for Reform." In *International Handbook of Student Experience in Elementary and Secondary School*, edited by D. Thiessen, and A. Cook-Sather, 805–828. The Netherlands: Springer.

Fisette, J. L. 2011. "Negotiating Power Within High School Girls' Exploratory Projects in Physical Education." *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal* 20 (1): 73–90. doi:10.1123/wspaj.20.1.73.

Fisette, J. L., and T. A. Walton. 2014. "'If You Really Knew Me' … I am Empowered Through Action." *Sport, Education and Society* 19 (2): 131–152. doi:10.1080/13573322.2011.643297.

Freire, P. 1994. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: New Revised 20th-Anniversary Edition*. New York: Continuum.

Garn, A. C., N. McCaughtry, N. L. Kulik, M. Kaseta, K. Maljak, L. Whalen, B. Shen, J. J. Martin, and M. Falhman. 2014. "Successful After-School Physical Activity Clubs in Urban High Schools: Perspectives of Adult Leaders and Student Participants." *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 33: 112–133. doi:10.1123/jtpe.2013-0006.

Halpern, R. 2002. "A Different Kind of Child Development Institution: The History of After-School Programs for Low-Income Children." *Teachers College Record* 104: 178–211. http://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9620.00160.

Hastie, P A, and A Casey. 2014. "Fidelity in models-based practice research in sport pedagogy: A guide for future investigations." *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 33 (3): 422–431.

Jago, R., and T. Baranowski. 2004. "Non-curricular Approaches for Increasing Physical Activity in Youth: a Review." *Preventive Medicine* 39 (1): 157–163. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2004.01.014.

Janssen, I., and A. LeBlanc. 2010. "Systematic Review of the Health Benefits of Physical Activity and Fitness in School-Aged Children and Youth." *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 7 (40): 1–16. doi:10.1186/1479-5868-7-40.

Kirk, D. 2006. "Sport Education, Critical Pedagogy, and Learning Theory: Toward an Intrinsic Justification for Physical Education and Youth Sport." *Quest* 58 (2): 255–264. doi:10.1080/00336297.2006.10491882.

Kirk, D. 2010. *Physical Education Futures*. London: Routledge.

Kohl, H. W., C. L. Craig, E. V. Lambert, S. Inoue, J. R. Alkandari, G. Leetongin, S. Kahlmeier, and Lancet Physical Activity Series Working Group. 2012. "The Pandemic of Physical Inactivity: Global Action for Public Health." *The Lancet* 380 (9838): 294–305. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60898-8.

Lamb, C. A., K. L. Oliver, and D. Kirk. 2018. "'*Go for it Girl*' Adolescent Girls' Responses to the Implementation of an Activist Approach in a Core Physical Education Programme." *Sport, Education and Society* 23 (8): 799–811. doi:10.1080/13573322.2018.1484724.

Larsson, H., B. Fagrell, and K. Redelius. 2009. "Queering Physical Education. Between Benevolence Towards Girls and a Tribute to Masculinity." *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 14 (1): 1–17. doi: 10.1080/17408980701345832.

Lincoln, Y. S., and E. Guba. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Luguetti, C., and K. L. Oliver. 2019. "'Am I an Easy Unit?' Challenges of Being and Becoming an Activist Teacher Educator in a Neoliberal Australian Context." *Sport, Education and Society*, 1–14. doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2019.1601620.

Luguetti, C., K. L. Oliver, L. E. Dantas, and D. Kirk. 2017. "'The Life of Crime Does Not Pay; Stop and Think!': The Process of Co-Constructing a Prototype Pedagogical Model of Sport for Working with Youth from Socially Vulnerable Backgrounds." *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* 22 (4): 329–348. doi:10.1080/17408989.2016.1203887.

Luguetti, C., K. L. Oliver, D. Kirk, and L. Dantas. 2015. "Exploring an Activist Approach of Working with Boys from Socially Vulnerable Backgrounds in a Sports Context." *Sport, Education, and Society*. doi: 10.1080/13573322.2015.1054274

MacPhail, A., K. Patton, M. Parker, and D. Tannehill. 2014. "Leading by Example: Teacher Educators' Professional Learning Through Communities of Practice." *Quest* 66: 39–56. doi:10.1080/00336297.2013.826139.

