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Runner



The Journal of the Health and Physical Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association



Exploring Ways to Create Safer
School Communities for Gender
and Sexually Diverse Students

Get Outside, Wellness Awaits

Embracing the Interdisciplinary
Connection of Movement Between
High School Physical Education and
Drama Education

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

Runner

Volume 54, Number 1, 2023

Supporting the Well-Being of School Communities

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Editor's Message

Lisa Taylor

Welcome! Thank you for reading the 54th volume of *Runner*. The articles herein focus on a variety of topics that all centre on the theme, “Supporting the Well-Being of School Communities.” Alongside practical strategies that may assist physical and health education teachers in their classes, you will find theory that informs these strategies, as well as experiences that inspire. Whether through extracurricular activities, in-class opportunities, new ideas that connect to the curriculum or supporting student teachers, all of the authors offer inspiration for practice and increased support for the K-12 school community.

The past few years have been especially challenging for students, staff and school communities; I find myself wondering about what this school year and next school year will look like and how the previous three years may linger and affect teachers and students. While much is left unknown at the onset of any school year, what is known is the dedication of physical and health education teachers in Alberta, who continuously offer their best to their students, their colleagues and their school communities. You will find evidence of that within this volume—authors who share their passion and vision for the future.

Runner is always looking for passionate educators to share their expertise and experiences. If you find yourself reading along and thinking about a meaningful practice you have engaged in with your students, perhaps an experience that influenced your approach to teaching, new knowledge you have come across in conversations with colleagues, through professional development or perhaps postsecondary studies, or perhaps a game/activity or unit that you think other physical and health educators could benefit from learning about, please reach out! *Runner* features the voice of all those who support students—from inservice teachers, to administrators and area support, community partners, postsecondary instructors and researchers, and preservice teachers (to name a few). We want to hear from you! Please reach out to me at



lisamarie.taylor@ucalgary.ca if you would like to share your expertise in *Runner*.

I want to send out a special thank you to the authors who courageously share their hearts, best practice and aims for the future in this volume of *Runner*. Furthermore, a special thank you also goes out to the peer reviewers who graciously offered their time to further strengthen the excellent manuscripts submitted.

On behalf of the Health and Physical Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, thank you for all you do to support our students, our colleagues and our school communities. I hope this volume of *Runner* finds you well and offers you inspiration for what lies ahead.

Wishing you well on the journey.

Lisa

President's Message

Jodi Harding-Kuriger

What do you remember most about being a preservice teacher? Was it your practicum experiences? Or that incredible gift that your cooperative teacher shared with you? In reading this issue of *Runner*, my thoughts began to wonder and wander to preservice teachers. This issue is an absolute treasure trove of “research to practise” and practical applications for beginning health and physical education (HPE) teachers and seasoned experts! (Thank you to our editor, Lisa Taylor, for another exceptional issue!) And so, I invite you to engage in some unstructured continued professional development.

Step 1: Read through this insightful issue.

Step 2: Gift it to a student teacher, beginning teacher or expert HPE teacher in your life.

Step 3: Follow up with them to engage in continued and collaborative conversations about HPE in Alberta schools.

Let's share the Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) knowledge far and wide!

Be well.

Jodi



Sympathy, Empathy, Compassion and Identifying Psychological Hazards in Schools

Astrid Kendrick

In my previous work as a first-aid instructor, my students and I always spent the first hour of the course focused on teaching and learning the skills of noticing danger. “Fire, wire, gas, glass” was the mantra I taught them to chant, and they would walk around our sterile classroom checking for imaginary hazards including electrical wires, fires and broken glass, and sniffing the air for a possible gas leak.

This rehearsal of skills has a purpose, one of which is related to emotional activation. Noticing a hazard helps to activate human emotions, and emotions are integral to alert our cognitive systems to pay attention to their local situation (Feldman Barrett 2017). For example, the fear response normally begins with the physical freezing of a person, even if momentarily, so that the brain can assess the situation and prime its autonomic nervous system for the best response to the stimuli (LeDoux 1996), be it fight or flight. First-aid training teaches us to take advantage of the momentary freeze to alert the brain to the potential physical hazards that might still be present.

Most of my first-aid students were not construction workers; they were high school students or office professionals. Over time, we started to discuss more realistic hazards that they might find in their actual places of learning or employment. Paper cuts, wet floors, slipping down stairs and bear attacks were the most common concerns. To adapt, my hazard mantra became “fire, wire, gas, glass, look up, look down, look all around” to help students with noticing other possible mechanisms of injury.

Unlike the physical hazards that carpenters and electricians may encounter on a construction site, teachers, school leaders and other educational workers are

likely to run into emotional hazards. In my research into compassion fatigue and burnout, I have been looking at psychological hazards that result from performing emotional labour at work (Kendrick 2022). Specifically, educators may provide crisis or trauma work with children and youth experiencing or recounting an experience with a traumatic event. Performing this form of work requires a care response, not a fear response, involving the activation of sympathy, empathy and compassion (Hedge and Mackenzie 2012; Sinclair et al 2017).

Sympathy, or the superficial recognition of the distress of another individual (Sinclair et al 2017), encourages humans to stop and consider the situation. Often disregarded, this emotion is important because noticing that a person is in distress is the first step toward helping to relieve the source of that stress. Sympathy prompts the individual to ask, “Are you OK?” Although without empathy or compassion, sympathy often ends after simply asking the question.

Empathy is the act of deep listening to a person’s response to the question, “Are you OK?” and requires the helper to take the time and attention to investigate and understand the response of the person in distress (Sinclair et al 2017; Canadian Mental Health Association 2022). Unlike sympathy, which will prompt the helper to disengage from a situation if the individual responds “yes,” an empathetic helper notes the nonverbal signals from the distressed individual and asks further questions to elicit a more nuanced response. The helper might say, I can see that you have been crying or I overheard some other students saying something about your shirt to prompt a better description of the cause of the stress.

Compassion is noticing, feeling and acting on the suffering of others (Stellar et al 2015). This emotion prompts the helper to act to alleviate the pain of the person in distress. After empathetic listening, a compassionate helper works with the individual to address the cause of their stress. This work is the most intense, requiring ongoing support and resources, as the cause of the distress is likely complex, multifaceted, not easily solved and may involve multiple interventions by many people. However, the emotion of compassion provides the long-term fortitude needed by the helper to assist the individual in distress, leading to compassion satisfaction, or the joy and pleasure of providing care to others (Figley 1995).

Following through with the work needed on feeling these emotions is slowed or stopped by burnout or compassion fatigue. The symptoms of compassion fatigue include a changed worldview to negative, helplessness, hopelessness and disassociation from the individual in distress (Dubois and Mistretta 2018). The main symptoms of burnout are physical fatigue, mental and emotional exhaustion, feeling unacknowledged or unimportant, and depersonalization (Maslach and Jackson 1981). These symptoms can hinder a caring individual from acting on their emotions.

At the level of sympathy, a person with compassion fatigue or burnout may “turn a blind eye” or not see the suffering of the individuals in their care. They take the “I’m OK” answer and refuse to engage further, despite evidence that the individual is clearly in distress. Rather than asking further questions to understand, the helper turns off the empathetic response knowing that they have neither the time nor the resources to spend on sorting out the cause of the individual’s stress thinking that “the system is under-resourced, and I’ll never be able to help this person get what they need.” Further, even if they listen closely and deeply, they lack the physical and emotional energy to act on their compassion with the individual. The fatigued helper may think, “I tried to help someone in a similar situation before and it didn’t work then, and it won’t work now. I don’t have the energy to try again.”

Fortunately, sympathy, empathy and compassion are not extinguished by compassion fatigue or burnout but simply temporarily muffled by stress and circumstance. Below are ways to build back these emotions:

1. Encourage rest for fatigued or burned out workers. Rest includes following a regular sleeping schedule, but it also includes taking weekends off from grading papers or planning lessons, scheduling a reasonable time when work is done for the evening, and using personal days as needed. It also includes

de-stigmatizing personal leaves for mentally or emotionally exhausted educators who need a break from work and welcoming them back once they return to work.

2. Ensure all adults who work in schools know the resources and supports available to students in distress. Educational workers are not psychologists or social workers, so they should know how to refer their students for further help, even knowing that this help may take time to arrive. Individuals are not able to take on all the emotional and mental work required to support the healing of students who have experienced traumatic events.
3. Schedule and take breaks throughout the workday to build workplace buoyancy (Martin and Marsh 2008) or a daily resilience to workplace challenges. Breaks do not look the same for everyone. For some, a break is a five-minute walk around the school by themselves; for others, it is enjoying a boisterous lunch in the staff room.
4. Time might be the most valuable resource in a school day. If planning to use the time of others, ensure the resource is used well. When planning for your own time, be realistic and lean on your support network to carve out what you need.
5. Accept support from others in your professional, friend and family networks. If other people are asking you if you are OK, take the cue to notice your own mental and emotional state.
6. Investigate the possibilities for a longer leave of absence and try out other career, job or workplace options.

Schools are workplaces with unique emotional hazards for adults who have commitment to caring for the children and youth who attend each day. Understanding sympathy, empathy and compassion of adults, as well as identifying emotional hazards on the job, can help to build a stronger and healthier school culture. For more information, check out the HEARTcare for Educators website at www.heartcareeducators.ca.

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Before taking on her current role as director of field experience (community-based pathway) at the Werklund School of Education, Astrid Kendrick, EdD, was a K-12 classroom teacher for 19 years, specializing in physical education and English/language arts. Her current research focus is on compassion fatigue, burnout and emotional labour in Alberta education workers and improving online learning through integrating podcasts. She is a member of the advisory circle for the Alberta Teachers' Association Women in Leadership Committee and is the cochair of the Health Promoting Schools Collaborative for the southern Alberta region. She was also the editor of *Runner*, for three years.

GO! Run: Creating Gender Inclusive Physical Activity Opportunities for Girls and LGBTQ2S+ Students

Ruva Sharara, Krista Trim, Katie Mahon and Jamie Anderson

Not every woman or girl experiences sport in the same way. Even if they share the same gender, other aspects of identity also impact how people experience sport differently. To achieve true gender equity, we must address the needs of women and girls who are racialized, have a disability, are LGBTQ2S+, are from low socioeconomic backgrounds and other marginalized intersections (Canadian Women and Sport 2022, para 9)

Studies continue to emerge about the participation of girls in sports, including their reduced involvement over time. For instance, Canadian Women and Sport (2016) report that if a girl has not participated in sport by the age of 10, she only has a 10 per cent chance of being physically active into adulthood. One in three girls experience additional barriers to participation related to low confidence, negative body image, perceived lack of skill, poor perceptions of belonging and not feeling welcomed into sport spaces (Canadian Women and Sport 2020). There also remain numerous barriers to inclusion for gender diverse youth as only one in 10 children who identify as LGBTQ2S+ have ever participated in physical activities that involve a coach (Veale et al 2015). Girls only and gender inclusive programs offer a promising strategy to increase the opportunities available to girls and gender diverse youth to meet Canada's 24-Hour Movement Guidelines (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology 2021). Gender inclusive programming also allows for the opportunity to address issues specific to girls and emphasize aspects of participation that are most important to them. Giving girls and gender diverse youth the space to be active may be enough to enrich the experience of participating in physical activity, especially for individuals who perceive themselves as lacking physical competence.

Positive experiences in physical activity can contribute to a sense of empowerment for participants and increased agency and comfort with their bodies (Canadian Women

and Sport 2012). Confidence and motivation are necessary in establishing a lifelong physical literacy journey, and active participation can contribute to increased self-esteem and positive self-concept among women and girls. We recognize that participation in sport is most beneficial to girls and gender-diverse youth when offered equitably. Gender equity in recreation requires the fair distribution of funds, resources and decision-making power to all genders without discrimination (Canadian Women and Sport 2020). However, gender equity is not possible if we do not also address other intersecting forms of inequality, such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and more.

According to Sport Canada's "Sport Participation in Canada" report, minoritized girls and women are the most underrepresented in the Canadian sport and recreation system (Ifedi 2005). Black, Indigenous, and women and girls of colour experience additional barriers to accessing sport spaces, including racism, Islamophobia, limited accommodations for familial responsibilities, and lack of income accessibility (Joseph and Lavallee 2021). Therefore, one single approach or solution will not always work for all women, girls and gender-diverse folks. As educators, coaches and physical activity leaders, it is necessary to attend to the myriad ways in which girls and gender diverse youth experience barriers to enjoyable movement opportunities.

Creating Equitable and Inclusive Physical Activity Environments

We believe that all girls and gender diverse youth deserve to have access to the positive health outcomes and benefits of physical activity. To increase access to these positive outcomes, educators, coaches and school leaders need to address the many barriers to participation that girls and gender-diverse youth experience in sport and

recreation. At a school level, equitable access can be prioritized through eliminating cuts in school sports, ensuring opportunities for all participants to learn, grow and develop (Sulz et al 2021). Offering all gender physical activity opportunities and not only gender-segregated opportunities can also offer greater choice for students, particularly for those whose identities exist outside of the gender binary. Although school infrastructure can be difficult to change, it is important that participants have access to changing room spaces and single-occupancy spaces that feel safe for them to use and change in. Sometimes this requires creativity from school administrators to make use of existing spaces, while also advocating to the school jurisdiction for dedicated spaces in the longer term and design of new schools.

Supportive school and jurisdictional policies can also address barriers to participation. Flexible gym-strip options, rather than specific requirements for dress, can reduce financial barriers to participation while allowing participants to have agency in their experience. It is important to recognize that while some clothing may appear unconventional for physical activity, students often choose to wear clothing that makes them feel safe or affirmed in their identity. Policies that allow transgender and gender-diverse students to participate in gender-segregated sports can also reduce barriers for LGBTQ2S+ youth. There is already an existing Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA) policy to address this, but greater support is needed at the jurisdiction and school levels to translate the policy into standard practice. In May 2015, after more than a year of deliberations, the ASAA board passed a policy allowing transgender athletes to participate in gender-segregated sports according to their gender identity (Hare 2016). In addition, *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Policy A* within that document states that “a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity will not be considered a factor in determining eligibility to participate in inter-member school competition by the Compliance Officer or the Appeal Committee” (ASAA 2021, 29).

Last, if our goal is to promote inclusive environments in sports and physical activity, we need to shift our own practices to promote an inclusive activity climate. We can start by emphasizing participation and acceptance before skill and effort, to ensure that students can feel a sense of belonging to grow and develop their skills. We know that it is essential to develop a positive relationship with movement so that girls and gender diverse youth feel motivated to move throughout their life, so we want to

prioritize fun as an equally important outcome of physical activity and sport. This does not mean that we do away with competition altogether, but rather we ensure that our classes or programs are designed to welcome different levels of competition in addition to cooperative opportunities. We also want to carefully monitor activities to ensure that each participant has a fair chance to participate and develop their skills and no one is left sitting on the sidelines.

To be a health-promoting environment for all participants, it is necessary to reinforce the social and emotional benefits of moving and disrupt the associations between physical activity and appearance. Physical activity leaders should not comment on bodily appearances but should create an environment that celebrates participation and recognizes that all bodies are good bodies that move in amazing ways (Pausé 2019). Even when we think we are giving a compliment, we might be reinforcing biases or making participants feel pressured to maintain a certain appearance (Tingle 2020). Sport is an incredible opportunity for girls and gender diverse youth to build positive relationships with their bodies. Weight-centred health promotion is often rooted in biases and negative values about body weights and sizes. It is important to reflect on the types of weight biases that we are surrounded by and have learned. Weight bias can harm participants and has been associated with a whole host of negative health outcomes, including anxiety, depression and issues with body image (Alberga et al 2016). Microaggressions can be unintentional but still impact participants. By avoiding stereotypes (negative and positive) and challenging our own biases, we can celebrate each student individually!

