Physical education and the art of teaching: transformative learning and teaching in physical education and sports pedagogy

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Physical education and the art of teaching: transformative learning and teaching in physical education and sports pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

The paper is the José María Cagigal Scholar Lecture presented at the AIESEP World Congress in Edinburgh 2018. In the paper I argue that the only real sustainable aim for physical education is more physical education, where different ways of being in the world as some-body are both possible and encouraged. To reach this aim, a focus on the art of teaching is vital as a way of critically scrutinising and designing transformative and genuinely pluralistic physical education practices. In order to do this I discuss education as being educative, a certain view of the child as well as teaching as a continuous act of making judgements about the why(s), what(s) and how(s) of education, normative judgements about desirable change. The take home messages involves: (i) reclaiming a certain view of the child in education, (ii) reclaiming the open-endedness of physical education, and (iii) reclaiming the art of teaching in physical education, which is about being educative and making judgements about what to bring to the educational situation. We then must start with the purpose of education – the why – before deciding on the what and how.

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Prologue

I would like to thank the AIESEP Board and Conference Planning Committee for inviting me to present the keynote lecture today in honour of AIESEP’s former President José María Cagigal. It is humbling to look at the list of distinguished scholars who have delivered this lecture before me. I am also (to be honest) slightly frightened by the fact that it is me who is giving the lecture today, rather than any of the prominent scholars who are not on the list! Some of you are here today.

I never did meet José María Cagigal, but in my preparation for this keynote I first talked to one of the PhD students from my department who is from Spain, and he told me wonderful stories about the contributions of Cagigal, the essays they wrote about him and the sports days they held in his honour. I also read some of his work published in English and was particularly captivated by his papers Sport and human progress published in 1976 and Education of the corporeal man [sic!] published in 1979, in which he draws attention to the importance of starting with the child and children’s play when discussing the values and contributions of physical education and sport. Cagigal and I both share an interest in children and children’s play and I will come back to this idea later when I talk about the view of the child.
**Introduction**

In this lecture I will argue that:

1. The only real sustainable aim for physical education is *more* physical education, where different ways of being in the world as some-body are both possible and encouraged, and that
2. to reach this aim, a focus on the art of teaching is vital as a way of critically scrutinising and designing transformative and genuinely pluralistic physical education practices.

In order to do this I will talk about education as being educative, a certain view of the child as well as teaching as a continuous act of making judgements about the why(s), what(s) and how(s) of education, normative judgements about desirable change.

So, why are these aspects of physical education important? Well, as I see it, they are important in relation to a discussion regarding transformative learning and teaching in physical education and sports pedagogy, and important in relation to the question of who or what should be transformed in order for transformative learning and teaching to occur. In the presentation, I draw on my re-readings of the work of John Dewey, Hannah Arendt, Gert Biesta and Sharon Todd, but also on the work of many colleagues who are present here today. I hope that I will do your contributions justice, and that I also have something to add to the discussion about education in physical education.

**Background – the continuous worrying signs!**

Like many others in the field over the last decades (for example previous Cagigal scholar lecturers such as Richard Tinning in 2001, Catherine Ennis in 2006, Hal Lawson in 2008 and Jan Wright in 2014), I see worrying signs in physical education (see also Burrows, Macdonald, & Wright, 2013; McCuaig, Enright, Rossi, Macdonald, & Hansen, 2016; Siedentop, 1992; 2002). This is powerfully described by David Kirk (2009), who in his book *Physical Education Futures* argues that more of the same, i.e. the repetitious teaching of sports techniques over and over and over again is a risk to the future of physical education in schools, and that:

> unless we first of all face up to and fully acknowledge the extreme seriousness of our current situation, until we grasp the nature of the problem, we cannot begin to contemplate a positive future. (ix)

Commenting on the papers presented as an AIESEP sponsored symposium, John Evans conveys this message in physical education further in terms of:

> In all these contexts, the message systems of schooling endorse performative cultures privileging reductive practices centring on measurable outcomes, accountability, target setting and heightened surveillance that, together, effect shifts away from more liberal and social democratic educational principles and ideals. (Evans, 2014, p. 546)

It seems as though the E in Physical Education, the E in PE, is under attack, and has been so for a while. A slow, but nonetheless deliberate attack! In Australia, issues of outsourcing of physical education is claimed to de-professionalise HPE teachers (Sperka, Enright, & McCuaig, 2018; Williams & Macdonald, 2015; Williams, Hay, & Macdonald, 2011). In other countries, an exclusive focus on activity levels and heart rate levels puts questions of education into the background, and on a political level, Macdonald (2014) eloquently asks: ‘Is global neo-liberalism shaping the future of physical education?’

