

**‘THAT IS A BIG PASSION OF MINE AS A
TYPICAL KIWI’**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’, TEACHERS’, AND STUDENTS’
PERSPECTIVES ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND**

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ABSTRACT

A critical element in the provision of physical education in primary schools is the perspectives of principals, teachers, and students. Little is known how their perspectives mediate the nature, frequency, and valuing of physical education. In this study, I used a qualitative research design to investigate their perspectives on physical education.

I recruited six principals, eight classroom teachers, and 24 students (aged 9-11 years old) from four primary schools in the Waikato District, New Zealand. I collected data from semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews with photo-elicitation, class videos, non-participant observation, documents, and other resources such as emails with participants. I completed thematic analysis and cross-case analysis. I reported and discussed the participants' views on (1) holistic development in physical education, (2) we valued the NZC, but we taught physical education in our ways, and (3) perceived barriers and challenges.

The findings showed the importance of physical education in the primary school curriculum and provided information about what happened to physical education in primary schools. The participants valued physical education and believed that it can promote students' interpersonal skills, physical and psychological well-being, and academic achievement. The implementation of physical education in the four primary schools was viewed as cultural reproduction based on seasonal sports and local events, and was influenced by multiple factors such as facilities, teachers' content knowledge, and time. Overall, the participants asserted that physical education plays an important role in the primary school curriculum.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE BRIEF OF MY RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Since 1877, physical education has been part of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Campbell, 1972; Stothart, 2000). Its nature has changed from an initial focus on military drill and physical training, to a focus on gymnastics and movement education, and more latterly to a focus on games education and health. It is unclear if it is still seen as relevant to contemporary schooling and whether it continues to be seen as providing important learning outcomes in primary schools.

This thesis examines how primary school principals, teachers, and students view the curriculum area of Health and Physical Education (HPE) in New Zealand. Although HPE is traditionally and more commonly recognised as physical education, Australia and New Zealand introduced HPE as a learning area in the late 1990s. I will use the preferred acronym ‘HPE’ (rather than ‘physical education’) when referring to the learning area in the context of this study. However, my focus in the present research is on teaching and learning in the practical context more commonly associated with physical education as distinct from HPE (see **Chapter 3.3.2** for further explanation and clarification).

In this chapter, I introduce the aims of my research and the importance of physical education firstly. Then, I present the research setting, the significance of the research, and the research questions. Lastly, I describe the structure of my thesis.

1.2 Research aims

The research communicates the value ascribed to physical education by examining principals', teachers', and students' perspectives on physical education in four primary schools in New Zealand. The research describes how principals, teachers, and students interpret, understand, and perceive physical education. The findings aim to provide readers with a better understanding of the role physical education is playing in promoting students' holistic development in the primary school curriculum.

1.3 The importance of physical education

The judgement of the importance and value of a school subject needs invariably to look at its history, present, and future (Kirk, 2010). Historically, physical education has been a field made up of diverse elements, such as survival skills, military skills, sport, physical games, and activities for entertainment (Phillips & Roper, 2006). The development of physical education is evident throughout human civilisation (Duncan & Watson, 1960; Kirk, 2010; Phillips & Roper, 2006). Duncan and Watson (1960) described physical education as:

... one of the most ancient phases of man's education. Primitive man had to be very active physically to survive. Simple, natural, and necessary physical activity was a continuous part of his experience, and through it he gained many of the same values that are claimed for the physical education [programmes] of today. (Duncan & Watson, 1960, p. 2)

In the explanation given by Duncan and Watson (1960), physical education was initially imbued with male-dominated attributes (Kirk, 2002), and its original significance was to pass onto men

skills for survival, such as hunting (Kirk, 2010). A focus on power, strength, fitness, and speed appears to be a long-established convention associated with physical education in people's minds.

Nowadays, physical education's unique value lies in the word 'education' that clearly positions it as an educational process through the physical, which can be understood as physical activities involving reconstructing and extending human experience in and out of schooling (Johnson & Turner, 2016; Kirk, 2010; Lynch, 2019). Physical education is more broadly defined by a range of related learning areas (Kirk, 2010, 2012), such as health education, safety education, sports education, sport science education, and recreation. Its educational attribute has gone beyond just teaching knowledge related to the body and contributes variously to "health, character, sportsmanship, citizenship, democratic concepts, moral values" (Duncan & Watson, 1960, p. 22), social ability, affective stability, social justice and equality (Gerdin et al., 2019), inclusion (Maher, 2017), gender (Penney, 2002), and critical perspectives (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014; Gerdin et al., 2018). It appears that physical education has had many claims and debates around its definition, content, scope, and significance (Pringle, 2015; Tinning, 2009).

It is worth noting that the nature of physical education has formed and "remained more or less intact since around the middle of the last century" (Kirk, 2010, p. 2); that is, its educational purposes are to enrich students' school experience and improve students' physical, psychological, and intellectual development (Bailey et al., 2009; Lynch, 2019; Morgan & Bourke, 2008). Laker (2003) argued that the centre of the debate about physical education is dependent on "who controls the curriculum and what emphasis should be placed on the physical element of that curriculum" (p. 153). Kirk (2012) proposed that the defining feature of physical education is its adherence to

socially constructed activity relating to political, cultural, and economic conditions at every moment in history. Whatever the claims and significance physical education has, as Kirk (2012) noted, “there is always potential for challenge and transformation of the dominant discourse, and this dominance is merely contingent and must be constantly renewed” (p. 158). Undoubtedly, the debate and discourse of the significance of physical education as a school subject will continue.

1.3.1 Physical education is a global concern in education

Physical education has moved beyond local conditions because of the rapid development of the media and sports culture around the globe (Pühse & Gerber, 2005). It has been viewed as one of the most potent instruments to bring physical and sports culture into existence (Ogi, 2005). Its significance for students’ holistic development has been recognised and valued (Ang & Penney, 2013; Bailey, 2005; Bailey et al., 2009; Cañabate et al., 2018).

However, physical education seems to have a fragile place and status in the primary school curriculum (Hardman & Marshall, 2000). A survey funded by the International Olympic Committee from 1998 to 1999 found that the provision of physical education in schools was in a perilous, unstable state all over the world (Hardman & Marshall, 2000). Hardman and Marshall (2000) surveyed 126 countries and found that the tenuous position of physical education was related to: (1) legitimate standing and current implementation; (2) limited or declining allocated curriculum time; (3) subject position; (4) an agreed thinking among headteachers¹, teachers, and parents; (5) insufficiencies in funding and resources; (6) limited teacher preparation; and (7) curriculum direction.

¹ A headteacher is a senior teacher or the staff who is in charge of a school, whose responsibilities involve teaching and management.

More recently, in the United States of America (USA), physical education has experienced a process of marginalisation (Beddoes et al., 2014; Oh & Graber, 2017; Sheehy, 2011) and a declining number of attendances in physical education lessons over the past 20 years (Schaub & Marian, 2011). The status of physical education in K-12 in the USA has been on the fringe of other academic subjects (Gambescia, 2006; Henry, 1978; Schaub & Marian, 2011). One of the leading causes is that physical education historically has a relatively lower academic position among all disciplines (Henry, 1978; Oh & Graber, 2017). Sheehy (2011) noted that some people hold negative images of physical education teachers. Graham (2008) cited Woody Allen's words that "those who can, do; those who cannot, teach; and those who cannot teach, teach physical education" (p. 1). Regardless of the possible causes, the reality in most schools and colleges is that greater emphasis is on academic disciplines such as mathematics, English, and science than physical education (Beddoes et al., 2014; Oh & Graber, 2017; Richards & Wilson, 2012).

The situation is similar in other countries as well. For example, in South Korea, the curricular reforms over the last 50 years have aimed to improve students' mental and physical health (Lee & Cho, 2014). However, physical education has had a lower status than other disciplines in the Korean curriculum due to the pressure to pass academic subjects such as mathematics and English in the university entrance exams (Lee & Cho, 2014). Overall, while physical education has had the same legal position as other subjects in the curriculum, its legal status does not match what happens in practice (Hardman & Marshall, 2000).

Despite its marginal status, contemporary physical education has attached importance to students' holistic development (Lynch, 2019; Lynch & Soukup, 2016). In England, physical education has been a crucial part of the curriculum under the influence of policy and the discourse of schooling, health, and sports (Griggs & Ward, 2012). Policy interventions from the British government have become a trend (Jung et al., 2016). From 2002, a national strategy called Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) was launched in the United Kingdom (UK). This strategy connected with several stakeholders, such as the Department for Education and Skills, headteachers and the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted). It aimed to attract more students aged five to 16 years old to participating in high-quality physical education and school sports (Phillpots, 2013). In 2013, a new policy for school sport and physical education, the Primary Physical Education and Sport Premium was initiated to replace PESSCL (Jones & Green, 2017; Lawless et al., 2020). Jung et al. (2016) suggested that the British government was positioning the "physical education, school sport and club links strategy and the physical education and sport strategy for young people for a wide-ranging array of social objectives" (p. 501).

Finland remains one of the few countries where physical education appears to be valued in both policy and practice. Students in Finland have been consistently ranked as top performers in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2010). According to Yli-Piipari (2014), physical education, as an obligatory subject/learning area in the Finnish curriculum, has partly contributed to this success. In Finland, primary physical education has been regarded as a primary means of promoting students' physical, cognitive, psychological, and mental development (Lynch, 2019; Morgan & Bourke, 2008; Morgan & Hansen, 2008c). This focus has been the case

ever since legislation in 1968 introduced a nine-year comprehensive school education system (Risku, 2014; Yli-Piipari, 2014). Yli-Piipari (2014) found that the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that students learn from physical education contribute to their involvement and participation in sports and physical activity throughout their lives. In another Finnish study, Jaakkola et al. (2015) showed that the relationship between academic performance and fundamental motor skills (FMS) was firmly established, suggesting that the proficiency of FMS is likely to stimulate students to have better academic achievement at schools.

In Australia, research has demonstrated that physical education and physical activity can play a powerful role in preventing and intervening in some chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, and improving students' physical and mental health (Eather et al., 2011; Healy et al., 2015; Olive et al., 2019; Telford, 2017; Telford et al., 2016). Therefore, HPE is considered one of the most prominent learning areas to cultivate an active, healthy lifestyle for Australians. Brooks and Dinan-Thompson (2013) reported that "HPE has been endorsed as a core learning requirement for all students in each year from K-10" (p. 235) to enhance "their own and others' health, safety, well-being and physical activity participation in varied and changing contexts" (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012, p. 2). HPE in Australia "is uniquely positioned to provide opportunities for the education of students to adopt lifelong healthy, active living" (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012, p. 2).

In China, a new national curriculum was launched in 2002 to accommodate the need for students' holistic development (Liang & Hong, 2012). The curriculum includes four key areas – intellect, morals, physical and aesthetic abilities (Jin, 2013). With the introduction of this new curriculum,

the title HPE² was introduced and obtained a secure status among the main learning subjects³. In this curriculum, physical education emphasises the concepts of health and fitness. Since 2005, as part of their nine-year compulsory education, with the aim of improving students' physical health, the Chinese government has required all school students to have physical and outdoor activities at least one hour per day (Chicharro-Saito, 2008).

In summary, the image of a marginal school subject and the traditional notion that physical education is inferior to other school subjects still dominate people's ways of thinking (Hardman & Marshall, 2000; Johns & Dimmock, 1999; Lee & Cho, 2014). Despite this, contemporary physical education in schools, on a global basis, has emphasised the importance of students' holistic development and has focused on concepts such as health, fitness, well-being, and equality. Many official curricula recognise physical education as an essential learning area with the same importance as other subject areas. However, it is unclear whether education practitioners and participants see it in the same light. How the physical education curriculum is interpreted and taught, how students feel about physical education, and how students' initial experience in physical education affects them have not been investigated thoroughly internationally (Dyson, 2006; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Sprake & Temple, 2016).

1.3.2 The importance of students' initial experience in physical education

Many stakeholders across countries and contexts have begun to pay attention to primary school physical education due to its benefits for students' holistic development (Carse et al., 2018; Jess

² Although Health and Physical Education is the updated title for physical education in the curriculum of China, the public is used to calling it physical education.

³ The main learning subjects are Chinese, Mathematics, Science, English, Health and Physical Education, Arts, and Morals.

et al., 2016; Kirk, 2005). Students' initial experience in physical education can have an influence on their later lives in terms of its benefits to physical, psychological, and social development (Beni et al., 2017; Jakobsson, 2014; Jakobsson et al., 2014; Kretchmar, 2006; Leisterer & Jekauc, 2019). This initial experience is often linked to "social interaction, fun, challenge, motor competence, and personally relevant learning" (Beni et al., 2017, p. 291). Kirk (2005) argued that students' initial experience has a decisive or crucial importance in their later success, failure, or participation "in the physical culture of society" (p. 242). Kretchmar (2006) contended that physical education is "delightful" and can offer "five fundamental human freedoms" (p. 6) for students, namely, freedom of expression, exploration, discovery, invention, and creativity. Without any doubt, delightful, enjoyable physical education can cultivate students' interest in all varieties of physical activity, sports, movement, and games in the long-term or even lifelong.

In contrast, unhappy, unenjoyable experiences in physical education in schools may arouse students' distaste or opposition towards physical education, sport, physical activities, games, and movement. Some studies have critically examined students' unenjoyable experiences in physical education at schools (Leisterer & Jekauc, 2019; Pringle, 2008; Trout & Graber, 2009). Pringle (2008) narrated a story about a student's struggle in school sports when he was at primary school. "Looking back now, it is quite clear, rugby sort of destroyed me. It made me feel like I wasn't quite good enough. It made me feel soft" (quoted in Pringle, 2008, p. 227). It was not until many years later, the student could say to himself, "Hey, I am a good guy" (Pringle, 2008, p. 227).

Leisterer and Jekauc (2019) quoted a student's negative experience in a group task in physical education. The student expressed a sense of "low cooperation and social commitment ... I felt

betrayed! ... And this was a mixture of sadness and anger, and I was in total rage because of them. And I felt down and depressed” (p. 6).

Trout and Graber (2009) interviewed 12 students aged 13-18 about their experiences in physical education. One student said:

[Physical education] didn't make me good at anything. It just made me realize how slow I was and how fat I am. Yeah, I always dreaded [physical education] classes. I really dreaded it because I could never do a push-up [or] a curl-up. (p. 277)

Stories such as these have raised concerns about performance-oriented, competitive sports-dominated physical education pedagogy in primary schools, especially if they are the dominant ways of thinking about the nature of physical education. As Penney et al. (2013) note, alternative ways of thinking about what a physical education curriculum can offer and who will be the beneficiaries are needed. Physical education can play a vital role in students' holistic development, but if it cannot satisfy students' needs, it is likely to be an unpleasant experience for some students, becoming an adverse influence on their lives (Richards et al., 2018). This issue raises the very real question of whether primary school principals and teachers see the educational value in ensuring every student has a holistic learning experience in physical education so that more students can be attracted to physical education and physical activity.

1.4 The research setting

1.4.1 New Zealand and its primary schools

New Zealand is an island country in the South Pacific, with a population of 4,699,755 (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Many New Zealanders identify as ‘Kiwis’, which is a nickname derived from a flightless native bird endemic to New Zealand (Legge, 2014). The majority of New Zealanders are of primarily European/Pākehā⁴ heritage, followed by indigenous Māori, Asian, Pacific people, and other nationalities and cultures (Statistics New Zealand, 2018). Also, the Treaty of Waitangi is recognised as the founding document of New Zealand, signed in 1840. Its signing is celebrated annually on Waitangi Day, February 6th, and it has impacted on all aspects of New Zealand society, including education (Byrnes, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2007; Orange, 2015). Overall, New Zealand is a multi-ethnic nation.

Students in New Zealand typically begin primary school on their fifth birthday. Generally, there are three categories of primary school in New Zealand. The first type of primary school is state schools, which is funded and owned by the state. No tuition fees, as such, are required, although many schools ask for yearly voluntary donations from families to help fund the school. *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007) is used in state schools. The second type of school is state-integrated schools. These were previously private schools but have now become part of the national education system (McGeorge, 1995). These ‘special character’ schools usually have specific religious affiliations (e.g., the Catholic Church). The government provides them with the same amount of funding as state schools. Students attending these schools need to

⁴ Pākehā is a Māori word that refers to New Zealanders who are of European descent.

pay attendance fees to cover the cost of maintaining the school property because it is privately owned. These schools follow the NZC. The last type of school is private schools. Private schools are only partially funded by the government. Their primary source of income is from tuition fees. Private schools typically follow the NZC while using other well-known curricula such as Cambridge Primary (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2020).

1.4.2 The current scenario of HPE in New Zealand

Although academics have realised that HPE in primary schools can effectively engage and encourage students to adopt a healthy lifestyle (Bailey et al., 2009), HPE seems not to have the same core place in the curriculum as literacy and mathematics (Griggs & Ward, 2012; Johns & Dimmock, 1999; Schaub & Marian, 2011; Sheehy, 2011). After the introduction of *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993), changes to the curriculum have had significant impacts on HPE in New Zealand (Petrie & lisahunter, 2011; Smith & Philpot, 2011). The addition of National Standards⁵ to this complex and contestable context put greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy (Cowie et al., 2009), and policies such as this have positioned HPE at the outer edge of the curriculum (Hipkins et al., 2011; Pope, 2014). Classroom teachers in primary schools spend more time and effort on literacy, science, and mathematics, paying less attention to HPE (Gordon et al., 2016). Despite having an ostensibly core place in the NZC, HPE seems to be on a “jagged edge: cut down to size” (Pope, 2014, p. 505).

⁵ National Standards for New Zealand primary-aged students in literacy and mathematics was a policy introduced by the National Government in 2008, and it was terminated by the Labour-led coalition Government in 2017.

1.4.3 Initiatives in New Zealand primary schools

Over recent years, different associations have introduced various initiatives that have had an impact on primary school HPE programmes (Petrie, 2012). For example, in Auckland, Play.sport, a pilot initiative managed by Sport New Zealand from 2015 to 2019 that was part of the government's Childhood Obesity Plan (Jaquiery, 2016), aimed to cultivate an active sports culture in schools and to support schools and teachers to deliver physical education to meet the requirements of HPE in the NZC (Sport New Zealand, 2016). Similarly, Rush et al. (2016) reported that Project Energize⁶ in the Waikato District brought a sports culture to schools and was an "efficacious school-based programme to combat obesity in children" (p. 6). Rush et al. (2016) made this claim because Project Energize had competent staff, sensitivities to unfairness and cultural differences, an ability to meet schools' needs, and support from community and food companies such as Fonterra⁷. These two programmes' general aim is to promote physical education and sport in communities and schools, whereas their specific aim is to prevent obesity by increasing physical activity and sport among children (Jaquiery, 2016). However, improving students' physical health is just one of the purposes of physical education in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Studies by Petrie (2012), Petrie et al. (2014), and Powell (2015) expressed concerns about many of the initiatives delivered in the name of primary school HPE. Powell (2015) examined four

⁶ Project Energize, an intervention programme for preventing obesity among children in primary and intermediate schools in the Waikato District, was established in 2003 by the Waikato District Health Board and delivered by Sport Waikato.

⁷ Fonterra is a New Zealand-based multinational dairy cooperative company responsible for the sale of dairy products produced in New Zealand.

programmes⁸ running in two schools in Auckland and argued that these programmes were “problematic as [they] did not necessarily work in the best interests of teachers or students” (p. 73). He pointed out that “in the end there was one only obvious choice: the ‘perfect’ practice of outsourcing the teaching of [physical education] to the experts” (p. 85). Petrie et al. (2014) found that of 124 school activity programmes in the Waikato District, 86.3 per cent were targeted at students in primary schools and 5.6 per cent for students in intermediate schools. Many of these programmes’ content did not link to the schools’ context, ethos, and culture (Petrie, 2012; Petrie et al., 2014), and was slightly modified or even directly copied from the materials of Sport New Zealand. Petrie et al. (2014) concluded that these programmes were unlikely to link to the “broader curriculum goals, competencies, and values, or other learning areas” (p. 29) in the NZC.

Petrie et al. (2014) warned that it is critical for principals, sports coordinators, and teachers to have input into the design, development, and implementation of their schools’ curricula. They should determine which outsourced programmes will be selected according to the requirements of the NZC; otherwise, we are likely to “see further narrowing of HPE, with a regression to traditional notions of [physical education] as sport, games, and fitness” (p. 36).

1.4.4 Online resources

Using online resources for teaching physical education has also become an alternative for classroom teachers (Petrie, 2012). Considering the influx of teaching resources and materials online for HPE, Petrie (2012) examined the advantages and limitations of a pre-packaged curriculum in a teacher education programme. On the one hand, online resources can positively

⁸ Four programmes were ASB Football by Football New Zealand, moveMprove® by GymSports New Zealand, Get Set Go by Athletics New Zealand, and ActivePost Small Sticks by the National Hockey Organisation.

affect teaching, as they provide detailed examples of a lesson, a unit, and a long-term plan, making it easy for teachers to design, implement, and assess their teaching step by step. On the other hand, online resources may constrain teachers. Some teachers may use or adopt them without thinking about their schools' ethos and facilities, or their students' abilities. Petrie (2012) reported that some teachers replicated online packages and used them in new contexts. These teachers seemed not to understand the philosophy and ideas behind these packaged programmes fully. Online resources as an alternative teaching resource appear to bring pros and cons for teachers' practice.

1.5 Significance of the present study

Previous literature has suggested that school principals can have a significant influence on quality physical education programmes in schools (Clohessy et al., 2020; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a; Penney et al., 2013), while teachers and students are the "primary stakeholders" (Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012, p. 127) involved in the everyday practice of education. In other words, teachers can be viewed as the primary implementers while students are the beneficiaries (Burrows et al., 2004; Dyson, 2006; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Macdonald, 2004). Thus, a continuous investigation of how stakeholders think about physical education can help seek out, understand, and express its importance, and help stakeholders design and implement their physical education curricula (Bailey, 2018).

A key gap in the literature is the perspectives of those in primary schools involved in the production and practice of physical education. Chróinín et al. (2020) reviewed 95 qualitative studies of stakeholders' perspectives on physical education and found a dearth of school principals' voices. It is interesting to note that among these stakeholders' perspectives, in particular, students' perspectives have been omitted in the history of education in New Zealand (McCulloch, 1992;

Ross & Burrows, 2003) and are usually not taken into full consideration when designing and implementing physical education curricula (Dyson, 2006; Hill & Cleven, 2005; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a).

Thus, understanding principals', teachers', and students' perspectives is valuable in understanding the design and implementation of physical education curricula in the primary school (Dyson, 1995, 2006; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012). Shearer (2002) urged that teachers should use their knowledge about the curriculum and students to be competent creators, actively involved in the development of the curriculum. Hill and Cleven (2005) pointed out a need to have a regular, systematic survey of students' preferences in physical education. This recommendation is not meant to teach students' preferences but rather to help schools and teachers produce a better physical education curriculum/programme (Hill & Cleven, 2005). Morgan and Hansen (2007) proposed that policymakers should have an "awareness and appreciation" (p. 100) of diverse stakeholders' perspectives, rather than assuming what happens in schools and classrooms aligns with policy.

Listening to stakeholders' voices will allow educators to gain authentic information about their day-to-day lives and give teachers opportunities to reflect on their teaching practice. If stakeholders' opinions are understood and valued, a better environment may be created with stronger links towards teaching and learning.

1.6 Research questions

1. What are principals' perspectives on physical education?
2. What are classroom teachers' perspectives on physical education?
3. What are students' perspectives on physical education?
4. What are the barriers and challenges in teaching physical education?

5. What do principals and classroom teachers think about physical education in *The New Zealand Curriculum*?

Additional sub-questions are outlined in **Appendices 1, 2 & 3**.

1.7 Thesis structure

There are nine chapters in my thesis. In Chapter One, I have described my research aims, the importance of physical education, the research setting, the significance of the research, my research questions, and my thesis structure.

In Chapter Two, I introduce myself, my experience in physical education and sport in my homeland, China, my motivation for studying physical education, Chinese philosophy – Confucianism and Mao Zedong’s influence, and the similar concepts in Mao Zedong’s thoughts and qualitative research.

In Chapter Three, I review perspectives on HPE curricula in terms of a discussion of physical education, sport, and HPE, followed by a discussion of the provision of HPE in several counties. I then present an historical perspective of HPE in New Zealand and identify the gaps between the HPE curriculum and classroom pedagogies in New Zealand.

In Chapter Four, I discuss what is meant by ‘perspective’ in academic research, followed by a review of principals’, teachers’, and students’ perspectives on physical education. I then summarise the important contributions of physical education to students’ holistic development. Lastly, I examine a complex issue: who should teach primary school physical education – classroom teachers, physical education specialists, or outside providers?

In Chapter Five, firstly, I discuss my understanding of the research paradigm and methodology. Then, I convey my assumptions about philosophy, qualitative research, and interpretivism. After that, I describe the research methods used, including how I found and selected the participating schools and participants, the data collection, thematic analysis, cross-case analysis and synthesis, the research's trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

In Chapter Six, Seven, and Eight, I narrate and discuss my findings through three themes, namely, (1) holistic development in physical education, (2) we valued the NZC, but we taught physical education in our ways, and (3) perceived barriers and challenges in terms of principals', teachers', and students' perspectives.

In Chapter Nine, I conclude my thesis by presenting the contributions of the research, limitations, some recommendations, my self-reflection, and some conclusions.

1.8 Chapter summary

In Chapter One, I have introduced the research aims, the importance of physical education, the research setting, significance and questions, and the thesis structure. Through the lenses of interpretivism and Mao Zedong's thoughts, I have used a qualitative case study research design to understand how principals, teachers, and students interpret physical education.

By listening to their voices, the importance of physical education in the primary school curriculum can be exposed. Substantive research has suggested that physical education is a subject that can play a significant role in students' holistic development. However, if students cannot have a

meaningful experience in physical education, they may lose opportunities to experience body movement, entertaining social activities, and cultural heritage. There are apparent gaps between ideality and reality. What is stated in the curriculum may not represent what happens in schools, which is problematic. Therefore, listening to stakeholders' perspectives on physical education is relevant research (Dyson et al., 2011; Penney et al., 2013; Petrie et al., 2007).

In the next chapter, I will introduce my background, motivation, Chinese philosophy – Confucianism, Mao Zedong's influence, and three concepts in Mao Zedong's thoughts that are compatible with three ones in qualitative research. This background information is designed to give more insights into why I undertook this research.

CHAPTER TWO: MY BACKGROUND AND BELIEFS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I introduce who I am, my mixture of experience of military drill and sport in Chinese physical education, my motivation for studying physical education, Chinese philosophy – Confucianism and Mao Zedong's influence, and the similar concepts between qualitative research and Mao's thoughts.

2.2 Self-introduction

My name is Cheng Deng and I come from China. I was born in 1978 to a middle-class family. There are four in my family – my parents, an elder sister, and myself. My home town, Yantai, is located on Jiaodong Peninsula, Shandong Province in the east of China, surrounded by the Bohai Sea and the Yellow Sea.

2.3 My mixture of experience in military drill and sport

The working style of the military is in every walk of life in China. I experienced a kind of physical education that was similar to being a soldier ever since I was at primary school. At the beginning of each school year, I had about 10 to 15 days of military training, including learning parade steps and standing, sitting in a military posture to hone stronger willpower, spirit, and discipline. In the mornings, I had to do callisthenics in lines in time to the verbal commands from the radio (Chicharro-Saito, 2008). In physical education lessons, I had to dress in ranks to greet teachers. These activities are still welcomed in some school physical education programmes in China.

This manner of working is also present in Chinese sports. I began playing soccer when I was seven years old in Yantai. I had to get up early at 5:00 a.m. and bike alone to a football academy at 5:30 a.m. I then had an hour training session from 6:00 to 7:00 a.m. in all weather conditions. In 1992, when I was 14 years old, I was selected into the U14 representative team for Shandong Province. I studied at a sports school owned and sponsored by the Chinese government in Jinan, the capital of Shandong Province. It took eight hours to go to the school by train, so I lived in school dormitories and had only 15 to 20 days for an annual holiday. In dormitories, I was in a bunk room with five other boys. We had to keep the room and bedding tidy. We got up at 5:30 a.m. and went to bed at 10:00 p.m.

In 1998, at the age of 20, I became a professional football player working for Shandong Luneng Taishan Football Club, one of the best football clubs in China. The manager used a military manner to manage the club. I lived in a club dormitory and had almost the same routine as I had at school. We had to wear a uniform and line up to go to the training pitch and into the dining hall. Over eight years, our team won four championships for the club in the top Chinese football league.

In 2005, my eighth year of professional football, I encountered some significant life changes. I was given less game time, I got married and soon after, my wife and I had a child. So, I had to plan for my future. Because traditional Chinese culture has a prejudice against physical culture (Ma, 2009; Yu & Bairner, 2011), claiming sportspeople are all brawn with no brains, I decided to quit football and begin tertiary education to study physical education. In 2006, I became a university student at Beijing Sport University. I spent seven years at the university and gained Bachelor and Master's degrees in Physical Education.

2.4 My motivation for studying physical education

My love for physical education and sport has been a driving force in my life because I have learned knowledge of life through them, such as positive attitudes, cooperation, perseverance, discipline, fair play, and social skills. In 1998, a coach from Korea taught me how to greet someone; before that, no one told me how to communicate with others. A year later, I learned that football was not the only important thing in my life and I needed to have a social life with friends, family, and others. In tertiary education, I knew that physical education carries many educational values such as resilience, health, and being social. I believe that physical education is a great vehicle for knowledge development, and through it, students can learn more about their life, culture, community, body, identity, and spirit.

Because I am Chinese, I began the present study with a strong understanding about Chinese history and culture, and with traditional Chinese perspectives embedded in my psyche. In 1839, following the First Opium War between the Qing dynasty of China and Britain (Liu, 2011), Chinese men were described as “the sick [men] of East Asia” (Morris, 2004, p. 12), which was a description of the majority of Chinese people who, to Europeans, had weak bodies and inferior health (Chicharro-Saito, 2008; Hwang & Chang, 2008; Morris, 2004).

To remedy this image, the initial Chinese physical education curriculum was established in 1903 (Lu et al., 2018; Tsai & Zhou, 2017). The curriculum borrowed some ideas about gymnastics and

military drill from other countries, mixing with Chinese *Wushu*⁹ to improve students' health and fitness in order to save the country. In 1917, Mao Zedong, one of the founders of the modern Chinese educational system, published 'A Study of Physical Education' (*Tiyu Zhi Yanjiu*) (Mao, 1917). In that article, he proposed that physical education was a suitable medium to cultivate a holistic person and urged physical education to be used for improving young students' physical, intellectual, and moral capacities. His ideas about education and physical education then became essential principles in the Chinese education system. As a Chinese person passionate about physical education and sport, I am strongly influenced by his thinking.

However, physical education as a school subject in Chinese schools has been marginalised, in part because of the examination-oriented education system, which results in schools, teachers, and parents paying more attention to examinable subjects such as Chinese, English, and mathematics, together with the country's harsh health and safety laws. Schools and teachers face huge compensation payouts if a student at school has an injury in a physical education lesson (Tian & Lu, 2014; Zhao, 2013; Zhang, 2016).

Current research in China focusing on students' physical fitness index shows that students' fitness is decreasing (Qi, 2018; Xiao et al., 2018; Yin et al., 2012). The rates of obesity and overweight students have become one of the most significant challenges for public health in China (Zhang, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Thus, as a Chinese person interested in physical education, I wanted to contribute to students' health and well-being.

⁹ Chinese *Wushu* is a type of ancient Chinese martial art.

I began my doctoral study in New Zealand because I was curious as to whether physical education in other countries had confronted a similar situation to that in China. The present research was an opportunity to answer that question. My starting position is that primary school physical education needs to be recognised as a valuable subject based on its ability to contribute to “the educational experience of students [which] may support physical, cognitive, emotional and social development” (Morgan & Bourke, 2008, p. 2). In order to identify the value placed on primary school physical education in New Zealand, I embarked on this investigation of how various stakeholders perceive physical education.

2.5 Chinese philosophy – Confucianism

Confucianism is one of three formative ancient philosophies¹⁰ in China established by a Chinese scholar, Kongzi (孔子) (551 – 479 B.C.), who is also named Confucius in Latin. His book of the *Analects* is a collection of his thoughts and stories about teaching and conversations with his disciples and is so influential that Kongzi’s ideas are the reference point for Chinese behaviour and the feudal ruling class’s government (Chan, 1963; Ilundáin-Agurruza & Hata, 2015). Kongzi asked and answered two questions (Liu & Liu, 2020; Ilundáin-Agurruza & Hata, 2015): (1) how does an individual live well? And (2) how does the government govern well? Chan (1963) concluded that Kongzi’s belief was of “a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations” (p. 15). Thus, Kongzi believed that a nation should be governed by virtue and moral models, rather than by punishment or authority.

¹⁰ The three main formative philosophies in ancient China are Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

Chinese culture can be understood from two aspects – its pragmatic nature and “the importance of social harmony” (Ilundáin-Agurruza & Hata, 2015, p. 103). These two features are shown in Kongzi’s doctrines and educational thoughts. Kongzi’s doctrines are about humanism, and one of his core concepts is *Ren* (仁) (Chan, 1963; Van Norden, 2011). *Ren* means to show compassion, benevolence, humanity, love, kindness, and goodwill (Liu & Liu, 2020). Liu and Liu (2020) interpreted *Ren* as the springhead of any action or behaviour, meaning that any action or behaviour embracing *Ren* is admirable. Van Norden (2011) explained that *Ren* has the same pronunciation as that of Chinese character (人), which means human beings. *Ren* is made up of two components. One is the index component (亻) symbolising human beings, while the other component (二) means ‘two’. To integrate them represents how virtuous deeds are shown in the relationships between people. However, its connotation means the amalgamation of all human virtues in one person who has a personality of being “rational, aesthetic, moral and religious” (Ilundáin-Agurruza & Hata, 2015, p. 102). Chan (1963) pointed out that Kongzi believed in human perfectibility, which means that, by education and enlightenment, people can become perfected and compliant (Cai, 2010; Hu, 2011).

Based on this understanding, Kongzi proposed his thoughts on education. Fang (2018) categorised Kongzi’s thoughts on education into six principles: (1) education should be accessible to all; (2) prioritising moral cultivation over other subjects; (3) teaching all students in light of their abilities using different methods; (4) learning while reflecting; (5) placing great emphasis on the teacher’s ethic; and (6) recognising equity in the relationship between teachers and students. Zhang (2019) added two more principles: (1) learning is for application; (2) students’ holistic development of *wen* (文) and *wu* (武). *Wen* is civic education, while *wu* is to develop masculinity by applying

practices such as *Wushu* (Yu, 2011; Yu & Bairner, 2011). Wang (2012) concluded with four essential points in terms of Kongzi's thoughts on *wu*. The first two are: (1) braveness that comprises a healthy body, motor skills, and *Ren*; (2) winning comes after friendships. Kongzi also emphasised: (3) the social function of *wu* – the alternating between work and entertainment; and (4) the benefits of promoting or restoring physical health. *Wu* seems to have provided the earliest foundation of today's philosophy linking physical education and masculinity in China.

However, Kongzi's doctrines and educational thoughts catered to the interests of a feudal ruling class and are out of date today. Hu (2015) and Yi (2005) maintained that Kongzi's doctrines and educational thoughts were dogmatic and pedantic, and lacked scientific theories and methods to question orthodox assumptions. Lu (2006) derided and satirised Kongzi, who was described as a slave serving bigwigs but not ordinary citizens. Yu (2011) argued that Chinese emperors utilised Confucianism and the imperial examination system (*keju*/ 科举) to establish a culture of worshipping men who were good at literacy, calligraphy, and drawing involving a sedentary lifestyle, causing an anti-physical culture and bias towards people with masculinity in China. Yu and Bairner (2011) contended that Confucianism brought an imbalance between academic learning and physical culture among Chinese, and developed a disposition towards being an obedient person and against physical culture.

