

## ARTICLE REVIEWED

### “Is Meaningful Physical Education and Social Justice a Complimentary Combination? A Physical Education Teacher Educator Collaborative Self-Study”

Iannucci, C., Ní Chróinín, D., Luguetti, C., & Hamblin, D. (2023). Is meaningful physical education and social justice a complimentary combination? A physical education teacher educator collaborative self-study. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 0(0), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2023.2271497>

#### THE PROBLEM

In recent years, there has been a notable push for innovative teaching in physical education, with a focus on health and wellness through socially just pedagogies. Meaningful PE aims to support students in valuing PE experiences by recognizing how participation enhances the quality of their lives. Additionally, teachers are urged to question outdated practices that perpetuate social injustices. The preparation for this transformative shift comes from robust physical education teacher education (PETE) programs, which equip teachers with the knowledge and desire to effectively integrate social justice concepts. The ultimate goal is to create inclusive and equitable learning environments by combining a solid understanding of social justice principles with practical teaching skills.



#### Research Summary

This study uses Loughran’s (2014) theory of developing a pedagogy of teacher education to address the research question: What is the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice in enacting PETE pedagogies? The premise of this theoretical framework is the development of pedagogy that is responsive to sociopolitical realities and complex contexts of education through intentional and reflective practices. With this framework in mind, this study used collaborative self-study to explore teacher educators’ approach to implementation of Meaningful PE and social justice. Study participants included four teacher educators from different institutions, with some teaching in-person courses and others teaching virtual or hybrid courses. Data was collected over a 13-month period and included various data sources such as planning materials, reflections, recordings of conversations with critical friends, and collective meeting recordings. Through the collaborative process, the participants adopted the five principles of transformative pedagogies of Philpot and Ovens (2019) and the principles of learning to teach Meaningful PE in PETE, which became a framework to guide their practice. Employing thematic analysis methods, the research team initially identified four themes, subsequently condensing them into two core themes.

#### Conclusion

Findings are presented in two themes: 1) Meaningful PE’s potential alignment with social justice without being identical; and 2) the interplay between individual and social aspects through democratic and reflective practices. Discussions, supported by quotes from meetings, illustrate the distinction and interconnectedness between Meaningful PE and social justice. The research reveals Meaningful PE’s emphasis on individual experiences and social justice’s focus on wider societal issues, highlighting their mutual influences.

#### Key Takeaway

The study proposes a symbiotic relationship between these paradigms, showcasing how a blend of both pedagogies can enrich teacher practices in PETE, fostering a deeper understanding of social justice while valuing individual experiences. The research team was able to collaboratively articulate ideas and experience new methodologies for innovative teaching practices. This study lays the groundwork for future research to examine the intersection of Meaningful PE and social justice in physical education.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Loughran, J. (2014). Professionally Developing as a Teacher Educator. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65(4), 271–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487114533386>

Philpot, R., and Ovens, A. (2019). “Five Principles of Transformative Pedagogies in PETE,” in Walton-Fisette, J. Sutherland, S. and Hill, J. (eds.) *Teaching About Social Justice Issues in Physical Education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 3-12.