However, in some respects the P in Physical Education (PE) is also under attack. In countries like Sweden, the academisation of physical education together with an overwhelming focus on assessment and grading leads teachers to give more classroom-based lectures. Physical education is also becoming swamped with written assignments (Svenberg, 2017; Tolgfors, 2018), which leads to students becoming more formulators of knowledge about movement than experts in or through movement (Brown, 2013). As I see it, physical education then risks becoming:
• doing sports without Education,
• fitness instruction without Education,
• physical activity facilitation without Education,
• obesity prevention without Education,
• facilitating fun and enjoyment without Education, or
• theoretical knowledge without movement.

It is not that these aspects cannot be valid activities for some or even many young people today. It is not that young people do not learn something in these practices. Rather, it is about whether physical education practised in this way is educative, and thus whether it is about education and something that schools, teachers and teaching should be concerned about.

As I argued initially, teaching can be seen as a continuous act of making judgements about the why(s), what(s) and how(s) of education. These choices are ideological and choosing to do physical education as sports techniques, or fitness, or as multi activity, or as theoretical knowledge, is a political choice depending on how we view the purpose of education. These choices also include the risk of alienating young people from movement if the physical education we choose is what John Dewey calls non-educative or even mis-educative.

However, I am not only worried about the future of physical education, I also see hope. Some examples are the work that is done around activist and participatory approaches (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010; Luguetti, Oliver, Kirk, & Dantas, 2017; Oliver & Hamzeh, 2010; Oliver & Kirk, 2016), where a focus on working with students helps to challenge inequalities and promote meaningful experiences in physical education.

What all these scholars highlight is that education is a complex endeavour and that education rarely functions in mechanistic ways, where a certain input or intervention will produce a certain outcome. Educational problems should therefore seldom be approached with mechanistic solutions. According to Biesta (2013), this is not a problem because it is this non-mechanistic quality that makes education educational. This is what Biesta calls the beautiful risk of education and it has consequences for how we approach, in this case, physical education and sport pedagogy. It also has consequences for how we view children and young people in education, which is another crucial ideological choice.

The view of the child

As already mentioned, in his papers Cagigal draws attention to the importance of starting with the child when discussing the values and contributions of doing sport. The same goes for education in general, and for physical education. If physical education is to be approached as educational, our assumptions regarding children that go beyond childhood as a mere preparation for adulthood need to be further explored. Let me explain.

How we in education conceptualise the child is a normative choice. It is a position that involves value judgements and is, accordingly, a political, moral as well as educational choice (Biesta, 2013). This position has radically changed in recent decades (Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014). In this change, sociology of childhood has been an important catalyst for moving beyond ideas of either (i) children’s naturalness involving a process of maturation towards a fixed end, or (ii) children as subjected to socialisation and shaped in order to eventually becoming competent members of society (James & James, 2004; Mayall, 2000). What sociology of childhood reveals is the problems attached to positioning children as incompetent becomings, where lack of competence and rational thought are given as reasons as to why adults treat children differently than other adults and, in consequence, claim with certainty what children need. Why are we so keen on telling children what they have to do in order to be for example healthy, that we totally ignore the stigmatisation we create regarding their bodies as normal or not normal?

Following sociology of childhood, children should not be seen as repositories to be filled, or as docile listeners and followers in terms of the objects of teaching. Instead, children should be released
from the results of development or socialisation in terms of a finished product of adulthood (Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014). Within sociology of childhood the argument is instead that childhood cannot be viewed as something universal, and that children should not be viewed as adults in the making, as not-yets, as not yet being adults. As a consequence, children are both becomings and beings at the same time. In this way, we can move beyond the not-yet-ness of the child as someone lacking something, and thus in need of a certain kind of education and a certain kind of teaching that fills this void.