Overall, Kongzi's thoughts have significantly influenced Chinese people, which has shaped a subconsciousness in contemporary Chinese society of giving priority to *wen* over *wu*. Karl (2010) showed the typical learned man in the scholarly tradition in the 1900s in China, who was portrayed with “extreme pallor, lack of musculature, long pinkie nails, flowing gowns that impeded

movement, [and] languid activity” (p. 10). Yu and Bairner (2011) concluded that Confucianism was an authorised ideology to serve imperial concerns that contributed to the dominant opinion in China of despising physical culture and physical education.

Confucianism was the dominant, orthodox belief influencing China until the Xinhai Revolution¹¹ in 1911 (Yu & Bairner, 2011). Thereafter, Sun Yat-sen¹² and Mao Zedong began to write the next chapter of Chinese physical education history.

2.6 Mao Zedong’s influence

Mao Zedong (1893-1976) was known as Chairman Mao, a leader of proletarians and the peasantry in China, and one of the founders of the People’s Republic of China (Niu, 1995; Zhuo, 1994). His theory about revolution, politics, and economy, later called Maoism, “Chinese Marxism” (Dirlik, 2012, p. 17), or the “Sinicization of Marxism” (Wang, 2014, p. 6), is one of the guiding ideologies for Chinese in terms of the development of the military, politics, economy, education, and culture. Nowadays, Mao’s thoughts are a compulsory academic course for every student at Chinese universities.

There is contention about the ontology and epistemology of Mao. Some believed that Mao Zedong was a Marxist (Brown, 2012; Feldman, 1985; Thomson, 1971; Wang, 2014; Zhuo, 1994). Brown (2012) pointed out that the modernity of China is built on Marxism that Mao learned and adapted into the specific circumstances of post-imperial China around the 1900s (Zhang & Sheese, 2017).

¹¹ The Xinhai Revolution was a revolution to overthrow the last imperial dynasty in China (the Qing dynasty), aiming to establish a country with republicanism.

¹² Sun Yat-sen (1866 -1925) was the provisional first president of the Republic of China from January 1st to March 10th 1912 and the first leader of the Nationalist Party of China.

Karl (2010) investigated Mao Zedong's family and educational background. He maintained that Mao Zedong's beliefs arose from his early education of learning the Confucian classics. From 1912 to 1921, his beliefs moved from liberal democracy to communism. Zhuo (1994) reported that Mao's thoughts were based on traditional Chinese culture and Marxism. At the early stage of his political career, Mao's thoughts were inspired by "liberalism, democratic reformism and Utopian socialism (Zhuo, 1994, p. 94). Later on, he learned Marxism and Leninism. In Snow's book (1944), *Red Star Over China*, Mao said that "... I had somewhat vague passions about 'nineteenth-century democracy', Utopianism and old-fashioned liberalism, and I was definitely [an] anti-militarist and anti-imperialist ..." (p. 148).

Through analysing Mao's first article, 'A Study of Physical Education' (*Tiyu Zhi Yanjiu*) (Mao, 1917), Uberoi (1995) concluded that Mao "was confused or muddled" (p. 117) and his ideology had not formed in the 1910s; thus, he was neither an idealist nor a materialist at that moment. Scalapino (1982) found that Mao was influenced by Hu Shi and John Dewey, and he was committed to parliamentarism and pragmatism when he was studying at Peking University. Due to the May Fourth Movement¹³ and the New Culture Movement¹⁴ in China in the 1910s, Mao read many articles written by Marx, Engels, and Lenin that had a considerable impact on his later thoughts (Karl, 2010; Zhang & Sheese, 2017). It seems hard to say which '-ism' Mao preferred because his ideas based on traditional Chinese philosophies (Ilundáin-Agurruza & Hata, 2015) evolved in conjunction with the changing international and Chinese conditions of the time.

¹³ The May Fourth Movement happened in Beijing on the 4th of May 1919, and was an enlightenment movement that grew out of students' protests that were anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist.

¹⁴ The New Culture Movement was a nationwide campaign from 1915-1923, asserting democracy and science, and aiming to abandon the age-old classical traditions such as Confucianism and to give literary status to the vernacular.

Ilundáin-Agurruza and Hata (2015) concluded that traditional Chinese culture has a pragmatic character. Mao thought that human cognition development is a product of social activities and praxis (Feldman, 1985). Mao (1970) argued that “philosophy is of no value unless it is learnt from society, the masses, and from nature I did not understand much when I read logic. The understanding came to me when I used it” (p. 23). He believed that society itself resembles a school, and learning is a lifelong social activity, in that people can learn while they are doing (Zhuo, 1994), whereby people can know how to apply knowledge to serve society and the public (Niu, 1995; Xu, 1992). Johnson (1973) asserted that Mao Zedong’s thoughts are in line with the views of American pragmatism, which advocate that hypotheses, beliefs, or theories need to be tested via scientific methods to see whether they are useful in practice. It seems that Mao Zedong was a pragmatist.

Mao Zedong’s pragmatic thinking about education had a significant influence in China. Mao maintained that the central precept for education is to cater for all people’s needs regardless of social class (Feldman, 1985; Zhuo, 1994). Mao asserted that the aim of education is to cultivate a holistic person who has all-around development in terms of moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic education as well as manual labour (Liu, 1993). These five aspects continue to constitute the essential goals for educating students in the Chinese education system.

Mao (1917) upheld three functions of physical education and asserted that students may gain benefits in their moral, intellectual, and physical aspects through physical education. On the physical aspect, Mao argued that movement is necessary because it accelerates the metabolism of the body and promotes health. On the intellectual aspect, he promoted physical education from

Descartes's notion of mind and body dualism (Baker & Morris, 1996); that is, human beings need to civilise their minds while strengthening their bodies. Providing that a person's body is healthy, the person can have energy and make efforts to enlighten the self. Lastly, he said that moral, social, and affective development is an essential function of physical education. Using examples of a cold bath and long-distance running with his friends, he suggested that physical education can strengthen and improve people's volition, mood, and mental condition.

Howeve, Wu (2010) studied Mao's influence on Chinese women from 1966 to 1976. She complained that Chinese women had "a life supposedly without sexual identity" (p. 409) during that time, because "a woman had to eliminate signs of femininity to look, act, and work just like a man. Female-specific apparel – skirts, dresses, high heels, handbags, makeup – [was] banned as symbols of *petit bourgeois*" (p. 409). Wu (1975) contended that "Maoism is a product of [an] historical situation rather than a product of a school of thought" (p. 108). Mao's thoughts were intended to promote peace in China, because in the history of modern China, the trauma and tears of its people were pervasive following a period of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Neither traditional Chinese philosophies nor Western methods could solve Chinese issues at that time (Wu, 1975). Knight (2007) concluded that "... conclusions about Mao are never the absolute truth ... they are the products of theory, [moulded] by the assumptions, values, and temporal perspective of the observer" (p. 17).

Overall, research has supported Mao's thoughts on physical education (Beurden et al., 2003; Chaddock et al., 2012; Fedewa & Ahn, 2011; Holfelder & Schott, 2014; Jacobs et al., 2013; Pennington, 2017; Powell et al., 2016; Sallis et al., 1999; Schwamberger et al., 2017; Silverman,

1998). Mao’s thoughts and my personal experience arm me with a belief that physical education can improve students’ physical, psychological, moral, and affective development, which is important for students in primary schools.

2.7 Linking Mao’s concepts to qualitative research

I believe that three concepts in Mao’s thoughts – criticism and self-criticism, discussion, and relationships with the public – can be linked respectively to the concepts in qualitative research of reflexivity, human participants’ voices, and relationships with participants (**Table 1**).

Table 1.

The Concepts in Mao's Thoughts and Qualitative Research

Three Concepts in Mao’s Thoughts	Three Concepts in Qualitative Research
Self-criticism and criticism	Reflexivity
Discussion	Human participants’ voices
Relationships with the public	Relationships with participants

Mao encouraged people to use criticism and self-criticism to advance their understanding of reality (Foreign Language Press of Peking, 1966). Criticism and self-criticism are constituted by “a logical extension of discussion” (Feldman, 1985, p. 447) to gain collective wisdom and knowledge (Triandis, 2018; Zhuo, 1994). Mao (Foreign Language Press of Peking, 1966) emphasised that:

[The] conscientious practise of self-criticism is still another hallmark To check up regularly on our work and in the process develop a democratic style of work, to fear neither criticism nor self-

criticism ... “Say all you know and say it without reserve” ... “Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not”.... (p. 259)

I understand that Mao’s discussion of self-criticism and criticism is meant to review and look at the job at hand introspectively, while talking to others regularly, in order to improve one’s work. That idea is comparable to the concept of reflexivity in qualitative research.

Reflexivity can be an individual or group activity (Barry et al., 1999). Gergen and Gergen (2007) asserted that reflexivity is a sort of “self-exposure” (p. 469) that involves a researcher’s thoughtful self-examination on “the intersubjective dynamics between themselves and study participants” (Goldblatt & Band-Winterstein, 2016, p. 100), which can bring insightful comprehension of the participants. Garfinkel (1991) maintained that reflexivity means to accept one another’s views. Through interactions with others, the meanings of people’s actions are understood in the light of relationships and continuous retrospection. Researchers can demonstrate their personal experience, biases, and historical, cultural, and geographic background knowledge to audiences, trying to reach a context in which readers can express their approval or disapproval, which the researcher can defend or accept. Through such interaction, a shared construction of the event or phenomenon they have discussed can be established. As a result, researchers can improve “the rigour and quality of the research” (Barry et al., 1999, p. 26).

In Mao’s view, discussion and relationships are critical concepts of researching with human participants. Mao (Foreign Language Press of Peking, 1966) urged that “the only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion, of criticism, of persuasion and education” (p. 52). Mao (Foreign

Language Press of Peking, 1966) insisted that “the masses are the real heroes, while we are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding, it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge” (p. 118).

From my understanding, Mao emphasised the need for governments to establish a close relationship with the public and to discuss important matters with the public to enable government officials to interpret their voices. This idea resonates with qualitative researchers who think that maintaining a harmonious relationship with the participants, audiences, and society is essential (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, 2008). Gergen and Gergen (2007, 2008) believed that knowledge and meaning are socially created through relationships, and in return, research should serve the participants, audiences, and society. Building a close relationship with human participants is thus an essential concept in both qualitative research and Mao’s thoughts.

Overall, Mao’s three key concepts can be connected to three concepts of qualitative research. His principle of criticism and self-criticism can be equated to reflexivity. Without reflexivity, one cannot have a quality, trustworthy product in qualitative research (Gergen & Gergen, 2003, 2007, 2008). Discussion with human participants is a valuable strategy to give voice to the participants and collect data to construct meaning, which allows researchers, participants, and audiences to share ideas, exchange information, and co-construct the meaning of their respective realities. Most importantly, researchers’ relationships with participants, audiences, and communities play an essential role in qualitative research (Gergen & Gergen, 2007, 2008). Building a rapport and an equitable relationship with participants can increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015). The three concepts in Mao’s thoughts thus resonate with qualitative research;

that is, knowledge/meaning of reality can come from reflexivity, the voices of human participants, and intimate relationships.

2.8 Chapter summary

In Chapter Two, I have positioned myself in the research project and shown how my own background has influenced my beliefs about physical education. As a Chinese person, I have been influenced by Confucianism and Mao's thoughts since I was a child, especially by Mao's thoughts because he was one of the most influential legends in the modern history of China after 1840. Mao's thoughts were then, as they are now, a compulsory course in the Chinese school curriculum and influential in the fundamental principles of contemporary Chinese education policies and curriculum.

In the next chapter, I will review international perspectives on HPE curricula. First of all, I will clarify the relationships among physical education, sport, and HPE. Secondly, I will show my understanding of the physical education or HPE curricula of several countries. Then, I present an historical perspective of HPE in New Zealand, followed by an overview of gaps between the HPE curriculum and classroom pedagogies in New Zealand.

CHAPTER THREE: PERSPECTIVES ON HPE CURRICULA

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature relating to perspectives on HPE curricula. The chapter begins with a discussion about physical education, sport, and HPE, to clarify the nature and role of physical education and why I wanted to investigate physical education. Next, I examine the provision of HPE in several nations. Then, I present an historical perspective of HPE in New Zealand, followed by a review of gaps between the HPE curriculum and classroom pedagogies in New Zealand.

3.2 Physical education, sport, and HPE

The relationship or definition of physical education, sport, and HPE seems elusive and controversial in the literature. Stakeholders seem to use physical education, sport, and HPE interchangeably in daily life, which has created an indistinct understanding of them (Lynch & Soukup, 2016; Pope, 2011). Penney (1998) argued that “all of our definitions and the directions that we pursue in [physical education] are contested, and contestable, that neither definitions nor curriculum frameworks are neutral, and that there are always alternative approaches that may be pursued” (p. 117). Thus, understanding the relationships among physical education, sport, and HPE will enable stakeholders to know the ‘why, how, and what’ about teaching and learning in physical education (Bailey, 2018; Pope, 2006).

3.2.1 The relationship between physical education and sport

Pope (2011) used the word ‘maelstrom’ to describe ambiguous relationships and meanings between physical education and sport. Research has shown that some primary school classroom teachers and pre-service teachers have a limited understanding of physical education (Dyson et al., 2018; Philpot & Smith, 2011; Stothart, 2005). They can be confused about the nature of physical education and often interchange their use of the terms ‘sport’ and ‘physical education’. Often similar understanding is linked to the terms, resulting in sport education rather than physical education dominating the taught physical education curriculum in primary schools (Devine & Telfer, 2014). An examination of both terms’ meaning is necessary to clarify the confusion and uncertainty around the nature and role of physical education.

Physical education and sport involve many of the same or similar activities but for different ends (Devine and Telfer, 2014). The ends depend on various stakeholders’ goals (Penney, 1998), such as the general public, academics, government, policy-makers, schools, communities, and parents. Pope (2011) maintained that sport is a complex cultural phenomenon, which may work as a valuable agent in physical education to provide and create opportunities for students to experience, transmit, and reinforce sport culture. Lee (1986) asserted that sport focused on training, and its extrinsic values associated with winning and performance outcomes, while physical education concentrated on educating people. Capel (2000) insisted that physical education is fundamentally an educational process, “whereas the focus in sport is on the activity” (p. 137). This educational attribute regards people as rational agents who can critically develop a knowledge of the body, movement, the environment, community, and society in order to promote an understanding of happiness, truth, and moral values intrinsically (Kirk, 2010). Thus, its worthiness takes account of

the mind, body, and intellectual aspects (Bailey et al., 2009; Kirk, 2010; Lynch, 2019; Mao, 1917; Morgan & Bourke, 2008); that is, the goal of physical education is to improve people's well-being and promote an active, thriving life. Sport should be one of the learning areas in physical education, but not be the only focus of the physical education curriculum (Capel, 2000; Tinning, 1995; Wright, 2004).

3.2.2 The relationship between physical education and HPE

Physical education has been the traditional title in the school curriculum. Health and Physical Education is the term being used increasingly worldwide because it is viewed as a more comprehensive title to express equality (Penney, 1998) and the multidimensional expectations of curricula (Lynch & Soukup, 2016). However, the interchangeable use of the two terms often suggests a comparable interpretation (Lynch & Soukup, 2016), which has caused confusion and uncertainty.

Lynch & Soukup (2016) reported that physical education has been affected by two contrasting beliefs in education. One is to see the physical structure of a person as a material thing, and another is to view a person as a whole; that is, constituted physically, mentally, and morally. The perspective of the whole child and a sociocultural view appeared in physical education during the 1980s to 1990s in England, Australia, and New Zealand, due to discontent and criticism that physical education was underpinned and dominated by concepts of medical science, biophysics, and psychology. As a result, physical education curricula in Australia and New Zealand combined with health education and added concepts of equality and multidimensional health (Cliff et al., 2009; Lynch & Soukup, 2016). Their curricula are now titled Health and Physical Education (HPE).

The title of physical education seems to be older and more traditional in contrast to HPE. But which one to use? Penney (1998) stressed that policies and local interests could influence which term is promoted or privileged: health, sport, or physical education. She insisted that the term ‘physical education’ would satisfy the lifelong demands of communities and students on condition that it could embrace the interests of the public in sport and health.

I prefer to investigate physical education as Penney (1998) contended, because physical education is linked to activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle. Also, schools in some countries, such as Canada and the USA, teach physical education and health education separately (Kilborn et al., 2016). Moreover, many journal names use ‘physical education’, such as the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, and the *European Physical Education Review*. Physical education may be an older name, but it can contain the significance of health and equality. Its use depends on personal understanding.

3.3 The provision of HPE – international perspectives

In this section, I present my interpretation of the HPE curricula of several countries such as England, the USA, and Australia because these countries own well-known education systems and world-class journals about HPE.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2016) proposed that quality education should be available to all children in all countries. UNESCO (2016) defined a good quality education as “striving towards equity; ensuring safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments; and deploying qualified teachers” (p. 188). However, how quality physical education or HPE is made up, understood, and defined is different across the world.

Stakeholders in different countries have varied views on the educational aims of physical education or HPE (Carse et al., 2018), causing the divergent provision of their physical education or HPE curricula. For instance, a focus on sport and competition is noticeable in contemporary English physical education curricula (Department for Education, 2013), while the Scotland physical education curriculum aims at students' health and well-being (Education Scotland, 2010).

3.3.1 National curriculum in England: physical education programmes of study

Under the influence of the *White Paper on Sport* (Commission of the European Communities, 2007), England's physical education curriculum focuses on using sports education and competitive sports (Griffiths & Armour, 2013). The *National curriculum in England: physical education programmes of study* (Department for Education, 2013) in primary schools declared that its purpose is to offer high-quality physical education to all students in England so that students could succeed and excel in physical activity and competitive sport. Griffiths and Armour (2013) concluded that sport and sport participation are a growing phenomenon in society and the economy, making an indispensable offering to Europe's unanimity and prosperity, providing a route to "social inclusion, social cohesion and re-engagement" (p. 213) in England.

The English national curriculum aims to encourage students to gain competence in a range of physical activities so that students can be physically able and involved in lifelong participation in sports and physical activity towards a healthy and active life. To learn the skills of running, jumping, throwing, and catching is the main content of the curriculum. The difficulty levels of learning tasks increase progressively in line with students' ages. The older the students, the more competitive sports will be provided. Schools are granted autonomy to select sports they want to

offer. Moreover, schools need to provide cooperative physical activities and opportunities to support students' health and fitness.

3.3.2 Health and well-being in the curriculum of Scotland

In Scotland, the *Curriculum for Excellence* (Education Scotland, 2010) provides every school with a framework of eight learning areas¹⁵ to ensure that each student or young person has a unique experience of public education. This curriculum proposes that the concept of health and well-being should be taught across all learning areas, as “learning through health and [well-being] promotes confidence, independent thinking and positive attitudes and dispositions” (Education Scotland, 2010, p. 8). The purpose of learning health and well-being is to ensure that the young generations of Scotland have the skills, knowledge, comprehension, abilities, and qualities for their intellectual, spiritual, communal, and physical well-being, at present and in the future.

Physical education, physical activity, sport, and outdoor education are encouraged in the Scottish curriculum (Education Scotland, 2010). The curriculum states that learning in physical education gives young generations opportunities to experience, challenge, and enjoy movement. So young generations can have positive attitudes as individuals and as team members to participate in sport and physical activities. Outdoor education is viewed as a valuable learning subject to enrich the students' learning and physical experiences. Physical education, physical activity, sport, and outdoor education are seen as important for establishing the Scottish lifestyle.

¹⁵ The eight learning areas are Expressive Arts, Health and Well-Being, Languages, Mathematics, Religious and Moral Education, Sciences, Social Studies, and Technologies.

3.3.3 The Health and Physical Education curriculum of Australia

In Australia, the curriculum of Health and Physical Education has recently been renewed. In 2012, the curriculum was named the *Australian Curriculum for Health and Physical Education: Foundation to Year 10* (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2012), but the curriculum in 2016 was named the *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016). The rationale for this update was that young Australians are expected to cope with challenges emerging from an increasingly changing and complex world (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016).

The *Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* aims to provide students with a curriculum that is based on students' experiences, is relevant to contemporary Australian society, and challenges students physically and mentally (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016). The curriculum intends to develop students' understanding, skills, and knowledge about health and physical capability, and to ensure that every student can:

1. critically use information and knowledge to improve, enhance their health, well-being, and safety, so that they can actively participate in physical activities;
2. use social and cognitive skills to establish, promote, and maintain personal identity and positive relationships with others;
3. use and master movement skills, concepts, and strategies in a variety of physical activities, and take part in and enjoy regular physical activities;

4. understand the significance of physical activity, and show respect to others, society, culture, and the environment;
5. analyse how different individuals and contextual elements construct the understanding of and opportunities for local, regional, global health and physical activity (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016).

Health and Physical Education in the Australian curriculum (The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2016) has two strands: personal, social, and community health; and movement and physical activity. Under the two strands, there are three sub-strands, respectively. For example, within the strand of personal, social, and community health, there are: (1) being healthy, safe, and active; (2) communicating and interacting for health and well-being; and (3) contributing to healthy and active communities. The sub-strands under the strand of movement and physical activity are: (1) moving the body; (2) understanding movement; and (3) learning through movement.

Twelve focus areas then develop the strands: (1) alcohol and drugs; (2) nourishment and nutrition; (3) health benefits of physical activity; (4) mental health and well-being; (5) relationships and sexuality; (6) safety; (7) active play and minor games; (8) challenge and adventure activities; (9) movement skills; (10) games and sports; (11) lifelong physical activities; and (12) rhythmic and expressive activities. These foci are integrated into teaching units, helping teachers and students to connect, reflect the diversity of ethnicities and cultures in contemporary Australia.

3.3.4 The recommendation and clarification of physical education in the USA

In the USA, the curricula of health education and physical education are separated. The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America), established in 1885 (Oglesby et al., 2018), is responsible for National Standards for K-12 physical education across the whole nation. SHAPE's vision is to educate all students in the USA to improve their well-being so that they can have healthy, physically active lives and lifelong participation in physical activity. SHAPE America (2015) recognised that physical education has gone through constant evolution and transformation, and now it is an essential part of general education, providing students with experience and knowledge for their lifelong well-being.

In 2008, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS) announced the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* based on scientific research findings. The guidelines recommended that regular physical activity can lessen some health risks. The optimal health benefits will happen if individuals are engaged in moderate-intensity physical activity such as jogging and walking for at least two hours and 30 minutes per week. Children and adolescents are advised to have 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity (USDHHS, 2008).

In 2013, a programme was constructed in collaboration with SHAPE America entitled *Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs (CSPAP)* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). This programme aimed to develop comprehensive physical activity programmes in schools to meet the recommended daily 60 minutes of physical activity (USDHHS, 2008), and to develop students' knowledge, confidence, and expertise about being physically active.

CSPAP (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013) stated that the implementation of 60 minutes of physical activity depended on the collaboration and synergy of five elements: (1) physical education; (2) physical activity before and after school; (3) physical activity during school; (4) family and community engagement; and (5) staff involvement (SHAPE America, 2015). Through the five elements, a CSPAP programme can provide various physical activities to maximise the knowledge, practice, and skills students learn in physical education in schools, thereby students can take part in 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every school day.

SHAPE America (2015) defined physical education, physical activity, and exercise, respectively, so that physical educators, teachers, parents, and students could know the differences among the three terms. Physical activity is defined as any bodily motion that causes energy exhaustion, while exercise is defined as a physical activity planned, constructed, and practised repetitively, which aims to boost and maintain one or more elements of fitness. In contrast to physical activity and exercise, physical education is defined as a branch of academic knowledge following and informed by the evidence from scientific research to offer a well-organised and detailed proposal for students' holistic development.

SHAPE America (2015) considers physical education an academic subject that “serves as the foundation of a CSPAP and, as such, demands the same education rigour as other core subjects” (p. 3). Students can improve three aspects of learning in physical education: (1) cognitive or mental abilities; (2) affective ability; and (3) psychomotor ability (SHAPE America, 2014). Physical

education in the USA aims to cultivate individuals who have physical literacy, skills, knowledge, and confidence so that they will have a lifespan involving physical activity (SHAPE America, 2013).

3.3.5 The diversification of physical education and HPE curricula in Canada

In Canada, there is no national department of education; as a result, there is no national common curriculum for all ten provinces and three territories. Nevertheless, there is a Canadian professional association aiming to promote health, physical education, and recreation, which was established in 1933 by the Physical Education Associations of Toronto and Québec (Howell, 1965). In 2008, its name was altered to Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada) (Hums & MacLean, 2017).

The provinces and territories are each responsible for their independent curricula; thus, varying terms are used for their physical education documents. For instance, Manitoba coined their curriculum a ‘curriculum framework’, British Columbia named theirs an ‘integrated resource package’, and Alberta used the title ‘program of study’ (Kilborn et al., 2016). There is a large degree of variation across these curricula, resources, and allocated time (Kilborn et al., 2016; Millington et al., 2008). For example, in British Columbia, the physical education curriculum is generally organised around personal and social responsibility, containing the concepts of multiculturalism and anti-racism (Kilborn et al., 2016; Millington et al., 2008). By comparison, in Alberta, the physical education curriculum pays more attention to movement skills and physical activity in order to prevent childhood obesity (Kilborn et al., 2016; McDermott, 2012).

There are two styles of curriculum relating to physical education and HPE in Canada. Ontario, Manitoba, and Québec have integrated physical education and health education, while the other seven provinces offer physical education and health education separately (Kilborn et al., 2016). For example, Ontario owns its HPE curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2019), which promotes: (1) social-emotional learning skills; (2) skills and knowledge through being lifelong participants in physical activity; (3) movement competence, skills, concepts, and strategies in sports and various physical activities to develop and improve fitness; and (4) an understanding of influences relating to health development, personal responsibility for health, and how a healthy, active life is associated with others.

By contrast, in New Brunswick, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Curriculum Branch (DOE, 2017) named its curriculum *Physical Education Grade K-5*. That curriculum defined quality physical education and six general graduation competencies¹⁶ that students need to develop. Quality physical education, in this use, is a well-planned programme taught by qualified teachers, which can provide a range of different, regular learning opportunities for all students. All students should have equal opportunities for and access to knowledge, skills, and resources in such a programme. That programme focuses on fundamental movement skills, concepts and strategies, and personal and social skills.

Kilborn et al. (2016) concluded that the subject area of physical education in the ten provinces was more inclined towards techniques and the skills of sports and games rather than the aims of the majority of the curricula; that is, to provide students with an active, healthy lifestyle. Overall,

¹⁶ The six competencies are (1) creativity and innovation, (2) citizenship, (3) communication, (4) personal and career development, (5) critical thinking, and (6) technology fluency.

because there is no national physical education or HPE curriculum in Canada, a variety of beliefs about physical education have been formed.

3.3.6 The teaching of physical education in three European nations

In European nations, there is diverse teaching of their physical education curricula (Forest et al., 2018). The teaching of physical education varies depending on the structure of the school curriculum, including the goals and learning outcomes (Forest et al., 2018; Ligozat et al., 2015; Lundqvist et al., 2012).

According to Forest et al. (2018), the teaching of physical education in three nations – France, Switzerland, and Sweden – is about (1) sport techniques and skills, (2) health education, (3) physical culture education, and (4) the education of values and citizenship. Their findings showed that physical education in France and Switzerland concentrates on sports techniques and skills, while it is inclined towards health education in Sweden. In addition to sport techniques and skills, the French curriculum focuses on physical culture education; that is, physical education is taught, placed, and constituted in the context of broader societal culture and issues (Kirk, 2010).

Internationally, physical education has been shaped in both different and similar ways. It ranges from the focus on sport and competition in England, to health, well-being, and physical education in Scotland and Australia, to the holistic development and clarity of physical education, physical activity, and physical exercise in the USA, with diverse approaches to physical education in Canada, France, Switzerland, and Sweden. Physical education seems to have the capacity to include sport, physical activity, physical exercise, outdoor education, culture education, health education, and moral education. Perhaps, this diversity is why physical education has been

structured “as a cross disciplinary body of knowledge” (Henry, 1978, p. 13) to “facilitate lifelong participation” (Jung et al., 2016, p. 515) in physical activity.

3.4 An historical perspective of HPE in New Zealand

Historical perspectives are culturally conceptual elements passed to people in a specific community or society in an assortment of ways (Levstik, 2008). Kirk (2010) emphasised that only partial knowledge or information will be available about physical education if there is an absence of an historical account. To understand HPE in New Zealand, it is, therefore, necessary to know its history.

3.4.1 The origin and emergence of physical education

Physical education in New Zealand has specific traits and patterns. Its origins in part arose from the physical games and activities of the indigenous Māori. Māori had played a range of games and other forms of physical activities before Europeans arrived in New Zealand (Hiroa & Buck, 1950; Stothart, 1974). Examples were spear throwing (hoeroa, whiuwhiu), boxing and wrestling (mekemeke, mamau, whakatoto), canoe racing (waka), and postural dances, such as kapa haka. These traditional Māori games, as well as other physical activities brought in by early European settlers, such as gymnastics and military drill, shaped physical education in New Zealand.

Two pioneers, Oscar David and Dr Francis Hutchinson, are reported to have been the first contributors to the emergence of physical education in New Zealand at the end of the 1880s (Stothart, 1974). At that time, the public desire for a more liberal form of physical education in primary schools was being called for. Oscar David, a Swiss national, taught gymnastics at Otago Boys’ and Girls’ High Schools from 1879 to 1882. He recommended that physical education

should have a prominent place in the curriculum and schools, and it should be taught by specialists in post-primary schools (Stothart, 1974). Dr Francis Hutchinson, who worked in Wellington Hospital, did two public presentations about physical education in 1884 to emphasise the importance and need for such a course. David and Hutchinson were the first two people to advocate for more comprehensive and inclusive physical education to be taught in New Zealand. It was the first time the concept of physical education as a school subject emerging in New Zealand (Stothart, 1974).

3.4.2 The Education Act 1877, military drill and physical training

There was no compulsory education system for children in New Zealand, and most children did not receive any systematic education until 1840 when New Zealand was officially announced a British colony. In 1877, the first Education Act was enacted (Campbell, 1972; Culpan, 2005; Simon, 1994; Stothart, 1974; Stothart, 2000; Sullivan, 2014; Swarbrick, 2013), offering an official guide for schooling and requiring children to learn subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, history, and geography. The Act “established twelve Education Boards, and confirmed the system of school inspectors” (Stothart, 2000, p. 5). Campbell (1972) reported that the Education Act 1877 acknowledged the opening of a national education system for all New Zealand children, which was free, perennial, and obligatory. The Act promoted primary school education to become a public priority (Shuker, 1987; Tearney, 2016).

The Education Act 1877 specified that military drill was a form of teaching in schools. Clause 85 in the Education Act 1877 stated that “... in public schools provision shall be made for instruction in military drills for all boys” (Stothart, 1974, p. 4). The military drill included activities, such as “cadet drills, wand movement, dumb-bells and clubs” (Stothart, 1974, p. 11), and “marching,

bands with fife and drum” (Stothart, 2000, p. 6). Military drill became the core content for boys at schools because of the large number of cadet companies in New Zealand at that time (McGeorge, 1992; Stothart, 1974). Military drill was the foundation for the future development of physical education in New Zealand (Stothart, 2000).

Although military drill dominated physical education (Ewing, 1960; Lynch, 2006), more comprehensive teaching and learning methods in physical education gradually began to emerge. In 1904, George Hogben, the Inspector-General of Schools, was interested in removing military drill’s influence on schooling. He reformed the primary school syllabus and proposed that primary school students should have 15 minutes for physical training per day (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2014; Stothart, 1974; Stothart, 2012; Swarbrick, 2013). Ewing (1960) described a typical physical education and health lesson taught at that time, showing that it focused on how to breathe, exercise, prevent infectious diseases, and give first aid.

In 1908, the *Manual of Physical Exercises* was published (Daley, 2003) and approved as the official handbook for primary schools. It immediately became popular, as the content of the book was different from military drill (Daley, 2003; Stothart, 1974). Its novel teaching methods provided teachers with detailed information about how to teach physical exercises. In 1912, Royd Garlick was appointed Director of Physical Education within the Department of Education (Daley, 2003; Stothart, 2000) and continued to encourage enlightened methods. From that time onwards, military drill was gradually replaced, and local conditions were given more attention in the curriculum.

3.4.3 The syllabus in 1920 and *the Growing Body*

The 1920 syllabus had special significance in New Zealand (Department of Education, 1920). In 1919, Mr H. E. Longworth was appointed the Director of Physical Education. He coordinated and organised his staff to rewrite the syllabus. It was the first time New Zealand instructors composing a syllabus for local conditions (Stothart, 1974). This syllabus emphasised teachers' responsibility for helping students develop their physiques and stated that students were "a matter of the greatest national importance, vital to the welfare and even the survival of the race" (Stothart, 1974, p. 17). This syllabus was connected to a book, *A Course of Physical Exercise and Games Suitable for Infants*, written by Miss Livingston of the Otago Education Board. Mr Longworth regularly visited every Education Board to promote this syllabus and to introduce Dalcroze eurhythmics and folk-dancing in leading primary schools throughout New Zealand. The syllabus made steady progress for physical education in New Zealand.

However, the introduction of *The Growing Body*, written by Dr James Renfrew White in 1932, changed the focus of physical education in New Zealand. The book, focusing on improving students' posture, was adopted and approved by the Department of Education as the official guide for use in primary schools (Stothart, 1974). Because teachers had to pay for the book, there were widespread protests and objections from the Primary Teachers Association. Stothart (1974) claimed that the book brought intense hostility and scepticism towards physical education, leading teachers to stop teaching physical education. Eventually, this book was discarded, and the *English Syllabus of Physical Training for Schools 1933* (Board of Education, 1934) was adopted.

3.4.4 Mr Philip Ashton Smithells and Māori

Philip Ashton Smithells was a physical educator and professor from England who was appointed as the superintendent of the New Zealand Department of Education in the 1940s (Stothart, 1974; Stothart, 2012). He valued Māori culture and realised the importance of preserving traditional Māori physical activities such as hand games, haka, and string games (Hokowhitu, 2004; Stothart, 1974). He worked with his staff to document these activities, so that many traditional Māori games and physical activities were recorded and preserved. Smithells drafted a new physical education syllabus for New Zealand based on the *English Syllabus of Physical training for Schools 1933* (Board of Education, 1934). He included Māori culture for primary and secondary schools in this curriculum (Hokowhitu, 2004; Legge, 2014). Hokowhitu (2004) claimed that “Smithells stepped outside the parameters that confined his academic contemporaries by at least recognising some value in Māori exercises” (p. 73). In 1948, Smithells was appointed as the first director of the School of Physical Education at the University of Otago, which provided the first university specialist physical and health education programme in New Zealand (McEldowney, 2014).

3.4.5 Swimming and outdoor education

In New Zealand, swimming has always been a popular physical activity in schools because of its many rivers, lakes, and extensive coastline. The value of swimming and safety education was recognised at the beginning of the 20th century because many drownings occurred (Moran, 2010).

Swimming was not officially taught in schools until the 1940s as most schools did not have facilities for teaching and learning swimming. In 1939, Ken Reid, a lecturer at the Teachers’ College and the senior organiser of physical education in Auckland, and Jack Fawcett, the headteacher at Cornwall School in Auckland, built the first pool for teaching swimming (Stothart,

1974; Stothart, 2000). In 1940, Reid attended a meeting in Wellington and proposed his idea of swimming instruction in schools, and his scheme was adopted. In the same year, he produced a film and wrote a pamphlet about teaching swimming (Stothart, 1974; Stothart, 2000). These materials and the idea of having swimming pools in schools were promoted. Swimming gradually became a compulsory subject in physical education for all students in New Zealand, with most schools having an outdoor swimming pool.