Maljak, K., A. Garn, N. McCaughtry, N. Kulik, J. Martin, B. Shen, L. Whalen, and M. Falhman. 2014. "Challenges in Offering Inner-City After-School Physical Activity Clubs." *American Journal of Health Education* 45: 297–307. doi:10.1080/19325037.2014.934414.

Marttinen, R., and R. J. Fredrick. 2017. "R.E.A.C.H: An After-School Approach to Physical Education." *Strategies* 30 (1): 8–14. doi: 10.1080/08924562.2016.1251862.

Marttinen, R., K. Johnston, S. B. Flory, and B. Meza. 2020. "Enacting a Body-Focused Curriculum with Young Girls Through an Activist Approach: Leveraging the After-School Space." *Physical Education and Sports Pedagogy*. doi:10.1080/17408989.2020.1761954

Marttinen, R., K. Johnston, S. Phillips, R. Fredrick, and B. Meza. 2019. "REACH Harlem: Young Urban Boys' Experiences in an After-School PA Positive Youth Development Program." *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*. doi:10.1080/17408989.2019.1592147

Nuñez Enriquez, O., and K.L. Oliver. 2020. 'The Collision of Two Worlds': When a Teacher-Centered Facilitator Meets a Student-Centered Pedagogy. *Sports, Education and Society*. doi:10.1080/13573322.2020.1738374

Oliver, K. L., and M. Hamzeh. 2010. "The Boys Won't Let us Play": 5th Grade Mestizas Publicly Challenge Physical Activity Discourse at School." *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sports* 81: 39–51. doi:10.1080/02701367.2010.10599626.

Oliver, K. L., M. Hamzeh, and N. McCaughtry. 2009. "Girly Girls Can Play Games / Las Niñas Pueden Jugar Tambien: Co-Creating a Curriculum of Possibilities with Fifth-Grade Girls." *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 28 (1): 90–110. doi:10.1123/jtpe.28.1.90.

Oliver, K. L., and D. Kirk. 2015. *Girls, Gender and Physical Education: An Activist Approach*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Oliver, K. L., and R. Lalik. 2001. "The Body as Curriculum: Learning with Adolescent Girls." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 33 (3): 303–333. doi:10.1080/00220270010006046.

Oliver, K. L., and R. Lalik. 2009. "Girly Girls Can Play Games/Las Niñas Pueden Jugar Tambien: Co-Creating a Curriculum of Possibilities with Fifth-Grade Girls." *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* 28 (1): 90–110. doi:10.1123/jtpe.23.2.162.

Oliver, K. L., and H. A. Oesterreich. 2013. "Student-Centred Inquiry as Curriculum as a Model for Field-Based Teacher Education." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 45 (3): 394–417. doi:10.1080/00220272.2012.719550.

Parker, M., K. Patton, and D. Tannehill. 2012. "Mapping the Landscape of Communities of Practice as Professional Development in Irish Physical Education." *Irish Educational Studies* 31 (3): 311–327. doi:10.1080/03323315.2012.710067.

Patton, K., and M. Parker. 2017. "Teacher Education Communities of Practice: More Than a Culture of Collaboration." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 67: 351–360. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.013.

Portman, P. A. 2003. "Are Physical Education Classes Encouraging Students to be Physically Active?: Experiences of Ninth Graders in Their Last Semester of Required Physical Education." *The Physical Educator* 60 (3): 150–162.

Siedentop, D., and L. Locke. 1997. "Making a Difference for Physical Education; What Professors and Practitioners Must Build Together." *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 68 (4): 25–33. doi:10.1080/07303084.1997.10604923.

Tannehill, D., H. Van der Mars, and A. MacPhail. 2013. *Building Effective Physical Education Programs*. Jones & Bartlett Publishers.

Tremblay, M. S., A. LeBlanc, M. Kho, T. Saunders, R. Larouche, R. Colley, G. Goldfield, and S. C. Gorber. 2011. "Systematic Review of Sedentary Behaviour and Health Indicators in School-Aged Children and Youth." *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 8 (1): 98. doi:10.1186/1479-5868-8-98.

Vertinsky, P. 1992. "Reclaiming Space, Revisioning the Body: The Quest for Gender-Sensitive Physical Education." *Quest* 44: 373–396. doi:10.1080/00336297.1992.10484063.