An example of this is Caggigal’s critique of viewing children’s movement activities as blueprints of adult activities, where the use of full-sized tennis courts, basketballs, or tackles in rugby are argued to be about the authenticity of what is done in physical education in terms of what sports should look like. Another example is the use of some motor ability or fitness testing, where children in general should fit into a certain fixed norm, such as normal BMI or normal motor development in terms of developmental stages, and if they do not it is interpreted as displaying a shortage or lack of something (Larsson & Quennerstedt, 2012).

Another example is how adults’ decisions and truths are superior to those of children. Let us take climbing a tree as an illustration. For an adult, climbing trees might be seen as full of risks and dangers, even though it is good for children to be physically active. However, for a child the same tree climbing involves other motives and reasons for climbing, for example, meaningfulness, freedom, or as a dare. So, why is it that an adult’s reasons in terms of risk and the need to protect children are more valid in a discussion about climbing trees or not in an educational context? Here we have a view of the child-at-risk – as not yet being able or mature enough to make decisions – a child in need of being saved by society, education or teachers. Why is it that adults can say or do things in relation to children that would be almost impossible in relation to another adult?

In conclusion, I would argue that children should not be positioned as not-yets, or as in-need in education, and that we should not make any radical difference between children and adults, because we are all always in a process of becoming. Instead children’s views, needs and perspectives should be taken into account released from a pre-determined notion of adulthood. If this is done, a child’s motives and reasons for climbing trees will be treated equally alongside arguments about risk and protection. Such a position would also have significant consequences for education.

**Physical education as educational**

For me, education should be at the heart of what is done in school, and when the E in PE is under attack, there should be an urgent call for education from education. Many of you will most likely agree with me on that. The question is rather what is educational about physical education? Also, what should physical education be educational about? On this we might not agree. But if we embrace the view of the child as being in a continuous process of becoming, then the responsibility of education and, thus, physical education must be thought of as opening up for different ways of being in the world as some-body (cf. Todd, 2014).

I previously argued that physical education with little concern for the E in PE is in danger of becoming a mere doing of sport, fitness instruction, physical activity facilitation or obesity prevention. It is not that doing, training, instruction or facilitation are not part of what could be called education. The problem is rather whether the doing, training, instruction or facilitation is educative. Here I turn to the work of John Dewey.

In much of his work Dewey argued that education should not be conceived of as a preparation for an idealised future set up as a pre-given standard for children to achieve. Rather, he argued that education is a continual transforming of experience that add to even further growth of experience (1916). So, if what happens in education is to be regarded as educative, it should involve experiences that lead to the growth of further experience (Dewey, 1938). On the other hand, experiences that restrict the growth of further experience, or where the learner is not affected at all, can be seen as non-educative, or even mis-educative. In this way, change is always constant, and education should offer
opportunities for children’s active, continual engagement and desire to go on learning (Dewey, 1938; see also Garrison, 1997). Dewey accordingly argues that there is ‘nothing to which education is subordinate save more education’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 49).

This implies that ‘the educational process has no end beyond itself’ (Dewey, 1916, p. 50) and that there cannot be an end to education when school ends. But how does this come about? According to Dewey, one important ingredient is encountering and living through gaps or interruptions – what Dewey calls indeterminate situations – where students can deliberate, inquire and use intelligent action to solve a problem more intelligently – not towards a fixed predetermined homogenous end, but open ended in different directions and towards different outcomes.

In line with Dewey, Sharon Todd describes that for education to be educative, aspects of what she calls disturbance and unknowingness are important. According to Todd, disturbance occurs: ‘not simply through the curriculum but through small, transformative moments that punctuate classroom life’ (Todd, 2014, p. 232). This uncertainty opens up for our own and others’ opportunities to become some-body and, in that sense, become transformative.

So, it is neither the child nor the content per se that is to be transformed. It is not about increasing knowledge or modifying behaviour. Instead, it is about teaching in such a way where the possibilities for a change in how we view the world, the society and ourselves occur. In this sense transformation is about the meaning of experience in relation to a future unknown or rather a future yet undecided. But where is the disturbance in physical education? Where are the interruptions in doing sports? Where is the indeterminacy in fitness instruction? And where are the transformative elements of physical activity facilitation?