Outdoor education has been a regular feature in New Zealand schools. The genesis of outdoor education can be traced back to 1300 AD when Māori first discovered and stepped on this land (Cosgriff et al., 2012). Outdoor education's appearance in the New Zealand curriculum and educational system can be dated back to the late 1920s to 1940s (Irwin & Straker, 2014; Lynch, 2006). Lynch (2006) reported that "by the end of the 1920s, the officers of the Department of Health and Education were sufficiently convinced of the value of the camps [outdoor education] to provide a weekly subsidy of 10 shillings per child at approved camps" (p. 22).

The first recorded outdoor education camp was held in 1919 in Marton, Manawatu-Wanganui. Students slept on straw while teaching staff were on canvas stretchers (Lynch, 2006; Stothart, 2012). Many schools in the Auckland district were convinced of the value of outdoor education, and locations such as the Waikato River, Piha, and Port Waikato were established as permanent camps by the South Auckland Education Board in 1956 (Lynch, 2006; Stothart, 1974).

Outdoor education thus became a regular feature in New Zealand education policy. Cosgriff et al. (2012) asserted that outdoor education is a learning area that can enrich the school physical

education curriculum and create more chances for students to link the knowledge they have learned in school classrooms to their lived experience.

3.4.6 Te reo kori

In 1984, the New Zealand Department of Education (Department of Education, 1987) tried to add the concept of equity into the national curriculum in order to establish a more inclusive, equitable curriculum that was more suitable for the context of New Zealand. Te reo kori, which translates as ‘the language of movement’, was first integrated into physical education in 1987 as one of seven essential learning areas¹⁷ (Legge, 2011, 2014, 2015; Pope, 2014; Stothart, 2000). It was an attempt to recognise the indigenous Māori forms of movement in the HPE curriculum. The purpose of doing that was to broaden students’ experience and reflect the awareness of multiple cultures and the bicultural identity of New Zealand (Department of Education, 1987).

Te reo kori was not fully embraced and not regarded as a key learning area in *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* in 1999 (Stothart, 2000), but its importance had been stated in the curriculum at that time (Ministry of Education, 1999):

In recognising New Zealand’s unique bicultural heritage, physical activity embraces ngà mahi a rēhia (Māori recreational and leisure activities, including te reo kori) Te reo kori provides opportunities for the development of fundamental movement skills, using poi, rākau, and whai. Students may also learn more advanced skills, such as those required for a complex poi performance, haka, or mau rākau using taiaha, under the tuition of experts from within the school or the wider community. (p. 42)

¹⁷ The other key learning areas were athletics, ball skills, aquatics, dance, outdoor education, and fitness.

Te reo kōri contains Māori language, values, and movement of the “body, mind and spirit” (Legge, 2015, p. 145). “These activities are unique to Aotearoa [New Zealand] and foster knowledge, traditions, and movement skills from the past along with adapted contemporary movements” (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 42). It uses traditional Māori activities to express Māori culture, demonstrating Māori’s creative skills and distinctive lifestyle, which is an invaluable medium for Māori culture in contemporary HPE curricula in New Zealand (Legge, 2015).

3.4.7 Health education and the ecological perspective

The first curriculum about health education was published in 1956 when C. Ruston Bach, a physical education teacher at Auckland Grammar School, compiled a book entitled *Notebook of Health Education including Hygiene and Physiology and Physical Education*. The book contained information about mental hygiene, venereal disease, and practical content. He believed that such information should be included in the physical education curriculum and urged that every student in New Zealand should have such a book (Stothart, 1974).

Health education in the 1970s included knowledge of hygiene, nutrition, and posture, and aimed to prevent contagious diseases/infection in order to ameliorate people’s habits and fend off sickness. This ideology came from the aim of public health organisations and governments, who intended “to accomplish a continuing good health status for all” (Lupton, 1995, p. 2) and focused on “individuals’ behaviours as determinants of health status” (Glanz et al., 2008, p. 9).

In the 1980s, health education moved to “the broader social determinants of health” (Glanz et al., 2008, p. 9). This aim heralded holistic theories from social, economic, and political impacts to think about health concerns. In particular, the ecological concept of the healthy development of

students promoted school health education programmes and linked individual health to others, community, and the social environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Socio-ecological perspectives were first introduced into the learning area of HPE in the 1993 curriculum (Smith & Philpot, 2011). This perspective was included in *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* in 1999 as a key concept that underpinned HPE (Ministry of Education, 1999):

People can take part in the health promotion process effectively only when they have a clear view of the social and environmental factors that affect health and well-being. Through learning experiences that reflect the socio-ecological perspective, students can seek to remove barriers to healthy choices. They can help to create the conditions that promote their own well-being and that of other people and society as a whole. (p. 33)

Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum in 2007 restated the socio-ecological perspective and pointed out that it is a method of considering and comprehending connections among individuals, others, and society. Students can learn physical education through socio-ecological perspectives in terms of social, political, economic, and cultural influences (Ministry of Education, 2017), whereby students can critically comprehend how and why the environment will influence their well-being, society, life, and knowledge.

3.4.8 The concept of movement

During the 1950s to 1980s, with the rapid growth of the New Zealand economy and population after World War II, many schools in New Zealand built gymnasiums that provided students with more options in physical education. A set of guide books and policies to promote physical education were published (Department of Education, 1966, 1987), for example, *The Physical*

Education Handbook: Infant Division (Romans, 1955). These resources offered teacher-directed teaching approaches and practical information (Petrie, 2008), such as coaching hints, rules, teaching skills, and group practice.

With the influence of these resources, movement as a modern concept for physical education became widespread in primary schools in New Zealand (Stothart, 1974). Earlier, Romans (1955) asserted that “the aim of physical education, or education through movement, is therefore basically the same as for other forms of education, namely, to make the greatest possible contribution to the growth and development of the individual” (p. 5). In the 2010s, Smith (2011) proposed that physical education may be viewed “as education in, through and about movement” (p. 32) that will allow teachers and students to critically choose what they prefer to teach and learn in their own physical cultures.

3.4.9 The 1st international conference and Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ)

In 1974, with the opening of Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, the first international conference of physical education in New Zealand opened at Lincoln College of Agriculture. The conference signalled that physical education professionals of New Zealand had the capacity to make contributions at the international level (Stothart, 2000).

In 1993, Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ) was officially established. It aims to organise international and domestic conferences, journals, teaching resources, and local meetings, and to safeguard the name of physical education in New Zealand. Its predecessors had been the Physical Education Society of New Zealand established in 1937, and the New Zealand Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (NZAHPER) established in 1967 (PENZ, 2019).

3.4.10 HPE in the New Zealand Curriculum in 1999 and 2007

Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999) was enacted in 1999. The curriculum saw the merger of three subjects – physical education, health education, and home economics – and contained seven key areas of learning¹⁸ (KALs), four curriculum strands¹⁹, and four underpinning concepts²⁰. From 2000 to 2002, a curriculum stocktake was initiated for ongoing revision and review, which led to the diminishing of *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1999) and the development of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007): a national curriculum document that encompassed all learning subjects in a single document (Petrie & lisahunter, 2011).

The NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) aims to cultivate “confident, connected, actively involved, lifelong learners” (p. 7) and to furnish the young with “the knowledge, skills and values” (Bolstad et al., 2012, p. iii) to succeed in an increasingly complex and uncertain future. The curriculum is based on eight values – (1) excellence, (2) innovation, inquiry, and curiosity, (3) diversity, (4) equity, (5) community and participation, (6) ecological sustainability, (7) integrity, and (8) respect – which collectively assert that the educational system and curriculum of New Zealand centre on learners, rather than making learners fit into the educational system.

¹⁸ The seven areas of learning are mental health, sexuality education, food and nutrition, body care and physical safety, physical activity, sport studies, and outdoor education.

¹⁹ Four curriculum strands are personal health and physical development, movement concepts and motor skills, relationships with other people, and healthy communities and environments.

²⁰ Four concepts are well-being (hauora), health promotion, the socio-ecological perspective, and the importance of attitudes and values that promote hauora.

The NZC encourages teachers to use effective pedagogies from scientific research to create an encouraging environment and adequate opportunities for learners, to increase connections with personal knowledge and experience, to use cooperative learning, and to explore the relationships between teaching and learning (Ministry of Education, 2007).

In the NZC 2007, the learning area ‘Health and Physical Education’ retained a secure position as one of eight key areas²¹ and was guided by the same underlying concepts, curricular strands, and KALs as stated in *Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum* 1999. Culpan and Galvan (2012) explained that HPE in the NZC represented the changing nature of physical education, reinforcing “the need for programmes in schools to move from a scientised, technocratic orientation to one that is socio-critical in nature and emancipatory in action” (p. 36).

3.4.11 Socially-critical perspectives in HPE

Socially-critical perspectives examine and challenge assumptions that may be taken for granted in society but are based on inequality and unfairness (Bowes & Bruce, 2011; Gerdin et al., 2018; Gillespie & McBain, 2014; McIntyre et al., 2016; Philpot, 2015; Wright, 2004; Wright et al., 2018). These perspectives are regarded as an important tool or theory to free HPE from various ‘isms’, such as “positivism, elitism, individualism, sexism, [and] racism” (McCuaig, 2013, p. 18).

HPE in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 1999, 2007) encourages teachers and students to teach and learn using a socially-critical perspective to see the interrelationships among culture, power, and ideology (Culpan, 2013; Philpot, 2015; Smith, 2016). Socially-critical

²¹ The other key areas are English, The Arts, Learning Languages, Mathematics and Statistics, Science, Social Science, and Technology.

perspectives require teachers and students to understand the issues of “power inequalities and social justice” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 36) in physical education, sport, and society, and to acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi, which offer schools “the scope, flexibility and authority” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 37) to implement the curriculum.

Armed with a socially-critical lens, students can understand the significance, function, and role of the world relating to movement, sport, and physical activity as those relate to social justice. Gillespie and McBain (2014) found that socially-critical perspectives enable students to analyse their current situations relating to culture, politics, and the economy by distinguishing inter-relationships among race, class, and power. Thus, students can notice, challenge, and question stereotypes, taken-for-granted assumptions, and practice (Gillespie & McBain, 2014). A socially-critical perspective may provide students with a continuous ability for innovation, and create a desire for challenging inequities and changing the status quo.

There are some limitations and dilemmas in the use of socially-critical perspectives. McIntyre et al. (2016) reported that socially-critical perspectives were used more in health education than physical education. Bowes and Bruce (2011) found that socially-critical perspectives might challenge teachers’ beliefs, values, opinions, and authority, and cause embarrassment in the classroom environment. Gerdin et al. (2018) warned that the value of critical theory and pedagogy may be redefined and minimised in practice because some HPE teachers’ interview responses in their study showed a partial and incomplete understanding. Philpot (2016) similarly questioned the use of critical theory as the singular theoretical framework for preparing HPE teachers. He concluded that “critical pedagogy based on the single narrative of [a] class is insufficient” (p. 271)

because it disregarded some other social issues in some groups of people, specifically those who were low-income, paralysed, female, or children with autism, dyslexia, or dysgraphia.

Culpan (2013) concluded that understanding critical pedagogy and arming students with socially-critical skills are important in HPE in the NZC. He recommended that students need to understand the relationships among culture, power, and ideology first. Students then need to have a sophisticated understanding of mainstream ideologies to develop a counter-discourse against the hegemony and speak up for oppressed groups.

3.5 Gaps between the HPE curriculum and classroom pedagogies in New Zealand

Penney (2011) argued that the curriculum is not only a government document but also a debatable, legislative procedure that has expanded into curricular planning, implementation, assessment, and development. To understand the nature of continual action and progress in the schooling system, curricular structures and frameworks that enable or restrict teachers' practice may render more insights on curricular changes (Ovens, 2010). The NZC had asked teachers to make considerable changes in teaching and learning (Culpan, 2008), for example, to use effective pedagogies under the guidance of socially-critical and socio-ecological perspectives. These changes have brought about some distinct variations to HPE in schools in New Zealand (Ovens, 2010). However, there are gaps between the HPE curriculum and the reality of classroom pedagogies used in the name of the subject. What is stated in the curriculum is not always what happens in the classroom (Penney, 2006; Tinning, 2009; Ward & Doutis, 1999).

Grant (2014) reported that a lack of understanding of the HPE curriculum and pedagogy has come from a series of causes. These include (1) limited time and opportunities for learning about HPE in teacher education and professional development; (2) the National Standards putting more emphasis on mathematics and literacy; (3) the lack of enough support and accountability from schools and the Ministry of Education; and (4) the need for more facilities. Ovens (2010) earlier argued that decrepit facilities need to be updated because of the growth in school rolls.

Petrie (2008, 2016) concluded that traditional teaching practices dominate teachers' pedagogy in primary school physical education, namely, that teachers are commanders and students are passive receivers. Most physical education lessons have a traditionally-conservative structure of warm-up activities, skills practice, games, and then warm-down activities (Griggs & Petrie, 2016).

Penney et al. (2015) contended that many unofficial HPE resources in the market do not align with the aims stated in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) in terms of pedagogy and content. Notably, unofficial resources often focus on health issues such as obesity and nutrition (Burrows et al., 2013). Thus, the unofficial resources lead to a very narrow understanding of health and pedagogical practices in HPE that may best be described as prescribed interventions rather than educational experiences. These unofficial resources may mislead the public about the objectives of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Stothart (2005) argued that HPE in New Zealand had been asked to bear too many responsibilities and to achieve too many expectations, making HPE more complicated than it should be. Tinning (2009) wondered how HPE in the NZC is so confident of achieving its expectations to make "a

significant contribution to the well-being of students beyond the classroom” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 22).

Physical education is increasingly being asked to meet many stakeholders’ needs. These stakeholders may conceptualise physical education as a subject that can achieve divergent purposes from a physical health intervention to an educational experience. It seems that HPE in New Zealand primary schools is on a path moving away from its intended objectives, which may lead to a more vulnerable future (Grant, 2014).

3.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the nature of and differences across physical education, sport, and HPE, and why I preferred to use the concept of physical education in this thesis. I then described the various interpretations and provision of HPE, especially physical education, in several countries. Lastly, I presented an historical perspective of HPE in New Zealand and described some apparent gaps between the nationally-prescribed curriculum and classroom reality in New Zealand.

The terms physical education, sport, and HPE have been used interchangeably, which has been controversial for those with a professional interest in the three fields. Sport more focuses on performance and winning, while physical education and HPE concentrate on the educational process. This educational trait gives physical education and HPE more space to be a valuable subject in school curricula.

Physical education and HPE have been viewed as valuable subjects for students’ holistic development and well-being in many nations. There are many varieties of how physical education

and HPE are perceived worldwide, with varying goals. People have assumed that physical education and HPE can achieve multiple educational goals, such as cultural inclusion and physical literacy. It is my belief that the most significant contributor of physical education is to educate students through sports, physical activity, movement, and games, with a focus on the students' physical, intellectual, social, and moral development.

The development of HPE in New Zealand has occurred across the nation's history, from military drill to physical training, to physical education and HPE. More contemporary concepts have been included in HPE, such as socio-ecological and socially-critical perspectives. HPE in New Zealand seems to be endowed with high expectations, which has led Tinning (2009) to ask if it is even possible for the subject to realise these lofty expectations.

In the next chapter, I move from the literature that examines physical education and HPE from international and national perspectives to a narrower focus on the perspectives of key stakeholders who lead, deliver, and experience physical education. Firstly, I examine previous studies of the principals, teachers, and students' perspectives on physical education and summarise the benefits of physical education for students' holistic development. I then conclude by presenting a discussion about who should teach primary school physical education – classroom teachers, physical education specialists, or outside providers?

CHAPTER FOUR: STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION

4.1 Introduction

Diverse stakeholders have a range of perspectives on the nature and purpose of primary school physical education. My point of departure in this chapter is to understand, firstly, what is meant by the term 'perspective', as used in academic research. Next, I introduce principals', teachers', and students' perspectives on physical education. Then, I summarise the benefits of physical education for students' holistic development. Lastly, I discuss a continuing issue about who is best positioned to teach primary school physical education – classroom teachers, physical education specialists, or outside providers?

4.2 What is meant by 'perspective'?

Soanes and Hawker (2006) suggested that 'perspective' means an attitude towards an event, a person, or an occurrence. In order to further clarify the term as it is used in academic research, I analysed five articles that investigated students' perspectives (**Table 2**). Having analysed the keywords and research methods used in these five studies, the meaning of 'perspective' was made clear.

Table 2 shows that, in these five articles, several synonyms of 'perspective' were used, such as 'conceptions', 'talk', 'voices', and 'experience'. These five studies used qualitative research methods such as semi-structured and focus group interviews, observations, and photo-elicitation to investigate participants' opinions, experience, and perception of a fact or an event.

Table 2.*Five Studies on Students' Perspectives*

Authors & Year	Keywords in Titles	Purposes	Research Methods Used
Backman et al. (2020)	The student perspective	To analyse student teachers' conceptions of teaching and evaluating movement	Group interviews and semi-structured interviews
Banville et al. (2017)	Students' perspectives	To recognise students' perspectives on health behaviour	Student focus-group interviews
Caldeborg & Öhman (2020)	Female students' perspectives	To investigate female students' talk of physical contact in physical education	Focus group interviews with photo-elicitation
Zhu (2015)	Students' perspectives	To interpret students' perspectives on grading in physical education	Observation, student profile grading sheets, and interviews
Lee & Hokanson (2017)	Students' perspectives	To listen to Asian American students' voices and investigate their experiences in physical education and sport	Interviews, a semi-structured questionnaire, and an open-ended questionnaire

Banville et al. (2017) recommended that studies of perspectives should attempt to carry out a systematic inquiry to examine participants' feelings, attitudes, reactions, experiences, and beliefs about a particular subject. Dyson (2006) asserted that research on 'perspective' is an inquiry into

participants' experience. This type of research on 'perspective' is participant-centred, which means that it is carried out 'with' participants rather than 'on' participants, trying to understand and interpret participants' values, beliefs, views, judgments, and experiences about their daily practice and actions (Dyson, 2006). 'Perspective' used in academic studies seems to investigate how a general notion or an abstract idea is perceived or regarded by a group of people, mainly using qualitative research methods (Banville et al., 2017; Dyson, 2006; Pope, 2006). With these definitions as a backdrop, in the present study, I define a perspective as a point of view or an attitude to an incident, event, or occurrence.

In the following sections, I review relevant articles investigating school principals', teachers', and students' perspectives of physical education.

4.3 Principals' perspectives

In this section, I discuss principals' perspectives on physical education. I present the influence of principals first, followed by literature that explores how principals' experiences and beliefs, and teachers' qualifications and competence influence physical education. Lastly, I examine principals' perspectives on the value of physical education.

4.3.1 The influence of principals' perspectives

As the school leaders, principals' perspectives need to be heard and understood because of their influence on school curricula (Green, 2014; Rainer et al., 2012). Clohessy et al. (2020) emphasised that the influence of leadership on the provision of physical education in primary school has been recognised as significant. Blankenship and Coleman (2009) suggested that support and help from principals can influence the status and development of school subjects, because they play a vital

role in guiding, organising, and balancing conflicting interests, and observing and checking their staff's actions and behaviour in order to maintain and sustain organisational functions (Caruso, 2013; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Penney et al. (2013) proposed that support from principals may lead to a better design of physical education programmes and more effective use of facilities and resources, which in turn can facilitate both teaching and learning in physical education.

4.3.2 Perceived influence

Principals' experiences, beliefs, and attitudes have been associated with teachers' work efficiency and the promotion of physical education (Day & Gu, 2010; Ellison & Woods, 2019; Rizzo & Kinzey, 2013). Day and Gu (2010), and Ellison and Woods (2019) showed that teachers' self-efficiency can increase when school principals and administrators empower them to be an active leader in the classroom. Rizzo and Kinzey (2013) investigated 106 middle and high school principals' attitudes towards physical education, and they found that principals would promote physical education if they had good working relationships with physical education educators or had personal experience in teaching physical education.

However, several studies of principals' perspectives on physical education have shown different findings (Gentry, 2013; George & Curtner-Smith, 2015, 2017). Gentry (2013) employed semi-structured interviews to investigate three principals' managerial support for physical education. The findings showed that the positive contribution and value of physical education that the teachers emphasised appeared to be diminished by the principals' views and actions. George and Curtner-Smith (2015, 2017) used an online survey and occupational socialisation theory to explore 19 principals' beliefs and values about physical education. They found that the principals had limited knowledge and understanding of the physical education curriculum, pedagogy, and the goals of

the subjects. A typical claim was that physical education and extracurricular sport were synonymous, and school sport was only suitable for highly physically skilled students. Such beliefs and ideas came from the principals' past personal experiences rather than their professional socialisation (George & Curtner-Smith, 2015, 2017).

In addition, the principals felt that teachers' qualifications and competence may be two fundamental factors determining whether or not quality physical education is taught in primary schools (Lynch, 2015; Lynch & Soukup, 2017; Zeng, 2011). In a study by Zeng (2011), principals claimed that teachers' qualifications had a direct association with the quality of physical education lessons. Similarly, Lynch (2015) surveyed 138 principals in the state of Victoria, Australia. He found that these principals asserted that classroom teachers, who lacked formal, regular training in physical education and did not have a qualification in physical education, were not as adept at offering quality physical education. Lynch and Soukup (2017) surveyed 73 primary school principals and concluded that teachers' preparation and qualifications were the main barriers to delivering quality physical education.

In contrast, in a case study of principals' experience in evaluating physical education teachers, Padaruth et al. (2017) reported that the principals in the study were not interested in teachers' qualifications and the content knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy; rather, they stressed relationships between teachers and students, the management of safety, and the teachers' teaching behaviour as their most important considerations. In the principals' minds, quality physical education appeared to be influenced by those factors rather than teachers' qualifications.

Furthermore, the principals reported more factors influencing teachers' teaching in physical education. Rainer et al. (2012) interviewed 14 headteachers in South Wales and found the provision of quality physical education was influenced by many factors, such as policies, curricula, extra-curricular opportunities, resources, and funding. They argued that these factors can lead to a lack of appropriate facilities, an unbalanced ratio of staff to students, teachers' lack of discretion to offer physical education, and time conflict with 'core' subjects. In a study in New York City, Zeng (2011) reported that principals might lack the agency to maintain sufficient facilities. The principals in the study were not satisfied with decrepit facilities in their schools and urged local officials to provide safe and well-equipped facilities for public schools. Halbert and MacPhail (2010) surveyed 763 principals' and teachers' perspectives on the physical education curriculum in Ireland. These principals said that their schools struggled to accommodate a new physical education curriculum because they lacked enough support, such as in-service professional development. Physical education in the principals' views seems to be affected by multiple factors, some of which are beyond their control.

4.3.3 The perceived value of physical education

Some principals seem to underrate physical education. Stevens-Smith et al. (2006) surveyed 86 principals in the USA. They found that the principals did not think physical education was as significant as other academic subjects, although they were aware of the requirements of the physical education curriculum. Gentry (2013) found that principals in their study appeared not to fully understand the value of physical education and underrated it. Principals in the two studies appeared not to place great emphasis on physical education in their school curricula.

However, other research showed that some principals do value physical education (Stringer, 2004; Zeng, 2011; Zeng & Wang, 2016). Stringer (2004) used a case study with mixed research methods to examine seven middle school principals' perceptions of physical education and found that these principals regarded physical education as a valuable vehicle for cultivating the whole child. The principals believed that physical education is likely to improve students' cognitive, personal, and social abilities, although they put more emphasis on students' physical development. The principals from Zeng's (2011) survey of 46 public school principals in New York City argued that a holistic curriculum should include physical education or students may lose opportunities for holistic development. Zeng and Wang (2016) reported similar perspectives when they surveyed 92 principals from 12 schools in Shanghai, China. The principals strongly agreed that students cannot develop holistically without physical education in their school curricula. They believed that physical education should have the same importance as English, science, and mathematics in the curriculum. They argued that students can develop a healthy lifestyle, provided that physical education in schools is fully valued and supported (Zeng & Wang, 2016).

In summary, the findings I have accounted for illustrate that physical education is a necessary part of the curriculum in principals' minds, although it is often underrated and influenced by contextual factors. Some principals believed that quality physical education can provide students with holistic development (Stringer, 2004; Zeng, 2011; Zeng & Wang, 2016). A holistic curriculum focuses not only on traditional core subjects but also offers activities that encourage students to be challenged physically and mentally. Rainer et al. (2012) recommended that further questions about principals' perspectives on physical education may focus on "what constitutes enough [physical education],

what facilities are required, what activities should be delivered, and who should be delivering [physical education]” (p. 444).

4.4 Teachers’ perspectives

In this section, I review studies that have investigated teachers’ perspectives on physical education. I start by introducing the importance of the teachers’ role and then present teachers’ perspectives in four themes.

4.4.1 The importance of the teachers’ role

There have been different voices on teaching and teachers, and not all of them paint a great picture. Gove (2013) identified four fallacies about teachers and teaching: (1) teaching as a profession is experiencing a decline in reputation because it is a high-pressure job that can cause distress and demotivation; (2) teaching is unable to have a significant effect on people; (3) teachers are sidelined in classroom learning activity because of technology advancement; and (4) teachers are not reliable. Teachers’ behaviour and activities should be monitored and approved at all times by independent agencies, such as the police, because of the potential for teacher misconduct (Diliberti et al., 2019; Muehlenhard et al., 2017; Yung, 2015).

However, research suggests that teachers have a major impact on students’ personal growth and are ranked second only to parents in terms of influencing students’ learning, because they spend substantial school time with students and act intentionally as role models (Xiang et al., 2002). Mainhard et al. (2018) highlighted teachers’ importance in developing students’ emotions and academic achievement in class. Jimerson and Haddock (2015) reported teachers’ notable contributions to student performance and outcomes in schools. Tennant et al. (2015) used a model

of social support designed by Tardy (1985) to investigate intermediate school students' perceptions about teachers' support, and conceptualised four types of strategies that teachers use for supporting students – emotion, information, assessment, and instrumental support. Tennant et al. (2015) suggested that teachers' emotional support in particular can facilitate students' development in social-emotional well-being. Brundrett (2013) argued that “teachers are the critical guardians of the intellectual life of the nation”, who “can make a real difference to the life chances of [students]” (p. 460). Without doubt, teachers play a vital role in students' personal development, although there are divergent voices. Listening to teachers' voices and understanding their perspectives can enable a better understanding of how they interpret and implement the curriculum in practice and how they support students' learning in class (Hyndman, 2017).

4.4.2 Perceived subordinate status and physical education as release and balance

Teachers in some studies have stated that physical education is not treated as an essential subject in their school curricula (Jenkinson & Benson, 2010; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a). In Australia, Jenkinson and Benson (2010) reported that only three per cent of teachers interviewed said physical education was given priority in their schools. Morgan and Hansen (2007, 2008a) found that the majority of classroom teachers studied did not think physical education received the same emphasis as other learning areas in their schools. The teachers had to concentrate more on literacy and mathematics in a packed curriculum, leading to less time allocated to physical education. One teacher said: “If something happens, I miss out [physical education] before anything else, like reading groups and maths, and everything else. It's kind of the first thing to get bumped” (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a, p. 512).

Although physical education is treated as less important in these Australian schools, Banville et al. (2020), and Burrows and McCormack (2011) found that the teachers in their studies in New Zealand asserted that students can release excess energy during physical education, sport, and physical activity at lunchtime and interval time so that they can settle down to classroom tasks. One teacher in a study by Burrows and McCormack (2011) said that compulsory classes for physical education, sport, and recreation can help students release any restlessness arising from academic learning to have a balanced school life. These teachers' perspectives suggested that physical education has the practical function of releasing students' energy, and helping them study and learn in other subjects. Physical education seems to be viewed as only important for the service functions it performs rather than important in its own right (Gaudreault et al., 2018; Richards et al., 2018).

4.4.3 Confusion about physical education

Research suggests that many teachers are uncertain or confused about the nature and purposes of physical education. Teachers with unhappy experiences in physical education as former students showed less confidence and were less likely to get involved in physical education than teachers who had positive experiences (Morgan & Hansen, 2008b). In Australia, Morgan and Hansen (2007) reported that 74 per cent of the primary school teachers in their study used physical education, physical activity, and sport interchangeably. Morgan and Hansen (2008b) concluded that teachers' uncertainty about physical education can be linked to their own experience and beliefs, and physical education is most likely to be seen as sport or fitness if teachers had that experience in physical education when they were at school.

In Ireland, in a six-year longitudinal study of elementary classroom teachers' beliefs about teaching physical education, Chróinín and O'Sullivan (2016) showed that the teacher' beliefs are shaped by their experience before, during, and after their initial teacher education study. Murphy and McEvoy (2020) found that most primary school teachers in their study (n=25) viewed physical education as “informal, sport/physical activity-related activities at break time” (p. 13). They concluded that this interpretation may have come from their past school experiences if there was an absence of formal physical education when they were at primary school.

In the USA, Linker and Woods (2018) examined pre-service classroom teachers' beliefs about physical education and compared these to the current curriculum expectations. Like Morgan and Hansen (2008b), they found a dissonance among the current physical education curriculum, practice expectations, and the physical education lessons teachers had experienced when they were students.

These various findings are consistent with those found in New Zealand. Studies have reported that primary school teachers in New Zealand have varying understanding of physical education, and they view it as sport, physical activity, or fitness (Banville et al., 2020; Dyson et al., 2018; Dyson et al., 2011; Philpot & Smith, 2011). Philpot and Smith (2011) found that pre-service teachers entering an undergraduate degree in physical education teacher education (PETE) in New Zealand interpreted physical education as synonymous with sport. However, final year pre-service teachers and pre-service teachers with a postgraduate degree thought that physical education was different from sport. One graduating student said that physical education is “learning through sport or other

nonsporting physical activities ... from those traditional sports, right through to things like going for a walk” (p. 38).

Gordon et al. (2013) reported that nearly 50 per cent of the primary school teachers in their study thought motor skills development was the principal aim of physical education. Gordon et al. (2016) noted that many teachers used a teacher-oriented method, which has been criticised for having a narrow aim, concentrating on the development of students’ physical aspects rather than creating chances for students’ creativity, cooperation, and social and affective development (Penney, 2011; Petrie, 2008, 2016).

Dyson et al. (2018) examined the role that “the historical sports, competition, fitness, fundamental sport skills and ‘Kiwisportification’” (p. 468) played in schools, and whether teachers’ understanding of physical education was consistent with the aims of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007). They found that the primary school teachers in the study saw physical education as sport, fitness, and games to improve physical health, and rarely focused on students’ social and affective development. It seems that the physical education lessons taught by these teachers are at odds with the philosophy of the NZC (Dyson et al., 2018; Gordon et al., 2016).

Teachers’ confusion about the nature of physical education to some extent impedes the implementation of the national curriculum (Dyson et al., 2011; Morgan & Hansen, 2007) and has caused considerable inconsistency between practice and curriculum. Teachers’ “muddle[d] thinking” (Dyson et al., 2018, p. 475) around the distinctions among physical education, sport, and

physical activity has contributed to a variety of practices. Physical education seems to be a “critical, complex and confusing” (Philpot & Smith, 2011, p. 38) learning area influenced by many factors.

4.4.4 Factors influencing physical education

There are many factors reported, such as weather, facilities, teachers’ beliefs, and preferences, influencing classroom teachers’ provision of quality physical education (Chróinín & O’Sullivan, 2016; Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012; Jess et al., 2016; Linker & Woods, 2018; MacLean, 2007). In England, Jess et al. (2016) reported that amenities, equipment, and climate can enable or limit the provision of primary school physical education. Of these factors, the adequacy of facilities has been a significant element linked to classroom teachers’ teaching and students’ experience in primary school physical education (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education, 200; Ovens, 2008; Pickup & Price, 2007).

In Australia, a range of factors associated with delivering quality physical education in schools are identified (Jenkinson & Benson, 2010; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a). Morgan and Hansen (2007) reported that the majority (92%) of teachers thought that a successful primary physical education programme was contingent on the school’s leadership team, including support from principals and sport coordinators. Morgan and Hansen (2008a) identified nine obstacles²² to effective primary school physical education, while Jenkinson and Benson (2010) reported 10 obstacles²³ to effective secondary school physical education. In these two studies, facilities such

²² Nine obstacles were: time/crowded curriculum; the shortage of professional development and help; finances; facilities; class size; content knowledge; confidence; past experience in physical education; personal preference (Morgan & Hansen, 2008a).

²³ Ten obstacles were: facilities; teaching space; equipment; class schedule; funding; support from colleagues; support from school administration; leadership; appropriate professional development; and professional development from schools and subject leaders (Jenkinson & Benson, 2010).

as teaching space and equipment were the greatest influence on the quality of physical education.

Similarly, in New Zealand, factors both within and external to school influence physical education and teachers' practice (Gordon et al., 2016). Gordon et al. (2016) found that the then 'National Standards' system, school facilities and resources, and the support and leadership from the schools strongly influenced teachers' practice in physical education. Regarding teachers themselves, Gordon et al. (2013) concluded that most of the teachers studied spent little time on the preparation of physical education lessons. Teachers in a New Zealand-based study (Dyson et al., 2018) admitted that planning, assessment, and reflection were essential factors to improving their teaching skills, but they seldom used these in physical education because of the crowded curriculum schedule and heavy workloads.

It is clear that physical education delivery is influenced by factors within schools such as teacher confidence and knowledge, and external factors such as policies and resources (Hyndman, 2017). It seems that the vast majority of influencing factors, apart from content knowledge, confidence, experience, and personal preference, are controlled by policies and resources. Changes in the curriculum alone do not significantly influence teachers' practice in physical education (Curtner-Smith, 1999; McIntyre et al., 2016).

4.4.5 Insufficient time in physical education teacher education

Previous research has demonstrated the positive impact of PETE on future practice. Teachers in a study by Chróinín and O'Sullivan (2016) said that teacher education programmes offer them opportunities to reflect on the pedagogical considerations of the content. The learning activities and shared ideas help them to develop a bank of resources for future teaching. These teachers

believed that learning about pedagogy happened during the practical activities they experienced rather than sitting and taking notes in a lecture theatre. In a study by Petrie and McGee (2012), the participating teachers stated that they needed professional development programmes to increase their confidence and gather more physical education specific resources. Linker and Woods (2018) reported that their initial teacher education study had influenced pre-service teachers. Having completed a course about physical education teaching methods, the participating teachers realised that physical education is for students' holistic development. One teacher in that study said that he respected physical education more following teacher education, whereas he had previously assumed other subjects, like English and science, were more important. The majority of participating teachers indicated that they would incorporate physical education into their classroom learning. However, some teachers said that they were reluctant to teach physical education, but would try to incorporate it into their classroom activities.

Internationally, the opportunities in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) to learn about physical education are reducing. In England, Griggs and Ward (2012) identified a disconnection between teachers' needs and training courses. A vital issue was the lack of sufficient time allocated to physical education in ITE. Griggs and Ward (2012) described the impact of a previous four-year initial teacher education qualification that had been substituted with one year of postgraduate study. In 36 weeks of a postgraduate diploma certificate of education, only nine hours were allocated to physical education, and for trainees in school-centred initial teacher training, there were only five hours allocated to physical education (Caldecott et al., 2006).

In New Zealand, the lack of teacher preparation is similar, and the reduction in the allocated time for physical education in ITE has become an issue (Dyson et al., 2011; Gordon et al., 2013; Griggs & Ward, 2012; Smith & Philpot, 2011). Dyson et al. (2011), Gordon et al. (2013), and Smith and Philpot (2011) have reported that there is limited curriculum time in ITE for teachers to learn to teach physical education. Smith and Philpot (2011) reported that in the majority of ITE programmes, primary school HPE had been integrated into a shared unit of 36 hours as a result of merging health education and physical education into one learning area.