You can get to know your participants better by using the All About Me sheets (Ever Active Schools 2021, 10-13) and modelling the use of pronouns and self-identification. The All About Me sheets offer an opportunity to learn about the unique strengths, interests and needs of each participant so that you can best support them. As you learn more about your students, you can also ensure that the visuals, posters and resources that you are using to support learning reflect the diversities and differences of your group, while also teaching participants about different ways of being in the world. We can also turn to resources within our communities that can provide support and positive mentorship to students. Local women and sports community groups and local LGBTQ2S+ pride organizations can be excellent partners in promoting change within your school jurisdiction.

GO! Run Clubs and Other Gender Inclusive Opportunities

To support schools in promoting inclusive spaces in sports and physical activity, Ever Active Schools has partnered with the Alberta Medical Association to create the GO! Run, a girls only run club. Through GO! Run, we seek to close the gap so girls and gender-diverse youth can access the critical physical, social and emotional benefits of participation, including increased school connection, positive development, improved grades, and better educational and employment outcomes (Greenspan, Griffith and Watson 2019). GO! Run is a branch of the Alberta Medical Association's Youth Run Club (AMA YRC) that was created to support and engage more girls in physical activity directly. The AMA YRC is a partnership between Ever Active Schools and the Alberta Medical Association and is now in its ninth year.

In 2017, GO! Run started as a pilot project, and we have been seeing continued success as we enter the fifth year of the program. GO! Run will always remain a free, fun and flexible club—*flexible* being the key adjective here. We officially relaunched our GO! Run programming to ensure that we also intentionally support gender and sexually diverse students as we continue to see similar barriers among students who belong to the LGBTQ2S+ community. We also offer a revamped handbook, which includes a new goal-setting worksheet, updated language and talking tips (Ever Active Schools 2021). There is also a deeper dive into gender equity and an evidence-based rationale for girls only programming. Included within the coaching handbook are running games and our All About Me sheets resource.

While GO! Run may be the program's name, who are we to say what works best for you? We do not want coaches or participants to be worried about only being able to participate in the club as a running program. The club is intended to be flexible, and we encourage teachers and coaches to adapt the club to best reflect the needs of your school context. At your first practice, you can have the participants give some ideas about what they would like their club to look like. It is in our experience that offering voice and choice in participation will also support the retention of participants. It might be a run club, it could be a walking club, it could be a GO! dance club—all under the GO! Run umbrella.

It is important when creating girls only opportunities to think about intersecting identity factors and how those can play a role in girls' participation in sport. Creating

gender inclusive and culturally appropriate programming can help to bridge the gap in promoting racialized girls' participation in sport and physical activity. Programming that embraces and celebrates gender diversity will also allow youth who identify as part of the LGBTQ2S+ community a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment to participate in sport and physical activity. GO! Run is a great way to start the conversation about gender equity in your school community and make an investment in the well-being of girls and gender diverse youth.

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Ruva Sharara completed a bachelor of science degree in kinesiology with a minor in psychology at the University of Calgary. In numerous roles, she promotes physical activity in diverse populations, including children with disabilities and individuals living with and beyond cancer. At Ever Active Schools, she continues to pursue this goal through various projects, including assisting in Alberta Medical Association Youth Run Clubs and facilitating job skills programs for youth working in the recreational field. Ruva enjoys spending time with her family and friends, video editing and photography. Ruva hopes to continue promoting health and wellness in the medical field as a physician.



Krista Trim is a health and wellness consultant with Ever Active Schools, and to her that is just a fancy title for doing fun things across the province! Krista's portfolio of work includes leading our resources, and co-coordinating the AMA Youth Run Club and GO! Run portfolios of work. She is passionate about the work as it relates to girls and women because growing up she saw first-hand the importance of girls only opportunities and how there really are places for girls and women to grow, learn and flourish.



Katie Mahon works for Ever Active Schools (EAS) as the assistant director, equity and inclusion. She is passionate about health and well-being and working toward dismantling barriers that limit access to health and well-being for children, youth and communities as well as promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within and beyond the EAS organization.



Jamie Anderson works part-time as a health and wellness consultant with Ever Active Schools and spends the rest of his time as a doctoral student in the Werklund School of Education at the University of Calgary. During his time at Ever Active Schools, he has supported the Miyomahchihowin (in good health) portfolio aimed to connect youth with impactful training, credit earning and employment opportunities. He is committed to reducing barriers to well-being for young people through both his research and practice.

Exploring Ways to Create Safer School Communities for Gender and Sexually Diverse Students

Kelsey Fahie

Canadian school communities are not safe for all students. Schools can be places of change or conformity, where students learn both implicit and explicit norms while they acclimate to their perceived place in society (Little 2016). Because schools play such a key role in growth and development, it is essential that students are provided with opportunities to explore their personal identities and perceived sense of self, free from bias and judgment. The purpose of this article is to support educators by sharing feedback from students and offering practical steps that they can take to realize safer schools for students who identify as gender and sexually diverse.

The physical and health education spaces are areas in which growth and development concepts are explored, and as such, PHE Canada, in collaboration with Ann Travers, from Simon Fraser University, took on the initiative to further study physical and health education from the experiences of gender and sexually diverse students through the SPIRIT Project (PHE Canada 2022). From this project, it was made clear that 2SLGBTQ+ students experience isolation, discrimination and harassment in school. In order for students to conduct critical self-exploration in a harm-reduction setting, educators and school administrators must first create an environment where it is safer for students to explore their sense of self, which includes an understanding of their gender and sexuality. When adopting an antioppressive lens, it is understood that the term *safe* space ignores the inherent intersectionality within each individual and does not recognize that what constitutes a safe space for one person, may not be completely safe for another.¹ As such, the term *safer* is used as opposed to safe. Therefore, educators can take steps to create safer spaces where cognizant efforts have been made to adjust and improve the space to become more welcoming and accepting for all students.

For the majority of gender and sexually diverse students, the school environment remains an unsafe space for them to learn and grow. Egale Canada's Still in Every Class in Every School climate survey on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Canadian schools, found that 78 per cent of 2SLGBTQ+ students in Canada have identified at least one place at their school that was unsafe for them (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021). From the student perspective, the school environment proves to be a space in which the majority do not feel fully safe. However, research conducted by Taylor et al (2015) from *Egale Canada's Every Teacher Project on LGBTQ-Inclusive Education in Canada's K-12 Schools*, which focuses on educators' perceptions of school safety, found that 72 per cent of teacher respondents believed their school to be safe (28 per cent) or somewhat safe (44 per cent) for gender and sexually diverse students. Since the school is one of the most important social institutions for children and youth, the discrepancy between student and educator perceptions of safety is alarming and unacceptable, and therefore, by analyzing theoretical and practical concepts, educators can work to understand the realities of 2SLGBTQ+ student safety at school by consulting wise practices regarding how they can work to make the school a safer place physically, socially and emotionally, for each and every student.

Recognizing Students as Knowledge Holders with Intersecting Identities

Before change can occur, educators are encouraged to engage in critical self-reflection of their unconscious biases. They also must assess the level of inclusivity and accessibility their school environment offers to students identifying as gender and sexually diverse, using trauma and violence-informed approaches (Government of Canada 2018). Patel and Travers (2021) encourage

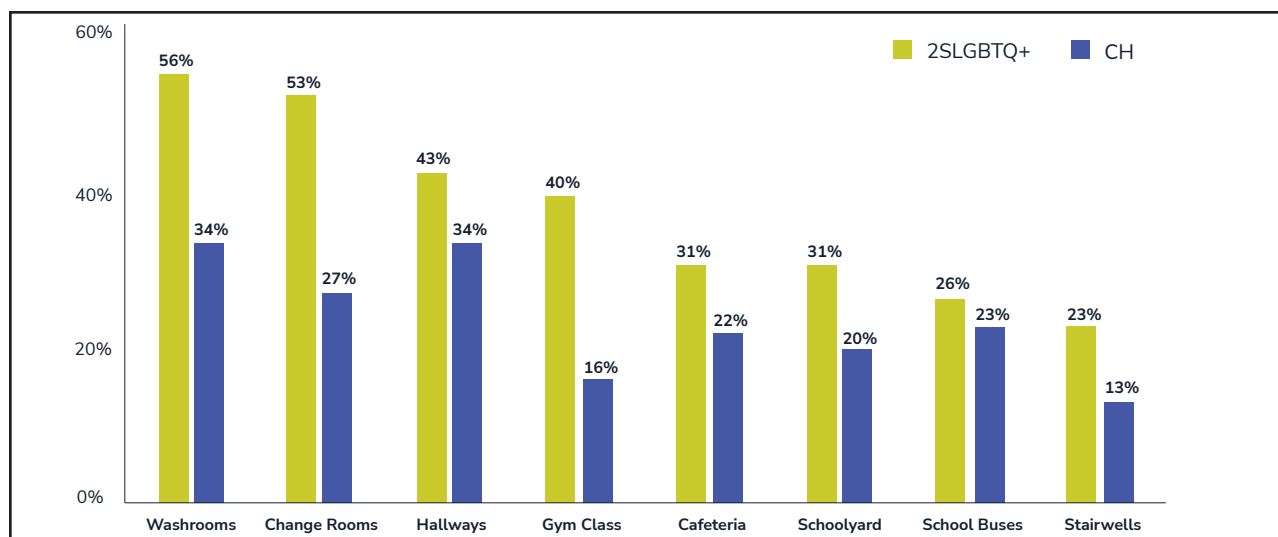


Figure 1. Unsafe Areas for 2SLGBTQ Students by 2SLGBTQ+ and Cisgender Heterosexual Students (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021, 73)

educators to consider what implicit biases, values or beliefs they carry with them that could be considered a barrier to inclusion in school-based settings. To do this, educators should conduct their own research into the dynamic social culture in schools, including becoming familiar with the acceptable and unacceptable norms and behaviours used in social settings. When it comes to learning about current culture and behaviours, Patel and Travers (2021) note that “it is important for educators to find the right balance between amplifying student voices and adults taking ample responsibility to effectively address barriers” (p 4). This means that while students are knowledge holders, it is unethical to ask students to represent the entire 2SLGBTQ+ community.

When establishing inclusive and welcoming spaces in the school environment, one must adopt an intersectional lens. Intersectionality is the understanding that every individual is multidimensional, in that each person has many identities that intersect, and the specific experience of an individual differs depending on how much power and privilege is associated with their identity (Patel and Travers 2021). For example, Patel and Travers (2021) note,

a racialized, queer, non-binary immigrant has a different experience than a white, queer, non-binary person with birthright citizenship. Although they both share the same gender and sexual identities, their respective racial and citizenship privileges will produce dissimilar lived experiences. Therefore, both individuals in this instance will have differential needs. (p 7)

Educators and school administrators have a professional duty and the opportunity to be proactive in creating safer spaces to ensure 2SLGBTQ+ students are included, welcomed and able to explore the various intersections of their identities without fear for their physical, social or emotional safety. The wise practices that educators can consult to support physical, social and emotional safety in school are outlined below.

Physical Safety (Structural)

When analyzing the school from a structural perspective, many physical spaces are deemed unsafe by 2SLGBTQ+ students. Safety in physical spaces can be assessed in terms of level of exposure, opportunity for harassment or bullying, the presence or lack of potential witnesses or authority figures, and the type of activity associated with the place, such as change rooms (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021). Figure 1 from Peter, Campbell and Taylor (2021) depicts the percentage of students surveyed, both in the 2SLGBTQ+ community and those who identify as cisgender and heterosexual, and the areas in the school that they deem unsafe.

This analysis demonstrates that there is a need to create safer physical spaces within the school for 2SLGBTQ+ students, who experience harassment in school spaces at a higher level than cisgender and heterosexual students (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021). The following points highlight wise practices that schools can use to create safer physical spaces:

- Create universal design of facilities to supplement sex-segregated facilities with all-gender facilities to provide private changing spaces for all students, rather than

singling out or isolating students (Travers and Reed 2021).

- Ensure that there is tangible 2SLGBTQ+ culture that is visible in classrooms (like positive space stickers, posters, pride flags, books/magazines and 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum) (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021).
- Allow students to participate in movement-based activities without changing, as the requirement to change into physical activity clothing (for example, shorts, T-shirt) deters many 2SLGBTQ+ students who wish to avoid the change room space (Patel and Travers 2021).
- Advocate for all-gender change rooms with stalls, so that physical activity can become more comfortable and accessible for all students. Speak with school administration or school board officials to see how funding could be provided to address these structural barriers (Patel and Travers 2021).
- Discourage gender-segregated physical education classes, including co-ed classes. The term *co-ed* is problematic because it validates the existence of two genders (male and female), while invalidating those who are nonbinary. Use all-gender classes.

Social Safety (Interpersonal)

Educators have a duty to create social environments in which gender and sexually diverse students can feel safe to express all facets of their identities. Being able to see one's identity positively reflected in school is an important principle of inclusive education, one which contributes to the overall well-being of 2SLGBTQ+ students (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021). As per federal Bill C-16, which is an amendment to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the *Criminal Code* to include gender identity and gender expression to be protected from discrimination, it is the duty of educators to ensure that the social spaces that exist in schools are welcoming and inclusive, and facilitate positive peer-to-peer interactions (Egale Canada 2017). To support this, Peter, Campbell and Taylor (2021) noted that a fundamental principle of inclusive education is that schools need to work to ensure that students from marginalized populations feel valued, welcome and respected at school, by seeing themselves represented visibly in schools, in curriculum and in schoolwide events and activities. Additionally, through the development and implementation of 2SLGBTQ+ inclusive policies and antiharassment and bullying policies, schools can establish

environments that facilitate social acceptance and inclusion, while creating spaces for positive peer interaction leading to increased social connectedness. An important aspect of school attachment and belonging for 2SLGBTQ+ students relates to socialization and the need to interact with others who share gender and sexual identities and experiences (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021). The following points highlight wise practices that schools can use to create safer social spaces:

- Educate students on all existing antiharassment and antidiscrimination policies protecting 2SLGBTQ+ students and communicate clear support by encouraging them to disclose any harassment or discrimination they experience at school with a trusted educator/school administrator (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021).
- Explicitly ensure the protection of 2SLGBTQ+ students and educators in school policies and codes of conduct with clear definitions of harassment and discrimination based on attraction, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (Egale Canada 2020).
- Set the standard at the beginning of a semester by clearly identifying behaviours that are encouraged and those that will not be tolerated. These behaviours include, but are not limited to lesbophobic, biphobic, homophobic, transphobic and queerphobic comments, body shaming and body comparisons. Because group norms are best cocreated, educators need to put time aside to develop and set expectations with students (Patel and Travers 2021).
- If possible, encourage and honour friend requests for enrollment in physical education classes, as students report that having their friends in the same class was helpful for their feelings of belonging and connection (Patel and Travers 2021).
- Encourage and advocate for the creation of clubs and programs that will provide 2SLGBTQ+ students with safer social spaces that facilitate inclusion and discourage othering, isolation and exclusion, such as all-gender physical activity programs and physical education classes, and gender and sexuality alliances.

Emotional Safety (Intrapersonal)

Educators are important allies for gender and sexually diverse students, since they have the power to influence, guide and create secure spaces where students can feel comfortable exploring their emotions. Peter, Campbell and Taylor (2021) noted that psychological well-being

focuses on self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth, and educators can work to cultivate environments where students can foster psychological and emotional well-being. As youth develop, identifying and becoming comfortable with one’s identity, values, beliefs, interests and emotions is vital to creating one’s sense of self. Peter, Campbell and Taylor (2021) note that when students are prevented, discouraged or denied the right to live according to one’s gender identity, it can have a large impact on school attachment. While feelings of emotional safety are only one contributor to overall mental health and well-being, alarming statistics from Egale Canada’s report *Still in Every Class in Every School*, and Peter, Campbell and Taylor (2021) as seen in Figure 2 below, illustrate that the majority of gender and sexually diverse students report that the state of their mental health ranges from moderate to languishing at school.