As many colleagues have described over the years, physical education has been about sport techniques, behaviour modification in relation to physical activity, playing sport in ready-made packages within a movement culture of competitive sports (Kirk, 2009; Tinning, 2012; Ward & Quennerstedt, 2016). If we follow Dewey, these practices have, for some or even many students, been non-educative because they do not necessarily involve experiences that lead to the growth of further experience. An example of this is from Gavin Ward’s PhD thesis (2015) in which he describes how students in primary physical education in the UK often spend their PE classes endlessly queuing in a long line of children and sometimes hitting, but mostly missing, a tennis ball.

In many cases, physical education has also been what Dewey calls mis-educative, where practices privileging norms that prioritise white, male, heterosexual and fit bodies restrict the experiences of many. For example, Azzarito (2009) describes how the students in her study express a quite narrow gendered and racialized idea of ideal bodies in terms of shape, size and appearance that includes ‘pretty, active and ideally white’ (p. 19) students, while other shapes, sizes and appearances are marginalised. Students who do not fit these norms are accordingly offered experiences that restrict the growth of further experience, which means that physical education is potentially mis-educative.

Educative physical education is a physical education that leads to the growth of further experience, where educative elements are ongoing and in relation to a future. There are several good examples of this in the field. One is the work of Kim Oliver (Oliver, 2001; Oliver & Hamzeh, 2010; Oliver & Lalik, 2004), who over the years has worked to pedagogically create a more equitable physical education with girls. Oliver supports them to identify, critique and negotiate inequitable practices thus improving physical education. Another parallel example of educative physical education is offered by Enright and O’Sullivan (2010), where students are encouraged to negotiate the curriculum in terms of content and pedagogies. This involves a teacher asking questions and listening (Eimear in this case), encompassing genuine decision-making and moving beyond strict teacher/student roles with the clear ambition for the students to transform barriers by ‘naming inequities; broadening horizons; and change agency’ (p. 208).

From a Deweyan point of view, these examples are genuinely educative. They also align with a view of children and young people in education previously mentioned. In this sense, they support my argument of the open-endedness of education and that a reasonable aim for physical education
is more physical education in which different ways of being in the world as some-body are both possible and encouraged. What these two examples also highlight is the crucial role of teaching in order for physical education to become educational.

The art of teaching

Education always involves teaching. Teaching is also a position of power – the power to change and the power to preserve – a licence to mess with young people’s minds as they are becoming somebody. Teaching is one aspect of what makes education being about education. Note here that I am talking about teaching and not necessarily teachers, even if teaching often is authorised to teachers in education. If we, at least for now, accept my arguments about education and the view of the child, then teaching matters. But how does it matter, and for what?

Building on the works of Biesta (2013, 2016, 2017), the art of teaching can be seen as a relation where something is taught by some-one to some-body for certain purposes. For teaching to occur we accordingly need teachers, students, content as well as educational purposes. When Biesta (2017) tries to restore teaching in education he agrees with the critique of teaching understood as an act of control, where the teacher guides, what I have talked about here as the unfinished child, towards a small set of predefined (and often measurable) learning (but not always learning) outcomes. According to Biesta, teaching is then concerned with ‘what works’ and students become the objects of teachers’ intentions in terms of cause and effect.

In teaching understood as an act of control, teaching as instruction, as production, as conformity, as compliance and as delivering recipes for action become reasonable logics. This kind of teaching can be found in teaching described as imitation, as following certain rules, as instruction in relation to a fixed and correct norm (Quennerstedt, 2013).

However, teaching can, according to Biesta (2017), also be understood as the responsibility of bringing something to the educational situation that was not already there; something the students were not asking for going into the educational situation. In this sense, he resonates with (and uses) the work of Hannah Arendt, who argues that the essence of education is the introduction of newcomers and newness to the world. Arendt develops this idea in her book ‘The human condition’, where she talks about children as beginners bringing new beginnings to the world. This is not about the beginning of something, but of some-body, who is a beginner where: ‘the newcomer possesses the capacity to begin something anew’ (Arendt, 1958, p. 9). Arendt also draws attention to the idea of visiting as a specific way of acting and coming into being in a public space like education. Visiting is how we act with and amongst others in a plurality of familiar and unfamiliar beginnings. This involves meeting people other than oneself asking questions like: ‘how would you see the world if you saw it from my position’ (Ljunggren, 1999, pp. 55–56).