Dyson et al. (2011) warned that most of the students who were graduating from these ITE programmes might not be well prepared for teaching physical education. Teachers in a study by Gordon et al. (2013) conceded that they had undertaken physical education study in their ITE but did not feel that they were well prepared for teaching it after graduating. More recently, Dyson et al. (2018) reported that teachers in their study had little confidence teaching in physical education, sport, or fundamental skills. It seems that insufficient time in ITE and a lack of professional development are key factors influencing teachers' practice in physical education (Gordon et al., 2013).

In summary, teachers play an influential role in classrooms. Their attitudes, beliefs, and teaching and learning strategies have a significant impact on students' personal development. Teachers generally interpret primary school physical education as a complex learning area influenced by many factors such as facilities, and are confused about the distinctions among – physical education, sport, and physical activity. In my view, research in primary school physical education may need to focus on the nature and purpose of physical education.

4.5 Students' perspectives

In this section, I examine studies that investigate students' perspectives on physical education. The section begins with an introduction discussing the significance of students' perspectives. I then describe students' perspectives of physical education in four themes – physical education for physical health, physical education for fun and enjoyment, perceived factors that influence students' learning, and unpleasant experiences in physical education.

4.5.1 The significance of students' perspectives

Students' perspectives need to be considered because teaching practice in the classroom is inevitably influenced by situational factors such as the learners' needs (Doyle, 1992; Dyson, 1995, 2006). Dyson (2006) pointed out that teachers can better understand and address students' needs by ascertaining students' perspectives. Enright and O'Sullivan (2012) recommended that listening to the voices of students can help teachers identify and understand students' learning experience. Thus, insights from students can be used to improve teaching and learning (Hyndman, 2017; MacPhail, 2011). Even though academics have stressed the importance of students' perspectives, there is a paucity of studies on students' perspectives on physical education in the literature (Bernstein et al., 2011; Cairney et al., 2012; Dismore & Bailey, 2011; Dyson, 1995, 2006; Enright & O'Sullivan, 2012; Kinchin & O'Sullivan, 1999; MacPhail, 2011; Petrie, 2013; Sprake & Temple, 2016; Te Ava & Rubie-Davies, 2016).

4.5.2 Physical education for physical health

Health is a word that is inevitably associated with peoples' well-being and lifestyles. Mong and Standal (2019) argue that different perspectives on health in physical education result in varied teaching practices and outcomes. For example, the perspective of biomedical science stresses

physical health in physical education. So indicators such as the time, intensity of a physical movement, and body weight are often used to measure and define whether an activity or a person can meet health standards. In this perspective, health can refer to the behaviour that supports and helps people to keep the body healthy to prevent sickness and infection (Banville et al., 2020). However, socially-critical perspectives connect people's health with broader factors such as politics, the economy, education, class, environment, gender, and so on. Socially-critical perspectives highlight educational and theoretical aspects of physical education, and appeal for social equality and justice (Mong & Standal, 2019; Philpot, 2015; Wright, 2004)

Some studies have investigated students' perspectives on the connection between physical education and health (Banville et al., 2017; Boyraz et al., 2015; Burrows, 2008). Boyraz et al. (2015) reported that 281 Turkish students in sixth grade considered physical education to be important because it could make a difference to their physical health. These students urged that more time should be allotted to physical education.

Two studies conducted in New Zealand suggest that the concept of health promoted in HPE in the NZC is inconsistent with students' perceptions. Banville et al. (2017) found that some of the 50 New Zealand students (aged 9-10) related health to hygiene, healthy diet, less screen time, and being active. Burrows (2008) surveyed 795 students in two primary and two secondary schools in New Zealand. She argued that the concepts of eating healthy food and doing exercise had proliferated both in and outside the schools. It seemed that students studied linked knowledge of health to body mass and weight, and tried to eat well and have regular exercise to maintain their physical health (Burrows, 2008).

Burrows et al. (2009) wondered whether some HPE programmes limited students' understanding of health because these programmes used time, quantity of exercise, and amounts of food as a measurement to encourage students to achieve a healthy lifestyle. The concepts and behaviour of health seem to be viewed by students as more of "a corporeal matter" (Burrows et al., 2009, p. 157) from a biomedical perspective rather than socially-critical perspectives.

4.5.3 Physical education for fun and enjoyment

In addition to affecting students' physical health, physical education can affect students' mental health and interest in other learning areas. Fun and enjoyment are two main themes arising from the analysis of students' perspectives on physical education. Ross (2008) suggested that the value of physical education is in the embodied experience of pleasure and enjoyment. He argued that the distinctive significance of physical education in schools is to create opportunities for students to have fun in their lives (Ross, 2008).

Students' fun and enjoyment in physical education are closely associated with several factors, for example, skill level, friends, and family (Bernstein et al., 2011; Cairney et al., 2012; Parker et al., 2018; Slade, 2011). Bernstein et al. (2011) examined middle school students' attitudes towards competitive activities in physical education. Their results showed that students' skill levels influence their attitudes and enjoyment. Similarly, Cairney et al. (2012) investigated the relationship between perceived competence and enjoyment in physical education in 2,263 students aged 9 to 10 in southern Ontario, Canada. Their findings showed that students with lower athletic capability had lower enjoyment. It appears that physically skilled students enjoy physical education more and gain greater confidence from their participation. This finding resonates with

Kirk's (2005) views that students' physical ability is closely associated with fun and enjoyment of physical education in school.

Fun and enjoyment are linked to friends and family. Students are eager to play games with their friends in physical education (Parker et al., 2018; Slade, 2011). Parker et al. (2018) employed a participatory research method of 'drawing and writing' (n=135) and focus group interviews (n=34) to explore students' (aged 8-11) understanding of physical education. The students' productions showed that physical education is not a boring subject. Some older students said that structured lessons and skills practice about sport techniques in physical education gave them confidence and enjoyment in community sports and weekend games. Some students' drawing and writing indicated that they enjoyed various physical activities, games, and sports in physical education with their friends and families, not only because of the attractiveness of a specific sport and game, but also for their social and affective needs (MacPhail, 2011).

Games in physical education seem a valuable approach to create fun for students' learning. In a study that explored students' attitudes towards physical education, Dismore and Bailey (2011) reported that fun was a critical element for enjoyment among students 7 to 11 years old. For students 11 to 14 years old, enjoyment was related to learning challenges, while fun was associated with games. Slade (2011) asserted that games in physical education are a valuable medium for students to learn, refine, and improve their fundamental motor skills; for example, students can have fun with friends in a basketball game while running, throwing, and jumping. Petrie and Clarkin-Phillips (2018) maintained that physical education should focus on games, and more time

should be given to games because they are pleasurable, self-organised, and self-initiated. Games seemingly can offer students chances to explore the real world with fun.

Due to its perceived nature as a fun subject, some schools have integrated physical education with other learning areas. Slade (2013) and Phillips and Marttinen (2013) found that physical education can enhance its educational and academic values when it combines with other subjects such as mathematics. Slade (2013) reported that two schools had combined two or more subjects with physical education and succeeded in addressing students' lack of interest, attentiveness, and motivation towards other learning areas. Phillips and Marttinen (2013) illustrated how to use mathematical ideas to measure heartbeats in a physical education programme to create motivation and fun among students. These examples indicate that integrating physical education with other learning areas may increase students' interest in academic success.

Fun and enjoyment in physical education give students additional confidence and motivation, encouraging their lifelong participation in physical activity. When physical education is integrated with other learning areas, it may improve academic performance indirectly (Beni et al., 2017; Kirk, 2005).

4.5.4 Perceived factors that influence students' learning

Physical education is a unique subject due to its practical nature and its enactment in a space beyond the normal desks and chairs of a classroom. Previous studies have identified several factors that influence students' participation and experiences in physical education (Parker et al., 2018; Pawlowski et al., 2018; Powell et al., 2019).

Teachers' pedagogy can influence students' learning in physical education (Parker et al., 2018; Powell et al., 2019). For example, a study by Parker et al. (2018) using students' drawings as data showed that teachers remained in charge of physical education in terms of pedagogy, and there was no room for students' self-learning. In addition, some students had to sit out for a whole physical education lesson if they behaved unacceptably (Parker et al., 2018).

In a study exploring 138 students' perspectives on physical activity in physical education, Powell et al. (2019) reported that traditional teacher-directed approaches have impacted on students' learning. This can be seen in the two students' comments:

In gymnastics we are not very active because the teacher demonstrates it ... [and] we have to wait in a queue for our turn quite a bit. (p. 938)

Sometimes the teacher is demonstrating and they do it for ages ... and then I say to myself, you are taking for ages, if you don't realise that and you are getting me bored (p. 938)

As well as teachers' pedagogy, a lack of facilities is a factor influencing students' learning in physical education (Pawlowski et al., 2018; Powell et al., 2019). Powell et al. (2019) pointed out that students have to queue for a long time to have a chance to practise if there are limited space and equipment available in their physical education lessons. Ovens (2008) urged that it is time to think about facilities and teaching space for quality HPE in New Zealand. He suggested that the baseline for new facilities is to meet the demands of students and teachers. He proposed that schools need to consider: What activity is expected? What kind of activity will the space enable?

Will the aging facilities meet students' needs and the requirements of the NZC? Teachers' pedagogy and the lack of facilities directly influence students' experiences in physical education.

In addition, Pawlowski et al. (2018) investigated students' play during recess time in both New Zealand and Denmark. They found that 12 socio-ecological factors²⁴ influencing students' play were inter-connected, such as gender, physical ability, body identity, school culture, peers, and weather. They grouped these factors into personal, social, cultural, internal, and external environmental factors. They concluded that it was difficult to ascertain which of the factors was most influential.

4.5.5 Unpleasant experiences in physical education

Several studies have suggested that schools and teachers need to consider the inclusion of culturally diverse activities in physical education (Dyson, 1995; Petrie, 2013; Te Ava & Rubie-Davies, 2016). A study examined Years 9 and 10 students' attitudes toward traditionally cultural activities in physical education in the Cook Islands, and showed that they enjoyed culturally physical activities and their families valued these activities (Te Ava & Rubie-Davies, 2016). The students said that this type of physical education programme offers them opportunities to learn more about their traditions and language. Petrie (2013) interviewed a primary school teacher who conveyed students' views about being active through art productions. The teacher proposed that teachers should broaden the concept of being active. While physical education teaches students about being physically active, it is also a means for teaching interpersonal skills, cultural movement, and critical thinking strategies.

²⁴ The 12 factors were: "bodily self-esteem and ability; gender; gendered school culture; peer influence; conflicts and exclusion; space and place experiences; lack of play facilities; outdoor play policy; use of electronic devices; recess duration; organised activities; and weather" (Pawlowski et al., 2018, p. 40).

However, there can be some unpleasant experiences for students in physical education. The quote below highlights one secondary school student's feelings about sports in the school physical education programme.

Now I am in secondary school, this sports issue is even worse. I am in a private school and here it seems we are now expected to love talking about rugby or golf. Well, whoopee doo ... I would rather watch paint dry. Quite literally, the thought of doing games really makes me feel ill, I can't even think about sleeping at night when I have games the next day. I can't concentrate on the lessons as my worst nightmare is slowly approaching. When it is time for the lesson, I genuinely do feel sick and have a headache from all the worrying. Of course I am told that I will be able to run it off or just [be] ignored completely. It is my worst time at school and I have done all I can to avoid it. (Jackson, 2002, p. 130)

Similarly, Everley and Everley (2019) reported a student's exclusion from a football game in physical education. The 10-year-old student said: "... I don't play with the boys in my class ... I can't get the ball and it gets all stressy ..." (p. 2038). These two students' experiences indicated that teachers need to understand students' diversity in physical ability and recognise that not all students are interested in doing competitive sports as physical education.

Wiltshire et al. (2017) criticised some schools' physical education programmes because they may have caused students' uncomfortable experiences. One female student said that "... I'd rather be anorexic than obese" (p. 553). One male student explained that "... I just swim really slow, like. It's kind of embarrassing at the end when I was, like, on the side and I was the last one. And everyone was looking at me like ..." (p. 556). Another male student remarked:

... I've [even] been embarrassed ... in year 7 when [I] just walk[ed] in ... and it's in this open field or whatever ... and [I was] just thinking 'how am I going to do this without looking a fool?' It's just the fear of just going into a place and not knowing what you're doing. (Wiltshire et al., 2017, p. 557)

In the three students' comments, the stigma of obesity, a performance-oriented environment, and the fear of getting it wrong created a heightened sense of anxiety that impacted negatively on the students' experiences of physical education in the school context.

These students' voices highlight that competitive sports or games may be less suitable for some students than unstructured, informal games (Everley & Everley, 2019). These voices are cause for concern. Teachers must recognise that an unchanging sport-dominated physical education programme can be detrimental to some students and affect their participation in physical education and regular schooling. It appears that an inclusive physical education curriculum underpinned by 'diversities and equity' is more suitable for all (Penney, 2011).

Overall, listening to students' perspectives is likely to enable schools and teachers to offer students better physical educational experiences. The majority of students in the studies mentioned above thought that physical education can support their physical health and create fun and enjoyment. They reported that schools' facilities and teachers' pedagogy influence their experiences in physical education. Most importantly, some students were appealing for an inclusive physical education curriculum. These students' voices have shown that schools and teachers need to listen to and think about students' needs and interests in order to provide them with better learning

experiences in physical education (MacPhail, 2011). To my mind, more research needs to explore the perspectives of students who have negative experiences in physical education.

4.6 Physical education can improve students' holistic development

As outlined above, principals', teachers', and students' perspectives have demonstrated that physical education as a school subject can promote students' holistic development in terms of their interpersonal skills, well-being, and academic achievement.

Interpersonal skills are seldom referred to in the literature on physical education; rather, the words used often are social and emotional learning (Ang & Penney, 2013; Dyson et al., 2021), social and affective domains (Bailey et al., 2009; Casey & Goodyear, 2015), or emotions and social skills (Cañabate et al., 2018). Interpersonal skills comprise the ability to communicate, relate, or connect with others, and are viewed as an essential competency for people's lives (Barakat, 2007; Hayes, 2002). Hayes (2002) described interpersonal skills as defined loosely and used interchangeably with social skills, people skills, or social competence. He pointed out that all skills used in face-to-face communication can be called interpersonal skills (Hayes, 2002). Thus, no matter which of the terms above is used or defined, interpersonal skills can be an umbrella term that embraces all of them, because, according to Hayes (2002), all these terms involve any interactional situations with others.

Research has shown the efficacy of physical education on the development of students' interpersonal skills. Ang and Penney (2013) affirmed physical education's potential to cater to students' social and emotional learning development. Bailey et al. (2009) found that physical education can boost students' learning in the physical, social, affective, and cognitive domains.

Cañabate et al. (2018) used quasi-experimental research to examine social and emotional skills in a physical education programme. They found that students achieved a higher degree of development in social and emotional skills, and showed greater cooperation, inclusion, and positive relationships with peers in a well-designed physical education programme.

However, there have been debates on what type of data and definitions can be viewed as credible or convincing because the social and affective domains overlap to some degree, making it hard to differentiate among them, causing ambiguity (Bailey et al., 2009; Stanford et al., 2006). Morris et al. (2004) and Stanford et al. (2006) suggested a lack of long-term evaluation research on the impact of physical education on students' social development. They questioned the validity and reliability of research connecting physical education with social development, and whether the evaluation research was designed and implemented rigorously and systematically in terms of the sustainability and transferability of the data collected. Bailey (2005) claimed that the majority of findings were from qualitative research and questioned whether anecdotal evidence could be viewed as credible. Moreover, there are unclear mechanisms for determining the certainty of findings, in particular how changes occurred in particular kinds of physical education programmes, and what type of pedagogies and factors stimulate the development and improvement of interpersonal skills (Bailey, 2005; Bailey et al., 2009; Morris et al., 2004).

These questions seem to arise from quantitative researchers' and positivists' perspectives that seek absolute explanations. However, it is necessary to note that qualitative research is typically intended to examine "the pluralization of life worlds" (Flick, 2009, p. 12), which are context-

dependent (Cox et al., 2008), as understanding and applications are learned as localised comprehension and practice (Flick, 2009).

Well-being as a broader concept about health has been used in physical education. Dodge et al. (2012) and Goodman et al. (2018) argued that well-being has been defined broadly, and its definition and composition remain controversial. Two explanations of well-being are ‘hedonism’ and ‘eudemonia’. The advocates of ‘hedonism’, for example Bradburn (1969), have pointed out that well-being has both positive and negative aspects, that is, a constructive or optimistic attitude, and a pessimistic or gloomy attitude. Diener and Suh (1997) added the concept of “life satisfaction” that “refers to a cognitive sense of satisfaction with life” (p. 200). People’s well-being can come from the maximisation of positive affect and cognition, and the minimisation of unhappiness and pain, which is ‘hedonism’ (Disabato et al., 2016; Goodman et al., 2018).

Ryff (1989), a supporter of ‘eudemonia’, identified six factors that influence people’s well-being, namely, “self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth” (p. 1069). The supporters of ‘eudemonia’ pay more attention to the positive functioning of the six factors in Ryff’s (1989) model (Dodge et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2018). ‘Eudemonia’ thus stands for “human flourishing and living up to one’s full potential (i.e., self-actualization)” (Disabato et al., 2016, p. 471).

Although there are debates about how to define, categorise, and measure well-being (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Rahmani et al., 2018), it is commonly understood as a state that is

associated with positive feelings and attitudes within people's physical and psychological sides, such as being happy, healthy, and comfortable, which creates a balanced life (Dodge et al., 2012).

Some studies have examined the link between students' physical and psychological well-being and their academic achievements (Cosgrove et al., 2018; Wittberg et al., 2010; Zach et al., 2017).

Wittberg et al. (2010) found that students' aerobic fitness had a moderate effect on their academic achievements and inferred that sustainable policies and intervention programmes aiming to increase students' aerobic activities may boost students' academic performance. Zach et al. (2017) reviewed research about physical education and academic achievement conducted from 1997 to 2015. They identified three categories of physical education programmes, namely, political, interventionist, and integrative programmes. Of these three categories, the integrative approach showed significant links between physical education and academic performance. Cosgrove et al. (2018) found that physical activities positively influenced academic performance, school attendance, and 'grit' – defined as a "perseverance and passion towards long-term goals" (p. 2). The authors concluded that physical education can create an environment to stimulate students to obtain and apply grit, which can contribute to students' academic achievement.

These positive influences may result from the benefits of physical activities associated with improved functions on the brain, such as attention, retention, and brain volume (Flöel et al., 2010; Jochem et al., 2017; van Dongen et al., 2016). Flöel et al. (2010) examined the relationship between brain function and physical activity. They found that people who do more physical activity will have "better memory functions and higher levels of neurotrophins" (Flöel et al., 2010, p. 2762). Jochem et al. (2017) showed a larger gray matter volume in the cingulate cortex during physical

activities and sports. Flöel et al. (2010) explained that gray matter volume that is in prefrontal and cingulate cortices is involved in improving memory. The increased neurotrophins contribute to the increase in gray matter volume. Greater gray matter volume ameliorates the functions of the two areas and triggers better memory and attention. These findings suggest that physical activity, sport, and physical exercise in physical education have a positive association with brain function such as retention and attention.

Some researchers have questioned the positive relationship between physical education and academic achievement (Dwyer et al., 2001; Martin & Chalmers, 2007). Martin and Chalmers (2007) concluded that physical education could not be recommended as a method to boost students' academic performance, because no statistically significant result in their research showed the link between them. Nevertheless, they did not deny that physical education has a small influence on students' academic achievement. Dwyer et al. (2001) endorsed the findings of Martin and Chalmers (2007). They found a low correlation between academic achievement and variables such as physical activities and fitness measurements, including sit-ups, push-ups, and standing long jump. They concluded physical education, at best, has a moderate impact on academic achievement. Due to the limitations of their research, their findings did not validate more significant relations between physical education and academic achievement. Dwyer et al. (2001) conceded that "the inference about a causal pathway is speculative if based on these data" (p. 236). Although these studies showed low correlations between physical education and academic achievement, they did not refute the value of physical education as contributing to students' academic achievements. It would seem that physical education plays an important role in

developing a whole student in terms of students' interpersonal skills, well-being, and academic achievement.

4.7 Perspectives on who should teach primary school physical education

The issue of who should be responsible for teaching physical education in primary schools – classroom teachers, physical education specialists, or outside providers – has been a heated topic. Petrie (2011), Penney et al. (2013), and Petrie et al. (2014) have maintained that this is a tricky issue which cannot be agreed upon currently and will be debated in the future. In this final section, I examine differing views on this issue.

4.7.1 Classroom teachers

Classroom teachers rather than physical education specialists are traditionally in charge of primary school physical education in many countries, including some states and territories in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012; Gordon et al., 2016). In a study informed by questionnaires with 512 primary schools in Ontario, Canada, Faulkner et al. (2008) found that of the 512 schools, 63 per cent of physical education lessons were taught by classroom teachers.

One of the supporting reasons for classroom teachers to teach physical education is that they have comprehensive knowledge about the learners, context, and pedagogy (Petrie, 2011). Classroom teachers can transfer the pedagogy they use in other subjects into physical education, and connect physical education “with learning opportunities provided in other curriculum areas and with broader school initiatives” (Petrie, 2011, p. 13). They know the strengths and weaknesses of every student in their classrooms. This means that, when designing and implementing a physical

education lesson, classroom teachers can intentionally arrange students into different groups in light of their abilities.

However, the quality of the physical education lessons taught by classroom teachers has been problematic (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012; Morgan & Bourke, 2008; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a; Petrie, 2011). As mentioned earlier, research has shown that many classroom teachers lack content knowledge about physical education (Dyson, 2014; Dyson et al., 2018; Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a; Petrie, 2011; Powell et al., 2019; Tsangaridou, 2012; Ward, 2013). These researchers variously reported the following:

1. Classroom teachers have difficulty in designing, developing, implementing, and assessing physical education lessons (Morgan & Hansen, 2007, 2008a; Petrie, 2011);
2. Classroom teachers lack variety in the content and pedagogy when teaching physical education (Powell et al., 2019);
3. Classroom teachers are often short on confidence, interest, and incentive to teach physical education (Dyson et al., 2018; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a; Petrie, 2011; Powell et al., 2019; Tsangaridou, 2012);
4. Classroom teachers rely heavily on online resources (Petrie, 2012) and outside providers (Dyson et al., 2016; Gordon et al., 2016);
5. Classroom teachers lack effective methods to develop motor skills (Dyson, 2014; Morgan & Hansen, 2007).

Overall, classroom teachers' lack of content and pedagogical knowledge in teaching physical education seems to be a leading concern from these research findings. Strengthening classroom teachers' knowledge and pedagogical skills in the context of physical education appears to be a key consideration for improving the quality of physical education (Chróinín & O'Sullivan, 2016; Linker & Woods, 2018). Pre-service and in-service learning and professional development programmes appear to play an essential role in supporting classroom teachers in teaching physical education.

4.7.2 Physical education specialist teachers

Physical education specialist teachers are not common in primary schools in many countries, including Australia and New Zealand. Lynch (2015) surveyed 138 principals of primary schools in seven regions in Victoria, Australia, and found that only 52 out of 138 (37.7%) primary schools employed specialists to teach HPE.

Physical education specialist teachers are assumed to have an in-depth understanding of the significance of physical education. Xiang et al. (2002) found that physical education specialist teachers have diverse interpretations of physical education. They regarded physical education as an academic subject to cultivate the student's holistic development in terms of (1) improving students' fitness and motor skills; (2) encouraging students to have an active lifestyle; (3) developing students' personal and social skills; and (4) bringing students enjoyment.

Physical education specialist teachers may be better than classroom teachers at developing students' motor skills. Constantinides et al. (2013) examined whether there were any differences in the effectiveness of teaching physical education between certified physical education specialist

teachers (n=10) and generic classroom teachers (n=10). These teachers (n=20) were asked to teach two lessons about developing motor skills. The physical education specialist teachers grouped students to ensure all students had equal chances to develop motor skills, and offered more appropriate tasks and practices, while classroom teachers only provided non-structured play. The findings showed that physical education specialist teachers could design activities on developing motor skills more effectively than classroom teachers.

However, there are some drawbacks in physical education specialist teachers' teaching. A review of 54 articles about primary school physical education reported that having physical education specialist teachers does not necessarily result in quality physical education (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). Physical education specialist teachers may not be as familiar with the students as the classroom teachers and may not be able to link physical education to other learning areas. Petrie (2011) reported that physical education specialist teachers may have more professional content knowledge, but they may also have a narrow understanding of the school's ethos, context, learning subjects, and learners. DeCorby et al. (2005) urged physical education specialist teachers to better embrace knowledge of gender equality, because they found that physical education specialist teachers had a stereotype about "boys as being aggressive and good at sports and girls as being inherently less skilled and more passive" (p. 212). DeCorby et al. (2005) were concerned that this view may be exacerbated in a physical education lesson taught by physical education specialists.

An additional challenge for physical education specialists in primary school seems to be isolation and a lack of professional development. In an autoethnographic study, Brooks and Dinan-Thompson (2015) reported some issues that physical education specialists faced, such as "isolated

teaching of classes, lack of contact with teachers and other [physical education] specialist teachers” (p. 335), and fewer chances for professional development. These issues can impede the professionalism of physical education specialists.

In summary, research has suggested that physical education specialist teachers in primary schools are most likely to provide a quality physical education lesson, but perhaps only regarding skills learning, because they have more content and pedagogical knowledge about physical education than classroom teachers. In contrast, classroom teachers may have more knowledge of multiple disciplines and the students themselves, which enables them to establish a more inclusive learning environment to cater to every student’s needs.

Physical education specialists may offer an alternative means of delivering quality physical education in primary schools. However, doing so will involve combining inspiration, innovation, responsibility, and sustainability alongside national policy, other professionals, and the public around the social and educational concepts of being prosperous and creative (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009).

4.7.3 Outside providers

Outsourcing is an actual application of outside resources driven by market forces (Liar, 2012; Mol, 2007). The outsourcing of HPE is a contentious topic (Dyson et al., 2011; Dyson et al., 2016; Petrie et al., 2014; Williams et al., 2011; Williams & Macdonald, 2015). In Australia, Morgan and Hansen (2007) found that 88 per cent of teachers said they were keen on the ideas and concepts outside providers used, and saw that as an opportunity to learn. The majority of teachers (93%) thought that outside providers bring additional professional expertise to students. Those teachers

were happy to have outside providers take over physical education, because they personally lacked confidence and knowledge about teaching physical education.

Similarly, in New Zealand, many scholars have reported that teachers rely on outside providers to deliver physical education both in school and after school (Dyson et al., 2018; Dyson et al., 2016; Gordon et al., 2013; Gordon et al., 2016; Powell, 2015). The majority of teachers, in these studies, viewed outside providers as ‘experts’ in physical education and thought that they have knowledge that teachers do not have. The perceived ‘experts’ teach a variety of sports, such as basketball, soccer, touch rugby, swimming, and cricket (Gordon et al., 2013), including knowledge about moving joints and stretching. One teacher studied explained that they personally were not knowledgeable enough to teach this content (Powell, 2015).

Overall, having outside providers deliver physical education seems a good idea in these teachers’ minds. The majority of classroom teachers studied seemed to prefer the outside providers to be in charge of physical education (McIntyre, 2018). A typical attitude was to reflect, “Well, I [am] never a very sporty person and so I struggle with teaching [physical education]” (McIntyre, 2018, p. 23).

However, there are concerns about outside providers (Dyson et al., 2016; Morgan & Hansen, 2007). Dyson et al. (2016) reported that the concerns were around the pedagogy and content used by outside providers. For example, their sessions lacked organisation and structure, with students having to stand in a long queue to hit a ball. Morgan and Hansen (2007) found that 32 per cent of the teachers in their study preferred to teach physical education together with outsider providers,

rather than leaving it to outside providers alone. These teachers believed that together they can offer students better provision because teachers have more knowledge about students than the outside providers. Petrie et al. (2014) warned that the views being delivered in some professional development programmes may affect teachers' views and practice about physical education, because these workshops or professional development are being facilitated by staff from outside organisations rather than from universities or Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ), resulting in ideas and concepts about physical education varying from the NZC (Petrie et al., 2014). It seems that outside providers cannot deliver physical education that meets the requirements stated in the NZC.

4.8 Chapter summary

Principals, teachers, and students, as primary stakeholders, have varying influences on the content or pedagogy of school curricula. Principals are highly influential in schools, allocating teaching hours, providing facilities, and hiring appropriate staff, so their preferences, experience, and beliefs about physical education will affect teachers and students. Teachers as the implementers need to cater to the requirements of the curriculum, students' needs, and schools' values. Students as the key recipients seem to have the least power to make changes, even where they have expressed their views. Thus, it is necessary to listen to and reveal all relevant stakeholders' voices in order to improve teaching and learning in physical education (MacPhail, 2011; Sprake & Temple, 2016).

In the research literature, the majority of the principals studied asserted that physical education can stimulate students' holistic development. However, many factors reported by the principals influence the implementation of quality physical education curricula, including factors such as policy, finances, and teacher education.

Teachers seem to have uncertainty about the definition and scope of physical education. Some teachers regarded physical education as less important than other subjects, but a few teachers recognised the cathartic release available to students through physical education. There are many individual and external factors that influence the teachers' ability to teach physical education, including teachers' content knowledge, facilities, weather, and policies. Teachers seemed to prefer practical professional development programmes over theoretical ones.

Most students considered physical education to be an essential school subject as it can improve their physical health and create fun and enjoyment. They also thought that school facilities and teachers' pedagogy directly influence their experiences in physical education. Competitive sport, body shape, weight, and healthy diet were dominant concepts about physical education expressed by the students; however, they valued an inclusive physical education curriculum that focuses on equity and diversity.

The three key stakeholder groups' perspectives on physical education have shown the important contributions of physical education to students' holistic development in terms of promoting their interpersonal skills, physical and psychological well-being, and academic performance in other learning areas.

Determining who should teach physical education seems to be a continuing question in the literature. Classroom teachers, physical education specialist teachers, and outside providers each have their own advantages and disadvantages. Classroom teachers have a holistic knowledge of

curriculum and pedagogy, but when compared to specialists, they may lack specialised knowledge of physical education. In contrast, physical education specialist teachers and outside providers have greater knowledge of physical education and sport, but outside providers may be short on comprehensive knowledge of curricula, schools, contexts, and learners, and physical education specialist teachers know little about gender equality. The exploration of who should teach primary school physical education is an ongoing debate, unresolved to date.

In the next chapter, I will present my approach to paradigms and methodology, my assumptions about the philosophy of qualitative research, and my interpretation of interpretivism. Then, I outline the research methods, including the methods I used for finding schools and participants, collecting data, analysing data, ensuring research trustworthiness, and dealing with ethical issues.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I first address my approach to paradigms and methodology, alongside my assumptions about the philosophy of qualitative research. I then provide a detailed account of the research methods used, including seeking and selecting participants, the information about the participating schools and participants, data collection, thematic analysis, cross-case analysis and synthesis, research trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

5.2 My proposition about paradigms and methodology

I had no understanding of research paradigms and qualitative methodology before I started my research journey at The University of Auckland. I was influenced by the traditional education assessment systems and research methods of positivism at Beijing Sport University in China. I always tried to find an answer that was deemed the only correct one in any Chinese examination systems. I was taught “docility-utility” (Kirk, 2004, p. 200), which means I needed to not only respect seniority but also obey their suggestions, orders, or opinions, even if I had different ideas or they were wrong. As a 20-year-old and beyond, I was coached by some celebrated soccer coaches from South Korea, Serbia, and Russia. I learned some foreign customs and concepts from them. Those concepts concerned not only football but some beliefs about life, such as equality and challenges, which have influenced how I see and what I think about the world.

Through my experience in military drill, sport, and tertiary education, I have learned that there is no absolute ‘truth’ in the world and everyone has their own understanding. I believe that by

experiencing and observing others' daily activities and talking with them, I can gain my own interpretation of their lives. It is like different philosophies of football between Korea and Japan, as well as the different customs between China and New Zealand. If I had not been to these countries or did not experience local events, I may never know or have considered my own personal interpretation of an event. It is only through life experiences that I have come to accept that people construct knowledge through their experience and social interaction in a specific place or time (Barker et al., 2013; Barker et al., 2015; Palincsar, 1998; Quennerstedt, 2013; Rovegno & Dolly, 2006).

5.2.1 My proposition about paradigms

Paradigms are invented by people (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2013). A paradigm is a collection of shared constructions, assumptions, and beliefs used by a group of academics to determine how they view the phenomena they are studying and what methods they are using to investigate the phenomena (Given, 2008). It shows the researcher's beliefs, principles, and ways of thinking about how they see, interpret, and act in the world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) defined "a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (p. 189), which is made up of four terminologies - ontology, epistemology, methodology, and ethics or axiology. Ontology represents questions about the nature of individual and social reality, and epistemology is about how one can know a reality and the relationship between the researcher and participants (Markula & Silk, 2011). Markula and Silk (2011) proposed that paradigms indicate a direction for researchers, telling them how they might see the world (ontology), and there is diverse discernment "about knowledge and how to gain it" (p. 23) (epistemology). Under the guidance of these two terms, researchers can use morally appropriate methods to obtain knowledge and meaning about the world (methodology and ethics or axiology). Combining the four terms will shape a philosophical position, that is, a

paradigm, that can lead researchers to make appropriate decisions about their research practice (Bateson, 1972).

5.2.2 My proposition about methodology

Methodology can be understood as a series of methods that are systematically used in a specific discipline to justify and explain an event or phenomenon (Soanes & Hawker, 2006). The word ‘methodology’ is a compound of ‘method’ and ‘-ology’. The method represents a way of doing something whereby data can be systematically collected, organised, and analysed, while the ‘-ology’ means a subject, part, or branch of knowledge in a particular discipline or study (Soanes & Hawker, 2006). Incorporating both words into one shows that methodology is a comprehensive research strategy that researchers use to interpret or explain a phenomenon, an incident, or an event, which makes a clear connection with the theoretical framework of a study (Mutch, 2013).

It is hard to provide a definitive explanation of what methodology constitutes in the theoretical frameworks of social sciences. Clough and Nutbrown (2012) believed that methodology shows “how research questions are articulated with questions asked ...” and “its effect is a claim about significance” (p. 36). Miles and Huberman (1994) claimed that methodology offers readers more details about the research process; thus, it reinforces researchers’ “confidence to a more significant plane and provides a more certain base (though not an absolute one) for action” (p. 3). Schensul (2008) asserted that research methodology contains “the assumptions, postulates, rules, and methods-the blueprint or roadmap-that researchers employ to render their work open to analysis, critique, replication, repetition, and/or adaptation and to choose research methods” (p. 517). Philosophically, a methodology needs to align with the researcher’s ontology and epistemology.

5.3 My assumptions about the philosophy of qualitative research

5.3.1 My assumption about ‘philosophy’

The term ‘philosophy’ has been used in a range of meanings; for example, ‘the philosophy of our company is ...’ when you are at an exhibition; ‘my coaching philosophy is ...’ as you are listening to a coach’s speech at a preseason meeting in a football club; or ‘our educational philosophy is founded on ...’ when you are in an education Expo. In these scenarios, philosophy has been understood as a solemn thought on a fundamental truth. It can be an idea, a belief, or an attitude towards an event or an incident, especially when a ‘why’ question is asked (Brinkmann, 2017). For instance, in the present study, my supervisors asked me, ‘Why do you want to research teachers’ and students’ perspectives on physical education?’ My answer, ‘Because I believe that students will not only gain fitness and physical health, but also they can improve their affective and social skills in physical education’, immediately went to a level of philosophical reflection, because the answer embodied my beliefs, assumptions, or presumptions about physical education. Thus, “anyone who is lovingly (*philo*) interested in the process of developing fundamental knowledge (*sophia*) can be considered a philosopher” (Brinkmann, 2017, p. 2).