Working to create inclusive and welcoming, safer spaces for students to explore their emotions, as well as trusting their emotions with others, can contribute to increased feelings of acceptance and self-worth, and, in turn, improving one’s overall mental health and psychological well-being. The following points highlight wise practices

that educators can use to create safer emotional spaces for students:

- Ensure 2SLGBTQ+ curricular content is a regular feature of classroom teaching (for example, include same-sex relationships in examples, study 2SLGBTQ+ historical figures and philanthropists and so on) and meaningfully includes a wide range of 2SLGBTQ+ identities, experiences and perspectives, and the intersections of topics and identities. Base your teachings on the inclusive principle that students are supported when they see themselves reflected in the curriculum (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021).
- Actively and visibly enact your allyship. It is not always known to educators which students identify as being a part of the 2SGLBTQ+ community, so it is important to demonstrate allyship through your words and actions (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021).
- Fill your classroom with books written by 2SLGBTQ+ authors about emotional safety and psychological well-being, and cultivating a positive sense of self so that 2SLGBTQ+ students see representation and have the choice to engage in personal learning. Similarly, provide students with a suggested list of films, documentaries,

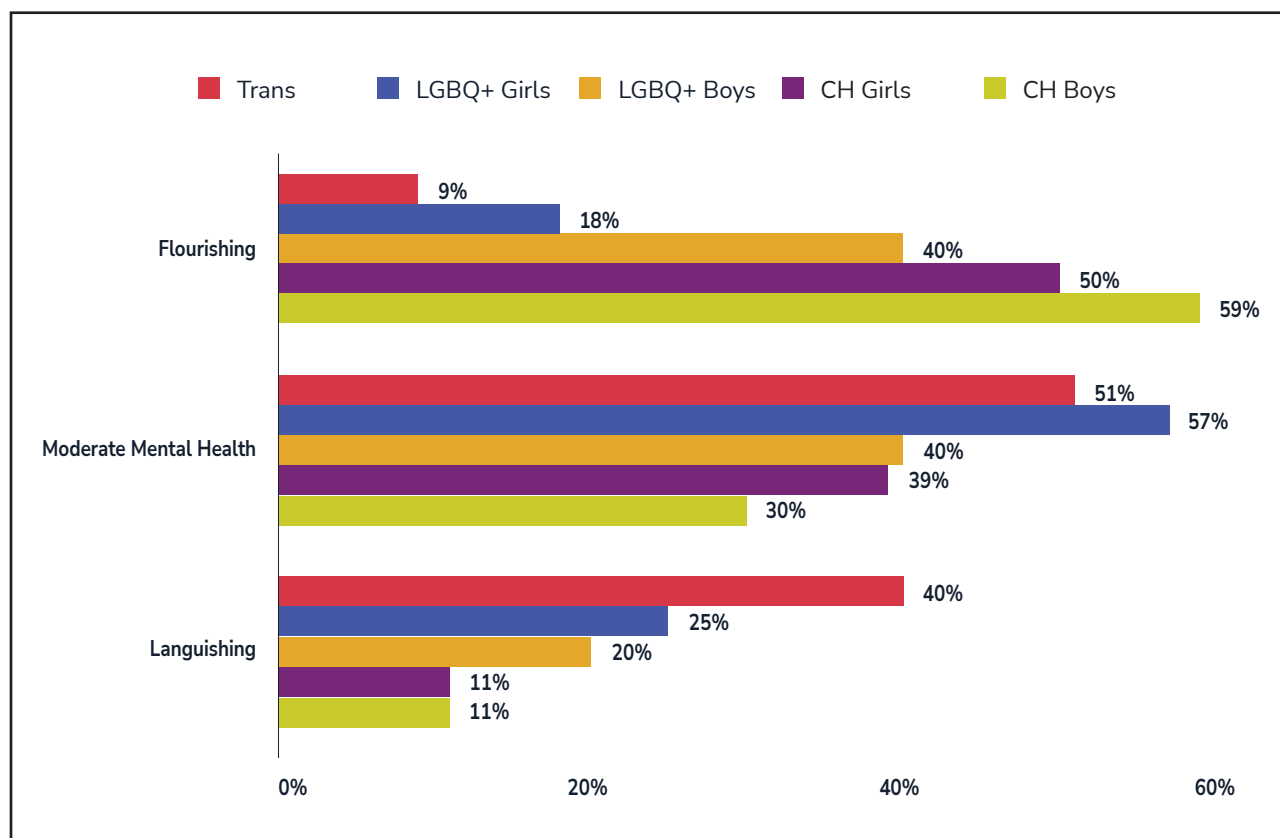


Figure 2. Positive Mental Health and Well-Being² (Peter, Campbell and Taylor 2021, 103)

authors, directors, musicians, artists and researchers that they could consult throughout their journeys of self-acceptance, self-love and self-discovery.

- Use inclusive language at all times. Avoid using sexist/misogynistic/outdated language to describe physical activities (for example, say “modified push-up” instead of “girl push-up”). At the beginning of a semester, introduce yourself with your name and pronouns, then ask students their pronouns and whether or not they would like to go by the name listed on the class list or another name (to avoid using dead names, which are assigned names at birth that a student chooses to no longer use to self-identify) (Patel and Travers 2021).
- Activities that involve running and jumping can induce feelings of gender dysphoria for some 2SLGBTQ+ students, as these activities can be a reminder of the various parts of their developing bodies that they are uncomfortable with (for example, breasts, penis and testicles) (Patel and Travers 2021). These types of activities can also feel unsafe for those who bind and/or tuck their genitals. Educators can offer alternative activities to evade feelings of gender dysphoria or physical harm, and offer student choice by encouraging students to engage in self-assessment to enhance educational safety, which will help to inform educators about the ways in which students feel comfortable moving their bodies, because if a student chooses not to engage in the instructed activity due to feeling of gender dysphoria, it should not be reflected in their grade (Patel and Travers 2021).

Conclusion

The school is an important social institution where students should be encouraged to explore the varying facets of their identities to form their overall sense of self. Educators play a crucial role in creating and fostering safer environments in the school where students feel included, welcomed and accepted physically, socially and emotionally. Educators must work to identify and unlearn harmful unconscious biases, and take an intersectional approach to creating a safer school environment. While students are the primary knowledge holders when it comes to current culture and norms, and some enjoy having the opportunity to share this knowledge, students should not be expected to bear the burden of educating the educators or fellow students. Therefore, it is up to educators to conduct personal research and engage in professional development opportunities so that they can best support *all* of their students. To show your support and work to

become a better ally, remember to ask questions, be respectful and open-minded, amplify student voices, exercise allyship, advocate for safer spaces, and continue to engage in lifelong learning. For more information and additional resources, check out www.phecanada.ca/activate/gender-equity.

Notes

1. M Davis, personal communication, 2022.
2. In the graph, CH refers to individuals who identify as cisgender and heterosexual.

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Kelsey is honoured to have worked alongside many knowledgeable gender and sexually diverse individuals through the SPIRIT Project, and to bring their shared personal and professional insights to the forefront as the lead, Programs and Resources for PHE Canada. For more information on the SPIRIT Project, see <https://phecanada.ca/activate/gender-equity/gender-diverse>.

Running Out of Your Comfort Zone: Connecting Blackfoot Youth to Culture Through Running

Andrea True Joy Fox (Pi'kssipitaakkii)

In this article, I share my experience coaching cross-country running and how movement through the sport of running can support the wellness of adolescence. I will also share how I nurtured cultural connections for the Blackfoot youth I coached through running and mentorship.

Cross-Country for Growth and Community

One of the most pervasive beliefs that nurtures my growth and development as an educator is that to grow I must step out of my comfort zone and embrace new experiences. When I returned from teaching Grade 1 to teach middle school, I was asked to coach the cross-country team (my sports were basketball and volleyball). With no experience coaching cross-country running, I said yes to this new, exciting and scary opportunity! I thrive when I am open to new experiences and the unfamiliar, even if it is scary, intimidating and full of the unknown. I decided that if I was going to coach running, I had to experience running. I had to learn how to run. Although I had not yet decided when I would start running with the student athletes, I knew that my moment to begin would arrive. The first cross-country run we attended was the Yellow Ribbon Run—a suicide awareness and prevention community run.

It was a cold, rainy September morning, and the bus provided a dry, warm haven for the coaches and support staff while the students ran the race. As the student athletes were getting set to run, the organizers invited me to join the run. They told me I would automatically take first place in my category because no one was registered in my category. Never one to shy away from winning or taking home some prizes, I was convinced.

I was so glad that I was dressed to run that morning: track pants, hoodie and runners. Once the race marshal

waved the flag, we were off! I felt good moving my body for the first kilometre, keeping in mind that this was a five-kilometre run with muddy roads and one big, steep hill to climb. As I climbed what felt like a mountain, I was slipping and sliding and eventually fell. A couple of student athletes running at my pace were also attempting to get up the hill. Sinking in the mud with the hard rain in our eyes and no end in sight, we eventually made it to the top, and boy did it feel good. I told myself if I could get over that hill, I could get to the finish line.

Something I have learned from running is how much mental work is involved and how you can have some amazing self-talk, especially when you need to convince your body to push through the discomfort and fatigue that can set in. My lungs were burning as I was not in running condition, and I was sweating hard, courtesy of my hoodie. Every runner knows that you do not run in a hoodie no matter how cold it is! Lesson learned. I was dehydrated, my legs were sore and I struggled to envision myself crossing the finish line. As we approached the last kilometre, I could see that people were watching us from the highway and along the road cheering us on. I knew there was no way I was quitting nor was I going to walk across the finish line. I pushed hard and kept my eyes on the runners ahead of me as if to picture them pulling me, getting me to finish strong. I can still remember how I felt when I crossed the finish line—I made it. I did something that was difficult, I did not quit and I was out of my comfort zone. From that day on I knew running would become my go-to for wellness, stress relief, reflection and a reminder that I can work through challenges. Once I experienced the power of running and how it benefited my well-being, I knew that students could also get so much out of running, beyond the physical benefits.

In my first year of coaching cross-country, conversations with other coaches made me aware of how some runners connect running with body image. I also learned that

some students did not want to join the running club because they had never joined before, and they “did not think they were a runner.” These conversations and the research I did about the sport of running allowed me to understand some of the barriers that may prevent students from trying out for the cross-country team or joining a running club.

Furthermore, as physical activity decreases in middle school when youth are in a transitional growth phase such as adolescence (Eime et al 2016), there is an urgency for educators to engage youth in physical movement beyond the physical education course walls. In my own experience as a youth who participated in sports and physical activity, it helped me cope with the various challenges that came with adolescence. Moreover, I have learned about our historical connection to movement from our Elders who told me stories about how our ancestors always moved their bodies and how this helped Blackfoot people to maintain a healthy lifestyle. I was further inspired when learning about how strong Blackfoot women were, some of whom were warriors, going to battle along with the men, such as Running Eagle, warrior woman (Hungry Wolf 1980). I knew that running could support physical activity and nurture the overall wellness of the Blackfoot youth I was coaching from my community, the Blood Tribe or Kainai. I shared these stories with them to encourage them to see the purpose of moving our bodies beyond the competition that is pursued in cross-country races. I was motivated to create an inclusive, inspirational and welcoming environment for the student athletes.

My first year of coaching was a learning curve filled with experiences that enabled me to learn about running and how to effectively coach student athletes to run. By the second year, I was inspired to try a fresh approach to encourage students to try out for the cross-country team. I promoted the cross-country team tryouts as a fun activity that would be encouraging, inclusive, positive and welcoming to all. I made it known that it did not matter if the student athletes had any experience running or if they were fast runners, and it did not matter if they were in physical running condition—as I reassured them that they would feel healthier and stronger throughout the training program. These approaches helped to create a healthy and inviting culture for the athletes. Having a good attitude was also important, as were attendance and academics. These expectations and guidelines encouraged students to attend their classes regularly and to come to the cross-country training program with an attitude of readiness to learn and to help others. Some of the athletes who

struggled in the areas of attitude and attendance improved in their classes as they attended the training. My approach to coaching running was that the discipline and efforts the student athletes put in on the track to do their best would transpire to their efforts in the classroom; together they complement one another.

Food always brings people together, and it is part of the social aspect of Blackfoot culture. (A big thank you to Glenda Red Crow and her team in the school kitchen who fulfilled my healthy snack wish lists and provided lunches and snacks for the students to enjoy after the cross-country training.) I learned from my Blackfoot culture how important food is and that it has many purposes, such as nourishing our bodies, and bonding and connecting while we laugh and share stories when we eat together and socialize after ceremonies. Some of the students were very hungry after school, so I knew that providing a healthy snack after training would provide them with the energy their growing bodies required as adolescents. While the student athletes ate their snacks post-training, they started to connect with one another, socializing and laughing. We were growing a community together. This brought me so much joy to see how happy these youth were when they were running, moving their bodies, forming friendships and knowing they belonged.

By my third year of coaching, over 60 students tried out for the cross-country team, where I ended up creating a junior team and a senior team. This was growing into something special; students wanted to move their bodies and connect with each other outside of their daily schedules in school. It did not make sense for me to cut any of the athletes. I believe when you see children and youth take an interest in something healthy, you are supposed to nurture it. I decided that every student who attended the tryouts would earn a spot on one of the two teams. While it was an overwhelming number of athletes, I noticed how students were hungry for an opportunity to join a sport, to belong and to feel part of something they could do. Running does not require you to be the fastest; it simply requires you to move your body at your own pace. When students express an interest in moving their bodies, we educators must do all that we can to nurture and support their interests, even if we are stepping out of our own comfort zones. Providing youth with engaging opportunities helps them to make healthy choices, and it encourages them to enjoy the health benefits of being physically active in mind, body and spirit.

When it came time to select the athletes that would represent the team at the cross-country meets, I

referenced the school rules for all athletes to maintain the three A's: academics, attendance and attitude. The students who met all three A's were the athletes who attended the meets. This was very motivating for many of the athletes, especially those who needed some inspiration and motivation to improve their attendance and attitudes. I also allowed all the athletes to continue to attend the weekly training, even if they were struggling to maintain the three A's. During this time in my coaching and teaching career, I believed that if a child was facing adversity in their life, it was imperative for me to continue supporting their efforts to participate in healthy activities and outlets, such as running. If they continued to show up for the cross-country training, they would be allowed to continue to train with the team, even if they did not qualify to be selected to compete in the cross-country meets. When students have positive activities to participate in, students will look forward to them, and stay connected and engaged in school.



It has never been my belief that physical education classes or extracurricular activities should be taken away from children as punitive measures. If we are to teach children how to participate in healthy activities, then we must continue to allow them to attend healthy activities and even more so when they are struggling. Children who endure hardships in their lives need things to look forward

to that are healthy and bring them joy. All children need something joyful to look forward to and to engage in at school. School is a wonderful space that can provide safety and happiness in students' lives, because teachers and coaches have countless opportunities to provide healthy, safe and joyful activities they can access. I started a mentorship program within the cross-country team where the senior students (Grade 8 and some Grade 7 athletes) would mentor and help the younger runners in Grades 6 and 7. After our training, the senior students could help and lead the cool-down exercises and stretches.