If we follow Arendt, the art of teaching is about fostering new beginnings in terms of always preserving newness by visiting and bringing something uniquely new to the educational situation. In this endeavour, teachers should constantly create new beginnings and thereby prepare children and young people to take responsibility for the world. However, teachers cannot control the forms the beginnings take, because as beginners pupils also bring something uniquely new to the situation. Instead, the teacher’s responsibility is to bring something unexpected, and in that lies the educative and transformative potential in terms of how pupils respond to teachers’ and other pupils’ beginnings (Biesta, 2013). Instead of controlling young people’s behaviour and knowledge development, teaching then becomes a responsibility to bring new beginners and new beginnings to education. Hence, I would argue that one of the major responsibilities in teaching is about judgements and making choices about what to bring, how and, not least, why.

The art of teaching is accordingly about asking questions regarding the why, what and how, questions concerning the content, purpose and relations in education. This brings me to the concept of didaktik, and Comenius who in 1657 wrote that didaktik ‘signifies the art of teaching’, which he developed rather as the foundations of the art of teaching. He further (not very modestly) added in his
book *Didactica magna* that didaktik involved ‘the art of teaching everybody everything – the whole art of teaching all things to all men [sic!], and indeed of teaching them with certainty, so that the result cannot fail to follow’ (1657, p. 5).³

Didaktik scholarship exists in many different forms, but often involves the questions:

…what, how and why, in terms of what and how teachers teach, what and how students learn and why this content or teaching is taught or learned. Questions such as who is teaching, who is learning, when and with whom are also relevant in this context. (Quennerstedt & Larsson, 2015, p. 567)

A central assumption in most didaktik theory is that education involves a range of different choices made in classrooms, gyms and schools, but also in politics and other areas of society. These choices are, for example, about the content of the teaching, the form of the teaching and the purposes of teaching. Teaching is thus, just as for Arendt and Biesta, understood as a political and moral act that should be explored in terms of judgement and its educational consequences.

Another central tenet is that education is understood as a relation between students, teachers, content, school and society at large. This is beautifully illustrated by my colleague Öhman (2014) Figure 1.

Education, and in my argument the art of teaching, is then located in-between student, teacher, content in relation to school and society, and it is in this context that the questions of what, how and why should be placed. As a consequence, discussing a how or a what without a why becomes empty, since the question of why gives education its direction.

The problem as I see it is that it is often the other way around. Many in the field, at least in the empirical studies I have been part of (e.g. Redelius, Quennerstedt, & Öhman, 2015), start in a what (and then the what of teaching), for example games, sports, dance or swimming, and then moves to a how (and then the how of teaching) in terms of sport techniques versus TGfU, or a follow-me pedagogy versus group work and peer-tutoring. It is only after that the question of why comes in – Why games? Why sport? Why dancing? Why group work? And a kind of vulgar-didaktik regarding educational purposes emerges that re-actively supplies answers like cooperation, fitness or tradition. It is almost as though physical education practice becomes a drama, or a spectacle, where the participants are part of upholding something that should look like physical education in terms of what and how. It looks like fitness training, but few students are physically active. It looks like competitive sports, but in a different logic-of-practice (Larsson & Quennerstedt, 2016; Ward & Quennerstedt, 2016). For both teachers and pupils, the challenge and the responsibility in the drama is then to play their role and play it well, to keep up the appearance of ‘effective’ PE.

![Figure 1](image-url)
So, let me return to the conference theme that my talk is connected to: transformative learning and teaching in physical education and sport pedagogy. I wonder: What should be transformed? In relation to what? Which part of the triangle should be transformed? The child?, The teacher?, The content?, Society?, The relation between the teacher and the child? When that is decided – how? The only way to even begin to answer this is by adding the purpose of education, the question of why, since the why gives direction in education.

The politics and practice of teaching requires choices to be made, non-choices to be made, and judgements to be made. The choice of not doing, for example, aesthetic activities, or not engaging in issues of social justice, is just as important as a choice of doing something like games, or student influence. However, according to Biesta (2013), the most important choices we make in relation to teaching are about the purpose of education. Because, as Biesta argues, it is when we have established the purpose that we can start discussing the content that students should engage in and how this content could be meaningfully presented. That requires engagement with the question why. But the purpose also provides the normative criteria for why we ought to value certain things above others in education.