‘Philosophy’ came from the Greek words *philo* and *sophia*. The former means *love* and the latter means *knowledge*, symbolising *the love of knowledge* (Brinkmann, 2017). Pierre Hadot (1995) argued that, historically, philosophy was not the theoretical discipline seen in universities or research institutes today, but rather a form of life that was counted as a self-established *paideia* (education or enlightenment). Critchley (2008) believes that philosophy is attached to an awareness of human beings’ limits, raising questions about whether “meaning [is] something we find in our empirical materials or something we make? Are we primarily explorers of meaning or

creators of meaning?” (Brinkmann, 2017, p. 3). In my opinion, the answer to these questions is that meaning or knowledge is created or made by ourselves, which “is theory dependent or, in other terms, value-laden” (Macdonald et al., 2002, p, 140) and not free of values. People “are guided by highly abstract principles” (Bateson, 1972, p. 326), beliefs, and values. These principles, beliefs, and values lead us to see, interpret, and act in our world. Thus, philosophy as a kind of meaning and knowledge is a type of application of knowledge in our daily lives, that is, “a systematic inquiry into the foundations of ethics, politics, aesthetics, and human knowledge” (Brinkmann, 2017, p. 4).

5.3.2 My interpretation of qualitative research

Qualitative research became popular in the 1960s in order to differentiate itself from the long-standing dominant quantitative research approach (Hammersley, 2013). Jacob (1987) contended that the limitations of certainty about quantitative research had become apparent in the literature, and researchers regarded qualitative research as an alternative research approach to positivism. Thus, some academics began to argue for qualitative research as a rigorous and acceptable form of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Hammersley, 2013).

Hammersley (2013) asserted that qualitative research is a type of social inquiry to investigate and analyse a small number of naturally occurring cases. It can offer an adaptable research design that is data-driven and emphasises the central character of subjectivity in the research activities. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) emphasised the term ‘qualitative’ by giving prominence to “the qualities of entities” (p. 17), and explained that qualitative research highlights “the socially constructed nature of reality [and] the intimate relationship” (p. 17) between the researcher and participants. Such research establishes inquiry through situational factors and stresses “the value-laden nature of

inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 17), seeking answers about “how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 17).

Many researchers have proposed that the particular value of qualitative study is that it can be conducted in a ‘real’ world context, rather than in a supposedly neutral laboratory. It allows participants to be observed and interviewed in an informal or natural environment, and to speak using their own language, rather than answering questions entirely structured by the researchers (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Galasiński & Kozłowska, 2010; Hammersley, 2013; Jacob, 1987). Accordingly, it can pay attention to the context, culture, and individual life environment in a way that quantitative research cannot (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hammersley, 2013), so that its findings come from analysing verbal or pictorial materials rather than using statistical methods (Hammersley, 2013). Thus, qualitative research can offer a fuller and more colourful understanding of the issues and events in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Jacob, 1987).

Overall, qualitative research is social inquiry that is guided by a particular theoretical framework through a situated, socially constructed activity to understand the nature of a reality, the qualities of entities, and the situational constraints (what qualitative research is). It is value-laden (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hammersley, 2013) and is conducted in a naturalistic setting to explore how the social experience of an individual or a group of people is brought into existence and furnished with meanings (where it will happen and what it will research). It uses a series of interpretative and situational practices, such as conversation and participatory activities, with a data-driven, adaptable research design, trying to build an intimate relationship with participants (researchers’ role) to collect evidence from sources such as field notes, interviews, photographs, recordings,

memos, and the researchers' reflexivity (the types of data that the researcher will collect and their sources). It mainly utilises inductive logic to code, seek patterns and themes to represent participants' voices, and understand their multiple, subjective worlds and lives (data analysis and representation).

Qualitative research is thus value- or theory-laden (*ontology*), using a flexible research design and intimate relationships (*epistemology*) to see and interpret the subjective, multiple, and various human experiences and meanings in day-to-day life. Multiple research methods are systematically designed to ensure the validity and reliability of the research process and findings, which address the research's trustworthiness (*methodology*). One of the essential elements of qualitative research is to maintain and deal with the relationships with participants, their cultures, customs, traditions, and human rights in relation to the researcher's own culture (*ethics*).

5.4 My understanding of interpretivism

Based on my experiences, I believe that people construct knowledge and 'multi-truth'. Therefore, my thesis is based on a "relativist ontology" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 191) and "subjective epistemology" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 37), searching for "explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28), trying to investigate the internal life-worlds of others using an interpretive paradigm (Pope, 2006).

Interpretivism is a paradigm for understanding social phenomena and the meanings of those phenomena (Elliot et al., 2016). The term 'interpretive paradigm' alludes to a group of academics or researchers who have their own beliefs about "the interpretation and understanding of human

meaning and action” (Donnelly, 2000, p. 77), and who believe that people have diverse experiences of the same event and thus construct different realities (Macdonald et al., 2002). Thus, the significance of interpretative research is that it seeks to understand the distinct actions and meanings people create in a specific circumstance (Pope, 2006; Sparkes, 1992).

Interpretive research aims to investigate people’s subjective experience or interpretation of an incident, involvement, event, or occurrence (Tinning & Fitzpatrick, 2012), and tries to understand the meanings people construct in everyday life. Pope (2006) asserted that “interpretive philosophy is founded on the belief that science is subjective and therefore permits alternative models of reality” (p. 22). Researchers and participants in interpretive research often create conversations and relationships. Within the shared relationship, they co-construct the significance of the research. Thus, interpretive research is subjective and interactive.

An influential sociologist in the history of interpretivism was Max Weber (Donnelly, 2000; Elliot et al., 2016). Weberian sociology, including “symbolic interactionism, dramaturgy, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and existential sociology” (Adler et al., 1987, p. 217), constituted interpretive sociology. Donnelly (2000) pointed out that Weber’s sociology aimed to reach ‘verstehen’ (an interpretive understanding) of a human action that is subjective and meaningful. Smith (1987) stressed that a completely objective reality is unable to be reached because reality is constructed differently by each individual. Thus, interpretive sociologists are concerned with a social reality that is not a set of incidents individuals face, but a reality that is built and created by individuals.

The interpretive paradigm has some merits. Sparkes (1992) advised three justifications for using it. Firstly, the interpretive paradigm is an all-embracing research paradigm. Smith (1987) claimed that interpretative research was variegated and could embrace diverse theories. Tinning and Fitzpatrick (2012) pointed out that the interpretive paradigm derives from different ontologies, and shares some similar epistemologies and methodologies with other paradigms such as critical research. Macdonald et al. (2002) asserted that an interpretive paradigm can embrace “a number of epistemologies (e.g., constructionist, subjectivist), methodologies (e.g., ethnography, life history, action research), and other theoretical perspectives (e.g., feminist, critical)” (p. 138). Therefore, the interpretive paradigm is an inclusive paradigm.

Secondly, the interpretive paradigm concentrates on people’s meanings (Donnelly, 2000; Sparkes, 1992). Researchers guided by the interpretive paradigm can focus on shared interests and intentions of both researchers and participants. Through experiencing participants’ daily activities and interviewing and observing them, researchers can understand the meanings participants have constructed (Sparkes, 1992). The interpretive research is thus able to answer questions, such as what happens in a specific location at a particular time, and how and why those events occur (Macdonald et al., 2002).

Thirdly, the interpretive paradigm advocates “the notion of multiple truths” (Macdonald et al., 2002, p. 140). The attribute of multiple truths allows researchers to understand and capture people’s different experiences through thick descriptive data (Woods & Graber, 2017). Therefore, the interpretive paradigm is suitable for investigating issues such as “how teaching and learning are perceived or experienced, how the curriculum is interpreted and implemented, how policy is

enacted, how settings are organised, [and] how subcultures are created or cultivated” (Pope, 2006, p. 30).

On the other hand, the interpretive paradigm has incurred some criticism. For example, it puts a strong emphasis on agency and relativist ontologically (Donnelly, 2000). Questions such as power and changes in the structure of society are often ignored (Macdonald et al., 2002). In addition, findings or truths that interpretive research uncovers cannot be easily replicated, because of multiple epistemologies in the interpretation and findings. Once space, time, and researcher personnel have changed, the findings may alter accordingly (Macdonald et al., 2002). Last but not least, some positivists criticise the interpretative paradigm, arguing that it is too subjective to reflect and express an objective world adequately, because the data collected depend mainly on interviews and observations, and are analysed by the researchers (Pope, 2006).

However, Sparkes (1992) concluded that facts, knowledge, and constructions are value-laden and variegated, and any ‘reality’ is only able to be seen from a value lens. The attributes of interpretivism – its inclusiveness, human orientation, anti-positivism, multi-truth, various research methods, and being co-constructed by researchers and participants (Pope, 2006; Smith, 1987; Sparkes, 1992) – determine that interpretivism is an ‘all-in’ paradigm for investigating human actions and meanings through lived experience. Due to these attributes, I was inclined to use interpretivism to guide me to see the world and understand the meanings of the realities we create.

5.5 Research methods

I utilised a qualitative case study design (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Stake, 1995, 2005, 2006) and recruited four public primary schools, including as participants six principals, eight

classroom teachers, and 24 students who were in Years five and six. All data were obtained using the following methods: semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Gubrium et al., 2012; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Markula & Silk, 2011; Mutch, 2013); focus group interviews with photo-elicitation²⁵ (photo prompting) (Azzarito & Kirk, 2013; Katzew & Azzarito, 2013; Markula & Silk, 2011; Mills, 2014; Mutch, 2013; Pope, 2013); document analysis (Coffey, 2014; Simons, 2009); non-participant observation (Emerson et al., 2011; Gambold, 2010; Marvasti, 2014); class videos; and other sources such as emails used for communicating with the participants.

I completed 22 interviews, filmed 16 physical education lessons, took many photos, and collected participating students' photos. I analysed school documents, including the school's plan, flyers, and handbooks, to gain a holistic understanding of the context (Coffey, 2014). I spent six to ten weeks visiting each school. At each school, I individually interviewed at least one principal and two classroom teachers using semi-structured interviews. I observed and filmed four physical education lessons taught by two participating teachers at each school. I interviewed two groups of three students using focus group interviews with photo-elicitation at each school. After I transcribed the interviews, I saved the transcripts, and analysed them using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun et al., 2019; Miles et al., 2014; Mutch, 2013) and the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006).

5.5.1 Seeking and selecting participants

I used purposive sampling, including maximum variation purposive sampling (Palys, 2008; Patton, 2002, 2015) and snowball sampling (Mack et al., 2005; Patton, 2002, 2015), to recruit a total of

²⁵ Photo-elicitation is a type of visual method that is used to understand and interpret photos in a research interview. It aims to generate data, ideas, and knowledge in a verbal discussion about photos, because photos can evoke deeper human consciousness, such as emotions and memories (Glaw et al., 2017; Harper, 2002).

six principals, eight classroom teachers, and 24 students from four primary schools in the Waikato District of New Zealand. All names used in this research, including schools' and participants' names, were pseudonyms, for privacy reasons.

5.5.1.1. Maximum variation purposive sampling

Purposive sampling in qualitative research is used for identifying and selecting cases containing rich information (Palys, 2008; Patton, 2002, 2015). Patton (2002) believed that “the logic and power of probability sampling” (p. 46) comes from the purpose of the study, and “the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting *information-rich cases* for in-depth study” (Patton, 2015, p. 264). My research supposed that physical education plays an essential role in students' holistic development, and I needed to investigate stakeholders from schools with different locations and decile levels²⁶. I chose maximum variation purposive sampling to identify four schools, because that approach aims to maximise the use of limited resources to select cases relevant to a phenomenon, which can extend to a broader spectrum of perspectives and positions, and offer as much insight as possible (Palys, 2008; Patton, 2002, 2015).

5.5.1.2. Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is a type of purposive sampling strategy, where participants refer the researcher to other potential participants (Mack et al., 2005; Patton, 2002, 2015). In my study, the selected four school principals helped me find eight teachers, and then the teachers helped me find 24 students from their classes regardless of whether the students liked physical education or not. In each school, the two teachers helped me recruit three boys and three girls. The purpose of using

²⁶ The deciles are grades used by the New Zealand Ministry of Education to determine how much funding for schools. The schools are ranked between 1 and 10. The lower a school's decile, the more funding it is granted. A school's decile is measured by socio-economic statistics of the school zone but not by the quality and performance of education in the school.

snowball sampling was that principals and teachers are gatekeepers of the schools and classrooms which were not otherwise accessible to me, and they knew more about their organisations than I did (Mack et al., 2005; Patton, 2002, 2015).

5.5.2 Participating schools

In 2018, I visited the selected four schools. These were full primary schools (from Years 1 to 8) across the Waikato District of New Zealand (**Table 3**). Three of the schools were in Hamilton, the largest inland city in New Zealand, with 169,500 people (Hamilton i-SITE Visitor Information Centre, 2020), while Blue Sea School was in a small Waikato town. Of the four schools, three had a decile rating below five. The lowest decile rating was three, while the highest was seven. Two schools were semi-rural schools, and the other two were a rural school and an urban school.

5.5.2.1. Brook School

Brook School is on the north side of Hamilton. The school concentrates on families, has generational relationships with its community, and offers all learners a physically and emotionally safe environment. It is a member of a community of learning (COL) | Kāhui Ako, meaning a group of educational staff from various schools, including preschools, primary and secondary schools in their community, work collaboratively to help students achieve academic success.

Brook School has particular values and curricular expectations. The school's values are referred to as the '3Bs'; that is, students' behaviour of respect, positivity, and active engagement in learning is encouraged (see photos in **Appendix 15**). The learning and teaching activities are based on agency, efficacy, and digital technology, and focus on the teaching of thinking. Students are expected to be architects of self-learning. The school curriculum adopts the NZC (Ministry of

Education, 2007), which focuses on students, cares for success, and expects students to become confident thinkers and leaders with good communication skills in the future (see photos in **Appendix 15**).

Table 3.

Participating Schools' Information

School Name	Authority	Decile in 2018	Roll	Location	School Type	Ethnic Composition
Brook School	State	3	231-232; normally 240	Semi- rural	Full primary Years 1-8	Pākehā 50%; Māori 49%; others 1%
Meadow Farm School	State	7	217	Semi- rural	Full primary Years 1-8	Pākehā 78%; Māori 14%; others 8%
Blue Sea School	State- integrated	4	60	Urban	Full Primary Years 1-8	Pākehā 72%; Māori 17%; others 11%
Mountainland School	State	4	110; normally 140-150	Rural	Full Primary Years 1-8	Pākehā 76%; Māori 24%

5.5.2.2. Meadow Farm School

Opened in 1916, Meadow Farm School is a rural school, surrounded by arable farms in the northeast area of Hamilton. The school promotes Māori culture and has integrated tikanga Māori

(Māori traditions) into all its learning areas in order to make students aware of tikanga Māori as an essential part of New Zealand culture.

Fostering students' unique abilities is at the core of the school's teaching and learning policy (see photos in **Appendix 16**). The school aims to provide students with a fun learning environment that is student-centred. The school curriculum is based on their '6Cs' that expect students to be confident communicators, thinkers, and contributors who are courageous, creative, critical, caring, curious, and collaborative. In addition, the school has values (see photos in **Appendix 16**) that encourage students to care, respect and think about others, aim high, appreciate differences, be thankful, fair, humble, honest, and sincere.

5.5.2.3. Blue Sea School

Blue Sea School is a small school in a small town near Hamilton. The school has four classrooms. Small as it is, there is a library, a resources room, a playground, a large grass pitch, two Astro turf courts, an equipment shed for physical education and sports, and an administration area (see photos in **Appendix 17**). The school provides quality education based on the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) and aims to meet students' social, emotional, physical, and cultural development needs.

Blue Sea School was established in 1902 and has had a long-standing working relationship with parents and the local Catholic Church, trying to educate students in accordance with its motto, *Semper Fidelis* (see photos in **Appendix 17**), meaning 'ever faithful' or 'ever-loyal' (Dawes, 2010). The school's core values are to be honest, sympathetic, and grateful (see photos in **Appendix 17**), which guide students to combine their faith in Christ with their learning. These values expect students to be ever faithful, lifelong learners and dedicate themselves to others and communities.

In short, the prominent feature of the school is its Catholic character that permeates through its learning programmes and creates a positive culture for learning and teaching in the school and community.

5.5.2.4. Mountainland School

Mountainland School is surrounded by hills and farms in the west of Hamilton (see photos in **Appendix 18**). The school's curriculum is based on the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) and its associated teaching and learning beliefs. Using a student-centred teaching and learning pedagogy, the school creates a constructive and inclusive culture with high expectations, encouraging students to have responsibility for their success both in and out of school.

Mountainland School's vision is to 'Expand the Hearts and Minds' of students, expecting students to be confident, connected lifelong learners who will be actively involved in their community and social life. The vision consists of their '3Rs' – resilience, responsibility, and relationships – guiding students, teachers, and other staff at the school to study, work, and live harmoniously with others in their community. Teachers and staff are encouraged to be collaborative and connected to students' broader community in order to facilitate teaching and learning. They need to listen to students' voices, encourage students to learn from peers, help students make emotional, social, and environmental interconnections with others, and create an environment where students can learn the skills of collaboration.

5.5.3 Participants

5.5.3.1. Participating principals

I interviewed six primary school principals (**Table 4**). The average time they had worked in the field of education was approximately 22.5 years. Every principal had at least 10 years' experience in teaching at different levels in schools in New Zealand and other countries.

Table 4.

Participating Principals' Information

Name	Gender	School Name	Experience in Teaching	Teaching Experience
Ace	Male	Brook School	26 years	Many schools in New Zealand, Australia, and Asia
Blas	Male	Brook School	10 years	Five schools in New Zealand and several schools in London
Dash	Male	Meadow Farm School	12 years	Four schools in New Zealand
Hart	Male	Blue Sea School	36 years	Many schools in New Zealand and overseas schools
Hope	Female	Mountainland School	24 years	Three schools in New Zealand and London
Gus	Male	Mountainland School	27 years	Three schools in New Zealand, including two schools in Auckland

5.5.3.2. Participating teachers

I interviewed eight teachers. At each school, I interviewed two teachers who were teaching at Year five or Year six (**Table 5**). The average time they had worked as a teacher was approximately 12.5 years.

Table 5.

Participating Teachers' Information

Name	Gender	School Name	Teaching Experience	Working Experience
Kaden	Male	Brook School	19 years	5 schools
Tara	Female	Brook School	2 years (provisionally registered teacher)	2 primary schools
Hank	Male	Meadow Farm School	15 years	Unknown
Tasha	Female	Meadow Farm School	6 months (provisionally registered teacher)	Unknown
Kana	Female	Blue Sea School	5 months (provisionally registered teacher)	1 school
Hilda	Female	Blue Sea School	32 years	8 schools
Reba	Female	Mountainland School	12 years	Several schools
Yair	Female	Mountainland School	19 years	2 schools

5.5.3.3. Participating students

I interviewed 24 students (12 boys and 12 girls) (**Table 6**). Their average age was 9.9 years. Of them, 19 students identified as New Zealand Pākehā, three students identified as Māori, and two students identified as New Zealand Philippines and New Zealand Indian, respectively.

Table 6.*Participating Students' Information*

Number	Name	Gender	School	Age	Ethnicity
1	Spike	Male	Brook School	9	Pākehā
2	Orion	Male	Ditto	9	Pākehā
3	Kier	Male	Ditto	10	Māori
4	Aroha	Female	Ditto	10	Māori
5	Fallon	Female	Ditto	9	Pākehā
6	Kama	Female	Ditto	10	Māori
7	Sacha	Male	Meadow Farm School	10	Pākehā
8	Kinsley	Male	Ditto	9	Pākehā
9	Ravi	Male	Ditto	9	Pākehā
10	Mabel	Female	Ditto	10	Pākehā
11	May	Female	Ditto	10	Pākehā
12	Dior	Female	Ditto	10	Pākehā
13	Dane	Male	Blue Sea School	11	Philippines
14	Basil	Male	Ditto	11	Pākehā
15	Jett	Male	Ditto	11	Pākehā
16	Macy	Female	Ditto	unknown	Pākehā
17	Faith	Female	Ditto	11	Pākehā
18	Adina	Female	Ditto	10	Indian
19	Oakley	Male	Mountainland School	9	Pākehā
20	Sandro	Male	Ditto	10	Pākehā
21	Aeson	Male	Ditto	9	Pākehā
22	Odina	Female	Ditto	10	Pākehā
23	Becky	Female	Ditto	10	Pākehā
24	Bobbi	Female	Ditto	10	Pākehā

5.5.4 Data collection

I collected evidence from semi-structured interviews, photo-elicitation with focus group interviews, non-participant observation, and documents (Azzarito, 2016; Izumi-Taylor et al., 2016; Penney et al., 2013; Petrie, 2012; Petrie et al., 2014; Powell, 2010).

5.5.4.1. Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews with prepared research questions (see **Appendices 1 to 3**) for interviews with the principals and teachers (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Markula & Silk, 2011; Mutch, 2013), and focus group interviews with photo-elicitation for the students (Bates et al., 2017; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Izumi-Taylor et al., 2016; Lapenta, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011; Mutch, 2013; Powell, 2010).

Before interviewing, I distributed participant information sheets and consent forms to the principals, classroom teachers, and students. Every participant signed and returned the relevant documents (see **Appendices 5 to 13**). In the interviews, I used a voice recorder and my iPhone 7 for recording the conversation (see photos in **Appendix 19**).

I used interviews for collecting data because interviews are a powerful strategy for engaging participants in conversation and are interactive in nature (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Gubrium et al., 2012; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). In interviews, the interchange between people provides a route to communal construction because more than two people are involved (Gubrium et al., 2012). This interactive process is not merely a neutral exchange of information between the interviewer and interviewees but a method of storytelling in which interviewees disclose their life accounts in

response to the interviewer’s inquiries (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In particular, an interview with photo-elicitation can facilitate, bridge, and create more topics in conversation, and photos can lessen the interviewees’ nervousness (Lapenta, 2011), so that, the interviewer can obtain more information about the interviewees.

5.5.4.2. Pilot interviews

I completed four pilot interviews from November 2017 to February 2018 before visiting the four schools and undertaking the formal interviews. Pilot interviews allowed me to gain real experience as an interviewer so that I could refine my research questions, improve my interview skills and language, and check whether my recording devices worked or not (Markula & Silk, 2011; Mutch, 2013).

I recruited two pre-service teachers and two primary school students (**Table 7 & 8**), and completed the four pilot interviews at the University of Waikato and in students’ homes. I transcribed the four interviews and met with my supervisors to discuss interview preparation, implementation, transcription, and data analysis.

Table 7.

Pilot Interviews: Pre-Service Teachers’ Information

Teacher	Gender	Years of University	Teaching Experience
A	Male	Third-year undergraduate	Multi-experience of practicum in HPE
B	Female	Postgraduate	Seven years of teaching in outdoor education

Table 8.

Pilot Interviews: Students' Information

Student	Gender	Years of School	Ethnicity
A	Male	Year 6	New Zealand Chinese
B	Female	Year 4	New Zealand Chinese

5.5.4.3. *Semi-structured interviews*

The aim of interviewing principals and teachers was to elicit their perspectives on physical education in line with my research questions. I expected to have interviews that were neither too loose nor too fixed (Brown & Danaher, 2019; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Markula & Silk, 2011; Mutch, 2013), so I chose to use the semi-structured interview process. I completed 14 semi-structured individual interviews with six principals and eight classroom teachers. Every interview took about 20 to 30 minutes, and was conducted either in a classroom or an office.

5.5.4.4. *Focus group interviews*

I used focus group interviews with photo-elicitation to interview participating students (Bates et al., 2017; Izumi-Taylor et al., 2016; Lapenta, 2011; Powell, 2010). The reason I used the focus group interview with photo-elicitation was because of the age of participating students. They were young and did not know me very well, so I felt that they might be reluctant to answer my research questions in a straight interview context. I thought that photos could be a means to bridge the

conversation and create a more friendly atmosphere in the interviews (Azzarito & Kirk, 2013; Izumi-Taylor et al., 2016; Powell, 2010).

I completed eight focus group interviews accompanied by photo-elicitation with 24 students. I completed two focus group interviews in each school. Each interview involved three students and took about 20 to 30 minutes, either in an agreed classroom or open space next to the school reception. As the researcher, I did not participate in the choice of photos other than to ask the students to take photos, and then to select between five and 10 photos that represented their perspectives to share with me and the others in the focus group interviews.

5.5.4.5. Visual theory

The aim of using visual theory was to deepen my understanding of the participants and their schools (Keats, 2009) and “to amass complexly layered meanings in a format which is both easily accessible and retrievable” (Phoenix, 2010, p. 94). The visual data created in the present research were both researcher- and participant-created (Banks, 2007; Phoenix, 2010). Participating students and I used two types of digital cameras for creating visual data. I used a digital camera (Canon EOS 550D) (see photos in **Appendix 20**) for taking photos and filming videos. I issued a digital camera (Canon IXUS 185) (see photos in **Appendix 20**) to each of the six participating students at each of the schools for taking photos. Both sets of visual data displayed vivid features of schools, events, people, and objects that cannot be described easily in words (Banks, 2007; Phoenix, 2010).

When distributing the cameras, I asked participating students to take photos that were relevant to physical education and physical activities in school and after school over two weeks. When returning them, participating students were asked to choose and save five to 10 photos they most

liked in the cameras. I printed out their photos and gave every photo a number to use in the following focus group interviews. In the focus group interviews, to interpret the meaning of the photos, I asked questions, such as ‘when and where were the photos taken, and what was happening in the photos?’

5.5.4.6. Non-participant observation

I used non-participant observation because I could note the incidents, events, or things that happened naturally during the research process, which sometimes videos and photos might not capture (Emerson et al., 2011; Gambold, 2010; Marvasti, 2014; Williams, 2008). While visiting each school, I sat in an unobtrusive place to film and observe participants’ physical education lessons, where I would not disturb teachers’ teaching and students’ learning. While filming, taking photos, and observing the lessons, I noted down an account of the events or information that could be connected to my research questions.

My observation activity involved two types of actions (Emerson et al., 2011). First, I observed and recorded participants’ daily routines relating to my research questions, for example, how long a physical education lesson took, how many physical education lessons a teacher taught per week, and how teachers taught physical education. Then, I wrote a research journal to record some points of daytime fieldwork (Penney et al., 2013; Petrie, 2012; Petrie et al., 2014). By writing, reviewing, and analysing what I had seen at schools, I gained an in-depth understanding of the schools and participants.

5.5.4.7. Document analysis

Compared with interviews and non-participant observation, document analysis offered less in-depth information about the participants (Coffey, 2014; Simons, 2009). Nevertheless, the potential of document analysis was to provide more details about school contexts and settings that might not have been fully revealed in the interviews and non-participant observation (Simons, 2009).

Before visiting participating schools, I researched each school's website so I could know and understand the context (Penney et al., 2013; Petrie, 2012; Petrie et al., 2014). I collected documents including newsletters, annual reports and actions, school charters, and schools' strategic direction. I saw these documents as a precursor to the interviews and observation (fieldwork), because they offered information and evidence about the culture, issues, and concerns in every school. For example, I knew what happened and what would happen to the school and community in the next several weeks through a newsletter. A photo or an artefact in the newsletter portrayed the learning activity and the culture of the school (Simons, 2009). These documents were used as "a mechanism and vehicle" (Coffey, 2014, p. 367) to help me understand and make sense of schools' and participants' practice and behaviour. Overall, these documents resembled "the sedimentations of social practices" (Coffey, 2014, p. 368), informing me of "how the organisation and social setting operate[d] and how people work[ed] with/in them" (Coffey, 2014, p. 368).

5.5.4.8. Data organisation

I transcribed the interviews verbatim and organised the interview transcripts by using Microsoft Office 2019 to facilitate future data analysis and retrieval. After obtaining the data, I first categorised the data in line with the names of the schools. Then I created sub-file names such as interviews, photos, videos, and documents for further categorising. The data were saved in two

portable hard drives separately, and backed up in the Google Drive of The University of Auckland and shared with my supervisors.

5.5.5 Thematic analysis

I utilised thematic analysis for data analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun et al., 2019; Gavin, 2008; Guest et al., 2012; Lapadat, 2010; Richards, 2015). Thematic analysis is an analytical approach used in social sciences and qualitative research “for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). It can be applied to systematically analyse data such as interview transcripts, observation (field notes), research memos, diaries, documents, photos, drawings, or other digital video and audio files (Gavin, 2008; Lapadat, 2010). Most importantly, its use is a reflexive, recursive process, whereby researchers can repeatedly inspect and review the data to find and categorise codes, sub-themes, topics, or relationships among extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun et al., 2019).

With the guidance of six steps for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Braun et al., 2019) (**Figure 1**), I constructed and completed two cycles of data analysis (Miles et al., 2014). My two cycles of the data analysis process were from deductive logic to inductive logic, that is, from “a type of logic that moves from hypothesis or theory to data collection” (Mutch, 2013, p. 3) to the categories or theories that arise from the data. In the next section, I introduce the six steps in thematic analysis and how I used them, and then present a description of my two cycles of thematic analysis.

5.5.5.1. Six steps in thematic analysis

(1) *Being conversant with the data.* During transcribing, and initial correcting and reading, I attempted to find “meanings and patterns [in] the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). I actively used some codes from the literature and my research questions. Initial codes were noted down in every page’s margin (see photos in **Appendix 21 and Figure 1**).

(2) *Labelling the initial codes.* Being familiar with the data and developing the initial codes, I assigned labels to the codes. These labels represented the content and features of specific data. Simultaneously, some sentences and words were colour-highlighted, and the relevant data were collated (see photos in **Appendix 21 and Figure 1**).

(3) *Looking for themes.* The codes I created in step two were combined, compared, and analysed, and the relevant extracts were collated into broader themes or sub-themes (see photos in **Appendix 21 and Figure 1**).

(4) *Rechecking and reviewing the themes relating to the research questions.* In this stage, I rechecked and reread the interview transcripts, trying to see whether the extracts were suitable for the themes. Then I created a map of the themes relating to the research questions for further theorisation (see photos in **Appendix 21 and Figure 1**).

(5) *Constant redefining and renaming of themes.* This process is also called a reflexive process. After I completed the first draft of my findings, my supervisors read the draft and gave me their

suggestions. Following their suggestions, I revisited and re-sorted themes, sub-themes, and extracts to see whether they fitted coherently (**Figure 1**).

(6) *Constructing the final report*. This step provided the chance for analysing again. In this stage, my supervisors read my draft again and gave me advice, so I went back to any step as needed and compiled “a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data [told]” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).

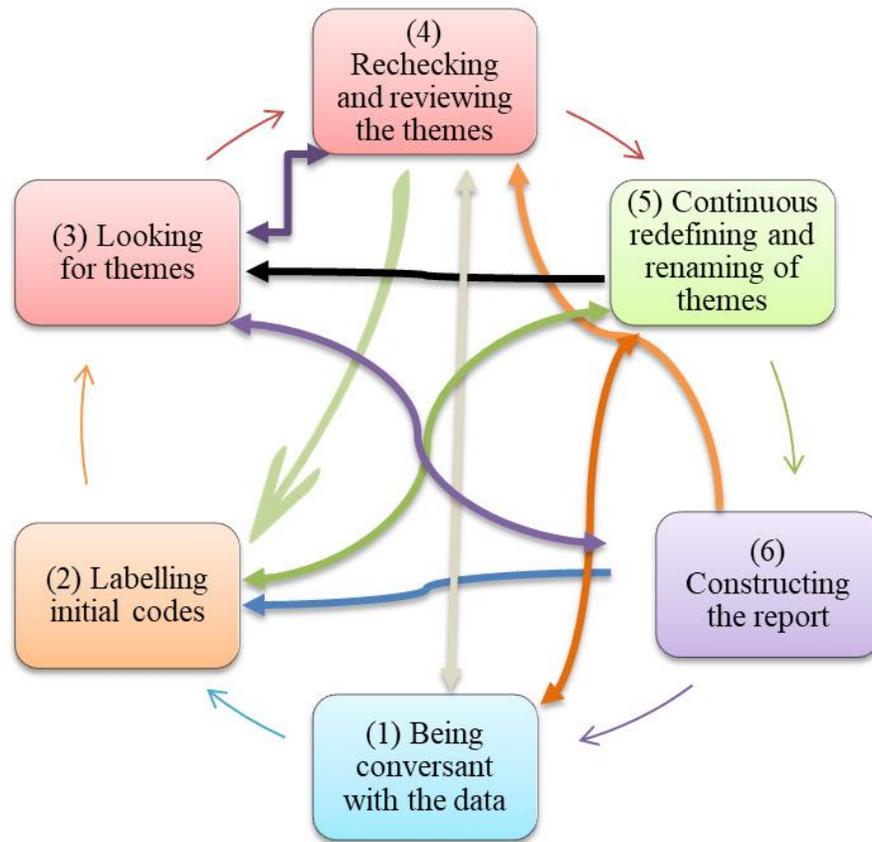
5.5.5.2. Two cycles of thematic analysis

My first cycle of analysis was a deductive analysis up to the fourth step of thematic analysis above. I employed some codes from the literature and my research questions, which provided a “coding reliability” approach in thematic analysis and paid more attention to the significance of “reliability and replicability” (Braun et al., 2019, p. 847).

My second cycle of analysis was an inductive analysis, dubbed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Braun et al., 2019). This coding process was driven by data rather than attempting to lay codes into a verified coding structure or preconceived notions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The purpose of using inductive analysis after the first stage of data analysis was to seek undiscovered codes and themes.

Figure 1.

My Approach to Thematic Analysis



Note. Adapted from “Using thematic analysis in psychology,” by V. Braun and V. Clarke, 2006, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), p. 87.

5.5.6 Cross-case analysis and synthesis

In my thematic analysis, I completed two cycles of data analysis for participants in each group: the principals, teachers, and students. However, in order to strengthen the robustness of my data analysis, and support theoretical generalisation and representation (Mills et al., 2010), I had also done a cross-case analysis using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006).

Glaser and Strauss (1967/2006) asserted that “the purpose of the constant comparative method of joint coding and analysis is to generate theory more systematically” (p. 102). Mills et al. (2010) recommended five reasons for using this method across and within multiple cases: (1) to ensure the correctness of data, (2) to construct a general statement of incidents, (3) to make information about incidents clearer, (4) to try out theory, and (5) to develop theory. Thus, the researcher using the constant comparative method can describe findings from the data with more general ideas, and achieve synthesis and generalisation at different degrees.

There are four stages of analysis in the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006). Stage one is to compare and contrast individual data extracts with every category or code. Stage two is to combine categories or codes in line with their properties. Stage three is to delimit the theory, which means to discard some evidence as they are no longer useful or desirable as stated by research questions and aims. Stage four is to write theory. In this stage, the researcher reorganises and reconstructs the findings into a more robust story that participants and researchers established. In the present study, stage one and two were completed during my first data analysis cycle. In contrast, stage three and four were similar to my second cycle of data analysis, which used inductive logic.

5.5.7 Research trustworthiness

Qualitative research aims to interpret and delineate phenomena, to provide detailed descriptions of participants with ample experience in “the phenomenon of interest” (Vishnevsky & Beanlands, 2004, p. 234), and to initiate theory development (Markula & Silk, 2011; Vishnevsky & Beanlands, 2004). Greene (2007) noted that the interpretations, conclusions, and assertions of a qualitative study always originate from the minds of the researchers and participants, which “are

fundamentally human cognitive processes” (p. 142), rather than being a product of a precisely analytical method or statistical software. The data collection and analysis in qualitative research cannot be done without researchers and participants who build up a collaborative, harmonious relationship to minimise bias and ensure trustworthiness (Kornbluh, 2015; Lincoln, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Markula & Silk, 2011).