Before our cross-country meets, we would have a circle and pray together. The students enjoyed this because it grounded them and helped bring them to a calm and confident place before their cross-country races. I enjoyed being able to connect our Blackfoot spirituality with our running teams. Furthermore, I had invited various guest speakers to share their stories about running, movement and cultural knowledge. This included Blackfoot Elders, Blackfoot athletes and professional athletes from other communities. Some of our Elders and mentors included Glen Eagle Child (Kainai Nation), Bruce Wolf Child (Kainai Nation), May Fox (Kainai Nation), Pete Weasel Moccasin (Kainai Nation), Ramona Big Head (Kainai Nation), Joy Spearchief-Morris (Kainai Nation), Rilee Manybears (Siksika Nation), Billy Mills (Oglala Lakota), Kenny Dobbs (Choctaw), Brittaney Woods (Siksika Nation), Dallas Soonias (Cree, Ojibwe), Jamie Thibeault Soonias (T'sou-ke Nation), Tyler White (Siksika Nation) and many others who were part of our journey as a cross-country team and running club. I am very grateful for all the mentors who have supported our program and have inspired many of our youth and me. I would like to give a special acknowledgement to the Running Warriors team captains and youth leaders: Justin Shouting (Kainai Nation), Kiowa Thunder Chief (Kainai Nation), Raquel Bull Calf (Kainai Nation) and the late Shaylize Williams-Day Rider (Kainai Nation), who were all exemplary leaders, and last, my comrade and awesome assistant coach, Charles First Rider (Kainai Nation).

We continued to train throughout the summer where I held running camps that included trips to the mountains to hike and connect with these historical places in Blackfoot territory. Often, we would have an Elder accompany us and talk with the youth about these significant places and how resilient our ancestors were. It was important for me to connect the students to the land that we trained on with cultural knowledge and understandings about our land and the stories of our

Blackfoot ancestors—running is a spiritual experience that goes beyond the physical part of connecting with ourselves. Therefore, praying before we ran was a very important cultural protocol we respected. Another component to my summer running camps included creating art and reading books. This would provide an opportunity for students to enjoy creative outlets and literacy while we took a break from running in the hot weather. We also took our summer camp training indoors into the gym where we worked on conditioning and strength training, as well as games that pushed our cardio limits!



As the teams trained together, they began to form friendships, and they would look out for each other and cheer each other on at the cross-country meets. Bullying was not an issue on the cross-country teams because I established a positive and safe environment with the help of the students from the beginning. Students who had some behaviour challenges were able to self-regulate their behaviours as they continued with the training throughout the year.

After the cross-country season concluded, I transitioned the cross-country teams into a running club for the year. Collectively, we decided that our running club needed a team name, so we called ourselves the Running Warriors, which we proudly connected to the history of our prominent ancestral warriors from the Blackfoot Confederacy. We enjoyed participating in the various cross-country races throughout the Southern Alberta region. With the success of the cross-country teams and

the running club, we were able to take the team to see the movie *McFarland, USA* (Caro 2015) as a year-end celebration for their commitment and participation on the teams. The students started talking about how amazing it would be to go to McFarland and meet Coach White, the Diaz brothers and the other McFarland runners who inspired the movie, which is based on a true story. We decided to make a goal to travel to McFarland and compete in the 5k and the half-marathon. It took us a whole year to train and fundraise, but we achieved our goal with consistent training and the help of our generous donors and sponsors. It was an incredible experience seeing all the athletes compete in the race and meet with the original McFarland cross-country team! It is experiences such as the McFarland trip, as well as the running club and cross-country teams, that remind our youth that they are worth it, they are important, they are valued and they can step out of their comfort zones while taking healthy risks that can have positive impacts on their lives.



If we are to encourage our students to step out of their comfort zones, we must be willing to step out of our comfort zones as well. I smile when I think of how proud my student athletes were when they would see me cross the finish lines at the various community races. I knew I was meant to be there, a coach who fell into cross-country coaching and running. It turned out to be an incredible learning experience for me and a joy to see the student athletes empower themselves through the sport of running!

Closing Thoughts

As an educator and coach, I have found that when students feel confident, they are more willing to be courageous to take the risks that help them to grow, open their mindsets and welcome new experiences. Helping students develop their confidence goes hand in hand with creating safe and welcoming spaces in schools and in sports. Allowing students to connect with their cultures and engage in cultural activities and teachings nurtures them wholistically. This is very important for Niitsitapi (the Real People—refers to Native people) students, as we educators work to decolonize the ways students have been taught in schools so that schools can become positive places for all students. As the mother of our baby girl, Alexandra, what I do to move my body will profoundly affect her attitude about and participation in daily movement as she watches me and learns from me. This resonates with me as a teacher; our students watch us, and they emulate and learn from us. If we want them to move their bodies, and be open to new and healthy experiences, we must model this for them. I encourage all educators to try something new each school year. It is so worth it, and the positive impact it has on our students and us is boundless!

I would like to dedicate my article to all the Running Warriors who inspired me with their discipline, resilience and strength, and to the late Shaylize Williams-Day Rider, whose kindness, leadership and dedication to the school and the team will always be remembered. It was an honour to coach all these talented, smart and passionate Blackfoot youth!

As a Niitsitapi education consultant, I love connecting with other coaches, leaders, teachers, educators and students through my consultant work that provides mentorship and guidance on how to support First Nations students and nurture relationships with First Nations communities through authentic, cultural and respectful ways. For inquiries to work with me, contact me at redstarwomen@gmail.com. You can also catch me on my podcast, *Talks with a Fox Podcast* (<https://talkswithafoxpodcast.buzzsprout.com/>) where I share many colourful conversations with inspirational people from across Turtle Island!

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Memes, Movement and Mindfulness: Implementing Wellness Initiatives

Daniel Balderson, Greg Ogilvie, Aaron Stout and Dawn Burleigh

The importance of wellness is increasingly a central focus among members of society today (Oliver and Baldwin 2018). From workplace wellness to individual wellness strategies, the quest for and benefits of a healthy lifestyle are apparent (Merrill et al 2011). School-based wellness is also receiving attention as the pressures of a demanding environment mount for students, teachers and staff alike (Spratt 2016). Administrators and policy-makers have increased calls for teachers to be more prepared to better address the growing wellness needs of their students (Roberts et al 2016). This need is compounded by the increasing demands of the teaching profession and ongoing wellness needs of educators themselves. How are teacher education programs addressing these calls? What is being done to help preservice teachers understand the importance of wellness and develop strategies to impart these important principles among their students?

The Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge (U of L) has prioritized wellness over the last four years. This has involved promoting wellness among faculty and preservice teachers, and preparing these future teachers to encourage students to value wellness. With the help and encouragement of the Alberta-based organization, Ever Active Schools, the Faculty of Education has been engaged in a wellness journey that has provided great learning opportunities and taken important steps forward in this worthy endeavour.

Wellness Champions and Comprehensive School Health

The first action item for the faculty was to form a committee of those interested in wellness. This invitation was also extended to nonacademic staff, students and professionals outside of the faculty who had a vested interest. For example, two members from Alberta Health Services (AHS) who worked with school-based wellness initiatives joined the wellness committee. The

communications officer from the Faculty of Education was also included, a decision that has proven to be very beneficial. In the end, about 10 individuals constituted the committee membership, composed of faculty, staff, students, university personnel from the U of L wellness office and community stakeholders from AHS. We called our collection of professionals the Wellness Champions Committee.

Our approach to promoting wellness is rooted in the Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach that is foundational to the health and wellness programming in Alberta schools. Provincially, the concept of wellness has centred on three areas of focus: active living, healthy eating and mental well-being (Storey et al 2016). In an effective CSH approach, organizational priorities of staff wellness and student leadership are essential to move the work forward. Using this conceptual framework as a guide, our committee attended to the following three focus areas:

- Promoting wellness among faculty and staff.
- Promoting wellness among preservice teachers.
- Providing resources, training and experiences to support preservice teachers in promoting wellness with their students in the K-12 system.



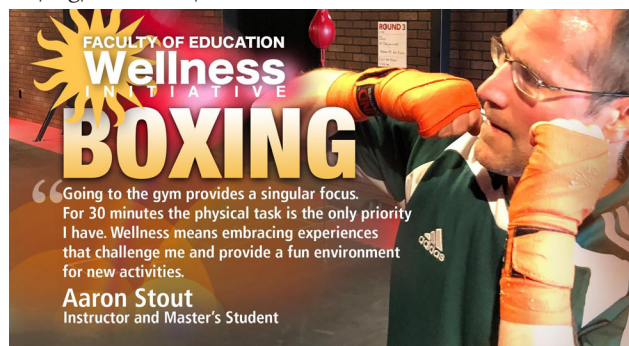
Committee members from the Faculty of Education: (left to right) Daniel Balderson, Aaron Stout, Dawn Burleigh and Greg Ogilvie at the National Forum on Wellness in Postsecondary Education.

Getting Started with Programming

Our committee began with the assumption that the primary challenge was not proving that wellness was an important priority for the Faculty of Education (this assumption was grounded in anecdotal evidence demonstrating a need for wellness programming), rather we needed to appraise the feasibility of embedding a wellness focus into our programmatic structure. We were aware of other faculties such as the Werklund School of Education that built an academic course that prioritizes the importance of wellness in education. However, in our BEd structure we determined that there was no room for additional coursework; this judgment guided our subsequent decisions. If wellness was going to be prioritized in the BEd program, it would need to occur within the existing programmatic structure and be embedded within those structures.

Wellness Profiles

The initial action of the Wellness Champions Committee was to emphasize that wellness exists as a personal focus of faculty and staff. We needed to combat the myth that professional faculties overemphasize the tasks of the job above embracing wellness as a life orientation. In CSH language, we needed to demonstrate that faculty and staff are models of wellness. To accomplish this, we reached out to the Faculty of Education to learn more about how individuals practise wellness in their day-to-day lives. The response was overwhelming. Faculty and staff shared images of bicycling, snowboarding, fishing and hiking with their families. Our communications officer, Darcy Tamayose, selected images and text from these submissions and created profiles and short vignettes that were publicized through the halls of the university on the Faculty of Education webpage (<https://stories.ulethbridge.ca/tag/education/>) and on social media. As a result of this



Example of a wellness profile

initial step, current students and alumni have been added to these profiles, and our communication outreach has grown. Initial profiles conceptualized wellness as active living, but subsequent profiles have been written that explore spirituality, gratitude, mental health, hobbies and connection to community. Wellness is being celebrated as an essential aspect of being an educator.

Course Outline Wellness Statement

In the faculty, conversations about wellness began to transform discussions among instructors. In the core courses, there is consistent collaboration on academic expectations, but there was no existing statement about the importance of wellness. Instructors discussed issues like assignment loads and duplication of outcomes across courses but did not have a unifying focus to justify academic modifications to meet wellness intentions. In the 2020 fall semester, the Wellness Champions Committee introduced the following statement to be included on all course outlines:

Professional and elective semesters in the Faculty of Education are busy and can be stressful times in a student's life. It is very important to pay attention to your health and wellness and maintain a balance between your professional and personal life. Some strategies to maintain health and wellness include: 1) Ensure you get adequate sleep; 2) Eat a healthy, balanced diet; 3) Include regular exercise and wellness routines in your schedule (eg, yoga, meditation, hobbies, clubs and social gatherings); 4) Stay organized and on top of assignments; 5) Limit screen time; and 6) Develop and engage with a strong support system. Most importantly, if you find yourself struggling, ask for help! The following link can help you to identify appropriate supports on campus: www.uleth.ca/education/wellness-initiative.

This statement allows students to prioritize personal wellness strategies in the structure of programming on campus. The inclusion of the statement in the course outlines motivates instructors to examine the design of their courses and normalize discussion around wellness. Through an informal analysis of students who are unsuccessful in the Faculty of Education, we determined that many of the issues stemmed from stress and mental health complications. A statement regarding the importance of wellness in the program can, and has, facilitated more discussions and understandings about well-being.

Other Wellness Initiatives

In addition to the faculty-wide initiative to emphasize health and well-being through the inclusion of a wellness statement in course outlines, programmatic changes were also made. In Professional Semester I (the first semester for students in the Faculty of Education), personal health and well-being became the focus of several initiatives. We had observed for quite some time that many students struggled with the transition to a professional faculty; they found it challenging to balance the demands of the program with a healthy home and social life. As a result, initiatives were developed to introduce students to community resources and promote a disposition toward maintaining an active, healthy lifestyle.



Wellness day barre session (Source: Faculty of Education Twitter Account)

The first initiative was to host a wellness break and barbecue on the first day for students in the program. After the orientation to the program in the morning and an abbreviated first class, students were invited to participate in an activity during a wellness break. The activities ranged from playing dodge ball, participating in a barre or yoga class, engaging in an aesthetic encounter, playing board games, competing in a healthy eating cook-off, learning strategies to promote mental health and so on. Following the wellness break, the faculty also offered a wellness-themed barbecue with kiosks set up by local community wellness groups to make students aware of the supports available within the university community and beyond.

In conjunction with the wellness break, the faculty also sponsored a wellness challenge. Starting at the wellness break and continuing every week for the remainder of the semester, students, faculty and staff were encouraged to tweet a picture demonstrating how they promote health and wellness using the hashtag #uledwellness. The challenge served to act as a reminder about the importance

of attending to wellness during a busy semester and also acted as a source for idea generation to help community members think about new ways they could attend to their health and wellness. The faculty also facilitated a step challenge to encourage members of cohorts to remain active throughout the semester. During predetermined weeks of the semester, each cohort of students were encouraged to track the steps they attained throughout the week. Cohorts that were able to achieve a minimum standard had their names entered into a draw to win a free coffee break during one of their class meetings.



Wellness day outdoor activities (Source: Faculty of Education Twitter)

Whereas the focus in Professional Semester I (PS I) was on the maintenance of personal health and well-being, the emphasis in Professional Semester II (PS II) shifted to developing the skills and knowledge to support health and wellness in the school environment. The primary mechanism for developing competence in this area was the Social Context Wellness Workshop. Social Context is a course where various social influences on education are explored, including race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and so on. As health and wellness are important factors influencing education, social context seemed to be a natural course in which to create an emphasis on promoting well-being.

This resulted in the creation of a half-day workshop characterized by a keynote speaker, an introduction to the Comprehensive School Health Framework, and multiple breakout sessions where students could learn about a variety of topics and strategies to apply in their future classrooms. Among the topics covered included Indigenous approaches to wellness, ways to use yoga to promote mindfulness in the classroom, strategies to identify students at risk of suicide and productively respond to the situation, place-based learning to promote wellness and

so on. Concepts introduced at the workshop were further reinforced through course discussions and assignments.



Aaron Stout delivering the PS II Wellness Workshop opening address.

Implications for Students

Ultimately, the wellness programming and initiatives in the Faculty of Education have been designed with students in mind. Through the four years of programming, we have come to understand that wellness initiatives that have been designed for faculty, staff and preservice teachers will also have a subsequent impact on the students they teach in the K-12 system throughout their teaching careers. It has been important that we hear the voices and perspectives of preservice teachers throughout the programming, and as such we have included members of the Education Undergraduate Society (EUS) on the Wellness Champions Committee and collected program feedback each semester. The early pressures of the program can often be overwhelming for students, and this dynamic contributed to the early development of faculty wellness initiatives. Owen Tschritter described this explicitly:

As a PSI student, starting the education program has been overwhelming; I found it difficult to connect with peers, which had a profound effect on my mental health. This initiative created an opportunity to participate in the academic community while being recognized for my personal accomplishments.