At a more general educational level, reasonable educational purposes might, apart from different kinds of knowledge in a variety of subject areas, be democracy, human rights or social justice. These general purposes should of course also affect the purposes of physical education, and Daryl Siedentop argued over 20 years ago for a physical education with the purpose of valuing physical activity in terms of participation and a willingness to participate ‘in ways that are literate and critical’ (1996, p. 266). This involves being a knowledgeable mover also understanding and potentially changing structural inequalities. More recently, Cloes (2017), the president of AIESEP, highlighted the possibility of preparing physically educated citizens in terms of the promotion of physically active lifestyles. With these goals and other goals for physical education, such as more moderate to vigorous physical activity or indeed health, we have to ask ourselves what we mean by health, what we mean by a physically active lifestyle, or what we mean by, for example, social justice, in order to reasonably start discussing which content is best suited for this purpose and how it should be meaningfully presented. We accordingly need to deliberate and clarify the purposes of physical education, since the art of teaching is inseparably dependent on the purpose.

For me, the question is not foremost how physical education should become, for example, more socially just. Instead, social justice should be the starting point as a normative judgement about desirable change, and only then discussions about the how and the what of education should follow. We should not start with how physical education should be taught, or what teachers in physical education should teach in terms of activities. Rather, we have to start with the question of why – the educational purpose of physical education. In this way, teaching could assume the responsibility of being educative rather than non-educative or mis-educative, since it involves a continuous act of making judgements about what all pupils should be given the possibility to do and learn in relation to this purpose and, further, what we should teach and how in relation to the purpose.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, I want to stress that I am a critical optimist when it comes to physical education. I think that physical education matters. So, in order to engage with the question of how physical education can be educative, rather than mis-educative or non-educative, I will now return to my two main arguments and conclude with my thoughts about how we can embrace this educative potential.

**The only real sustainable aim for physical education is more physical education**

I have argued that with a certain view of the child as always being in a process of becoming and a view education as being educative, there can be no end to education in relation to a fixed endpoint, such as adulthood. Education does not end with the end of school, with hopes that this will endure
during the life course. In this sense, all of us, children and young people in school as well as adults, are always in a process of becoming physically educated. It is in this sense that physical education should be regarded as educative, and the end goal of physical education should not be proficiency in sport, not trying out many different activities, not learning sport techniques, not learning how to cooperate, or not more physical activity, even if these things could be part of PE practice. The end goal of physical education should instead be more education, *more physical education*, and thus the capacity for further physical education.

However, physical education as more physical education is risky (cf. Biesta, 2013). We do not know whether or when education happens. The outcome is unpredictable when we introduce new beginnings and new beginners in the process of education. However, I think that it is worth considering the alternative of a physical education without the E, without education.

**A focus on the art of teaching**

The art of teaching can, as I have argued, be seen as a relation where something is taught by someone to someone for certain purposes and thus fostering new beginnings. Focusing on the E in PE is therefore about reclaiming teaching as a continuous act of making professional judgements about the why(s), how(s) and what(s) of education. This together implies that teaching is about making judgements about what is educationally desirable, i.e. the purposes of education in terms of what to bring to the educational process.

If we follow Dewey, Arendt, Biesta or didaktik theory, teaching in physical education has the responsibility to engage students in practices that bring something unexpected, bringing newness not asked for. In this sense, transformative learning and teaching is not about changing the child or the young. It is instead about opening up different ways of being in the world and forming teaching so everyone’s beginnings are allowed to come into being. But what does this look like?

**What does it look like?**

As indicated initially, I see hope for physical education in, for example, activist, appreciative, paradoxical and participatory approaches (Enright, Hill, Sandford, & Gard, 2014; Enright & O’Sullivan, 2010; Larsson et al., 2014; Luguetti et al., 2017; Oliver & Hamzeh, 2010; Oliver & Kirk, 2016). Other apt examples are the work on meaningful physical education (Fletcher, Ni Chróinín, Price, & Francis, 2018; NiChróinín, Fletcher, & O’Sullivan, 2018), social justice (Azzarito, Macdonald, Dagkas, & Fisette, 2017), or pedagogical cases such as those introduced by Armour (2014). But also at a policy level in Australia and Scotland, new curricula show promise (Carse, Jess, & Keay, 2018; Jess, Atencio, & Thorburn, 2011; Macdonald, 2013; McCuaig, Quennerstedt, & Macdonald, 2013; Thorburn, 2017; Thorburn & Horrell, 2014). These examples are all examples of physical education practices embracing the view of children and young people in education that I have argued for. I can recommend reading some, if not all, these papers if you not already have done that.