Trustworthiness in qualitative research comes through multiple activities occurring across researchers, participants, and outsiders (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lub, 2015). These multiple activities make certain that the research’s quality, credibility, validity, and rigour are seen and understood (Given & Saumure, 2008; Morgan & Ravitch, 2018). I established some parameters in my research, such as audit tracking, peer debriefing, data triangulation, member checking, thick description, and reflexivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Houghton et al., 2013; Kornbluh, 2015; Lincoln, 1995, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Sparkes, 2002). I discuss these parameters in line with three assumptions recommended by Creswell and Miller (2000), namely, researchers’ assumptions, participants’ assumptions, and outsiders’ assumptions.

5.5.7.1. The researcher’s assumptions

The researcher’s assumptions about trustworthiness include data triangulation, reflexivity, and seeking disconfirming information (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I used data triangulation through gathering information from multiple data sources such as photos, videos, documents, and observation to seek “convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126) with the main data resource, that is, interviews (Denzin, 1970; Flick et al., 2004; Marvasti, 2014; Patton, 1999). Five activities I used could be seen as either triangulation or reflexivity.

1. I had regular discussions with my supervisors from start to finish, designed to increase the quality, rigour, credibility, and validity of the research process.
2. I showed my beliefs and bias by presenting my personal experience, the influences on me and self-reflexivity about my thesis (Creswell & Miller, 2000).
3. I took fieldnotes and wrote a research journal to record ideas emerging from the research process.
4. I used iterative processes of data analysis for discovering, analysing, and summarising the codes and themes from multiple data sources.
5. I compared and contrasted my findings with themes from the literature in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives (Carter et al., 2014).

In addition, in the second cycle of inductive data analysis, I did a thorough search for evidence that is either congruous or incompatible, including disconfirming information, to demonstrate participants' realities that are "multiple and complex" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127).

5.5.7.2. Participants' assumptions

Participants' assumptions about trustworthiness in this study involved 'member checking' and cooperation (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lub, 2015). Some critics have argued that 'member checking' is problematic for two reasons (Lub, 2015; Sandelowski, 1993; Smith & McGannon, 2018): (1) generalisation; that is, we cannot anticipate that the comparable agreement and categories are reached if we assume that there is no general veracity of a story; (2) bias; interpreting and understanding people's experiences are invariably based on the researcher's beliefs and assumptions, so it is impossible to increase research rigour through 'member checking'. However,

these criticisms ignore the verisimilitude of qualitative research (Markula & Silk, 2011). Markula and Silk (2011), and Schwandt (2007) explained that verisimilitude in qualitative research means how well a study reflects participants' realities and whether the study can produce resonance with readers who share or do not share the narrated occurrences in the study.

To enhance verisimilitude, I built an intimate relationship with participants, which is the premise of cooperation. I used two strategies to ensure that I could gather authentic input from participants (Kornbluh, 2015). Firstly, I recognised the “power and politics” (Kornbluh, 2015, p. 403) between the interviewer and participants, because the participants might have seen me as an expert and worry that I might regard their opinions or ideas as worthless, causing them to defer to my interpretation. I investigated asymmetric power relationships, such as the differences between educational values and beliefs, socioeconomic status, and the culture of the schools (Kleinman, 2007; Mertens, 2007). Secondly, the participants might not have fully understood the intention of my research, and they might doubt my ability to interpret their voices (Kornbluh, 2015). Before the interviews, the participants read and signed the information sheet and consent form, meaning that they had understood the intention of my research. I emailed the interview transcripts to participating principals and teachers immediately after transcribing was done, and again after data analysis, building their confidence in my ability. The strategies and cooperative relationship enhanced the verisimilitude of this research.

5.5.7.3. Outsiders' assumptions

The audit tracks, peer debriefing, and thick description in this research were outsiders' assumptions about trustworthiness (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Lub, 2015). The participating schools, principals, teachers, and six academics from The University of Auckland (my supervisors) had been

continuously debriefing and overseeing this research from start to finish. My audit tracks included physical and intellectual audit tracks (Carcary, 2009). I used Microsoft Office 2019 and emails to record, store, and retrieve the data and decisions made throughout the research process (physical audit track), which allowed my supervisors and me to repeatedly check the constructs and themes emerging from the data (intellectual audit track) (Houghton et al., 2013).

Table 9 below shows how my supervisors and I identified and categorised themes (intellectual audit track). This activity happened in June 2019, where two of my supervisors gave me their suggestions on initial theme categorisation. The table is a sample of how external auditors helped me to make decisions. I saw this as a process of peer debriefing, that is, my supervisors always challenged and questioned me in any face-to-face meeting or in replies to my emails, making my research more credible (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

In the final report, I used thick description to strengthen credibility and verisimilitude (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This is a combined process of using language, critical reflection, and detailed descriptions of the research phenomena (Houghton et al., 2013). I showed a detailed description of the schools and participants. For example, how much participating principals were interested in physical education, their experiences in teaching, and the schools' values and beliefs. I used these descriptions to create a plausible explanation of participants' perspectives, which further reinforced the trustworthiness of my research.

Table 9.

A Sample of An Intellectual Audit Track for Seeking and Categorising Themes

Data Extracts	Codes	Sub-Themes	Themes I Created	Themes Suggested by Two Supervisors
“I think it is important for kids. It gives <u>a balance</u> to lives. And makes some <u>more learned in classroom work</u> and if they are fit, healthy and happy.”	A balance for school life	Relationships with other subjects	It contributes to well-being, and students become resilient	Holistic development

5.5.8 Ethical considerations

Wallace (2010) suggested that, when doing qualitative research, researchers must address issues of anonymity and confidentiality and use appropriate methods to resolve them in order to protect participants. Anonymity represents whether the data collected and represented can be anonymous or not, while confidentiality is an agreement between the researcher and participants about how to use, preserve, and share data (Sieber & Tolich, 1992).

I could not achieve full anonymity in this research because I had to talk to participants to understand their context, culture, and background (Wallace, 2010). Participating students’ identities could not be kept confidential in a focus group interview as the participating students knew each other. In order to deal with that issue, I used partial anonymity (Ogden, 2008). I made up pseudonyms to replace the schools’ and participants’ real names and blurred the faces on the

photos that the participants had authorised for using in the final presentation. However, there remain possibilities to expose the participants' identities through gender and ethnicity (Ogden, 2008).

I gave the information sheet and consent form to every participant (see **Appendices 5-14**), and asked them to read thoroughly and sign the consent form (see **Appendix 6, 8, 11, & 12**). The consent form stated that if anyone in a focus group interview did not want to share their opinion with others, an individual interview would be provided at an agreed place. In the information sheet and consent form, I promised that the data would be used only for this research, and after being saved for six years, all data would be destroyed. No data would be shared with third parties, apart from my supervisors. I transcribed the audio files and promised that the videotapes would not be published and only used for analysis by my supervisors and me. My research was approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17th October 2017 (Reference number 017800).

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed my assumptions about paradigms and qualitative research, and my understanding of interpretivism. I then described my research methods, including how I identified and selected the schools and participants, information about the schools and participants, data collection, thematic analysis, the constant comparative method, research trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

As a qualitative study, I used semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, visual theory, non-participant observation, and documents to collect data. The use of multiple data sources and

interviews with different participants in this research were the two most significant challenges; nevertheless, these are necessary skills for qualitative researchers. I employed thematic analysis and the constant comparative method to scrutinise the patterns and themes because they are reflexive and recursive. I used document analysis and non-participant observation for triangulation with the interview data collection. The reiteration of reflection, challenges, and interrogation during the research process from me and my six supervisors boosted and ensured the trustworthiness and verisimilitude of the research to a greater extent. Despite the fact that I am Chinese and English is my second language, I coped with the main ethical issues and gained approval from The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee.

In the next Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, I will present and discuss my research findings – (1) holistic development in physical education, (2) we valued the NZC, but we taught physical education in our ways, and (3) perceived barriers and challenges – in terms of participating principals', teachers', and students' perspectives respectively.

CHAPTER SIX: HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

6.1 Introduction

Internationally, primary school principals', classroom teachers', and students' perspectives of physical education have received much attention (Petrie & Griggs, 2018; Rainer et al., 2012; Sprake & Temple, 2016). However, there is a paucity of available research on the three key stakeholder groups' perspectives of physical education in the New Zealand context (Dyson, 2006; Dyson et al., 2018; Pope, 2006). A call for more qualitative research to investigate primary school principals', teachers', and students' voices on physical education has been recommended (Chróinín et al., 2020; Dyson, 1995, 2001; Graham, 1995; Green, 2014; Lynch, 2013, 2015; Lynch & Soukup, 2017; Sprake & Temple, 2016). Thus, the purpose of my study was to investigate primary school principals', teachers', and students' perspectives in terms of how they interpret physical education, how they elucidate the NZC 2007, and their perceived barriers and challenges in providing physical education.

Given my research questions, I present and discuss three themes with various subthemes in Chapter Six, Seven, and Eight. The themes are concerned with the participants' views about the value of physical education, followed by their views on physical education in the NZC, and lastly, their perceived barriers and challenges to teaching and learning in primary school physical education. At the beginning of each of the three chapters, a table shows subthemes that are addressed respectively through principals', teachers', and students' perspectives. All participant quotes are presented verbatim, with the original grammar and emphasis. I used '[physical education]' and

‘[NZC]’ to replace the original ‘PE’, ‘it’, and ‘the curriculum’ in the quotes in order to make the thesis clear and consistent. Then, I present a cross-case analysis and synthesis of participants’ perspectives, followed by discussing their perspectives.

6.2 Expressed value of physical education

In this section, I present the expressed value of physical education in terms of all participants’ perspectives (**Table 10**). Nearly all participants acknowledged the importance of physical education. They believed that physical education can promote students’ holistic development in terms of their interpersonal skills, well-being, and academic performance.

6.2.1 Principals’ perspectives

6.2.1.1. Physical education is for social skills

Four out of six principals emphasised the benefit of physical education on students’ development of social ability. These four principals valued physical education and mentioned that students can gain social skills through learning in it, including teamwork, cooperation, leadership, and communication. Principal Dash from Meadow Farm School talked about his passion and understanding, and why he valued physical education.

I love physical education ... I am not, by any means an athlete, but I do have a joy [and] passion for it. I played rugby since I was four, up to age 13. I played cricket when I grew up, and I had done a few triathlons. I have really been enjoying them.

Table 10.

The Participants' Views on the Value of Physical Education

Participants Themes	Principals' Perspectives	Teachers' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Expressed Value of Physical Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical education is for social skills 2. Resilience and self-worth 3. Physical education has a cathartic effect 4. Physical education can make students active and create a balanced life 5. Physical education as a sport culture can establish a healthy lifestyle 6. Fun with friends and families 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Students learn a lot of social skills" 2. Shaping good character and self-efficacy 3. Physical education as 'a reset button' improves students' attention 4. "I think it has benefits for physical well-being and health" 5. Physical education as games for fun 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It sounds a little bit ordinary, but it can keep you fit and keep weight off 2. "The reality is that there is always having fun" with friends and family

What I love about physical education for children is the way it gets all the ... I do not want to call them self-skills, all the humanistic skills that you develop through sport. So, the idea of compromising with team members, the idea of working to collective goals, the idea of [being] absolutely shattered beyond belief having been still thinking and working towards a strategy, the idea of having to accept someone who is better than you, the idea of being humble when you win, um, and the real camaraderie you will get from playing sport. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

From his early experience, Dash believed that physical education is able to provide positive learning for students. In particular, physical education can create opportunities to develop students' social skills. That belief was shown in the physical education programmes in his school – Meadow Farm School – that used traditional sports and athletic events, such as rugby, cricket, netball, and cross-country, for improving students' social and affective abilities (Opstoel et al., 2020). Students demonstrated their social skills during these sports and events, such as sympathy, encouragement, and love (see photos in **Appendix 22**).

Similar to Dash, two other principals, Ace and Blas from Brook School, expressed a keen interest in physical education. For example, in one interview Ace commented, “Physical education? Oh, I do personally like physical education. I am passionate about physical education”. Blas then added that “I do love physical education. I think it is really important”. They asserted that physical education offers students opportunities to be a team member and to cooperate.

I think physical education is very important. It will bring teamwork, cooperation ... They are all of the very important values, skills, and attitudes to develop. If physical education can be taught appropriately and effectively, it is a great vehicle for our kids. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

Well, there is a benefit of being part of teams and understanding what it is, like to be part of a team and learning rules of a game. (Blas, Deputy Principal, Brook School)

These two principals agreed that physical education can cultivate students' ability to be a team member, and teach students how to collaborate and communicate with others. Likewise, Principal Gus from Mountainland School accentuated the benefit of physical education for developing social skills. Gus and his colleagues had established a party-like, family-oriented event called Tabloids Day (see photos on **Appendix 23**). The Tabloids consisted of approximately ten different physical games, aiming to improve students' social skills. In Gus's view, traditional sport events in Mountainland School's physical education programmes would not create a context for all students to develop social skills. Instead, they adopted a more inclusive physical education programme to promote students' social skills learning.

There are many of those classic sports and events that are fairly traditional such as athletics and cross-country. We will not have many opportunities for entering, socialising and participating in those activities actively together. So, we created Junior Tabloids that is an event in our physical education programme. We think that it is also a good opportunity for our school. We are all involved and it develops leadership, creativity, um, and sportsmanship. (Gus, Principal, Mountainland School)

From these principals' comments, they believed that physical education is a practical subject that can create realistic scenarios to promote students' social skills, such as cooperation, leadership, and communication.

6.2.1.2. Resilience and self-worth

The two principals at Mountainland School viewed physical education as building resilience and self-worth. Principal Hope said that students can learn and develop abilities in how to deal with uncertainties and challenges in physical education. To her, physical education included learning about resilience.

I definitely think physical education both in and outside of classrooms, at and outside of our school. All those things about resilience. You will get resilient when you go out. When things do not go quite as wanted ... you need to refigure out your practice; you need to be resilient in what you are doing.
(Hope, Principal, Mountainland School)

For Hope, resilience was significant for students' future lives because students would experience challenges throughout their lives. However, physical education can offer opportunities for students to develop resilience. Similarly, principal Gus ascribed self-worth to physical education.

Physical education contributes to your self-worth, and that can be an important part of your life, and may also then make massive links to when you are doing your writing and math. It is maybe the time you are struggling; you need to go back to keep trying and practise. (Gus, Principal, Mountainland School)

In the two principals' minds, physical education provides meaningful opportunities for developing students' abilities of resilience and self-worth. Although they used different words, they believed that physical education can develop students' confidence in themselves to recover quickly from difficulties.

6.2.1.3. Physical education has a cathartic effect

Two principals mentioned that physical education has a cathartic effect.

... the children here have a lot of energy, and they need to release it during physical education, sports, and physical activities. So, the children are always engaged in some sort of activities here, which makes some learn more in classroom work. (Hart, Principal, Blue Sea School)

[Physical education] is a good outlet. We've got a lot of high energy boys. They need to be engaged, motivated, and stimulated. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

Principal Ace felt that physical education gives vent to students for releasing their energy. However, Hart thought that it helps release students' energy and helps them learn in classrooms. These two principals' views indicated that physical education can engage students in school activities to release excess energy and to learn more in classroom activities. Physical education seems to help students to be engaged and thus enriches their experiences in schools.

6.2.1.4. Physical education can make students active and create a balanced life

Three principals remarked that physical education can boost students' well-being, such as creating an active and balanced life.

I think physical education contributes to the fact of well-being in terms that, if you are able to be active and enjoy a whole variety of activities, being able to use your body in different experiences and get the pleasure of that, to see that you can accomplish a range of activities. (Gus, Principal, Mountainland School)

It seemed to Gus that the most important aspect of physical education is to provide students with opportunities to actively enjoy and participate in various physical activities to improve their well-being. Similarly, Dash from Meadow Farm School viewed physical education as a lifelong pursuit of being active.

I guess my drive with physical education in primary schools is that lifelong understanding and belief of being active, which is really important for you as a person. It is very important for you mentally. It is also very important for your body ... It just needs to be an activity of some sort, that you get up moving and being active. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

Dash considered physical education to be a school subject that plays an important role in being active in students' lives to improve their physical and mental health. Likewise, Hart, the principal of Blue Sea School, said that "it is important for kids. It gives a balance to lives ... if they are fit, healthy and happy". These three principals' views implied that it is important to be active and involved in different activities, rather than necessarily being proficient in those activities. Physical education seemed to be regarded as a school subject for improving students' well-being and enhancing their tendencies to have balanced lives by being active and involved in many different pursuits.

6.2.1.5. Physical education as a sport culture can establish a healthy lifestyle

Two principals viewed physical education as a sport culture or a local lifestyle beyond a school subject. Blas, the Deputy Principal from Brook School, regarded physical education as a lifestyle of New Zealanders.

Physical education is a big passion of mine as a typical Kiwi, a bloke. I think that playing sport is a really big part in learning skills ... it can have the benefits of being fit, seeing the balance in emotions, feeling what [it] is like to have a healthy, or run a healthy lifestyle. (Blas, Principal, Brook School)

Ace, the principal of Brook School, had a similar opinion about physical education as Blas. In addition, he saw physical education as a method for overcoming a sedentary lifestyle.

So, what I observe will be highly important, something like [physical education] ... whereby we can find a balance ... We can engage kids in a healthy lifestyle ... It is more sedentary in our life now. We are spending more time sitting. Kids spend more time engaged on digital platforms as opposed to playing, constructing, risk-taking with things we did as children. So, I think it is needed to be a change, a conscious change. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

To them, physical education seemed to be a lifestyle involving sports and other physical activities, and it can achieve a healthy way of life for students to succeed in balancing with today's sedentary lifestyle.

6.2.1.6. Fun with friends and families

Two principals commented that physical education is a fun subject. Principal Dash from Meadow Farm School said that "You will get a lot of fun with [physical education]". Principal Gus from Mountainland School firmly believed that physical education "is participation, socialisation, teamwork, [and] having fun". Thus, Gus, as one of the leaders, organised Tabloids Day at Mountainland School. He saw Tabloids as "a festival, a party-like atmosphere where all children participate, and also a number of adults come to watch their children being physically active on the day". To his mind, physical education can create fun and opportunities to bring friends and

families together. It seemed that, in the two principals' understanding, fun with friends and families is a key element to engage students in physical education. Indeed, happiness, enjoyment, and fun have been identified as a primary motivation to stimulate students to achieve their goals in education (Dismore & Bailey, 2011; O'Reilly et al., 2001; Portman, 1995), and the principals are tapping into that potential.

6.2.2 Teachers' perspectives

In this section, I present participating teachers' perspectives in terms of five subthemes: (1) "students learn a lot of social skills"; (2) shaping good character and self-efficacy; (3) physical education as a reset button; (4) "I think it has benefits for physical well-being and health"; and (5) physical education as games for fun.

6.2.2.1. "Students learn a lot of social skills"

Five teachers believed that physical education can improve students' social skills. Kaden, a senior teacher from Brook School, was aware of the value of physical education from his 19 years of teaching in four schools. He said that students will learn social skills when they face winning or losing in sport or games, and creating opportunities for these experiences is the main aim of physical education.

I think when we teach sports and games, students learn a lot of social skills, such as the benefits of cooperation, collaboration, and the nature of competitiveness. And winning is a strong drive for some kids, and coping with the frustration and things associated around when they lose, they do not do those well, or when they cannot do something they want to. So, I think that stuff is a really important part of the physical education programme. (Kaden, Teacher, Brook School)

Two senior teachers from Mountainland School expressed similar opinions. Yair had 19 years of teaching experience. She openly conceded that physical education was not her favourite subject. This was not because she did not value it, but because she did not feel confident teaching it. Despite this, she stated, “I think it is really important to learn team skills, cooperation, [and] fair play ...”. Similarly, Reba explained, “I think it does some skills of being in a game, of being a team, being part of a team, sharing and supporting each other ...”. These two teachers had seen how physical education can improve students’ social skills and team skills over many years of their teaching.

The other two teachers’ perspectives are consistent with the teachers’ opinions above. They described physical education as a subject that can build up students’ interpersonal skills, such as the confidence and ability to work together. Hilda, a senior teacher from Blue Sea School with 32 years of teaching experience, mentioned that physical education helps students learn “teamwork, learning to win, [and] to lose graciously ...”. Her colleague, Kana, noted that “when children are playing together ... there is a social aspect of the games, like cooperation, teamship, and then absolutely children become hopefully more confident ...”. Overall, in these teachers’ understanding and teaching experience, physical education can contribute to students’ social skills development.

6.2.2.2. Shaping good character and self-efficacy

Two teachers, Hank and Tasha in Meadow Farm School, reported that physical education contributes to students’ character and self-efficacy. Hank and Tasha worked, cooperated, and supported each other in a classroom, and they used sports as part of their physical education programme.

Hank, a senior teacher with 15 years experience, commented that, “within the sporting and physical education work, students learn personalities like collaboration, team building, [and] confidence ...”. Tasha, a beginning teacher, felt that physical education creates challenges for students, and increases students’ belief in themselves for self-achievement. She viewed those challenges as “just amazing, you cannot get it from any other subject ... So, that is self-efficacy”. Hank and Tasha maintained that physical education plays an all-important role in shaping students’ character and self-efficacy.

Hank and Tasha also implied that students’ good character and self-efficacy shaped in physical education could be brought into classroom tasks.

Some children who maybe are not confident, or they struggle maybe with learning in the classroom like math and reading ... they hope to give them confidence within the classroom to try those new things, like accept new challenges they do in the sport field and [physical education] lessons ... Like in [physical education] programmes, students learn some good characteristics that they will take into the classroom, so teamwork, team building, and confidence ... Like they are ready to come into the classroom to learn when someone is doing math, or reading, you know, the flow-on with a good and open mindset. (Hank, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

... All of those advantages would come into the classroom if they have a really good [physical education] lesson. So that is why we get there for self-efficacy. From that, children will have a good feeling, a positive feeling about the school. They feel positive and great about themselves when they can kind of show off these skills ... that is a different type of feeling. Children can share their leadership qualities ... they get confidence on the outside, then making them come into the classroom, then do that as well ... (Tasha, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

Both teachers were convinced from their teaching experiences that quality physical education promoted students' performance in other learning areas. They described physical education as a subject that can help students shape good values and principles, and improve their confidence. "They [students] get from their [physical education] so much more than they get from reading and doing their math", Tasha commented. Physical education appears to be a catalyst that can lead to positive changes for students' personal development and self-efficacy (Hamilton et al., 2017; Su et al., 2016).

6.2.2.3. Physical education as 'a reset button' improves students' attention

Two teachers expressed a similar understanding to the principals' perspectives – physical education is viewed as an outlet, which helps students better concentrate on their classroom tasks.

I think physical activity is helpful for all the other learning if children are active, busy, and they have been getting their blood pumping. Being really active helps them to focus and concentrate on other studies. I have got a class [of] mostly boys, and I find that they are much better behaved and more focused on their learning if we do have physical activities. (Hilda, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

In Hilda's view, physical education can improve students' behaviour and attention in classroom learning. Similarly, Reba from Mountainland School described physical education as a reset button that can improve students' attention.

[Physical education] can really help them focus on learning. I think what they learn in [physical education] can flow into the classroom. You know, for focusing a game, whether to score a goal or

whatever, then it kind of seems to focus on the determination that can come into the classroom as well ... I think it is most like a reset. So, if I know the class is getting off task, really loud, I say “you can go for a quick run on the field and come back”, and settle back in. It usually works, kind of changes the scene. So fresh air, burning off energy, coming back to focus. (Reba, Teacher, Mountainland School)

Consistent with the principals’ perspectives, viewing physical education as an outlet, both teachers felt that physical education can release students’ energy and settle them down to focus more on their classroom tasks.

6.2.2.4. “I think it has benefits for physical well-being and health”

Five teachers reported that physical education can influence students’ diets and fitness, and promote students’ well-being in their later lives.

What I believe [physical education] is to do with, of course, exercising and maintaining your health. I feel that 90% is your diet of what you eat; it has a huge impact on your physical activities as well. If you are eating healthy, of course, you will get a better result no matter what exercise you are finding or if you are stretching. Diet is very important. I feel it is important to do some sort of exercises every day, especially for the young kids nowadays. (Tara, Teacher, Brook School)

Tara indicated that teaching healthy dietary habits and doing regular exercise should be central aims in physical education, because these ‘habits’ are responsible for students’ well-being. However, Kaden, her colleague, thought that fitness is the central focus of physical education.

Firstly, the development of growth for motor skills, I think that is important. The development of cardiovascular fitness gives [students] a sense of well-being. That is good for their physical body.

We need to understand the role of being healthy and that as a country we are seeing increasingly people are getting unhealthy. (Kaden, Teacher, Brook School)

Kaden's thoughts on physical education were more inclined towards its physical benefits. Similarly, Tasha, a teacher from Meadow Farm School, preferred to use sports such as rugby to develop students' physical well-being, such as motor skills (see photos in **Appendix 24**). "I know the skill is important to keeping you fit and healthy", Tasha said. Tasha believed that learning skills through sports contributes to students' fitness development. Likewise, two teachers from Blue Sea School conveyed comparable views.

I think it [physical education] has benefits for physical well-being and health ... We have tried to have 15 to 20 minutes of fitness every day, um, as well as the [physical education]. I aim to have it three times a week ... (Hilda, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

[Physical education] will bring children many things. They will have coordination and movement, expertise and balance, hand and eye coordination, um, speed ... They become aware of what their body can do. And through practice, they will understand what threshold sorts their body can have, what they can do safely, and what they do at risk. So, I think [physical education] is very important. (Kana, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

Hilda and Kana used various methods to improve students' physical well-being (see photos in **Appendix 25**, showing examples of how they taught). They indicated that physical education is valuable in their teaching as it can improve students' physical well-being.

Similarly, Yair from Mountainland School explained that “I think it is absolutely important to get our children moving, especially in these days, they always want to do or sit in front of [their] iPad”. To Yair’s mind, physical education can engage children to move more, so it can directly improve their physical well-being, especially in today’s digital era. These teachers’ perspectives are congruent with the principals’ views; that is, physical education can improve students’ physical well-being and fitness.

6.2.2.5. Physical education as games for fun

However, only one teacher described physical education as games for fun.

I like taking the kids out more for games, for fun, um, more than teaching skills I suppose. Um, or if I teach skills, I want to fit it into a game, then we can go out to play and have fun, and just be physical and fun sort of together. (Reba, Teacher, Mountainland School)

In Reba’s view, students can have fun while gaining physical benefits in physical education. Similar to some principals’ and most students’ views, to her, fun seems to be the most important part of physical education.

6.2.3 Students’ perspectives

6.2.3.1. It sounds a little bit ordinary, but it can keep you fit and keep weight off

Fifteen of the 24 students – eight boys and seven girls – believed that the most valuable and practical function of physical education is to improve their physical health such as to keep fit and lose weight. The following excerpts from the focus group interviews demonstrate how the students perceived the important role physical education plays in maintaining fitness.

I think [physical education] is like building up your muscles I guess. (Sandro, a boy)

[Physical education] helps get fitness, and hopefully, I am trying to get into All Blacks. (Jett, a boy)

Um, [physical education] is very good to help me fit ... (Dane, a boy)

Yep, like you can learn to get fit. (Oakley, a boy)

You run around and burn your energy. (Kinsley, a boy)

[Physical education] is losing weight. (Spike, a boy)

[Physical education] is a really good way to make yourself fit and to get your muscles working really strong. (Orion, a boy)

Yeah, [physical education] is a good way to get fit. I think the most important thing you can learn from it is to keep fit and like being active. (Kier, a boy)

It is about losing weight ... exercising so you do not get sour muscles when you are older. (Aroha, a girl)

I think you can get fit if you continue practising. (Becky, a girl)

It keeps you fit and healthy ... it would be a benefit for you. (Odina, a girl)

It is really to get your muscles working ... you need to get your muscles moving and it is good and great activities. (Kama, a girl)

[Physical education] is about losing weight ... (Fallon, a girl)

I think this might be a little bit ordinary but it can make you fit ... when you are just about outside like running around and burning your calories. (Mabel, a girl)

So you are getting fit while enjoying yourself. It is just really good to sort of knowing you are getting fit ... so it is really good. (May, a girl)

To the boys, physical education mainly helped them keep fit and build up strong muscles. To the girls, however, physical education was more often considered a way to burn calories, lose weight, and keep the body moving, so they can be fit and healthy. More girls were concerned about physical education for burning calories and losing weight than boys.

6.2.3.2. “The reality is that there is always having fun” with friends and family

In students’ first responses to questions about physical education, nearly all students mentioned fun and happiness with friends at school, and with families after school or on weekends. Perhaps, their comments indicate that they view physical education more as leisure or recreational activities. The first school visited was Brook School. Of six students there, half gave a detailed account of how they had fun with their friends and families in physical education (see the photos in **Appendix 27**), while the other half of the students just said fun and did not explain further.

You can find fun from your friends when you are doing [physical education] ... I just think [physical education] with your friends is fun because when you are running, if you both are running at the same pace, you can talk to each other while focusing on running and to get your speed up together. (Orion, a boy)

My opinion on [physical education] would be it is a nice way to catch up with your friends ... I think it is a good way for you to casual talk with your friends and have a good time ... I think [physical education] is a good thing for kids ... (Kier, a boy)

I think you can learn some things from your friends in sport and games because you might hang out with your friends or like your cousins who will teach you that game ... it is like friends’ stuff. (Kama, a girl)

The students at Brook School described physical education as sports, games, physical activity, and chat time with their friends and families. The students were attracted to physical education because it brings them fun, happiness, and enjoyment. Some students, though, did not give detailed descriptions about how and why physical education is fun; however, their simple answers indicated their attitudes towards physical education. Sometimes, there may be no ‘why’ answers in students’ minds about things they love.

In Meadow Farm School, the six students interviewed expressed a similar opinion.

I think when I hear about it when that like, the teachers say like ‘it is time to do [pause] [physical education]’ and I will like it (enthusiastic clapping). And then get a change to like math, oh oh ... so yep I love it ... My parents really support me ... [and] want me to do what makes me happy. So, sport makes me happy. So, they let me do sport. (Mabel, a girl)

So, I just guess like having a big fun. They always say ‘what is the most important thing you like about physical education?’ Heaps of people say ‘oh I think it is winning’, but the reality is that there is always having fun. We just enjoy it, and hanging out with friends, then doing good things for everyone. (May, a girl)

Um, I like [physical education] but I do not like it at the same time. It is about having fun Um, my mum ... and my grandparents support me too. If we do like rugby, like we do touch [rugby] now, they are always like ‘oh she is getting there, go’. (Dior, a girl)

I really enjoy sport. ... that is really fun. It is competitive and fun at the same time. You can play with your friends, with your family, or you can play alone if you want. My parents always encourage me because my parents have been involved in a lot of sports. I kind of got it from them ... (Ravi, a boy)

I think [physical education] is pretty fun to do ... I do like to play cricket with my family. At our old house we always go on the cul-de-sac, grab the wickets and bats and we will play ... My parents really love football, coming to our games and watching us, and they always encourage me ... So, it is really fun for us to do just something. (Sacha, a boy)

I like [physical education] because probably just I do it a lot at home. I love it. You run around and have fun with your mates ... Um well, dad and mum always say, 'you have to do at least two sports ...' 'to keep doing sport and be fit and it is good for you.' ... I quite like sport in general. I made some of my best friends in playing my sports. It is pretty fun ... (Kinsley, a boy)

These six students had a passion for physical education, and they perceived physical education as sport and a fun time in school or out of school. To these students, physical education played an important role in creating entertainment with friends and families in their lives. In this way, physical education was perceived as a school subject, local culture, custom, and recreation.

In Blue Sea School, five of the six participating students said they were fond of physical education, and only one student (Faith) showed little interest in physical education.

My favourite is reading and art. [Physical education] out of and in the class, I am pretty much against it because I would rather stay inside and read, but you know, if I have to do it, even if it does include me moping around for the start, I mean I will do it. (Faith, a girl)

Nonetheless, Faith valued physical education. She said that “Um, [physical education] is really good for helping you collaborate with some friends”. Her comment showed that, although she disliked physical education, it helps her to learn how to cooperate with friends. Other students reported positive feelings about physical education.

I like [physical education] personally. ... it is fun because you can get to, um, hang out with your friends. (Macy, a girl)

I love [physical education]. I think it is good to collaborate with your friends. (Adina, a girl)

Um, I love doing [physical education] that is not only the educational side; it is normally fun as well. You get like fun. I guess you learn more and you entertain more if you like doing something. (Basil, a boy)

Normally, I am happy with any sports that I do because at least you are able to go out actually to have fun with mates with like rugby, soccer, yep. (Jett, a boy)

It is pretty hard to explain [physical education] really. It is pretty fun, and I love being around all the school, walking around with my friends to see everything. (Dane, a boy)

These five students perceived physical education as sport or physical activity that creates pleasure with their friends. They indicated that fun enables them to learn more. Happiness and pleasure

appeared to be a significant element for these students in physical education. Although Faith hesitated to participate in physical education, she felt that it can encourage her to cooperate with friends.

In Mountainland School, the six students perceived physical education as running, sports, being active, and outdoor activities, which give them enjoyment and light-hearted pleasure with friends and families.

[Physical education] is really fun ... I kind of like running, and all sorts of those casual sports. My parents really want me to have winter sports or summer sports. My dad actually goes to buy equipment which I need to play and mum coaches me. (Becky, a girl)

I enjoy [physical education] because I get new friends ... Also, because it is all fun outdoor activities that make really really fun. (Odina, a girl)

[Physical education] is really fun because you can naturally go outdoors then play with your friends, then exercise, because I get to make heaps of new friends and people I do not know. My family supports me a lot and they try to get me into doing physical stuff a lot of time (Bobbi, a girl)

I think [physical education] is like fun. ... I like running, doing sports ... I have my best friend when I first joined the sport and met him; he is my best friend. (Sandro, a boy)

I think [physical education] is really fun because it is exciting and you can go out. It is just fun because like skate stuff. (Oakley, a boy)

[Physical education] is really fun ... I just like sports ... Not sure why. I do not know but it is really fun to do. My mum actually ... does not like it when I go in like do devices stuff I think she is proud of me when I get into interschool for stuff ... that is really cool. (Aeson, a boy)

These students mentioned that how their families supported them to do physical education. On that note, the meaning of physical education for students seemed to be broader than a school subject and more consistent with family events relating to students' daily lives. Perhaps, with the parents' and friends' influence, students can participate in more physical activities and become more active. Physical education seems to be an element of the local culture, and it is closely connected with sport and other physical events in these students' lives.

6.3 Holistic development in physical education

From the participants' perspectives, the value of physical education was perceived to bring students holistic development. For example, being social and fun, building healthy lifestyles, resilience, character, self-worth, and self-efficacy, and playing a serving role in other academic subjects in the school curricula. To further theorise, it is evident that in the participants' perspectives, physical education can promote students' holistic development concerning their interpersonal skills, physical and psychological well-being, and academic performance (**Table 11**).

Table 11.

Cross-Case Analysis of Participants' Views on the Value of Physical Education

Themes	Interpersonal Skills	Physical and Psychological Well-Being	Academic Performance
	Subthemes		
Participants	Being Social and Fun	Healthy Lifestyles, Resilience, Character, Self-Worth, and Self-Efficacy	A Serving Role
Principals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical education is for social skills 2. Fun with friends and families 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical education can make students active and create a balanced life 2. Resilience and self-worth 3. Physical education as a sport culture can establish a healthy lifestyle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical education has a cathartic effect
Teachers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. “Students learn a lot of social skills” 4. Physical education as games for fun 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. “I think it has benefits for physical well-being and health” 5. Shaping good character and self-efficacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Physical education as ‘a reset button’ improves students’ attention
Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. “The reality is that there is always having fun” with friends and family 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. It sounds a little bit ordinary, but it can keep you fit and keep weight off 	

Interpersonal skills are an essential part of our social life because they are vital to build and maintain interpersonal relationships (Knapp & Daly, 2011). Nine out of 14 principals and teachers linked physical education to this point. These participants became aware of the importance of developing interpersonal skills and viewed physical education as an appropriate school subject helping schools and teachers achieve their such understanding. However, these participants used different words to describe interpersonal skills, for example, humanistic skills, teamwork, cooperation, being part of a team and learning rules, leadership, sportsmanship, team skills, sharing, and supporting each other. Of these examples, communication, cooperation, leadership, and empathy (**Figure 2**) seem to be the most important interpersonal skills in these participants' comments.