Ben Beland, a recent graduate and a former member of the EUS and the Wellness Champions Committee, commented:

Though only in my second year of teaching, wellness is part of my classroom, largely due to the emphasis on it from the faculty. Despite looking different

depending on the group of students, one thing is clear to them: wellness is the most important thing in the classroom.

Similarly, Abigail Duguid, a current BEd student and Pronghorn athlete, reiterated that the wellness initiatives supported her in finding balance in her own educational journey while meeting the demands of her teaching practice alongside being an athlete:

I have found the health and wellness initiatives in the faculty to be very helpful when I feel stuck or need to be more reflective in my teaching practice or personal life. Something I pride myself on is the ability to have an efficient and effective work-life balance. While challenging at times, the ability to utilize the wellness initiatives has assisted in grounding me when I feel overwhelmed.



Yoga session at the Wellness Workshop

For many students, the wellness initiatives, like the weekly Twitter challenge, developed a sense of community and collaboration. For Danika Peters, a graduate and former president of the EUS, the wellness initiatives generated a sense of belonging and collegiality. She commented:

The Faculty of Education Health and Wellness initiatives allowed me to be a part of integral conversations about wellness on a personal, provincial, and national scale. The lessons learned and stories shared continue to influence the way in which I incorporate wellness into my personal and professional lives, as well as how I model wellness for students in my classroom.

According to present and former students across all semesters, the Faculty of Education wellness initiatives have brought about various learning opportunities, a sense of support, balance and collaboration, and a lasting impact on classroom practice.

Conclusion

For members of the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge, growing concern over the prevalence of issues related to the health and wellness of students in the program acted as a call to action. With the support of community organizations, such as Ever Active Schools, the Wellness Champions Committee was formed with the clear mandate to make health and well-being a focus in the program. In the first stages of the committee's work, several initiatives and programmatic shifts occurred to emphasize personal health and well-being and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to promote wellness within a school environment. The feedback from students has been overwhelmingly positive, expressing how the initiatives have fostered dispositional changes while in the program and also after graduating and teaching in schools. While the committee views this feedback as encouraging, we are also dedicated to expanding the pilot project, finding additional ways to support health and well-being within the faculty, and developing more longitudinal approaches to better understand how preservice teachers continue their wellness journey as they move into the profession. Through these efforts, we hope to continue to positively impact the health and well-being of all members of the Faculty of Education and the broader educational community.

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Get Outside, Wellness Awaits

Christine McKernan

Think about a grand adventure you had as a kid. Reflect on a time when you explored, tried something new or made a memory that you still recall to this day. Maybe it was an experience you had on your own or something that you shared with friends or family members (think *The Goonies*-esque adventuring here!). What life lesson did that experience teach you? Where did this adventure take place? And, more important, who was the teacher who provided this lifelong learning opportunity?

For many of you, the experience you are reflecting on likely includes an element of the outdoors. Whether the experience is learning to rollerblade and making the journey to a friend's house for the first time, building tree forts with siblings or mastering the set of monkey bars at your local playground, time spent outdoors can teach us so much about ourselves, others and the world around us. Our experiences in the outdoors both as a child and as an adult are vital to our physical and mental well-being (Fyfe-Johnson et al 2021; OPC 2015)

While the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a lot from us, it has also given us a rare opportunity to escape from certain daily distractions and reacquaint ourselves with the mysteries, joys, peace and adventures that the outdoors has to offer. Over the past few years, you may have found yourself reconsidering or reflecting on what contributes to an effective learning environment. Weaving the outdoors into the everyday school routine not only benefits well-being but also allows students to learn in new ways from the world around them.

Nurture Through Nature

Research continues to show that the outdoors plays an important role in supporting student wellness, both physically and mentally (Fyfe-Johnson et al 2021; OPC 2015). Time spent outdoors supports physical health in many ways. The 2020 *Canadian ParticipACTION Report Card*

on Physical Activity for Children and Youth found that only 39 per cent of Canadian children and youth were getting the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day (ParticipACTION 2020). More recent studies report that physical activity levels declined further during the COVID-19 pandemic (CanCOVID 2021). Spending time outdoors, however, can play an important role in promoting movement and overall physical health. Research shows that physical activity increases and sedentary behaviour decreases when students are outside (OPC 2015; Gray et al 2015; Prisk and Cusworth 2018). Quite simply, when students are outdoors they move more, sit less and play longer (OPC 2015). Further, consistent outdoor time has also been shown to have a positive impact on physiological factors such as eyesight, bone health, cardiorespiratory fitness, musculoskeletal fitness and immunity (OPC 2015; Prisk and Cusworth 2018). By providing unstructured time to play freely outdoors, students develop both fine and gross motor skills, balance and coordination (CPHA 2019; Prisk and Cusworth 2018).

Outdoor play also has immense benefits for student mental health. Providing opportunities for unstructured outdoor play allows students to navigate uncertain or challenging situations and build independence and agency in the process. They also develop social-emotional skills, such as resilience and coping, which help them to manage adversity and thrive as children, youth and into adulthood (CPHA 2019). Quality outdoor play environments promote diverse friendships and reduce bullying and conflict since students have more space, resources and creativity to explore their environment (Prisk and Cusworth 2018). Across the ages, time spent in natural environments has been shown to support improvements in self-esteem, self-confidence, problem solving, resilience and stress reduction (Roberts, Hinds and Camic 2020).

Taking School Experiences Outdoors

So, how can we embrace the outdoors in schools and maximize opportunities for all students to get outside? Even if your school is not near a forest, park or designated natural area, you can still take advantage of the outdoors by utilizing the green spaces, rocks, playgrounds and trees in your community. Here are a few strategies to help incorporate the outdoors into your daily classroom routine:

- Let learning bloom by reflecting on which classroom activities could easily be moved outdoors (for example, independent reading time, sharing circles, movement breaks or service learning activities). Start small and expand your time in nature as students get more comfortable with learning outdoors. Try not to worry if things do not go exactly as planned—let nature be your guide!
- Learn from the land through land-based and experiential learning. Not sure where to start? Connect with a local Indigenous Elder or community partner, or use a resource from the Alberta Teachers' Association's Walking Together project, such as the Stepping Stones publication on "First Nations Traditional Plants and Uses" (ATA 2019). If the opportunity arises, invest in natural spaces and loose parts versus fixed playground structures on your school grounds (OPC 2015; CPHA 2019). Invite students to be a part of the design process for these spaces.
- Go wild and free with unstructured outdoor time. Give students the freedom to explore the outdoors before school, after school, at recess or at lunch. Free play can provide meaningful time for students to grow their creativity and imagination. We also know that unstructured time spent outdoors can promote cognition and social-emotional skills such as resilience, self-regulation, the ability to problem solve and gross motor skill development (PHN 2018; CPHA 2019).
- Take a fresh look at school practices such as policies or rules around outdoor play. Work with parents and families to establish a common understanding of how and when students are learning outdoors. By making sure everyone is on the same page, students and families will come prepared with proper clothing, equipment and the understanding that classroom time is also outdoor time.

Embracing the Outdoors: Comprehensive School Health in Action

There are so many great examples of how schools across Alberta are embracing the outdoors in their everyday practices. Taken together, these ideas show us how the comprehensive school health framework (AHS 2022) strengthens nature-based experiences at school.



The Comprehensive School Health Framework (AHS 2022)

- **Partnerships and services:** A K–6 school in southern Alberta created a school garden by using grant funds to purchase outdoor garden boxes. Each grade is responsible for a different part of the garden project, from planning, to watering to harvesting the vegetables. The project relies on continued partnerships with parents and families to care for the garden over the summer months.
- **Teaching and learning:** A school authority outside of Edmonton partnered with a local land conservation foundation to provide access to a vast area of land. Teachers can book the outdoor space for free so that students can receive instruction from teachers and Indigenous Elders about the traditional uses of the land. Staff are also welcomed to use the land for staff wellness events.
- **Social and physical environments:** In northern Alberta, a school has created an outdoor classroom environment by using natural structures and supplies (tree stumps, logs, rocks) to create an outdoor learning and play

space on their school grounds. Classroom instruction can take place in the area, as can free play during recess and before and after school.

- Policy: In an effort to mitigate the weather from being a barrier to getting outside, a school in Medicine Hat developed a standard for “all weather recess.” The school sent a letter home to families stating that there would no longer be a temperature cut-off for outdoor recess (within reason). By creating this common understanding, students and caregivers are prepared with proper clothing for whatever the weather conditions bring each school day.

There is so much to love about the outdoors. When school staff embrace nature, they give both their students and themselves an opportunity to explore, learn and nurture a love for the outdoors while also strengthening their physical and mental wellness. Start small and get student feedback on new ideas for how to incorporate the outdoors into the daily classroom routine. The outdoors is full of adventures and lessons just waiting to be learned. What will it teach your students?

For more information about this topic and other ideas to create healthy school communities, visit us at <https://schools.healthiertogether.ca> or connect with your local Alberta Health Services health promotion facilitator by e-mailing schoolhealthandwellness@ahs.ca.

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How Can Interaction with Nature Support Student Well-Being as the COVID-19 Pandemic Unfolds?

Cheryl Stewart and Erin Cavallin

The COVID-19 global pandemic has led many educators to question the impacts on the mental well-being of Canadian youth. Due to the changing nature of human contact, alterations to familiar, predictable structures, and general health and wellness fears, many children and youth have been affected with increased mental health concerns like anxiety, behavioural issues and depression (Fegert et al 2020).

Following a literature review, this paper focuses on the beneficial potential of engaging youth in nature interaction as it relates to the mental health of school-aged children. At the base of this exploration is the belief that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted youth mental health because it specifically attacked the knowledge that “children and youth flourish in environments that are predictable, safe, and structured” (Vaillancourt et al 2021, 8). The authors of this article focus on examining how educators can support and understand interactions with nature as they relate to well-being in students as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold, and identify the impact of nature on well-being within the context of schools to support students and families. Ultimately, this work is aimed at building capacity within teachers and other educational stakeholders, like parents and school administrators, to motivate and empower these groups to use experiences in nature to support the well-being of children and youth, and mitigate the detrimental effects of the pandemic. Additionally, strategies staff can use to integrate nature into classrooms and schools can be found at the closing of this article.

Interaction with nature is an expansive term that describes a variety of outdoor experiences and is described within Tillman et al (2018). Interaction with nature is often divided into three different groups: accessibility, exposure and engagement. Accessibility refers to one’s physical proximity to nature whereas exposure relates to

experiences involving passive contact with nature or making use of a natural area. Interaction with nature describes the active, intentional use of a natural space for an activity such as gardening or fly-fishing. Given the limitations placed on travel and certain activities during the pandemic, this paper focuses on interactions with nature that could feasibly be pursued on the school grounds, within the surrounding community on a walking field trip or after school supported by parents. These types of experiences tend to align most closely with those described as exposure to nature as well as interaction with nature, as some activities involve active participation in specific outdoor activities such as gardening.

Literature Review

This paper is the product of a traditional literature review. This method was chosen as the format allows for the most flexibility in gathering varied texts and pluralistic ideologies (Efron and Ravid 2019). This was important as a multidisciplinary approach would serve the exploration and collaborative process most effectively. Sources were drawn from the University of Calgary library website using the narrowed search terms: nature, natural environments, mental health, health, children, youth, green, wellness, psychology and well-being. Use of these terms initially generated 942 search results. This was reduced to 424 different sources when a filter was applied to display only those that had been peer reviewed.

To narrow the focus even further, criteria for inclusion in this study included several practical considerations. First, one of the goals for this work was to build capacity and empower educational stakeholders like teachers, parents and students, as well as school-based and system leaders. To that end, programs operated by external organizations like wilderness camps or that were situated in novel locations were excluded. Second, many

constraints were placed on schools and educators throughout the pandemic. In our own experiences, school closures moved classes online, limits placed on transportation cancelled field trips, and the cohorting of students caused many changes to an average day at school. Parents also faced restrictions on travel and reduced opportunities to enrol their children in sports, arts and other extracurricular opportunities. In other words, because students had limited access to organized programs like wilderness camps or to engage in travel to remote locations during the pandemic, the decision was made to exclude articles that focused on this type of programming. Rather, COVID-19 restrictions required teachers and parents to look to the schoolyard and the surrounding community to engage and inspire children. For this reason, only data that highlighted nature experiences that could be supported in these simple, local environments were selected for this study. In summation, 27 articles were included and contributed to the knowledge presented. They represent a variety of research methodologies including qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method approaches as well as several literature reviews.

Findings

To clarify and streamline some of the larger findings about the benefits of nature, information was gathered

and compartmentalized into the three main theme areas of connection, restoration and resilience (see Figure 1). These three areas were then further broken down to specify more definite or distinct examples to help support a more applicable understanding.

Connection

Within the literature, it is evident that experiences in nature encourage connection. Specifically, time spent outdoors supports a strong connection to nature, as well as connection to oneself and others.

Connection to Nature

A connection to nature has been shown to have numerous benefits for well-being including one's emotional experience, sense of satisfaction and vitality (Nisbet, Zelenski and Murphy 2011). Furthermore, the benefits of connecting with nature are not limited to situations where individuals physically access natural spaces. Even the simple act of viewing images and video footage that depict nature can have positive effects on one's well-being, although the effect is less significant than when people's experiences are physically immersed in outdoor experiences (Mayer et al 2009). These findings pose compelling possibilities for educators, both in terms of taking learning outside but also looking for opportunities to invite nature into the four walls of the classroom.

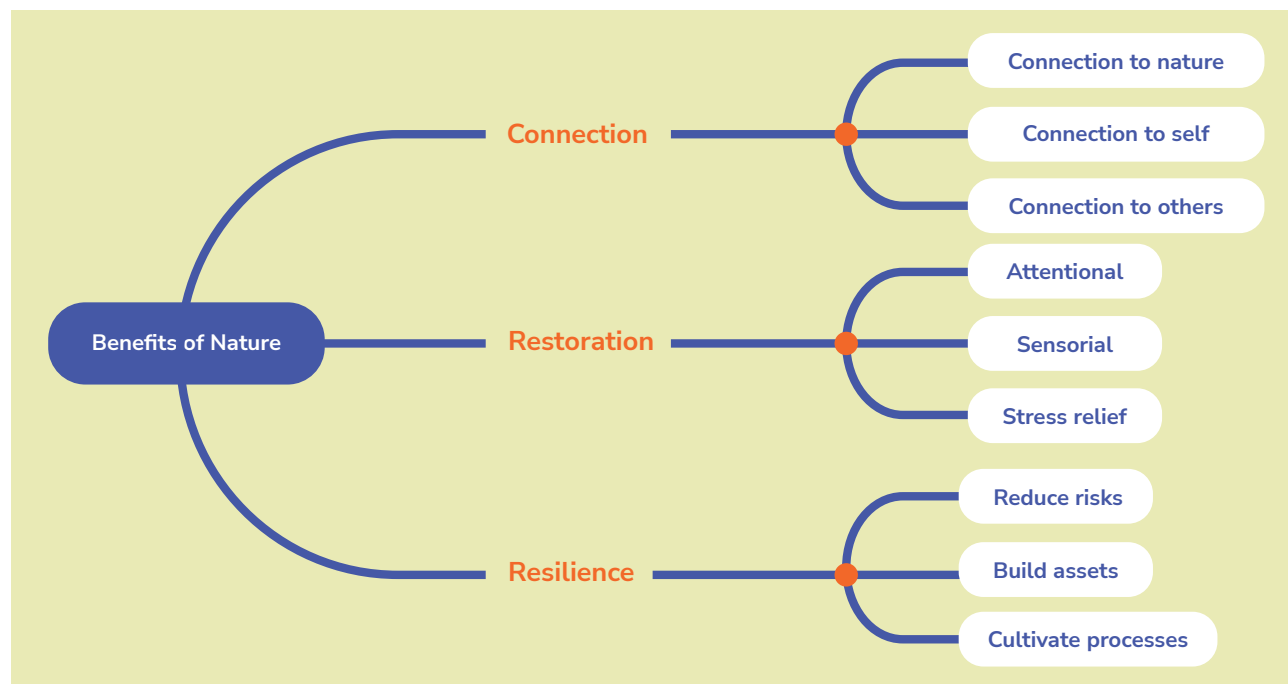


Figure 1. Areas of positive interaction between nature and mental health

Connection to Self

Nature relatedness has been examined through a multidisciplinary lens and found to be intimately related to a more determined sense of well-being (Reese et al 2014). According to Piff et al (2015), it is the experiential feeling of being in awe of a natural setting that allows an individual to recognize their “small self” and feel humbled in their relationship to something greater than just themselves. These findings suggest that interactions with nature could provide students with opportunities for self-reflection, which could help keep the weight of the pandemic in perspective.