All these examples are also illustrations of practices that take the purpose of education into consideration in similar ways that I have talked about here today. What all these scholars highlight is a physical education practice that is potentially *educative*. What they all seem to point towards, at least from my reading of the research, can be summarised in some interrelated ideas about physical education as more physical education that involve:

1. A pedagogy of becoming – which includes a view of the child as always being in a process of becoming physically educated.
2. A pedagogy of meaning – including a focus on meaningful experiences and the process of making new or revised meanings out of experience.
3. A pedagogy of hesitation – offering time for deliberation and reflection.
4. A pedagogy of interruption and discovery – bringing something new to education that involves uncertainty, curiosity and disturbance making movement as well as movement culture something to discover.

5. A pedagogy of critical inquiry – focusing on the understanding and challenging of taken for granted assumptions about ourselves and others.

6. A pedagogy of social justice – offering opportunities to change oppressive, unfair and unsustainable PE practices in school as well as in society.

7. A pedagogy of plurality – viewing physical education practice as open-ended in terms of different possibilities, different ways of being or diverse opportunities to be for example healthy, however these are construed.

In this sense, they all also acknowledge the art of teaching as an entirely indispensable part of education in the pedagogies of becoming, meaning, discovery, hesitation, inquiry, social justice and plurality.

But is the physical education I am talking about here transformative? Well, for me it depends on who or what we should transform. The child, the teachers, the content, the teaching, school, or society? Further, in relation to all these, transformation in relation to what? If by transformative we mean the transfer of predetermined knowledge and behaviour from one generation to the next in relation to a small set of predefined measurable outcomes, I would say no. If by transformative we mean transforming the child towards a fixed norm of adulthood, I also would say no. However, if transformative indicates transformation of the educational situation in which teaching embraces the responsibility of bringing something to the educational situations that the students have not asked for – then I say yes. In this sense, there is a potential to discuss and design transformative and genuinely pluralistic physical education practices.

**Take home messages**

Many of the things I have raised here today have previously been argued and illustrated by colleagues in the field, indeed by many of you present here today. What I have tried to do is to use educational theory and didaktik theory to bring this together in hopefully new and fruitful ways in relation to the topic of transformative learning and teaching. My take home messages are thus about the significant consequences of reclaiming the E in PE, which involves:

- Reclaiming a certain view of the child in education, which suggests that a reasonable goal for physical education is more physical education.
- Reclaiming the open-endedness of physical education, which involves acknowledging that movement and movement cultures should be recognised as something that should be discovered, rather than related to behaviour modification.
- Reclaiming the art of teaching in physical education, which is about being educative and making judgements about what to bring to the educational situation. We then must start with the purpose of education – the why – before deciding on the what and how.

We might disagree about the why of education (diversity and social justice, physical activity levels, sport, health, etc.) but let us instead agree to reclaim the E in PE and, as a consequence, to more seriously start deliberating – in policy, in research as well as in practice – the educative purposes of physical education. Because, for me, that is the position from which we should always begin to discuss and design transformative learning and teaching in physical education and sport pedagogy.
Notes

1. AIESEP - Association Internationale des Écoles Supérieures d’Éducation Physique (International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education).

2. According to Cranton and Taylor (2012), this is achieved through a process of critically exploring and questioning assumptions that we take for granted and also involves the possibility of changing oppressive, unfair or unsustainable practices (O’Sullivan, Morrell, & O’Connor, 2002). This is a form of transformative learning bell hooks (1994) have called transgressive.

3. I know that many people from English speaking countries find the didaktik concept strange and perhaps related to being didactic and offering little beyond ‘pedagogy’. However, in continental Europe and the Nordic countries the concept stands for an important research tradition with an interest in theories and practices of teaching and learning.

Disclosure statement

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References