Figure 2 shows how three participating students understood the skill of empathy in their traditional cross-country running. The figure demonstrates the principals' and teachers' understanding of the value of physical education.

Figure 2.

May's Photo About Being Social



Cheng: Can we talk about this photo you took?

Yep. Um, I personally really like kids in Years 5, 6, 7, and 8 to help our little kids. ...

May:

Like sometimes they just need that little push to keep on going, to run the end.

We are like pre-seniors. So, yea, it is really good we can go out there. They are just

Dior: really cute, and also, yes, I have something else to say, I forget ... Yes, you can encourage them.

Mabel: ... Like what May and Dior said it is really good to see the older kids um helping them and encouraging them to keep going. And like tell them where to go stuff.

The three girls were ten years old from Meadow Farm School. In the conversation, they discussed one photo taken by May. They described how they enjoyed going out and supporting their schoolmates and thought it was fun to see and encourage their schoolmates on-site. Although the three students were not aware of the value of their behaviour, their behaviour offered emotional support to their schoolmates. The students' behaviour seems to validate the principals' and teachers' understanding of the value of physical education.

Fun plays a vital role in students' learning and teachers' teaching. It can encourage students to get to know each other, maintain a good relationship with others, and increase self-efficacy (Bavi, 2018). In the present study, nearly all participating students said that it is fun with friends and family in physical education and physical activity (see **Figure 3** and the photos in **Appendix 27**). However, only three of 14 principals and teachers (two principals and one teacher) suggested that fun was a purpose of physical education. It seems that what students perceive is different from what the principals and teachers perceive. From what participating students described, fun in physical education appears to be an experience, while most participating principals and teachers

seem to think more about the learning outcomes. Namely, most participating principals and teachers emphasise the knowledge or skills students should obtain by the end of a class, course, or programme rather than the students' learning experience.

Figure 3 illustrates how a student at Blue Sea School thought his school physical education programme was fun. At this Catholic school, physical education is connected to the school culture and community activities. Through these activities, pleasure, enjoyment, or entertainment can be brought to students to develop their interpersonal skills. Dane was an eleven-year-old boy. In the interview, Dane mentioned that he enjoyed the dancing class because he felt happy with his friend and family.

Figure 3.

Dane's Photo about Fun with Friends and Family



Cheng: Which of the photos do you like most, Dane?

Dane: I like this one.

Cheng: Why do you like it?

I like dancing because it is fun and more like flexible. We are doing folk dancing. Next

Dane: week, we have Grandparents Day, and we will present our folk dancing in front of them. I am really excited about it.

In addition, to the participants, physical education can support students' physical and psychological well-being. About two-thirds of participants mentioned the physical benefits of physical education. They used different words to describe the benefits: being active, balancing lives, a healthy lifestyle, being fit, eating healthy, developing motor skills and cardiovascular fitness, having coordination and movement, keeping fit, losing weight, and burning energy. Although the participants used different words, their expressions pointed to a belief that physical education can improve students' physical and psychological well-being.

I should point out that more girls perceived physical education for burning up calories and managing weight than boys. As Azzarito (2009) warned, such understanding of physical education as an intervention for weight control can restrain students' comprehension of physicality; it may play a part in "increasing rates of anorexia" (p. 35) in female students and male students' state of being obsessed with "bigness and muscle dysmorphia" (p. 35). Such understanding of the ideal body does not come from learning outcomes in the curriculum but rather from advertisements of mass media, corporations, or industry groups (Azzarito, 2009; Powell, 2019). We should be vigilant and wary of how "an ideal heteronormative female body [is] produced through" (Mansfield et al., 2018, p. 29) physical education in schools.

In four participating principals' and teachers' views (two principals and two teachers), physical education can positively affect students' psychological well-being. For example, developing

students' capacities of resilience and self-worth, and shaping good character and self-efficacy. The principals' understanding of developing resilience and self-worth in physical education were also reflected in their school's vision shown in the school charter. In contrast, two teachers shared what they saw in their teaching experience; that is, students can develop character and self-efficacy in physical education. It indicates that the school history, culture, customs, and context influence the principals' understanding, while the teachers' expressions are more from their experience of teaching.

Moreover, physical education in these participants' perspectives played a functional role in their schools that extends beyond the explicit achievement objectives of HPE in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007). Two principals and two teachers remarked that physical education has a cathartic function. The two principals emphasised the benefit of releasing students' excess energy in physical education. So, students could be motivated and engaged in school activities. In contrast, the two teachers described physical education as an outlet. They made a point of its benefit of improving students' attention on classroom tasks and classroom management. Despite the fact that physical education is recognised as an outlet for releasing energy to engage students, improve their attention, and help classroom management, it seems that physical education acts to serve other academic subjects and school activity in their schools' curricula in these participants' perspectives.

In summary, although the participants used different expressions to describe the value of physical education, they felt that physical education can have a holistic influence on developing students' interpersonal skills, physical and psychological well-being, and academic performance. It seems

physical education plays an irreplaceable role in these school curricula in these participants' perspectives.

6.4 Why is physical education important in primary schools?

I initially positioned my research in light of my own background from China. I recognised that I was influenced by Mao (1917). One hundred years later, his understanding of physical education still resonates with me and to an extent is similar to the achievement objectives in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007), although the politics and life views between China and New Zealand are vastly different. Whatever the politics, Mao can be viewed as a philosopher whose past insights may have some bearing on the present. Therefore, I continue to refer to his understanding of physical education.

Most participants believed that physical education is important because it can provide students with opportunities for holistic development in terms of improving their interpersonal skills, well-being, and academic performance. Significantly, the students believed that physical education consists of fun with friends and family while keeping them healthy. These participants' perspectives on physical education are consistent with the achievement objectives of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) and Mao's thoughts about physical education. However, none of the participants showed a holistic understanding of the all-encompassing value of physical education as stated in Mao's thoughts and the NZC 2007. Mao (1917) proposed that physical education can promote students' holistic development in terms of improving their moral, intellectual, and physical abilities. The NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) stated that learning in physical education can strengthen four aspects of students' development, specifically, personal health and physical development, movement concepts and motor skills, relationships with other

people, and healthy communities and environments. In my interpretation, the present research data suggests that any participating principal or teacher had not fully understood the value of physical education in students' holistic development. Each participant mentioned just part of the value of physical education.

I will discuss the participants' understanding of physical education in respect of interpersonal skills, well-being, and its beneficial effect on other learning areas, to demonstrate the important contributions of physical education in primary school.

6.4.1 Interpersonal skills

Most participating principals and teachers indicated that physical education can promote students' abilities to cooperate and work as a team. They suggested that physical education leads to personal development and a sense of self-worth. This interpretation is consistent with the vision and competencies stated in the NZC; that is, students will be "able to relate well to others" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 8) and interact "effectively with a diverse range of people in a variety of contexts, including the ability to listen actively, recognise different points of view, negotiate, and share ideas" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 12).

This interpretation by the participants also corroborates the findings from previous research (e.g., Ang & Penney, 2013; Bailey, 2005; Bailey et al., 2009; Cañabate et al., 2018; Chepyator-Thomson & Hsu, 2013; Golinkoff et al., 2006; Kolb & Kolb, 2010; Morris et al., 2004; Smith & Pellegrini, 2008). Although there is criticism of the lack of longitudinal data (Long et al., 2002) and unanimous definitions about interpersonal skills (Bailey et al., 2009), again, the perceived benefits of physical education on the development of interpersonal skills are evident in my research.

Physical education offers young people opportunities to develop, improve, and strengthen their interpersonal skills such as collaboration, communication, leadership, and personal development (Casey & Goodyear, 2015; Kirk, 2013; Long et al., 2002; Samalot-Rivera, 2014).

In addition, my research findings are consistent with some studies in physical education that have used innovative pedagogical models to develop students' social and affective skills. These include sport education (Pennington & Sinelnikov, 2018), teaching games for understanding (Chen & Light, 2006; Jones et al., 2010; Kirk & MacPhail, 2002; Mandigo et al., 2019; Stolz & Pill, 2014; Webb et al., 2006), cooperative learning (Dyson, 2001; Dyson & Casey, 2012, 2016; Ovens et al., 2012), and teaching personal and social responsibility (Gordon, 2010; Pozo et al., 2018). Although these studies have offered positive results, the implementation of the innovative pedagogical models is contingent on the context, teachers' experiences, and beliefs, and how they understand the intention of the model (Stolz & Pill, 2014). As a result, the effect of these models on students' interpersonal skills is varying. Kirk (2013) recommended that teachers should employ specific, tailored curriculum structures and arrangements to meet the needs of their own context, in contrast with physical education's present and long-established forms, to explore more possibilities in order to cultivate a holistic person.

6.4.2 Physical and psychological well-being

Physical and psychological well-being pervades all facets of students' lives in schools (Lu & Buchanan, 2014). Most of the participants in this study valued physical education because they believed that it can help retain a healthy body while boosting well-being in terms of mental health, positive characteristics, and happiness. This finding resonates with the results from previous research (Bardaglio et al., 2015; Beni et al., 2017; Buszard et al., 2016; Coulter et al., 2020;

Dismore & Bailey, 2011; Dyson, 1995; Ericsson & Karlsson, 2014; Gallotta et al., 2017; O'Reilly et al., 2001; Wright, 2004). However, there is limited evidence from qualitative research that identifies how practitioners understand the benefits or importance of physical education in primary schools. My research findings contribute a clearer understanding of the importance of physical education on students' physical and psychological well-being from the participants' direct experience in the context of New Zealand. Uninterested as some of these classroom teachers were in teaching physical education, they still valued it because it can boost students' physical and psychological well-being.

In terms of the physical benefits of physical education, the participants' perspectives in this research showed that physical education can improve students' physical well-being (Ministry of Education, 2018). Findings from experimental research have supported the participants' views that physical education can keep students fit and develop motor skills (Bardaglio et al., 2015; Buszard et al., 2016; Ericsson & Karlsson, 2014; Gallotta et al., 2017). These studies used an experimental design to examine the benefits of a particular physical education programme on students' physical development over a short period and the long term. Their results pointed out that appropriate and purposeful physical education programmes can improve students' motor skills and fitness (Bardaglio et al., 2015; Gallotta et al., 2017). My findings supplement their results by using a qualitative research design to unveil stakeholders' perspectives on that aspect.

Concerning the psychological benefits of physical education, such as fun, happiness, or enjoyment, my findings reinforce existing studies' findings (Coulter et al., 2020; O'Reilly et al., 2001; Wright, 2004). Dismore and Bailey (2011) suggested that fun and enjoyment are associated with different

meanings across age groups in physical education. The word 'fun' is used more to express satisfying feelings about physical education among students aged seven to 11, but less so amongst students aged 11 to 14 who think that enjoyment comes from challenges in physical education. This finding is consistent with one of my research findings. The student participants in my study were at school years four and five, about 9 to 11 years old, and fun was frequently used to describe their feelings towards physical education.

It is noticeable that previous studies have reported that fun, happiness, and enjoyment came from engagement with peer interactions (Dyson, 1995; Light, 2010; Smith & Parr, 2007), the content of physical education programmes (Kinchin & O'Sullivan, 1999, 2003), or from engagement with families (Wright et al., 2003). The present research resonates with these findings and provides a more holistic understanding of fun in physical education. The students interviewed linked physical education with fun, happiness, or enjoyment, not only with their friends but also with their families.

The participating students' perspectives indicated that they took part in physical education due to positive feelings with their friends and families, while the teachers in this study mentioned that they taught physical education in line with local sports and events. Their understanding is consistent with the description of physical education in previous research (Johnson & Turner, 2016). Namely, physical education is not only a class but also "a process or occurrence that happens in many places and in the company of many different people (i.e., friends, peers, family members, adult mentors, teachers, coaches, etc.)" (Johnson & Turner, 2016, p. 10).

It seems that physical education, including physical activity, outdoor family entertainment, and sport at local, national, and international levels in New Zealand, has interlaced with its social structure. It is understandable that the young generation is influenced by local communities, schools, families, and friends, whose positive attitudes towards physical education can be culturally adapted and transmitted (Ministry of Education, 2018; Tinning, 2012). In particular, families and friends play a significant role in promoting students' beliefs about physical education and well-being (Flynn et al., 2017; Kimiecik & Horn, 2012). To boost students' physical and psychological well-being through physical education appears to be a common-sense belief and a part of New Zealanders' lifestyle.

6.4.3 Physical education is beneficial to other learning areas

Studies have explained how principals and teachers view the benefits of physical education for other learning areas (Banville et al., 2020; Burrows & McCormack, 2011; Macdonald et al., 2014). However, those studies did not show strong qualitative evidence. My research findings offer more about the beliefs held. The principals' and teachers' interpretations of physical education in the present research were associated with increasing students' attention span while learning in classrooms, as well as promoting self-efficacy and resilience. They described physical education as an outlet or a 'reboot' that has a cathartic effect, helping students release their energy and then concentrate on other academic tasks. Moreover, in the teachers' teaching experience, they have seen that the skills students learned in physical education, such as teamwork and self-efficacy, can transfer into their classroom learning. As a result, students may have confidence in other learning areas and improve their academic performance.

These interpretations are congruent with earlier research that showed positive links and relationships among physical activity level, fitness, and academic performance (Castelli et al., 2007; Erwin et al., 2012; Haapala, 2013; Johnson et al., 2017; Marttinen et al., 2017; Simms et al., 2014; Vazou et al., 2012; Wittberg et al., 2010; Zach et al., 2017). Nevertheless, the ethical issues of conducting experiments with human beings limit further research in this field. Thus, qualitative research can complement experimental research to offer more in-depth insights from human beings' experience. My research findings show more personal beliefs about the benefits of physical education on other learning areas from the participants' experiences.

The benefits of physical education for other learning areas have led to changes in thinking when teaching physical education. For example, Johnson et al. (2017) have proposed integrating physical education in primary schools into other academic subjects, such as mathematics, writing, and reading. Wittberg et al. (2010) recommended that "physical education, cross-curricular thematic units, and club activities" (p. 284) can be combined into schools' curricula, because the increase in aerobic activities may elevate students' motivation for academic achievements (Vazou et al., 2012; Zach et al., 2017). Physical education, thus, seems to enable and create a learning environment to help students improve their confidence and attention in other learning areas.

6.5 Chapter summary

In conclusion, it is evident that physical education takes place both in and out of the school. The role physical education has played in schools' curricula is not only to improve students' physical and psychological well-being, but also to contribute to students' behaviour and has a positive influence on their interpersonal skills and academic performance (Ministry of Education, 2018; Olive et al., 2019; Telford, 2017). Macdonald et al. (2014) predicted that better designed and

structured physical education programmes need to be conducted to increase student cognitive function, along with more scientific evidence on the relationship between physical education and academic performance. Moreover, the students' habitus and perspectives are under the influence of a specific social field that is related to family, friends, and local culture. It seems physical education is important in primary schools because it can develop the whole child. In particular, students can learn about their bodies and themselves through physical activity and movement; and how to share their lives with others and create enjoyable occasions (Ozoliņš & Stolz, 2013).

In the next chapter, I present and discuss the participants' perspectives on physical education of the NZC 2007. Namely, we valued the NZC, but we taught physical education in our ways.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WE VALUED THE NZC, BUT WE TAUGHT PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN OUR WAYS

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present principals', teachers', and students' perspectives on physical education in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) (Ministry of Education, 2007), as summarised in **Table 12**. After that, cross-case analysis and synthesis of the participants' perspective are developed, followed by discussing their perspectives.

Overall, the provision of physical education in the four schools was based on seasonal sports and local events (e.g., see photos of tractor pulling in **Appendix 26**), and taught from teachers' own knowledge and beliefs. The majority of participating principals and teachers thought that the NZC is helpful, and the strength of the NZC is that the schools can adapt its implementation to meet local needs. However, the principals and teachers had a varied understanding of physical education in the NZC. The participating principals and teachers alluded to a lot of sports, skills learning, physical activity, and games whenever talking about it. Beginning teachers seemed to need more help in teaching physical education. For participating students, nearly all of them preferred to have more options in their taught physical education curriculum.

7.2 Expressed Views on the New Zealand Curriculum

7.2.1 Principals' perspectives

The majority of participating principals commented that the NZC is helpful, and they recognised that many online and offline resources can be linked to the curriculum. However, a few principals were confused about what constituted physical education.

7.2.1.1. Is physical education in the NZC more inclined to health and well-being, or sports and fitness?

A few principals expressed uncertainty about what is required to be taught in physical education in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007). Principal Ace from Brook School claimed that, outstanding as the NZC is, it is more oriented to health and well-being. He assumed that the benefits on the physical side of HPE were overlooked.

I think we have got a really great curriculum that concerns health and well-being ... If you look at [the NZC] and choose elements from it, you can actually work through the document without actually teaching [physical education] over a year. ... I suppose that [physical education] sort of gets left out ...
(Ace, Principal, Brook School)

Blas, the deputy principal of Brook School, was concerned about the NZC in the same way.

The curriculum is helpful. ... I have confusion around [physical education] because of those learning areas of HPE. Um, technically you can go through three terms of the school that have not actually done any physical things outside at the playground. (Blas, Deputy Principal, Brook School)

Table 12.

The Participants' Views on the New Zealand Curriculum

Participants Themes	Principals' Perspectives	Teachers' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Expressed Views on <i>The New Zealand Curriculum</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is physical education in the NZC more inclined to health and well-being, or sports and fitness? 2. Should physical education be prescriptive or not? 3. Our curriculum is based on seasons and local sports and events 4. Other supportive resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "As a beginning teacher, I struggle with the NZC" 2. The NZC provides a proper scope and the achievement objectives are helpful 3. Other resources can link to and support the NZC 4. We use the NZC, but we teach physical education from our knowledge, based on seasonal events and sports 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is really cool to have more options

Blas was confused because he thought that sport, fitness, and physical education are mixed up in the NZC.

I think generally we may marry sports with [physical education] and fitness in New Zealand. We put all three together, and the same ‘basket’ feels like to kick it in, um, trying to kill two birds with one stone. I guess it is what we are trying to do here. (Blas, Deputy Principal, Brook School)

Both of them expressed uncertainty about what should be taught and what constituted physical education in the NZC. These uncertainties seem to come from the lack of appropriate definitions of these terms in the NZC and the flexible attribute of the NZC.

7.2.1.2. Should physical education be prescriptive or not?

Principal Ace from Brook School recommended that primary school physical education should be more prescriptive, compulsory, and indicate the scope and content needed to be taught.

So I think we need to look at a more prescriptive way when we approach [physical education]. I think this document is great, but I still think there is definite room ... for mandated requirements in [physical education] ... to be implemented. I think we need to put greater priority emphasis on that, particularly in this day and age. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

In contrast, four principals said that they prefer the flexibility and scope the NZC provided.

I like [the NZC] because it is good for scope. I have done an integrated inquiry learning with children ... I am trying to integrate [physical education] into other learning areas. I think our curriculum gives us scope to do that. (Blas, Principal, Brook School)

Principal Hope from Mountainland School declared that "... it is a very broad document. That allows a lot of scope ...". Deputy principal Gus from the same school added, "I like [the NZC] because it is good for scope". In the same vein, Dash from Meadow Farm School commented that "... it is sort of a broad umbrella up here, but not a very prescriptive guideline. I kind of like it. I think that is good. I am glad it is not overly prescriptive".

Clearly, the principals had varying views about the NZC and interpreted the flexibility as either a positive or a negative feature. Overall, more principals saw the flexibility and scope as a positive characteristic, as it provides more room for schools and teachers so that they can make their own choices about content.

7.2.1.3. Our curriculum is based on seasons and local sports and events

Three principals reported that their schools' curricula were based on the NZC, but were closely organised to align with seasons, local sports, and other events.

[The NZC] is really useful and we follow the curriculum, but our teachers all have to do their own ... they do things [at] various times of the year. ... like in the first term, there is a lot of swimming because we have swimming and sports in competitions with other schools ... teachers follow the rotation. (Hart, Principal, Blue Sea School)

From what I have seen in [physical education], and I believe [that] our teachers are linking to [the NZC]. We have our Mountainland School curriculum that we have developed for this school, which connects and links to [the NZC]. ... We are part of the western cluster that is about six or seven schools, and we get together for inter-school competitions from time to time. So, we have soccer, Ki-o-Rahi and

athletics ... we have sent students off to participate in inter-school cross-country competition ... inter-school competitions for sports and athletics. (Hope, Principal, Mountainland School)

Gus, the deputy principal of Mountainland School, then added that “Our school curriculum is based on [the NZC] but [it] is not [the NZC]. It is an interpretation of that, but there is good stuff on the curriculum”. The schools preferred to have their physical education programmes conforming to local sports and other events. In these principals’ replies, the schools seem to have the authority to decide what should be taught to students in physical education.

7.2.1.4. Other supportive resources

Two principals reported that additional resources are supporting the NZC, such as Kiwi Sports²⁷, YouTube and TKI²⁸.

I feel [that] the curriculum definitely forms a good framework for teachers to work within, in terms of things we want children to achieve. What is more supportive is the resources they provide. The resources are tied to [the NZC]. Different organisations help produce resources. It has a lot of resources out there from Kiwi Sports. ... that whole collecting information on the Internet you can download and pick up on. YouTube is great for showing skills and getting kids engaging actively, um, in order to try other things. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

Likewise, Principal Blas from Brook School said “... TKI ... I used a couple of times”. Dash noted that “... what the [physical education] curriculum provides is clear achievement objectives and a

²⁷ KiwiSport is a regional partnership fund in Waikato, New Zealand. It is a government-funded initiative and tries to get more school-aged children taking part in sport.

²⁸ TKI is the abbreviation for Te Kete Ipurangi and a website established by the Ministry of Education, New Zealand. It aims to provide schools, teachers, and students with information and resources in order to boost students’ academic performance.

framework for children to progress through what is more helpful within [physical education] lessons, and the resources around there”. These participants seem to be satisfied with the resources around the [NZC]. It seems, from the principals’ perspectives, many resources can support schools and teachers to teach physical education in the NZC.

7.2.2 Teachers’ perspectives

Among teachers interviewed, senior teachers praised the NZC highly as it allows them to teach from their knowledge and experience. Nevertheless, one beginning teacher found that the NZC could not satisfy her needs because it did not provide a standard model for planning and teaching physical education.

7.2.2.1. “As a beginning teacher, I struggle with the NZC”

Kana, a beginning teacher in her first year teaching at Blue Sea School, criticised the NZC as failing to play the role she thought it should by helping beginning teachers.

I read the [NZC]. I think [that] it as a book is counterproductive. The curriculum is not very specific and helpful. I, as a beginning teacher, struggle with the [NZC] because I am not confident as a teacher.

(Kana, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

Kana was upset because she did not have any confidence in teaching physical education when she was interviewed. “I need confidence. Somebody will challenge you because you have no confidence”, she said. She appealed for a detailed, standard curricular plan or a structured template that shows quality teaching in physical education.

I think I would like to say [the NZC needs] more structures, better results, so that is not too much of my teaching time, and too much of new teachers' time is looking for resources, trying to find resources. That is such a waste of time. (Kana, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

Obviously, Kana lacked the knowledge and resources of teaching physical education. So, she had to spend much time searching and preparing every day, which put extra pressure on her overall teaching. Although Kana claimed that the curriculum did not support her, she agreed that “it allows flexibility, which is excellent”. On the other hand, “it will not give you structure when you need it as a beginning teacher”. She then explained:

You can become flexible when you know everything. When you do not know everything, you must not be flexible and confident. If you are not confident, even you might be good ... It is a little bit scary. (Kana, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

Kana wanted to be a good teacher, but she emphasised that she needed to see the desired practice model. “Being a good teacher, you need to see good practice; you need to model good practice; you need to practise good practice and you need opportunities”, she said.

The attributes of the NZC, such as its flexibility, adaptability, and the breadth of its coverage, seem to bring benefits and drawbacks for teaching and learning. It can maximise teachers' and students' potential because it is adaptable and flexible. However, it also causes difficulties for beginning teachers or teachers who are not adept at teaching in some learning areas, such as the arts or physical education. Those teachers may spend more time searching for and learning the subjects, causing time pressure on their teaching. Perhaps, the curriculum needs to be supported by more

teacher education time and in-service courses to ensure teachers understand how to interpret physical education in the NZC.

7.2.2.2. The NZC provides a proper scope and the achievement objectives are helpful

In contrast, four out of eight teachers mentioned that the NZC is helpful because it does not offer a limited scope restricting their teaching.

You can fit your [physical education] lessons into the achievement objectives quite easily ... So [the NZC] is helpful in that way. ... it is so open-ended. You can do basically what you want and it will still fit. (Yair, Teacher, Mountainland School)

Hilda from Blue Sea School commented that “it is quite broad, but I think it is a good thing because you can adapt to what suits your children and your particular situation”. It seems that these teachers were satisfied with the NZC because it offers room for teachers to teach in line with their own understanding and knowledge, and it meets the needs of the students in their own specific communities.

Some teachers felt that the explicit achievement objectives in the NZC are helpful for planning and evaluation.

It helps to have a document that you can fall back on, to look for resources, and planning, and looking at the objectives, things like that. We base our learning objectives on [the NZC] ... assessing children’s ability and writing reports. ... So, we do use the curriculum for our unit planning and year planning. (Hank, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

Tara from Brook School said that “there are a lot of outcomes for [physical education] that help me to plan what I need to do for these kids in terms of games, exercise, health knowledge, and all the rest”. Reba from Mountainland School remarked that “[the NZC] is a curriculum guide that always guides our [physical education] teaching. I think it is a useful guide ... We give the children the self-assessment, those sorts of things”. These teachers’ remarks illustrate that NZC is supportive because it gives teachers the flexibility to develop their own specific learning objectives from the broader NZC achievement objectives.

7.2.2.3. Other resources can link to and support the NZC

Four teachers reported that many resources can link to the NZC, such as the *Physical Education Handbook* (Department of Education, 1964) and *Kiwi Sports Manuals*²⁹ from Sport Waikato³⁰.

It was the *Physical Education Handbook* which was actually a treasure trove. It has always been a useful resource since I first started teaching. There is a lot of really good stuff in it. ... I still have things like *KiwiDex Manual* ... It has got a lot of really good games in it and probably more guides in terms of structured ways of taking [physical education] lessons, which is quite helpful. (Hilda, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

I think it is called the *KiwiDex*, *Sports Menu* or Sport Energize stuff. There are some pre-packaged activities and games ... for Ki-o-Rahi and rippa rugby ... there are pretty much lesson plans to follow, which is really helpful. (Reba, Teacher, Mountainland School)

²⁹ The names of these materials as reported by the participants may be older ones or not correct names. I searched online and did not find the materials with the same names, but there were materials with similar names.

³⁰ Sport Waikato is a sports organisation established in 1986 in the Waikato region, New Zealand. Its aims are to promote young people to involve in regional sports, local physical activity, and community sport, and to encourage the young to have a healthy and active lifestyle.

In years gone by we used paper resources like *Kiwi Expert Manuals* and *Kiwi Sports Manuals* ... there are a lot of resources online now. ... Quite often, I look at video resources and lessons if we are looking for something, particularly for coaching skills and drills. (Kaden, Teacher, Brook School)

Tasha from Meadow Farm School mentioned that “I did an ACC³¹ course thing. This is a booklet thing ... I have got a lot of ideas from there. I do not get stuck too much”. Overall, resources from Sport Waikato and online support teachers’ teaching in physical education.

7.2.2.4. We use the NZC, but we teach physical education from our knowledge, based on seasonal events and sports

Three teachers reported that, supportive as the NZC is, they had to do their own planning based on their schools’ situations.

I am aware of the curriculum in terms of the plan, the unit plans we create. I reference the [NZC] and take them alongside. In terms of planning for other certain things, the school sort of seems to do year and year round, so we are somewhat bound to conform to that. For example, this term we have cross-country training to start, because we know we are doing cross-country. (Kaden, Teacher, Brook School)

I have used [the NZC]. I have been using it for better outcomes. It helps me to know what I am teaching for skills or knowledge around a certain [physical] activity ... This term is cross-country, in the last term the focus was around softball skills and fitness ... and in term four swimming is the main one. So, we have a rotation. (Tara, Teacher, Brook School)

³¹ The Accident Compensation Corporation in New Zealand.

Unlike the teachers above, Tasha from Meadow Farm School remarked that she draws on her own knowledge about physical education to teach, rather than focusing on the NZC.

I used a lot of stuff from my knowledge ... because it just feels like inside knowledge which will be key to physical activities ... I see stuff on [the NZC] but seldom use it, because I have to figure out what we are actually doing. (Tasha, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

The NZC seems to provide the essential supporting structure for schools and teachers, but teachers still need to consider their individual school situation in practice.

7.2.3 Students' perspectives: It is really cool to have more options

Eighteen out of 24 students said that they want their schools to provide them with more options in physical education. Of the other six students, one student proposed keeping what they had, while the other five students said that they wanted to have some changes but did not explain further. The majority of students thought that it is exciting to have options in their physical education programmes because they can choose what they already know or like. Many students indicated that they are willing to learn or experience new and different content.

I am happy because you are getting to learn new things. (Fallon, Brook School)

I am happy to have dance so I get to do some free dancing with music. (Aroha, Brook School)

I would be happy if the school gives us more options. If the school gives us more options for sports like I will jump right in there ... It is a really good feeling. (May, Meadow Farm School)

I will like it quite a lot because I do all these sorts of sports. I love all sports. I would care if they added any other sports. (Kinsley, Meadow Farm School)

I think that it would be better if we had more of an option to do what kind of [physical education] because some people might not have the advantage in some sort of [physical education], but like they are really good at some other ones. So, it would be better if we had a wide variety of things to do. (Macy, Blue Sea School)

Oh, a wide variety of things to do will definitely boost some peoples' experience and help them and set them up for the future. So that would be pretty cool. (Faith, Blue Sea School)

The quotes shown above are drawn from six students to represent the general feeling about physical education. Overall, the 23 students who wanted more options voiced consistent perspectives on their schools' curricula for physical education. Namely, they wanted more choices in their physical education programmes, so that they could choose what they like and have different experiences.

However, one student thought that it might take a long time to adapt to changes, and he might feel quite embarrassed if he could not perform very well before his peers.

I quite like just keeping what we are used to because I have had it for over six years and I am pretty used to those ... it will take a while to take you to get used to those. And like taking ages for you to learn how to do it, um, to learn all the skills, and not like, like embarrass yourself if you do not know what you are doing and try in front of the people. (Sacha, Meadow Farm School)

Sacha saw himself as good at some sports such as rugby. He seemed to be afraid of having an unsuccessful performance when doing new sports or games in front of his schoolmates. He thought that mastering a skill would take time. These two points made him hesitate to support multiple options of experience in physical education. Overall, the majority of students wanted to have more options in their physical education curriculum. If more options were available, they would have more opportunities to learn and experience different physical education subjects and knowledge.

7.3 We valued the NZC, but we taught physical education in our ways

In the present study, the participants showed a varying understanding of how physical education was described and prescribed in the NZC. They said that there are diverse resources online and offline for supporting teaching and learning physical education. Consequently, the principals and teachers taught physical education from their knowledge and beliefs, focusing on content that followed seasonal events and sports. In terms of participating students, they showed interest in if their schools could provide more options to the physical education curriculum (**Table 13**).

Table 13.

Cross-Case Analysis of Participants' Views on Physical Education in the NZC

Themes Participants	Various ways of understanding physical education	We teach physical education from our knowledge and beliefs, following seasonal events and sports	Other resources
Principals	1. Is physical education in the NZC more inclined to health and well-being, or sports and fitness? 2. Should physical education be prescriptive or not?	1. Our curriculum is based on seasons and local sports and events	1. Other supportive resources
Teachers	3. “As a beginning teacher, I struggle with the NZC” 4. The NZC provides a proper scope and the achievement objectives are helpful	2. We use the NZC, but we teach physical education from our knowledge, based on seasonal events and sports	2. Other resources can link to and support the NZC
Students			3. It is really cool to have more options

When questioned about physical education in the NZC, participating principals and teachers showed different interpretations. Two principals said they were confused about what should be taught in physical education: health and well-being, or sport and fitness? One principal suggested that physical education should be prescriptive. However, the other principals commented that they appreciated the scope and flexibility of the NZC because these attributes gave them room to teach physical education in line with their own understanding and beliefs.

From the teachers' point of view, a beginning teacher said that she lacked confidence and needed help. She suggested that she struggled to teach in ways consistent with the NZC because the document provided no examples of how a quality physical education lesson was structured and implemented. The flexibility of the NZC and the lack of teaching experience as a beginning teacher caused her to lack confidence when teaching physical education. Nevertheless, four senior teachers said they like the NZC because it does not limit their teaching but encourages them to use their own teaching methods. It seems that senior teachers are more confident in enacting the NZC when teaching physical education, while beginning teachers need more support.

Although the majority of the principals and teachers appreciated the NZC, they said there are many 'other' resources that more direct their teaching in physical education, such as Kiwi Sports Manuals from Sport Waikato and materials from ACC. They used them and taught physical education from their understanding and beliefs, following the seasonal sport and events (that practice was also shown in my observation). It seems that apart from the NZC, there are insufficient resources from the Ministry of Education that support teachers' teaching and learning in physical education.

Overall, the participating principals and teachers had their own understanding and beliefs about physical education. They used the NZC and other resources to support their teaching but their teaching programmes were strongly influenced by their knowledge and beliefs and based largely on seasonal sports and local events.

7.4 Varied understanding of *the New Zealand Curriculum*

A curriculum usually contains the aims, scope, and content that the nation, society, communities, and parents expect their children to achieve. Flinders (2010) proposed that a national curriculum has two purposes. One is for social needs, and the other is for individual development. The purpose for social needs means that the curriculum is in line with the social division of labour and is oriented to future occupations and the functions of a society. In contrast, the purpose for individual development represents “self-actualization” (Flinders, 2010, p. 229), which needs to harmonise with social needs.

The curriculum, institutions, and people tend to influence “curriculum construction and changes” (Penney, 2006, p. 565) that enable or constrain curricular implementation and development. “If one accepts the enacted curriculum as a [‘lived’] experience for teachers and students, we know very little about what goes on in the name of curriculum in schools” (Ward & Doutis, 1999, p. 394), because the official curriculum may not reflect what is happening in schools (Penney, 2006). Thus, it is necessary to understand how principals, teachers, and students interpret the enacted curriculum (Lynch, 2013, 2015; Penney, 2006; Ward & Doutis, 1999).

There are various interpretations of the NZC. Dyson et al. (2011) viewed the NZC as a “strategic plan” (p. 6) bringing new knowledge to teachers. Ovens (2010) described the NZC as “an emergent

process” (p. 27) that is influenced by the development of the socio-political ethos, national secondary qualifications, and Māori perspectives, which brings a decentralised, flexible curriculum based on an idea of HPE as one learning area. Conversely, Priestley and Sinnema (2014) argued that the NZC lessens precise requirements for knowledge and cannot state in detail how practitioners would gain access to knowledge. Culpan (2008) accused the NZC of failing to deal with issues such as “biculturalism, use of conceptual underpinning, over-reliance on KALs³², [and] critical pedagogy” (p. 58), and ignoring topics such as obesity and ethical and moral issues in physical education. Penney et al. (2015) concluded that there is no simple answer to this muddled situation, and it is crucial to continue to explore the relationships among the discourse of policy, curriculum, and pedagogy.