Connection to Others

Research has shown that periods of quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic led to greater connections between youth and their immediate families (Polack et al 2021). While initially this may seem like a positive outcome, this study also showed that family connections came at a cost to the social interactions of youth, which decreased during these times and had negative impacts on mental health. Nature interactions have the potential to help students reconnect and restore the social bonds that are so critical in the development of youth. Activities like community gardening can be pursued on or near school grounds and have been shown to reduce feelings of isolation and increase a sense of connectedness between individuals and to their community (Reese and Myers 2012; Wakefield et al 2007).

Restoration

Restoration describes the return to a state that once was, or the return to a better state. This section directly connects the findings related to how nature can repair that which has been strained and stressed.

Attentional

For those struggling with stress and fatigue, Kaplan (1995) proposed to describe the restorative benefits of the natural environment and specifically outlined the break that can be afforded by being in natural spaces and settings. Cumulatively known as attentional restoration theory (ART), Kaplan outlined that sustained attention and focus, like that upon students worried about disruption, isolation and the unknown, can be mitigated in part by being surrounded and engaged in natural landscapes. Nature’s decreased requirement for direct attention highlights that a soft fascination with natural landscapes and environments allows for an individual with

depleted mental resources to recharge and benefit from the feeling of being away from day-to-day stress (Kaplan 1995; Korpela 2013). With this information, educators can recognize that the efficacy of including natural breaks into a student schedule allows for a recharge and reinvigoration of mental ability. Emerging studies show that restorative implications of nature can impact instruction and upon returning to class, more than double the amount of time teachers are able to instruct and engage learners without having to redirect student attention to learning (Kuo, Browning and Penner 2018).

Sensorial

Attributing to the idea that people perceive nature to be more beautiful than man-made landscapes and that beautiful views are more restorative to human beings, Purcell, Peron and Berto (2001) documented strong relations between measures of preference of scenic beauty and perceived restorative quality. Moving beyond just the visual representation, restorative properties can be connected to many sensorial opportunities afforded by natural settings (Kuo, Browning and Penner 2018; Purcell, Peron and Berto 2001; Ratcliffe, Gatersleben and Sowden 2013). Being immersed in a sensory experience and finding oneself encompassed by natural landscapes and elements builds potential for a renewal of depleted mental resources (Berto 2014). Educators can engage with this knowledge and recognize the impact that sensory engagement with nature can provide for students. This awareness allows for opportunistic benefits as there is no need to plan for sensory experiences as even something as simple as listening to birdsong while outdoors can have noted benefits (Ratcliffe, Gatersleben and Sowden 2013).

Stress Relief

In response to the unpredictability and uncertainty of a COVID world, many students suffered while navigating an increased number of stressors, negatively impacting their well-being (Vaillancourt et al 2021). It is proposed that contact with nature is not just a direct support but that nature “acts as an intermediate between two variables, in this case between the adverse situations to which children are exposed and the stress level that they suffer from that exposure” (Corraliza, Collado and Bethelmy 2012, 254). A growing body of work has noted the buffering effect of nature in the study of young children, and in particular those who were experiencing very high levels of stress benefited the most from the buffering effects of nearby nature (Wells and Evans 2003).

With the full impact of COVID-19 not yet understood, educators will need to consider the ways in which we recover from and move beyond stresses that have weighed so heavily on learners (Hill et al 2020).

Resilience

Nature interactions, such as unstructured play in naturalized areas and engaging in gardening projects, provide examples of the types of endeavours that are possible within the grounds of most schools or within the immediate vicinity of the school. Although the intended outcomes of these activities may not explicitly seek to develop resilience within students, Chawla et al (2014) suggests that they create the ideal conditions for this to happen. Their work highlights connections between interactions with nature and Masten and Reed's (2002) three strategies to develop resilience including reducing risks (like lack of focus), building assets (such as self-reflection skills) and cultivating processes (such as developing cooperative relationships with others). Interactions with nature provide an authentic, engaging context for students to practise these strategies and develop their resilience.

Implications

With the goal of exploring helpful perspectives on nature and reimagining information with a new "COVID-19" lens, this exploration was undertaken with the knowledge that an intentional, well-referenced literature review creates great potential to advance knowledge and create change (Webster and Watson 2002). As Canadian educators continue to react and respond to COVID-19, the impact of this global pandemic is far from over, and there are distinct implications for continued openness and contemplation when attending to actions and intentions that support our youth. Worries for a final wave of COVID still have educators considering what new changes they will need to pivot around and how to best support mental health concerns for the students they care about.

During both the online continuation and the return to in-person schooling, educators were frequently and befittingly recognized as essential workers and called on to support and engage in youth mental health practices for their students (Hill et al 2020). As educators who were witnesses to the struggles of compassion fatigue, burnout and emotional struggles, it became clear to the authors many times that mental health was at the forefront of many conversations and decisions being made on the front

lines of classes. It has been claimed that a key strategy to supporting youth mental health is the incorporation of emphasized, strategic measures that support lifelong mental health understanding and that this best be attended to in easily accessible venues, namely within schools (Vaillancourt et al 2021). If educators are armed with a deeper awareness of the benefits of exposure to nature, it stands to become a more practised, more understood strategy that is engaged in with purposeful awareness and directed intention.

For those who are connected to and care for Canada's youth, the impact and effects of the pandemic will be a long discussed and considered topic. It is with deep hope that the research outlined here will support the development of a core foundation of mental health opportunity that no pandemic can shake. Even in the most restricted of times, there was always the ability to attend to time outside, and for many there was an intangible knowledge that this was "good" but without the anchoring understanding of why. At times, the narratives of being outdoors spoke of health in regards to transmission rates but seldom with the deeper theories and knowledge unpacked. With a more direct understanding of the many facets of nature's potential, it is possible to begin building a dialogue about mental health strategies as they are threaded within the many hours, days and years of school. By clarifying and showcasing how nature can contribute to good mental health, the great task of teachers to support not only learning but also well-being might be better met.

Incorporating Nature into Your Practice: Where to Start?

- Replace dismissal bells with animal noises, bird whistles or nature sounds.
- Incorporate nature images, posters and nature photography when creating groups or teams.
- Give space and time for intentional conversations surrounding connections to nature and the potential for positive mental health impacts.
- Hold practices and team meets outside when possible.
- Explore field trip opportunities that support time and space to engage in natural spaces.
- Consider meeting or ending classes in outside spaces.
- Use natural materials where possible (stumps for seats, rocks for weights).

- Make nature time like physical activity time and account for it as a daily part of the school routine.
- Start a walking club at lunchtime with staff and students.
- Include flowers, rocks and plants into physical spaces.
- Augment health lessons related to nutrition by engaging in gardening projects either on school grounds or in community spaces devoted to growing vegetables and fruits.
- Invite nature into the schoolyard by exploring potential spaces that are suitable for naturalization projects.
- Consider using natural spaces outdoors to encourage reflection and introspection for activities such as self-assessment.
- Work with students to set monthly targets for times spent outdoors in nature.

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Integrating a Career Planning Unit into the Alberta Grade 1 Health and Life Skills and Physical Education and Wellness Curricula

Kirsty E Hansen, Kerry B Bernes, Jonathan L Roque, Annelise M Lyseng and Karissa L Horne

Background

To help situate the current research, an overview of how this work came to fruition is provided. To begin, a comprehensive career needs survey (CCNS) was developed by Magnusson and Bernes (2002) to gain a better understanding of students' career needs. The CCNS is a collaborative initiative between the Southern Alberta Centre of Excellence for Career Development at the University of Lethbridge Faculty of Education, the Chinook Regional Career Transitions for Youth Project and the Southwestern Rural Youth Career Development Project (2002). The aim of the survey was to capture students' perceptions of career development and planning needs as well as any perceived gaps that might be present in existing services (Magnusson and Bernes 2002; Witko et al 2006). The survey included both quantitative and qualitative responses, and they were distributed to 54 junior high and senior high schools in the southern Alberta region by classroom teachers (Witko et al 2006). The results from the surveys indicated that some of the most pressing needs for junior and senior high school students were finding their interests and abilities, discovering their passions, gaining support for their career plans and postsecondary, and gaining financial information (Magnusson and Bernes 2002). Additionally, the surveys implied that beginning career planning earlier (in junior high or even before) could be more effective in assisting students through the process of career decision making

(Witko et al 2006). Given these results, it was evident that career planning was an important component that was lacking from students' educational experiences in southern Alberta.

Based on the results obtained from the CCNS, a career education pilot project, Career Coaching Across the Curriculum, was created and implemented (Slomp, Gunn and Bernes 2014). Alberta Education and the Canadian Career Development Foundation supported the project by providing funding to train 50 preservice teachers in career education, which allowed them to go into schools in Alberta and implement career education across the K-12 curriculum. The pilot project consisted of two components (2014). First, the career education course was provided to the preservice teachers over four weekends (2014). The first three weekends provided preservice teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for integrating career interventions into the regular curriculum, and then the fourth weekend allowed preservice teachers to share their lesson plans, unit plans and schoolwide interventions they developed with their classmates (2014). Second, after successfully completing the four-weekend career education course, students completed a 12-week internship where they could transfer their newly acquired knowledge and skills into elementary, middle or high schools in southern Alberta (2014). The larger data set has already been published (2014) and thus, the current paper aims to detail an example of one of the specific classroom implementations from the larger study.

Introduction

Career development is a lifelong process that ultimately affects many facets of life including physical and mental health, relationships, finances, family and more. It is imperative that individuals choose career paths that mirror their values, skills and interests to achieve a healthy, safe and fulfilling lifestyle. Effective career planning involves an extensive amount of self-awareness (Code et al 2006). Thus, self-exploratory skills must be introduced at an early age that might promote the development of career planning skills (Magnuson and Starr 2000). Career development skills, specifically, self-awareness, is a skill that will develop over time and help these students undertake a career path appropriate for their individuality and vocational identity (Galles and Lenz 2013). Moreover, a person-centred, strengths-based approach to vocational development is especially conducive to meaningful career planning (Kosine, Steger and Duncan 2008). This article identifies an opportunity to implement a strengths-based and self-knowledge-driven career unit for Grade 1, which was integrated with the health and life skills curriculum (Alberta Learning 2002) and can also be useful considering the new Alberta physical education and wellness curriculum. Throughout the unit, students participated in activities focused on improving their self-awareness, recognizing personal strengths and interests, and goal setting. The sections of this paper include (a) context of the teaching environment, (b) curricular integration, (c) detailed description of the unit plan, (d) method of evaluating the unit's effectiveness, (e) results and (f) discussion and future directions of integrating career planning into a Grade 1 classroom.

Context of the Teaching Environment

The career planning unit was implemented into the health and life skills curriculum (Alberta Learning 2002) in an urban elementary school in southern Alberta that served about 550 students. The targeted classroom consisted of 19 students between the ages of six and seven; 9 males and 10 females; 15 students were of Caucasian descent; 2 students were of East Asian descent; and 2 students were of Indigenous descent. The large majority of students were from middle-class, blue-collar homes. The unit plan was designed to be amenable for all socioeconomic brackets and conceivably accessible and applicable to all students. There was a large diverse and broad range of developmental levels represented in the

class; lesson plans were designed to be amenable to modification when needed for students with lower reading and/or writing levels while still covering the same content and aiming for the same outcomes. For students with limited writing skills, the teacher would scribe these students' responses or require the students to draw extra pictures. One student who had cerebral palsy had an assistant who completed the assignments with him. The unit took place over the course of five weeks, with 60–90 minutes each week being dedicated to this unit.

Curricular Integration

As previously mentioned, Grade 1 health and life skills were of focus for integration. The outcomes addressed within the Alberta program of studies are outlined below.

Health and Life Skills Objectives Achieved

The following learning outcomes outlined by Alberta Learning (2002) for Health 1 were targeted:

Wellness Choices (General Outcome):

Students will make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others.

- W-1.10: recognize community helpers, and identify how to seek their help (Alberta Learning 2002, 9)

Life Learning Choices (General Outcome):

Students will use resources effectively to manage and explore life roles and career opportunities and challenges.

- L-1.4: define a goal, and recognize that setting goals helps accomplish tasks
- L-1.5: recognize interests, strengths, and skills of self
- L-1.6: demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which people perform responsibilities in the community, including paid and unpaid work (Alberta Learning 2002, 22, 25)

Considering there have been recent changes to the health and life skills curriculum since the current study was conducted, it is important to identify how the study's findings are applicable to the new physical education and wellness curriculum. For instance, the outcome, "students examine personal characteristics, feelings, and emotions and explore understanding of self" (Alberta Education 2021) is highly relevant as students were taught about the importance of self-awareness and individuality. Another outcome from the new curriculum that could be explored is, "students investigate how healthy relationships in learning and playing environments are built through connection" (Alberta Education 2021). In the current

study, students learned about different jobs in their communities and that each job was valued, which emphasizes how community supports relationships with one another.

Detailed Description of the Unit Plan

Lesson 1: Goal Setting

Visualization Activity. The teacher had students close their eyes as the teacher read from a guided imagery script. The script had students envision various aspects of their future lives and to consider what an ideal day in the future might look like (Appendix A). At the end of the visualization activity, each student came up to the front of the class, where the teacher asked the presenting student the following questions:

- Do you have to get up early for your job?
- Are you working inside or outside?
- What kind of building do you have to go into?
- What do you do at your job?
- Why do you like that job?
- What does your future family look like? What about your friends?

When every student had finished presenting, the teacher held a discussion on how everyone could still change their mind on what they wanted to be when they grew up, and that it was OK to try different jobs. The teacher then introduced the concept of goal setting. The teacher discussed: (a) the difference between long-term and short-term goals, (b) examples of long-term and short-term goals and (c) how one's career was a long-term goal. A short-term goal was defined as an objective that a student wanted to complete in a day, week, month or even year. A long-term goal was defined as an objective that might take several years to accomplish.

Art Activity. Last, the teacher handed out an 11 x 7-inch colouring page. The page consisted of blank fields where students were to include their name, future career choice, future house, future pet and one way they wanted to make a difference in the world (Appendix B). The teacher explained that each of the aforementioned aspects could be understood as the students' long-term goals.

Lesson 2: Career Cut-Outs

Students were asked to think back to the prior week when they had discussed what career they wanted to have in the future. The teacher reminded the students that they were not limited to the same idea they had the previous

week and could change their career choice if they wanted to. They were then provided with a piece of 11 x 7-inch paper and a cut-out in the shape of a person that was to serve as a template. The teacher asked the students to pick one career they were interested in and to draw themselves in the future doing that career, using the template provided. Students were to consider (a) what they would wear, (b) what tools or instruments they might be using and (c) what their surroundings would be like (Appendix C). Upon completing the activity, the students came to the front of the room and presented their picture. They were required to say the name of their chosen job and to provide a reason for why they chose that job.

Lesson 3: Jobs in My Community

Brainstorming Session. The lesson began with a brainstorming activity where students were to list as many careers as they could think of. The class discussed what each job entailed, and how each of these jobs were important and different, in the same way each structure in a local community could serve an important purpose. Students were advised to take note of any jobs that were discussed that were of particular interest to them.

Reading and Discussion. Upon concluding the brainstorming session, the teacher read the book, *The Top Job*, by Elizabeth Cody Kimmel (2007). The book was a story about a classroom where each student presented their parents'/guardians' job to the class. Each of the book's characters embellished and exaggerated their parents'/guardians' careers, with the exception of one student. This particular character told the class her father changed light bulbs for his job; consequently, the class was quick to dismiss her. However, the character went on to explain that her father had a particularly important job—he changed the light bulbs at the top of the Empire State Building. At first the class ridiculed the girl and her father, but once they discovered that he changed the Empire State Building's "tippy top" light bulb, a feat that involved tremendous courage and stamina, the class was impressed. The purpose of the story was to show students that all jobs were valuable in a flourishing community as demonstrated in the story.

Method of Evaluating the Unit's Effectiveness

Formative Assessment

Student interest and engagement were observed through verbal feedback and were gathered at the end of each lesson in order to check for understanding. During

discussions at the beginning of each lesson, engagement and excitement was also closely observed. Students' commitment to any particular activity was measured by the students' completeness of work and quality of work. The teacher also solicited continuous verbal feedback to modify the unit to fit the learning needs of each student.

Summative Assessment

Students were given a summative assessment form where they were to provide feedback on how effective the Career and Life Planning unit was in different areas pertaining to (a) student participation, (b) the helpfulness of each activity and (c) the attainment of prescribed learning outcomes (Appendix D).

Results

After completing the unit, students were given a two-page summative evaluation form to complete. The teacher worked with pairs of students to complete the form as it ensured that they were completed properly. The first section of the form required each student to indicate which of the activities they participated in. For part two, students rated each activity by circling one of three faces depending on whether they thought the activity was not good at all, good or great. Last, students were asked if the unit (a) helped them learn more about themselves (b) helped them learn more about careers (c) made them excited about their future and (d) made them want to learn more about different careers.

The following tables contain the student evaluations of the career planning unit. As is evident from Table 1 below, 100 per cent of students completed all of the activities.

TABLE 1

Part 1: Completion of Activities

ACTIVITY	I DIDN'T DO IT	I DID IT
Future self sheet	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
Career cut-out	0 (0%)	19 (100%)
Jobs in my community	0 (0%)	19 (100%)

In assessing the data provided in Table 2, the activities were generally well received by the students.

TABLE 2

Part 2: Perceived Helpfulness of the Activity

ACTIVITY	NOT GOOD AT ALL	GOOD	GREAT
Future self sheet	1 (5%)	4 (21%)	14 (74%)
Career cut-outs	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	18 (95%)
Jobs in my community	0 (0%)	6 (32%)	13 (68%)

Note: Overall 98 per cent of the students rated the activities either good or great.

Last, students were to indicate if they believed the unit had achieved its objectives. The results of Part 3 are as follows:

TABLE 3

Part 3: Evaluation of Career Planning Unit

RESPONSE	I DON'T AGREE	I'M NOT SURE	I AGREE
This unit plan helped me to learn a lot about myself.	2 (10%)	3 (16%)	14 (74%)
This unit plan helped me to learn a lot about careers.	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	18 (95%)
This unit plan made me excited about what I could do with my life.	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	17 (90%)
This unit plan made me want to learn more about different careers.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	19 (100%)

Discussion and Future Directions

Students at the Grade 1 level do not typically possess developed written communication skills. As such, it was especially effective for children to use art and visual imagery to convey their thoughts and feelings. Adding metaphor and symbolism was especially effective at delivering lessons that involved more complex, abstract concepts such as self-knowledge. Several children requested to repeat the unit's activities where they could "show their ideas as pictures." Consequently, the teacher ensured that activities that involved any amount of writing also included an element of art. For future implementation, art outcomes could also be integrated into the unit plan. Curricular integration was successful in that the unit was able to achieve its career unit objectives (mostly centred around self-awareness). It would be advantageous to integrate more units into the career unit to make the topic of careers an ongoing, overarching theme.

More career exploration through individual research could have been implemented into the career unit. Career exploration was largely limited to class discussion, brainstorming and career presentations. A number of students suggested that they be allowed to explore more careers and to learn more about different jobs from more books and various media.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, such an implementation was not possible. Naturally, students indicated in their evaluation forms that the unit made them want to learn more about different careers (Table 3). Many students provided a considerably positive response to the career presentations done by their peers. As a result of each student's parent/guardian being employed in a unique career, these presentations in effect, served as a rudimentary form of career exploration.

Storytelling was a particularly effective medium of communication. Students were able to successfully identify the primary themes from the book, *The Top Job* (Kimmel 2007). Each student appeared markedly engaged and eager to contribute to class discussion at the conclusion of the reading activity. A number of students were noticeably disappointed when class discussion ended and requested that discussion about careers be extended because they desired "to learn more about careers." For future implementation, it would be beneficial to introduce an element of career research where students would be free to explore jobs that they might find interesting and personally relevant. Students who were typically more scholastically inclined undertook career research on their own and borrowed library books about careers. These

same students also repeated class activities at home and presented them to the teacher, specifically Activity 4 (Career Cut-Outs).

This career planning unit also assisted in creating a stronger classroom community. Because of the unit's heavy emphasis on uniqueness, personal value, individuality and self-awareness, the students learned a lot more about their peers by relating their own interests to others. As the students learned more about each other, the teacher observed how new friendships form over shared interests and goals, as well as students being more open to and validating the ideas of others during class discussion.

Conclusion

As evidenced by this unit, Grade 1 students are abundantly capable of engaging in self-reflective processes. The idea that attaining greater self-knowledge can serve to be a reward unto itself holds significant pedagogical implications. Teachers must question if what they are teaching is not only scholastically edifying but also personally meaningful. Is lesson material meaningful enough that students are willing to create homework for themselves beyond the classroom? As the students in this article demonstrated, when lesson material is personally relevant enough, school work ceases to be a tedious chore and becomes a purposeful quest for greater self-knowledge. One especially important goal of education is to teach kids to learn independently and to pursue continuous learning—not just learning for learning's sake but rather learning for the purpose of building character and fulfilling meaningful life goals. Grade 1 students demonstrated that they are capable of grasping not only what is being taught but can also appreciate the value of why something is being taught. Naturally, connecting normal classroom material to career and life education can make typical classroom topics more relatable and engaging, and will hopefully result in students who are self-wise and career ready.

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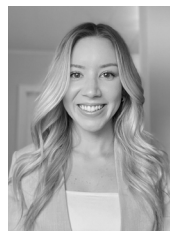
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Appendix A

Close your eyes and get as comfortable as possible. Take a deep breath in and out, in and out, in and out. This is your fantasy. It will help you to dream of your perfect day. Try not to limit yourself. Anything is possible on your perfect day. Allow yourself to dream about things that you would not do on an ordinary day. Let your mind run wild. Anything is possible on this day.

See yourself waking up in the morning. Look around the room before you get out of bed. Where are you? Are you at home or are you somewhere else? Get out of the bed and walk around the room. What do you see? Are there posters on the walls? What is in the room? Change out of your pyjamas and put on what you are going to wear today. Do you put on a costume? A uniform? A jersey? Or something else? Open the door and walk out of the room.

Go into the kitchen and sit down to eat your perfect breakfast. What are you eating? Are you alone or is someone eating with you on your perfect day? Is there music playing? Is the TV on? Are you looking out the window as you eat?

You have finished breakfast and are now on your way to meet your hero. Who are you going to meet? Do you already know your hero, or are you meeting them for the

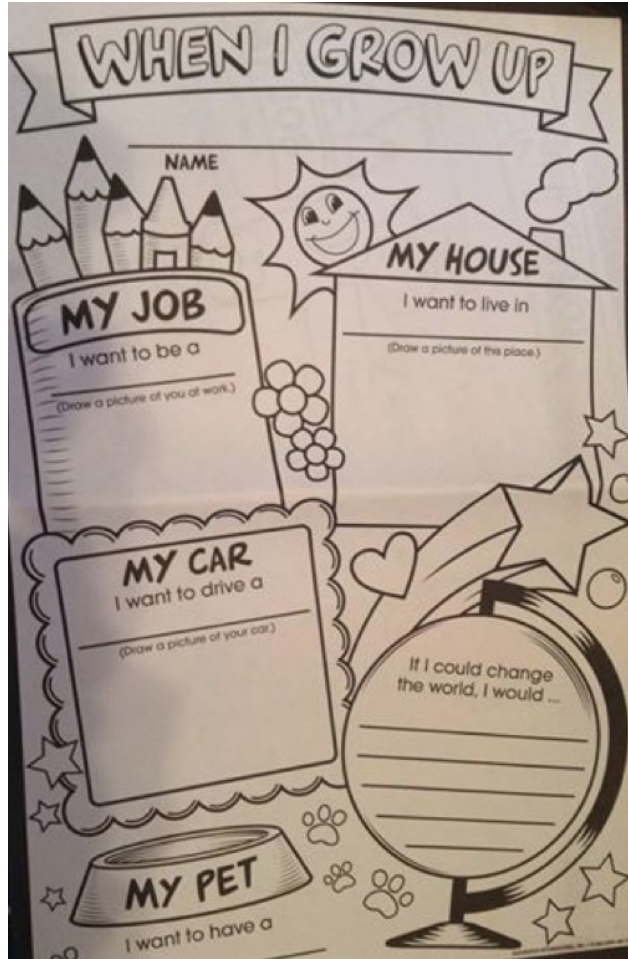
first time? Why is this person your hero? Where will you meet this person? Why do you want to meet them? You are going to take along something that is very, very important to you. What are you going to take? Why have you chosen this item?

How will you get to the meeting spot? Will you walk? Drive? Fly? Bike? Or magically appear? You have now finished meeting with your hero. You now have the rest of the day to do whatever you want. You can do all of the things you have always dreamed of doing. How are you going to spend your day? Where are you going to spend your day? Are you outside or inside?

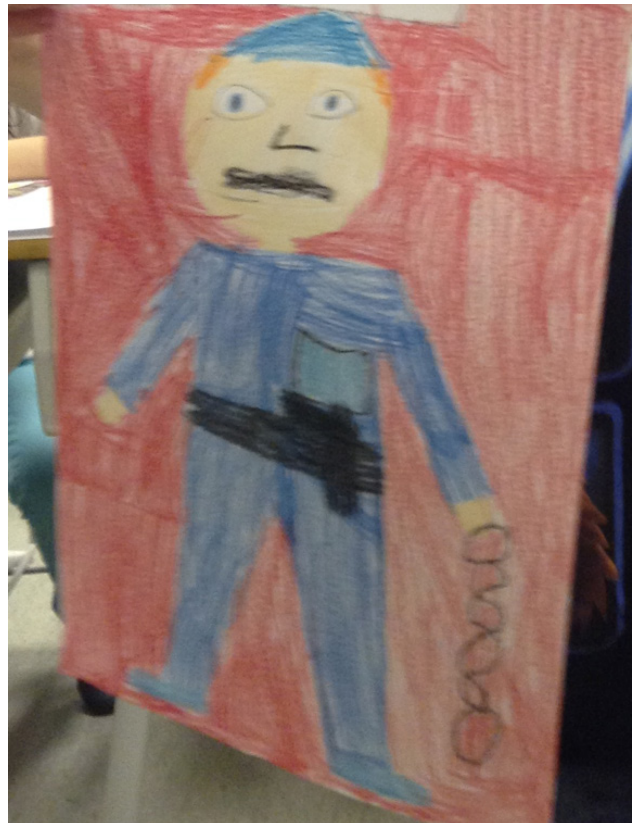
Take a moment now to think about all of the activities that you have done on your perfect day. Your day is coming to an end now. Where do you see yourself going to bed at night? What do you see right before you close your eyes? As you drift off to sleep, think of one thing you are really looking forward to doing tomorrow.

The dream of your perfect day is now over. Take a few moments to come back to the classroom again. When you are ready, open your eyes and write down the story of your perfect day.

Appendix B



Appendix C



Appendix D

Career Coaching Across the Curriculum: Student Evaluation Form

I hope you enjoyed this project. Please complete this evaluation form.

Part 1: Please let me know if you did the activities.

ACTIVITY	I DIDN'T DO IT	I DID IT
Future self sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career cut-out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jobs in my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 2: Please let me know if you thought the activity was helpful by circling whether you thought it was not good at all, good or great.

ACTIVITY	NOT GOOD AT ALL	GOOD	GREAT
Future self sheet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career cut-out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jobs in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What did you like about this lesson, unit plan or schoolwide intervention?

How could this lesson, unit plan or schoolwide intervention be made better?

Part 3: Please tell me how much you agree with the following statements by putting a checkmark in the box that best tells me how you feel.

ACTIVITY	I DON'T AGREE	I'M NOT SURE	I AGREE
This lesson helped me to learn a lot about myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This lesson helped me to learn a lot about careers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This lesson made me excited about what I could do with my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This lesson made me want to learn more about different careers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you very much for your help!

Embracing the Interdisciplinary Connection of Movement Between High School Physical Education and Drama Education

Lisa Taylor and Harrison Campbell

During their graduate studies, Lisa Taylor and Harrison Campbell, the authors of this article, found themselves in several conversations regarding the love of their separate disciplines; Campbell talked about his love of teaching drama and Taylor talked about her love of teaching physical education (PE). When the two disciplines overlapped, conversation included good-hearted humour regarding competition for facilities (for example, the school gym as the venue for sports, class and school plays) and similarities in experiences with reduced program funding when school budgets were cut (for example, a lack of funding for props and costumes or balls

and other game equipment). Initially it was assumed that their programs differed greatly and they simply tolerated one another. However, with further discussion, the authors realized similarities between their drama and PE programs, and an opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary work that could better support students who feel disengaged with PE but thrive in drama settings in the process. The striking similarity that the authors recognized is the mirrored curricular outcome focus on movement, particularly at the Grade 10 level (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Overlapping Movement-Focused Outcomes Within the Grade 10 Alberta Drama and PE Programs of Study

DRAMA 10 (ALBERTA EDUCATION 1989) <i>The student will be able to:</i>		PHYSICAL EDUCATION 10 (ALBERTA EDUCATION 2000) <i>Students will:</i>	
3.	“recognize the necessity for physical warmups” (p 8)	A10-1	“apply and refine locomotor skills and concepts—effort, space and relationships—to perform and create a variety of activities to improve personal performance” (p 9)
4.	“perform a physical warm-up” (p 8)	A10-3	“apply and refine nonlocomotor skills and concepts—effort, space and relationships—to perform and create a variety of activities to improve personal performance” (p 9)
15.	“use basic locomotor movements...to explore space” (p 9)	A10-5	“apply and refine manipulative skills and concepts—effort, space and relationships—to perform and create a variety of activities to improve personal performance” (p 9)

The Alberta PE curriculum is known for its emphasis on movement. The general outcomes of Activity, Benefits Health, Cooperation, and Do it Daily (Alberta Learning 2000) centre on active participation, with an expectation that all outcomes in the curriculum are achieved through physical activity. Furthermore, throughout the K-12 curriculum, fundamental movement skills are taught and fostered, actions are refined and spatial awareness in relation to structures, equipment and peers are developed (Alberta Learning 2000).

Interestingly, the drama curriculum, across Grades 10-12, also advocates for the importance of movement through units of study such as tableau, creative movement, mime, dance drama, improvised dance, choreographed dance and stage fighting (Alberta Education 1989). Movement within the drama curriculum is defined as nonverbal physical expression (Albers and Sanders 2010) and often includes considerations toward touch, gaze, gesture and posture. Students in drama need to practise stillness at appropriate moments; be aware of the strain on themselves while performing; design personal warm-ups; align their bodies properly to help enhance flexibility and balance; concentrate and apply appropriate energy to movement and gesture; move parts of their bodies in isolation; be aware of the space around them; employ high, medium and low levels as appropriate; explore space through basic locomotor movements (for example, walking, running, crawling); and create and respond to patterns of movement (Wells and Sandretto 2016). When one takes pause to notice, there is an obvious overlap between the two curricula.

Alongside the initial conversation that inspired this article, Campbell shared his general discouragement with PE based on his own experiences as a high school student. He expressed that PE was difficult due to a number of factors surrounding his confidence. There was a perception in his PE class that those more skilled succeeded, and there was a disparity between how individuals with varying skill levels were treated. Furthermore, there was rigidity in the PE program Campbell experienced, where swimming and weight lifting were mandatory units and were uncomfortable for Campbell. Additionally, despite always investing his best efforts in PE class, Campbell was never able to achieve honours grades in PE. Taylor was disheartened to hear of Campbell's experiences, to say the least.

Unfortunately, students' feelings of discouragement with PE are not uncommon and are a result of various circumstances and environments that can be created by PE teachers. Students may feel discouraged for a variety of reasons including difficulties with skill acquisition,

frustration with sport-specific games, and dissatisfaction with repetitive and rigid programming (Tudor, Sarkar and Spray 2019).

However, Campbell felt that he thrived to a greater extent within the context of drama due, primarily, to the strong sense of community and support he experienced within the theatrical spaces. Within movement-based activities and exercises, the drama spaces were more collaborative, flexible and group oriented, which felt more supportive.

The literature offers a number of strategies that can be used to work to engage students who feel discouraged in PE class. For example, offering students the opportunity to participate in activities that are more personally relevant can have a positive effect on engagement (Mitchell, Gray and Inchley 2015) and may encourage student participation in class (El-Sherif 2014). Furthermore, consulting students regarding their choices and supporting their voice as part of PE programming can engage students as well (Mitchell, Gray and Inchley 2015). Campbell and Taylor found themselves in discussion regarding how the interdisciplinary movement outcomes in drama and PE could be fostered with games that are played and how these games might support students.

Considering the overlap between the movement-focused outcomes in the drama and PE programs of studies, the authors compiled a list of games that can be played in both drama and PE settings. Following the list of games offered (Table 2), the authors offer ideas as to how these games might be implemented in a cross-curricular nature to support students.

Overlapping Games

Table 2 includes a list of games that the authors have played within their classes. The Drama 10-inspired games were used in numerous courses, and the PE 10-inspired games were used over a number of semesters in PE classes. (When these games were compiled, the authors recognized games they had also used in their own classes!) The games listed in Table 2 achieve both Drama 10 and PE 10 outcomes (Table 1). These games are designed for maximum participation for all students with minimal instruction, as students appreciate ample time to be active, facilitated by clear instructions and organization (Gray, Treacy and Hall 2019). Important to note: the authors do not claim to own the game ideas listed in Table 2. These games and their descriptions have been gathered through experience, and then shared and passed along by colleagues.

TABLE 2

Games with Descriptions That Can Be Played to Achieve Outcomes in Drama 10 and PE 10

DRAMA 10 GAMES	PE 10 GAMES
<p>Atom</p> <p>Objective: Form the atoms called out as quickly as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants move around the room randomly, filling all the space. • The teacher/facilitator calls out any of the following, and participants respond accordingly: “Atom One”—students stand alone with their arms hugging their bodies; “Atom Two”—two people pair up hugging each other/touching elbows/linking arms; “Atom Three”—three people form a group hugging/touching elbows/linking arms; “Atom Four,” “Atom Five” and so on. (Possible formations depend on the number of people participating.) • Groups of atoms split up for each new grouping. • Calling out “melt down,” asks students to all fall to the floor/ground. • Anyone left over after the groups of two, three, four and so on are formed, do a little dance in their free space and then work to find a group for the next call-out. 	<p>Human Knot</p> <p>Objective: Unscramble the knot to form a circle, joined by hands holding pinnies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students stand in a circle formation, facing each other, in groups of 8–12. • Each student stretches one arm out with a pinny in it. • Each student grabs the other end of someone else’s pinny with their free hand. Note: Students should not grab the pinny of the people right beside them. • Once everyone has both hands on a pinny, the group works to untangle themselves into a circle without letting go of any of the pinnies.
<p>Blob Tag</p> <p>Objective: Be the last person who hasn’t yet joined a blob.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select one or two people to be “it.” • When the person who is “it” touches another player, they link arms to become a blob. • Now the blob is “it,” and anyone else who is tagged by the blob must join the blob. • Eventually everyone will become part of the blob. 	<p>Rock, Paper, Scissors, Shoot Entourage</p> <p>Objective: Win the final game!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students, standing, face each other in pairs to play rock, paper, scissors using full-body actions; rock looks like arms overhead while crouching, paper looks like arms and legs wide like a star; scissors looks like arms crossed in front of chest with legs together. • On “rock, paper, scissors” students do small jumps up and down. On “shoot” the student chooses their action (rock, paper or scissors). • The person who wins finds another person in the class to play. • The person who does not win becomes part of the winner’s entourage, following behind them and cheering them on. • The game ends when two people with massive entourages face each other for the last battle.
<p>Ball Game</p> <p>Objective: Keep one fewer balls (for example, six) than the total number of students in the group (for example, seven) moving with flow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students form groups of seven or eight. • Starting with one ball, establish a throwing pattern around the circle (for example, student one throws the ball to student two across the circle, who throws it to student three across the circle, who throws it to student four across the circle and so on). • Each person receives and throws the ball only once. • The person who began the throwing must be the last person to receive the ball. • Repeat the same throwing pattern a few times until everyone remembers clearly who they throw to and receive from. • Once the pattern is established, begin adding more balls, so there are several balls going around the circle at the same time. 	<p>Folks Just Love</p> <p>Objective: Move to various pylons and communicate with peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One person in the centre of a circle stands with about 10 students around them (each person at a pylon 3 metres away from the person in the middle). • The person in the centre says “folks just love…” and something they love (chocolate, sunsets, puppies and so on) • All the students who love that same thing have to leave their pylon and find another pylon to stand by, while the person in the centre tries to find a pylon to stand by. • The person left without a pylon becomes the new person in the centre who begins a new round by saying “folks just love…”

<p>Shape Shifter</p> <p>Objective: Move as a group safely together, communicating verbally and nonverbally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students line up single file in groups of five or six in an open playing space (for example, gym or field). Divide the class into groups that are the same size (for example, 40 = 8 groups of 5). • When you say “go,” student teams will walk or jog slowly together, staying in their line. • When you say “shape shift,” the first person in each jogging line forms a pose or shape with their arms that the rest of their team needs to mimic. • When you say “shape shift” again, the second person in each line forms a new pose or shape with their arms that the rest of the line needs to mimic. The first person in line then needs to turn around and now walk or slowly jog backward. • Repeat “shape shift” until the entirety of each team is moving backward. • Note: Set a stepping cadence by playing some music to move to. • Remind students to look over their shoulders and communicate to each other while walking or jogging backward to avoid injury. 	<p>Over the Lava (or) Cross the River</p> <p>Objective: Get over the lava or cross the river without anyone touching the ground.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in teams of four or five try to get from one side of the playing space (for example, gym, hallway or field) to the other (a designated safe space). • Students are given one piece of equipment less than the number of people on the team (that is, five teammates = four pieces of equipment). • Working together, students need to figure out how to get their whole team to “cross the river.” • No part of the students’ bodies can touch the gym floor, or they go back to the side of the “river” they started on and try again). • Equipment can include scooters, poly spots, skipping ropes, tarps—anything that can be safely stepped on.
<p>Flocking</p> <p>Objective: Work together as a flock to fluidly change direction and follow the leader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form groups of four. • The four students stand in a diamond formation all facing the same direction with enough room between bodies to allow arms to be stretched out freely. • The person at the front of the diamond (in the direction the flock initially moves) determines the movements; this student uses all parts of their body in any way they please. • When you call “change of direction,” pointing to the new direction, the flocks/students need to adjust; the leader changes when there is a change in direction of movement—with the person at the front of the diamond in the direction in which the group is now moving as the new leader. • The change of leadership should occur without disrupting the flow of the movement. 	<p>Zombies Attack</p> <p>Objective: To be the last human alive!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select two zombies (good for a group of 40). • Gather students standing around the centre circle in a gym, or a similar circle laid out by pylons in a field. • Zombies stand in the middle of the circle. • On “go,” students walk around the centre circle in the same direction (counter/clockwise). • When you say “zombies attack,” zombies run after the humans and tag only one of them, as the humans try to run away within the play space. • Once tagged, that human becomes a zombie in the centre of the circle, joining the other zombies (now four zombies total). • Play until everyone is a zombie.

Pedagogical Implementation Options

How might the aforementioned games be used to support students who feel disengaged in PE but thrive in a drama setting? Communication and coordination between the drama and PE teachers are critical to realize these opportunities. Suggestions for cross-curricular implementation follow:

- Have students participate in a game within the drama setting, later giving the students the opportunity to participate in the same game in PE class. This approach can give the students experience with the game played and opportunity to excel with repetition in the PE setting. Additionally, the students may find the game played in PE as more personally relevant if connected to their experiences in drama.
- In the context of a student-designed low-organized games unit in PE (see Taylor 2021), where students introduce and lead their peers in a game as a teacher would, students could use any of the games in Table 2, practised in a drama class setting first, to support their assignment, leadership and perceived confidence in PE.
- Have students introduce and lead a game in the context of drama class and then introduce and lead the same game in the context of PE class as (for example) a warm-up game. This may foster student confidence by providing an opportunity for the student to feel seen by peers as an individual who holds knowledge in both drama and PE contexts.

Closing Thoughts

Based on the authors' experiences as K-12 educators, getting to know the students in our classes has allowed us to better support the learning and achievement experienced by each individual. Engaging individual students in conversation regarding their classes and interests outside of PE is a great starting point to learn passions students may have. If you find yourself learning about students in your PE class who feel discouraged in PE but thrive in their drama course, consider connecting with the drama teacher in your school and introducing some of the interdisciplinary games mentioned above.

Important to note: the authors of this paper have engaged their own K-12 students numerous times in the games listed in this manuscript. However, the authors

have not applied the cross-curricular strategies mentioned in this article in a K-12 setting. However, with this article, we hope to encourage a more collaborative approach to teaching drama education and PE, where two departments sometimes at odds can better support each other and their students. Furthermore, the authors hope that this article might serve as inspiration to connect with students who may appear less engaged in PE, to find out what other strengths and passions they have that can be leveraged in a PE setting.

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Maggie Shane, the ATA's privacy officer, is your resource for privacy compliance support.

780-447-9429 (direct)

780-699-9311 (cell, available any time)

Consent for Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information

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By signing below, I am consenting to The Alberta Teachers' Association collecting, using and disclosing personal information identifying me or my child/children or ward(s) in print and/or online publications and on websites available to the public, including social media. By way of example, personal information may include, but is not limited to, name, photographs, audio/video recordings, artwork, writings or quotations.

I understand that copies of digital publications may come to be housed on servers outside Canada.

I understand that I may vary or withdraw this consent at any time. I understand that the Association's privacy officer is available to answer any questions I may have regarding the collection, use and disclosure of these records. The privacy officer can be reached at 780-447-9429 or 1-800-232-7208.

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Today's date: _____

For more information on the ATA's privacy policy, visit www.teachers.ab.ca.



The Alberta Teachers' Association

Contributions to *Runner*

Runner, the journal of the Health and Physical Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association, is a professional journal for physical education teachers in Alberta. Authors are encouraged to submit articles of relevance in either a peer review or editorial review process. Topics may include, but are not limited to, personal explorations of significant classroom experiences; descriptions of innovative classroom and school practices; reviews or evaluations of instructional and curricular methods, programs or materials; discussions of trends, issues or policies; and scientific research.

Manuscripts on other themes will also be considered for publication and may be up to 2,500 words long. References to works cited should appear in full in a list at the end of the article using the author-date system. Photographs,

line drawings and diagrams are welcome. To ensure quality reproduction, digital photographs should have a minimum of 300 DPI. A caption and photo credit should accompany each photograph. The contributor is responsible for obtaining consent to use a photo image and written parental permission for any image or works by children under 18 years of age.

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically in Word format. A cover page should include the contributor's name, professional position, address, phone number and e-mail address. A Copyright Transfer Agreement must be completed once a submission is accepted.

Contributions are reviewed by the editor, who reserves the right to edit for clarity and space.

Send manuscripts for future issues to Lisa Taylor at runner@hpec.ab.ca.

Copyright Transfer Agreement

I/we, _____, the author(s), transfer copyright of the manuscript entitled _____

to the Health and Physical Education Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association, in consideration of publication. This transfer shall become effective if and when the manuscript is accepted for publication, thereby granting the Health and Physical Education Council the right to authorize republication, representation and distribution of the original and derivative material. I/we further certify that the manuscript under consideration has not been previously published and is my/our own original piece.

I/we understand that the work may be edited for publication.

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Two-sentence biographical note about the author(s):

HPEC Mission Statement

The Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC), as a professional organization of teachers, advocates for quality health and physical education programs and provides opportunities for professional growth and development of its members. HPEC is committed to providing leadership in creating healthy, active school communities.



HPEC Vision Statement

Alberta teachers will provide quality instruction and programs in health and physical education to promote the development of healthy, active lifestyles in students.

Objectives

The objectives of HPEC shall be to

- improve curriculum, instruction and assessment in health and physical education through increased knowledge, skills and understanding;
- develop, study and propose professional resources and responses to health and physical education issues;
- ensure that teachers have access to meaningful professional development opportunities that meet their needs throughout all stages of their career;
- enhance the expertise of members by promoting an understanding of current research to inform professional practice;
- liaise with other organizations that seek to promote healthy, active lifestyles within school communities;
- further the continuous development and evaluation of standards and guidelines within the profession for personnel, programs and facilities in health and physical education; and
- facilitate broad-based, skilful participation in the planning and implementation of effective, collaborative, ongoing professional development.

Beliefs

HPEC believes that

- a well-delivered health and physical education curriculum supported by quality instruction can change health behaviours of children and youth in K-12;
- health and physical education play a valued and vital role in providing a quality, balanced education for all children and youth in Alberta schools;
- all students in all grades in Alberta schools should have the right and opportunity to experience sustained, vigorous physical activity through participation in quality daily physical education programs;
- wellness is an outcome of quality health and physical education programs that develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to assist students to make appropriate choices to live active, healthy lives; and
- comprehensive school health is the framework for the delivery of quality health and physical education programs to promote and develop wellness in Alberta's children and youth.

From the Executive Handbook of the Health and Physical Education Council (2016).

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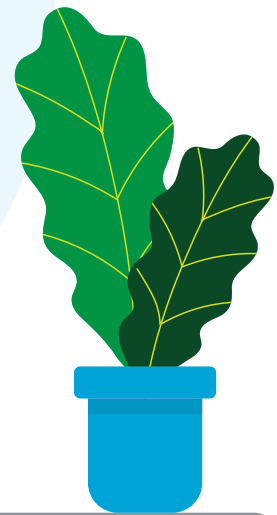
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