The varied understanding of the NZC is reflected in the present research in more detail. Nearly all participants across stakeholder groups regarded physical education as a combination of sports, skills learning, or multi-physical activities. All four schools and teachers had their individual curricula and physical education programmes. The schools and teachers taught physical education in line with their own knowledge, local events, and seasonal sports. The principals and senior teachers appreciated the room the NZC offered because they could design and implement the physical education curriculum in the way that they understood and based on their experience, to harmonise with their communities’ and schools’ needs.

³² KALs is the abbreviation for Key Areas of Learning in NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007), consisting of eight areas: English, the Arts, Health and Physical Education, Learning Languages, Mathematics and Statistics, Science, Social Sciences, and Technology.

However, beginning teachers and some other teachers struggled with the NZC because of its flexible and broad features. They complained that they had no idea about what should be taught without an exact scope being stated in the NZC. In addition, they reported that it was hard to find the information they needed because there were too many resources and the nature of the interdisciplinary knowledge of physical education. This interpretation is consistent with findings from previous research. For example, Dyson et al. (2011) pointed out that although the flexibility of the NZC encourages innovation, it has resulted in a confused understanding among classroom teachers of what should be taught and how to teach physical education, especially among those without sufficient knowledge of physical education.

The present research offers regular students' perspectives on physical education in primary schools. Few studies concerning students' perspectives have concentrated on primary school students' experiences of taught physical education curricula. The majority of studies about students' perspectives have focused on students at secondary school (Chen, 1999; Cothran & Kulinna, 2006; El-Sherif, 2014), students with disabilities (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Haegele & Sutherland, 2015), students who were overweight (Gabrus, 2014; Trout & Graber, 2009), and students who experienced bullying in physical education (O'Connor & Graber, 2014). The current physical education curriculum organisation in the four schools was in a seasonal tradition with local events and sports, for example, soccer and rugby in winter, and cricket and swimming in summer. The students were used to that schedule, but nearly all of them called for broader experience in their physical education programmes.

7.5 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the participants showed diverse perspectives on physical education in the NZC. It seems that improving teachers' understanding of physical education is the most prioritised task for quality physical education. Ovens (2010) has recommended that professional development and in-service courses can effectively improve teachers' content knowledge. Thus, more professional development programmes and adequate time for teachers' learning about teaching physical education are needed, because the support may help teachers acquire a better interpretation of HPE. If teachers' understanding of physical education could be consistent with the NZC, the influence of unofficial resources, such as outside providers, could be minimised.

One option the Ministry of Education may consider to guide teachers better might be offering a set of detailed curricula of physical education. These curricula may resemble a ready-to-use-menu that can be categorised into sports, teaching modules, games, multi-physical activities, skills learning, and movement for students of different ages. The curricula can provide teachers with a curricular module showing a standardised design or activity for implementation and evaluation. This 'menu' might help schools and teachers to choose and deliver their physical education programmes in line with students' needs, and it may further provide direction on how to judge and assess a quality physical education lesson.

In the next chapter, I present the participants' perceived barriers and challenges in terms of the individual data analysis, and cross-case analysis and synthesis, followed by discussing these barriers and challenges.

CHAPTER EIGHT: PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

8.1 Introduction

The principal, teacher, and student participants in this study reported some barriers and challenges they have confronted in their physical education programmes, such as lack of equipment and facilities, teachers' ability, and input from outside providers. According to information from the principals, teachers, and students, these perspectives are presented separately in light of barriers and challenges (**Table 14**). Subsequently, cross-case analysis and synthesis of their perspectives is introduced and discussed.

8.2 Perceived barriers and challenges

8.2.1 Perceived barriers

Overall, there were three barriers reported by participating principals and teachers – time pressure, finances, and teachers' knowledge of physical education. This section introduces the three barriers in terms of the themes from the principals' and teachers' explanations, respectively (**Table 14**).

8.2.1.1. *Principals' perspectives*

8.2.1.1.1. *Time pressure from National Standards, curricular coverage, and teachers' multiple roles*

Some participating principals complained that it is hard for them to balance the allocated time for all subjects, including physical education.

Table 14.

Perceived Barriers and Challenges

Participants Themes	Principals' Perspectives	Teachers' Perspectives	Students' Perspectives
Perceived Barriers	1. Time pressure from National Standards, curricular coverage, and teachers' multiple roles 2. Finances 3. Teachers' lack of content knowledge about physical education	1. Time pressure from a 'packed' curriculum, and the emphasis on literacy and mathematics 2. "I want to teach hurdles, but we have not got hurdles. So those are the hurdles" 3. "The barrier is my own knowledge"	
Perceived Challenges: Perspectives on Outside Providers	4. They are supportive but lack knowledge	4. They are professional	1. "I like my teachers because they help people who cannot really do physical education"

Our teachers will probably say they do not have enough time to fit [physical education] in the curriculum, because they are so heavily engaged in numeracy, literacy, information technology, inquiry ... One of the barriers is gone, which could probably be one of the biggest barriers. It was the National Standards. We have [had] to teach and implement [physical education] effectively in line with the National Standards that places a lot of pressure on teachers to really saturate the timetable they daily planned with their work around reading, writing, and mathematics. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

Principal Ace concluded that a jam-packed curriculum along with meeting the recent National Standards assessments reduced the time available for teachers teaching physical education. Likewise, Principal Dash thought that the reality made having a physical education lesson every school day impossible because teachers could not cover everything required by the curriculum.

The biggest challenge and pressure are coverage. How do I make sure I am going through all curriculum objectives? That is probably why the biggest effect getting in the way of doing a great [physical education] lesson every day. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

For Dash, it seems impossible to have apportioned time for physical education lessons every day. It is also difficult for teachers to integrate physical education into other learning areas.

One of the biggest pressures is the balance of curriculum ... Now we are doing social science; we are doing English ... So, you are always trying to integrate the curriculum. We can do some social science and the arts at the same time. But how can we do mathematics and [physical education] at the same time? (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

To Dash's mind, some subjects are able to be integrated into one lesson together, but it seems to be problematic to combine physical education with other subjects. However, Principal Hart from Blue Sea School expressed a slightly different opinion. He said that "[physical education] fits around other subjects, but [it is] not the core subjects like reading, writing, and mathematics". Hart valued physical education, but he still thought literacy and mathematics should have priority over other subjects in primary schools, even though the National Standards had been terminated in 2017. So, it seems that less time is allotted to physical education in Blue Sea School, especially if physical education impacted on learning in priority areas such as literacy and numeracy.

8.2.1.1.2. Finances

Funding physical education seems to be a significant and challenging issue in schools with lower deciles, when compared with the schools with higher decile ratings. Brook School had a decile rating three in 2018.

We are a financially challenged school ... Funding is definitely a barrier. ... maintaining the facilities, upkeep ... to purchase things, new uniforms, new hockey sticks, or inline sticks, or other resources to support [physical education] teaching can be exceptionally challenging for us ... we need funding for sports equipment, sports facilities, and swimming pools ... That is a barrier for us. I know at least 15 swimming pools in schools around Waikato that are going to be closed because we cannot afford to run them. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

There was a similar scenario in Blue Sea School (decile rating four in 2018). The school did not have an indoor hall, resulting in the cancellation of physical education lessons when the weather was unpleasant. Principal Hart explained that "we do not have a gymnasium or a hall that we can use. When the weather is not suitable, teachers may cancel their daily [physical education] lessons

because there is no place or appropriate equipment available”. However, finances were not an issue at Meadow Farm School, a semi-rural school with a decile rating seven in 2018.

I think you can compare us with international standards. We sit quite properly, and I am really proud of resources we are able to provide for our children, the environment we are able to learn in, um, access to opportunities that we have. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

The lack of finances in schools with lower deciles is a significant barrier in the four participating schools. It has caused the cancellation of physical education when the weather is unpleasant, and it has reduced the opportunities for students to have a quality experience in physical education.

8.2.1.1.3. Teachers’ lack of content knowledge about physical education

Two principals thought that a lack of pedagogical content knowledge was the primary barrier for classroom teachers to deliver quality physical education lessons.

... probably just teachers’ own skills and knowledge, because they are not specialists in the area ... but if they were specialists, there probably would be a lot of more [teachers] explicitly teaching at the skill level. So, the quality may be higher. (Hope, Principal, Mountainland School)

That is a barrier for us, teachers’ capability, that is always a barrier. You have some teachers ... who are very capable of teaching [physical education]. Senior teachers tend to be better ... Some junior teachers certainly used to be supported around teaching physical education. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

The two principals knew their classroom teachers are generalists rather than physical education specialists, and understood that they may not be confident when teaching physical education. It is interesting to note that when Mountainland school recruits their teachers, teachers are judged on how well they teach literacy and mathematics rather than how well they teach physical education or other learning areas.

I am not sure that we judge our teachers on how well they can teach [physical education]. We probably make more judgments about how well they teach reading, writing, and math ... It is not to say that [physical education] is not important because all New Zealand teachers are trained to teach [physical education]. They need to be able to teach it, but it probably does not have the same emphasis as some of the other core subjects ... if a teacher is struggling in their areas of teaching [physical education], then I have to provide some support for them to either upskill themselves or to be supported to teach.

(Hope, Principal, Mountainland School)

Hope's comment indicated that although teachers are qualified, it does not mean that they are good at teaching physical education, and the school seemed to emphasise more on teachers' capacities for teaching literacy and mathematics. Classroom teachers' lack of content knowledge in physical education seems to be common in these primary schools, causing schools and teachers to look for support from outside providers.

8.2.1.2. Teachers' perspectives

8.2.1.2.1. Time pressure from a 'packed' curriculum, and emphasis on literacy and mathematics

Four teachers thought that time was a barrier for them to deliver physical education because they allocated more time to literacy, numeracy, and other work. They believed these subjects are more important than physical education.

So, it is very easy to throw [physical education] out, not really to make a continuous effort for that. What I am trying to say is that sometimes there are tests to be done, or work needs to be completed within a time frame so [physical education] can be one of the first subjects that is taken out of the timetable to give other things more time. (Reba, Teacher, Mountainland School)

We are spending more time on literacy and numeracy. It is one of our main focuses in primary schools. At times, not always, because I feel that literacy and numeracy are the most crucial subjects to teach in primary schools. I have spent more time on that instead of other [learning areas] like arts, [physical education] and all the rest. (Tara, Teacher, Brook School)

Likewise, Kana from Blue Sea School commented that "Time is the leading pressure. [Physical education] requires time, and it is also competing with the rest of the curriculum. I am struggling with time". Her colleague, Hilda added that "Time sometimes is pressure particularly previously with National Standards; that is much time to focus on reading, writing and mathematics".

The crowded curriculum, the emphasis on literacy and mathematics, various evaluations, and tests create a hierarchy of subjects that challenges teachers and principals to address the requirements

in the ‘priority’ subjects versus the scope of learning espoused in the NZC, giving rise to more pressure on schools and teachers. As a result, schools and teachers reduce the time allocated for subjects such as physical education or the arts. The lack of time caused by the crowded curriculum and the emphasis on literacy and mathematics seems a major challenge to the successful teaching of physical education.

8.2.1.2.2. *“I want to teach hurdles, but we have not got hurdles. So those are the hurdles”*

Some teachers reported that the deficiencies of facilities and equipment are a barrier, impeding them from having quality physical education programmes. Reba from Mountainland School remarked that barriers “... sometimes may be the equipment. You know, sometimes the school lacks equipment and the quality equipment”.

Sometimes we have not got the materials, for instance, I am trying to teach shot-put. We have not really got shot puts, so I am using balls. Like I want to teach hurdles, we have not got hurdles. So those are the ‘hurdles’. (Yair, Teacher, Mountainland School)

In terms of facilities for [physical education], definitely, we do not have the equipment. Um, the equipment or things we need to teach certain things for [physical education], we just do not have it, and that is why the money plays a big part. Of course, every school has a budget, and sometimes we just do not make the budget, and we cannot do anything about it. (Tara, Teacher, Brook School)

The three teachers did not seem satisfied with their schools’ facilities and equipment for physical education because the situation had influenced their teaching and students’ learning. Tara’s colleague, Kaden, mentioned the importance of equipment for teachers’ teaching and confidence.

I think if you have got a good activity and enough equipment, that can get you through the day, even if you are not confident as a teacher ... if you don't have the correct resources, you will let the children get bored, then you get the problem ... resourcing can be a problem sometimes, you know the equipment is very expensive. Sometimes schools have good equipment, and sometimes they don't. Sometimes it is manageable and sometimes [it] is not. (Kaden, Teacher, Brook School)

These comments indicate the teachers' sense of helplessness about the challenges presented by a lack of teaching resources in physical education. Teachers have to plan in advance to ensure that any equipment the schools do have is available. So, they can use the school resources optimally to provide students with a well-prepared physical education programme. Even in a school such as Meadow Farm, where the principal said that they were well resourced, teachers suggested that they had to plan in line with their school's capacity.

For example, in term one, we did cricket and softball, so these are two different sports but [they] use the same skills like catching, throwing, fielding, hitting ... that all takes time to make sure to get resources, make sure the school has the resources so that we do not need to order anything through the term break, to make sure we have got the right resources for the lessons. (Hank, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

... sometimes, it is the equipment. That is also again I chose touch [rugby] because it is winter. And all you need is basically balls and cones for that ... the next, if I do not have everything, so what are we going to do? (Tasha, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

Although the teachers' needs for teaching physical education in Meadow Farm School can be satisfied, Hank and Tasha still needed to plan in advance as physical education equipment was

shared across the school. Any shifts in when physical education is delivered can have the potential to limit access to the equipment needed. The lack of adequate, suitable equipment and facilities in physical education is a significant challenge and barrier in the schools, particularly those with low decile ratings. More financial support for maintaining, updating teaching facilities and equipment in these schools is needed.

8.2.1.2.3. *“The barrier is my own knowledge”*

Three out of eight participating teachers voiced a lack of confidence in teaching physical education because they lacked content knowledge.

The barrier is my own knowledge ... I think it is the biggest one. We probably need more professional development, materials, [and] more expert help. (Yair, Teacher, Mountainland School)

Probably when the span [for physical education] is very long, maybe an hour and a half, if there is something, I really was not confident then, I did not have any help, all the class is more expert than me. (Reba, Teacher, Mountainland School)

Like I said, I always have to do background research. I will always have to go on and find out more before I start teaching, so that has been a challenge for me while I do not know much ... again because I am not an expert ... there are many things I do not know. So that is the challenge. (Tara, Teacher, Brook School)

These teachers' remarks showed that they lacked confidence when teaching physical education. Likewise, by the principals' admission, the schools have recruited classroom teachers mainly for teaching literacy and mathematics, rather than for teaching physical education or other subjects.

Principal Gus from Mountainland School concluded that “the knowledge of the [NZC] in the area of HPE is still not strong among many teachers”.

8.2.2 Perceived challenges: perspectives on outside providers

Outside providers can impact both positively and negatively on primary school physical education. In this section, I introduce principals’, teachers’, and students’ perspectives on the challenges from outside providers in terms of three themes: principals’ – they are supportive but lack knowledge; teachers’ – they are professional; and students’ – ‘I like my teachers because they help people who cannot really do physical education’.

8.2.2.1. They are supportive but lack knowledge

Five out of the six principals spoke positively about outside providers’ role and the role programmes such as Project Energize played in the delivery of physical education programmes in their schools. They reported positive feelings about one of the outside providers – Sport Waikato. Sport Waikato is the primary outside sports provider in Waikato District that builds a close relationship with the four schools. It provides students with various physical activities and sports to develop their motor skills and helps schools prepare sports tournaments and competitions at the local and regional level.

Principal Ace from Brook School commented that “we have KiwiSport providing some sports for us, and they are here from time to time ... we have a staff member in Project Energize who is our lead consultant”. Blas, another principal from Brook School, added that “what we are trying to do here is to use mostly Sport Waikato”.

In Meadow Farm School, Sport Waikato and other outside providers offered their service as well.

We have got [an outside provider] coaching soccer for boys ... and Project Energize. They do come and support teachers with [physical education] lessons, to make sure our [physical education] lessons are engaging, and fostering skills purposefully. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

The same scenario happened in Blue Sea School and Mountainland School.

Over the years we have had, I think they are called Sport Waikato. They have us involved in a programme called Project Energize, and they have really good facilitators to come to our schools. We had a person who was working with teachers, which was a really big help. (Hart, Principal, Blue Sea School)

We get a lot of support from outside agencies which I think we need, because in a rural primary school, that is very unlikely, for example, to have [physical education] specialists in our school, and you are just going to have general classroom teachers in part of the role of taking [physical education]. So, the people coming from outside, like KiwiSport people, um, are really valuable. (Hope, Principal, Mountainland School)

In addition, Sport Waikato offered teachers professional development.

Their [Sport Waikato] role now has moved away from coming in just taking the [physical education] lessons and running kind of like spotlight sessions, to more come in working with teachers to professionally grow teachers to run better [physical education] lessons themselves. (Dash, Principal, Meadow Farm School)

Principal Ace from Brook School remarked that “they [Sport Waikato] come through, and run workshops for us around particular needs”. Deputy Principal Blas added, “... anybody needs help with anything, anybody needs professional development, and then to get those experts there to help, or using the one we have got in the school to help teachers learn”.

These principals appreciated Sport Waikato’s help. Principal Hart from Blue Sea School gave them praise and recognised their usefulness.

Project Energize is a great programme, because if teachers do not have confidence, that is really right there to support them. It is a kind of great professional development. That is what we do in our classes, which is the best way I think. They also handed out some handbooks and some books to our teachers.
(Hart, Principal, Blue Sea School)

Likewise, Principal Hope from Mountainland School said that “they [Sport Waikato] bring their specialisation, and do work with our teachers to become upskilled”. These principals emphasised that Sport Waikato was valuable to their schools because they could be called in when their schools needed help. They not only offered students training sessions but also ran workshops for teachers.

However, two principals worried about the quality of the programmes offered by the outside providers. One mentioned class management, and another complained that the outside providers lacked knowledge of the curriculum and did not know students’ individual needs.

About the quality they deliver, sometimes better, sometimes worse. As you can imagine, it is challenging for some of the external agencies to come in and manage children. They might be great athletes, they might have excellent skills, but to teach those skills is different. ... If you have got 65 students who have a diverse range of needs, the teachers may know who they are, their personalities, and which combination works well to get together. The management is a big part of it, but do our teachers have the same [physical education] skills from experts, probably not. So goes both ways. (Ace, Principal, Brook School)

Ace worried about the pedagogy these outside providers used, however, he was also aware that classroom teachers did not always have the knowledge for teaching physical education. It seems the school is in a dilemma and has to compromise because there is not a better option. Gus, the principal from Mountainland School, pointed out that there are different aims between the school and Sport Waikato, which leads to different ends.

Project Energize is funded by the Regional District Health Board but works with Sport Waikato. They have a strong philosophy around reducing obesity in schools with regular physical activities. It does not sit well with my philosophy around the person who attends [physical education] in primary schools. (Gus, Principal, Mountainland School)

As far as Gus was concerned, physical education should “contribute to your self-worth, and that can be an important part of your life”, and should not only focus on preventing obesity. Gus then expressed his dissatisfaction with the quality of the programme provided by Sport Waikato.

I am not feeling overly positive about that ... and I think it is sad to feel a low level. They do not have curriculum content knowledge to support what they are doing (Gus, Principal, Mountainland School)

Principal Gus thought that these programmes' quality was not reaching the requirements of either the curriculum of the school or the NZC. The two principals were not satisfied with the programmes provided by Sport Waikato because of the staff's lack of knowledge about the pedagogy, learners, and context, and their educational philosophy not being in line with the criteria of the schools' curricula and the NZC.

Undoubtedly, Sport Waikato promotes sports and health at schools, and supports teachers in improving their teaching in physical education and sports. However, these outside providers may lack knowledge of the NZC, pedagogy, the learners, and context because they are not registered teachers. The discrepancies in teaching philosophies in physical education between schools and outside providers cause concern.

8.2.2.2. They are professional

Overall, the participating teachers expressed gratitude and appreciation for the help from Sport Waikato. Six out of eight teachers mentioned that Sport Waikato came into their schools to teach students, ran workshops and professional development programmes for teachers, and distributed materials to teachers for future reference. These teachers acknowledged that help.

They [Sport Waikato] are actually really good. They help so much with Ripa Rugby because Yair and I are not at all familiar with the rules ... they stepped in, coached the kids, and coached me as well, until I was confident (Reba, Teacher, Mountainland School)

I think the quality of their teaching [Sport Waikato] is excellent. ... They have got really good ideas for games, and they really do help. ... I took notes about what they said and how they taught the children ... When they were gone, I tried to carry on with that. ... I used run, jump, and throw, or anything from Sport Waikato to teach (Yair, Teacher, Mountainland School)

We have Sport Waikato who provides us with good professional development ... Good support around the health issues. Those things they do because they are responsible and paid for by WDHB [Waikato District Health Board] ... They did lessons on differences between sprints and long-distance running, and multiple sessions for athletics. ... so I learned at the same time with students (Kaden, Teacher, Brook School)

Project Energize is a good organisation. They come to school and run [physical education] programmes. You can get so much value out of those ... they come out to help us, show us and demonstrate ... Through my teaching career, I have gone to different events and courses to do with health education, so I am really pretty familiar with a few things, but I have not done professional learning to do sports. What they do, that is good. That is hands-on. That is what you want ... they come to demonstrate and get teachers to do it too; then you suddenly realise the benefits in some courses you go to for other things, that is just somebody telling you stuff and you listen and write notes ... yep, I like it. I can say that involvement is really important. (Hank, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

Project Energize came in and did some training sessions and workshops ... I thought it was really good. They gave us some handouts. We use them ... We like them because we are saying “your game is a real way to get them [students] running around rather than doing laps”. (Tasha, Teacher, Meadow Farm School)

They [Sport Waikato] came to the school and did lessons with children, also provided professional development afterwards for teachers, particularly on athletics, swimming, and indoor fitness activities ... We also had access to an athletics event that was called Get Set Go ... We recently had professional development on fundamental skills, and I incorporated those ideas into my teaching. Project Energize people use it actually to test children at the beginning on running, jumping, throwing whether they [children] have the correct techniques, but I probably do not go into that much detail ... I do not always have the skills to know exactly how to analyse, how to help children ... but I have got notes, I can refer to them, but I do not feel like I am an expert. (Hilda, Teacher, Blue Sea School)

These teachers expressed their admiration for Sport Waikato because it helped them teach and provided professional development for them. The teachers viewed the outside providers as ‘experts’ in physical education because they were seen as having skills and knowledge in physical education and sports. The teachers were happy to attend their professional programmes because these programmes were practical. Like the participants in previous research (Dyson et al., 2016), Yair, Reba, Hilda, and Kaden saw it as a valuable opportunity to learn from them when outside providers come to schools to teach. Hank and Tasha claimed that the workshops and professional development programmes were valuable because they were practical rather than theoretical. Moreover, Hank felt that the practical experiences made him appreciate the knowledge he had gained from other courses.

Generally, these teachers felt that it made sense to get help for teaching physical education from outside providers, as they were able to develop a better understanding of how to organise and teach an individual sport or game step by step, giving them more confidence in teaching physical education.

8.2.2.3. *“I like my teachers because they help people who cannot really do physical education”*

Approximately 50 per cent of participating students preferred physical education to be taught by their classroom teachers, while 20 per cent of the students preferred it to be taught by outside providers or physical education specialists. The remaining 30 per cent suggested that their preferred teacher depended on what was being taught.

The students that preferred having their classroom teachers stated that this was their preference because of their teachers’ comprehensive knowledge and inclusive, supportive attitude towards every student. For example, Kier from Brook School explained that “I like my teachers to teach because they are more encouraging.” He showed me the photo he took (see **Figure 4**).

Figure 4.

Kier’s Photo about His Classroom Teacher



Cheng: Kier, you have just said you like Mr Kaden to teach you. Can you tell me why?

Kier: I think it is cool that he is running with us. He [Mr Kaden] helps all of us, especially for the people who cannot really do it [physical education].

Kama then added, “I like Mr Kaden and Ms Tara too, especially, Mr Kaden who has been running cross-country with us, and helping us to keep going, and do not stop ...” In these students’ eyes, their teachers’ positive encouragement and behaviour were vital for their learning, particularly for those that were not good at physical education.

Four students from Meadow Farm School expressed similar standpoints. In their minds, classroom teachers knew them very well, and could create a fun learning environment. Dior and May said that they liked their teachers because “they are full of fun”. Mabel stated that she preferred having her own teachers for physical education as “they are supportive and comprehend us”. Furthermore, Sacha explained:

I think teachers are quite good because they are still learning. They can tell you what they are learning. So, they know you a lot better than some coaches you might have just met. So, they will know your name and know what you are good at, what you like; and you are new to the coaches, they do not know much about you besides your name. So, I am really with the teachers. (Sacha, Student, Meadow Farm School)

Likewise, four students at Mountainland School had the same views on their classroom teachers. Sandro said that “I just like having Mrs Reba to teach us about [physical education] because she is really nice. We normally get to do fun activities”. Aeson remarked that “It is just really cool when Mrs Reba teaches us, because like if you make mistakes, she is really nice about it”. Oakley commented that “... it is really fun when she is teaching [physical education] because like, sometimes she teaches us some new things we do not know”. Bobbi emphasised that the relationship she has with her teacher is different from that with the outside providers.

I like to get my teacher to teach me because she knows me a bit better so she can help me. And she has been watching me for a while instead of the coaches and others need to get to know you. (Bobbi, Student, Mountainland School)

These students enjoyed having their classroom teachers teaching physical education. They believed that their teachers knew them well and would better support their personal development. In addition, their teachers were able to establish an equal learning environment catering to all students, and bring more fun activities to supporting their learning.

Eight out of the 24 students felt that whom they preferred to teach physical education depended on the content. They might prefer a coach or physical specialists to teach them if the activity was sports or for competition, whereas they might like their teachers if it was normal physical activities and exercises.

It depends on what we are doing. If it is like actually a sport, like not just exercises, or games, or a typical [physical education] lesson, then I probably prefer a person who knows more about sports to teach me rather than a teacher who knows round stuff, like all-around stuff, but does not really know much about, like hockey, very individual sports. (Faith, Student, Blue Sea School)

I am much pretty ok whoever, just as long as they know what they are doing. (Macy, Student, Blue Sea School)

If it is for competition then we maybe prefer someone who knows more about that, but if it is for like, just go energy exercising, then it would be good for the teacher to show us and the teacher can also then get us to have more experience. So I do not mind anyone. (Adina, Student, Blue Sea School)

We do not really mind, probably, both. The teacher shows us like, basic things while the coach will do the same but more with like games and shoots. (Dane and Basil, Student, Blue Sea School)

These students were aware of the respective advantages of classroom teachers and coaches. They all said that classroom teachers are preferred for physical education lessons that focus on activity, play, and exercise, but not necessarily to specialise in a specific sport. However, when learning to play competitive sport, they thought that a coach or a specialist would probably be better, as they would have more specialised knowledge about sport.

However, five students believed that the specialists or outside providers should teach physical education on the grounds that they knew more about sport than their teachers.

I think I like the coaches more because ... I just think sometimes coaches can be a little bit better and almost like coaching you for sport than teachers. Because they sometimes know more about what they are doing than teachers do sometimes. (Kinsley, Student, Meadow Farm School)

I like coaches because they are more experienced. (Spike, Student, Brook School)

Because they get more experienced. (Aroha, Student, Brook School)

I do not know. I just prefer my coach to teach me. I do not mind teachers, but I prefer a coach. (Fallon, Student, Brook School)

I would say [that] to train people and they [coaches] would be good to come here. (Orion, Student, Brook School)

These students preferred coaches or specialists because they had more knowledge and experience of a particular sport. They thought they could learn more specialised knowledge from the coaches or specialists.

8.3 Time pressure, finances, and teachers' lack of content knowledge

In the present study, three factors were identified as strongly influencing the quality of physical education in the four primary schools: time pressure, finances, and classroom teachers' lack of content knowledge (**Table 15**). These factors are not new findings, but long-lasting issues in the primary school context. These factors have inhibited the schools and teachers from delivering quality physical education programmes in their schools to some extent.

Time pressure caused by National Standards, curricular scope, and teachers' extra duties have influenced the frequency in which teachers taught physical education lessons. Three principals complained that National Standards had caused extra workloads to schools and teachers such as the assessment and the focus on literacy and mathematics. So, the schools had to allocate more time to literacy and mathematics, and less time to physical education and other subjects. Four teachers agreed with the principals' explanations. They ascribed the lack of quality physical education to National Standards because they had to spend more time preparing teaching, learning,

Table 15.

Cross-Case Analysis of Participants' Perceived Barriers and Challenges

Themes Participants	Time pressure, finances, and a lack of content knowledge	They are supportive but lack knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy	“I like my teachers because they help people who cannot really do physical education”
Principals	1. Time pressure from National Standards, curricular coverage, and teachers' multiple roles 2. Finances 3. Teachers' lack of content knowledge	1. They are supportive but lack knowledge	
Teachers	4. Time pressure from a 'packed' curriculum, and emphasis on literacy and mathematics 5. “I want to teach hurdles, but we have not got hurdles. So those are the hurdles” 6. “The barrier is my own knowledge”	2. They are professional	
Students			1. “I like my teachers because they help people who cannot really do physical education”

and assessing literacy and mathematics. One principal mentioned that the NZC covers a broad range of learning areas. They stated that it is hard for teachers to integrate physical education with other subjects, which further reduces opportunities for physical education. What is more, the principals and teachers may undertake other duties because there is a limited budget on staffing entitlements, in particular in schools with lower decile. It seems the time pressure from National Standards, curricular scope, and teachers' extra duties has influenced physical education in their schools to a greater extent.

An additional issue that was perceived to impact on physical education is finances. Two principals and four teachers from the four primary schools mentioned the lack of facilities and equipment in their physical education programmes. Two principals from the schools with low decile reported that their schools did not have sufficient financial support to purchase the equipment and renovate or upgrade their physical education facilities such as indoor halls. Similarly, the teachers from the schools with both low and high deciles said that they had limited equipment available to design and implement their physical education programmes. Quality facilities and equipment are perceived to be important for quality physical education. Without suitable equipment and teaching spaces, students' learning is thought to be compromised.

Classroom teachers' lack of knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy is a long-lasting issue in primary schools (Gordon et al., 2013; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a; Penney et al., 2013; Petrie, 2010; Pope, 2014). Three principals and three teachers said classroom teachers lacked knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy. The principals knew the strengths of their teachers from recruitment. One principal said that their school was inclined to employ teachers who are good at teaching

literacy and mathematics. Not surprisingly, at this school two experienced teachers admitted that they lacked content knowledge of physical education. It indicates that the lower status of physical education than literacy and mathematics still exists in some principals' minds, which may partially contribute to the teachers' lack of content knowledge of physical education in primary schools.

8.4 They are supportive, but I like my teachers to teach physical education

When referring to outside providers, 11 out of 14 principals and teachers felt that the outside providers were helpful and supportive. For example, one principal said that a Sport Waikato coordinator was in his school so that the outside providers could be on call on the school days. The outside providers also gave teachers regular professional development to help them teach physical activity and sport in their schools' physical education programmes. Thus, the teachers felt they were well supported. However, two principals said that they worried about the quality of the programmes delivered by these outside providers because the outside providers lacked the knowledge of the schools, the school community, learners, the school curriculum, the NZC, and pedagogy. Nevertheless, the principals seem not to have a better idea of who should teach primary school physical education.

When asking students whom they prefer to teach physical education, classroom teachers, outside providers, or physical education specialists, half of the students preferred to have their classroom teachers teach them. 30% of the students said who will teach them depends on the content or subjects in their physical education lessons. Only 20% of the students wanted outside providers to teach them. It is evident that if the content or subject of physical education is for all, 80% of the students would prefer their teachers to teach them physical education. The students who support their classroom teachers used different words to describe their teachers: the caring, encouraging,

nice, fun, intimate relationship, and allowing them to make mistakes. Their answers show the importance of the relationship between students and teachers, and the significance of teachers' emotional support to students in teaching and learning (Tennant et al., 2015).

8.5 Long-lasting barriers to quality physical education

The meaning of quality can be understood differently in different contexts, so there has not been a consensus on what constitutes quality physical education (Dyson, 2014; Webster et al., 2014; Williams & Pill, 2019). Penney et al. (2009) argued that a quality physical education programme should include a quality curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment. Webster et al. (2014) proposed eight criteria for a quality physical education lesson, specifically, whether: (1) all students have access to it; (2) it is instructed by a teacher who has continuous, sustained practice and education; (3) it is allotted sufficient time in the school curriculum; (4) it creates a constructive and positive learning milieu; (5) it can be assessed to boost learning that is congruent with other academic learning areas; (6) it focuses on learners' needs; (7) it encourages individuals and society to develop active and healthy lifestyles; and (8) it uses methods from research-based findings.

Compared to Webster et al.'s (2014) eight criteria about quality physical education, the four schools' physical education programmes seemed unable to fulfil these criteria. Many factors inhibited the schools and classroom teachers from having quality physical education. For example, in the four schools, the crowded curriculum that squeezed the time allotted to physical education, a lack of facilities and equipment that impeded a positive learning environment, and teachers' lack of content knowledge and confidence meaning that students' learning outcomes were compromised and more informed teacher education was needed.

Eight out of the 14 participating principals and teachers in my research said that, in a crowded curriculum, they chose to give priority to science, literacy, and mathematics over physical education. The demands of literacy and mathematics, and various management requirements in primary schools occupied the teachers' time. Similarly, previous studies that used a mixed-method research design have shown that a crowded curriculum puts pressure on teaching physical education (Gordon et al., 2016; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). In New Zealand, Gordon et al. (2016) recognised that the pressure from National Standards on reading and writing influenced classroom teachers' practice in physical education negatively because most of the teachers' time was used for preparing to teach those subjects. Likewise, in Australia, Morgan and Hansen (2008a) found that teachers ranked the "lack of time/crowded curriculum" (p. 510) at the top of a list of institutional barriers; however, beyond the ranking, they only offered two extracts from their qualitative data to support this claim. My research, therefore, adds further evidence to support the claim that the time allocated to physical education is reduced as a result of a crowded curriculum and the prioritisation of other learning areas.

In addition, due to physical education's unique characteristic, that is, there is no universal or standard method to assess it like other academic subjects, an inveterate impression of its inferior status to other core subjects persists in people's minds. Dwyer et al. (2003) complained that the absence of performance measures in physical education had been seen as a barrier to its implementation, creating a typical comment about physical education such as:

Physical education doesn't have, as far as the marks go, any clout. The parents say, "Well, ok, they got a C in physed [physical education]. That doesn't really matter." C in drama. C in art. It's all in that area.

Whereas if it's a C in math or language, their eyebrows go up and questions start popping. So it's the value you put on the subject. (Dwyer et al., 2003, p. 450)

It is evident in the present research and the above comment, deep-seated views about physical education are still in some peoples' mind, where it is not usually seen as an essential subject in comparison to other measurable subjects in the school curriculum (Lineham, 2003). It is not difficult to understand why physical education has not been given importance in school curricula. López-Pastor et al. (2013) suggested that "assessment is an integral and necessary aspect of education across all subject areas of the school curriculum" (p. 73). It seems that only when there is a general agreement that physical education is valued like other subjects, will much importance be attached to it (Chng & Lund, 2018; Chróinín & Cosgrave, 2013; López-Pastor et al., 2013).

The lack of facilities and equipment for physical education is not a barrier unique to New Zealand. My research findings about that align with other studies' findings (Dwyer et al., 2003; Gordon et al., 2016; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a; Ovens, 2008; Penney et al., 2013). The lack of facilities becomes noticeable, especially in winter when the weather does not allow teaching physical education outdoors, so that "in some ways it [physical education] is almost like a frill" (Dwyer et al., 2003, p. 450). Morgan and Hansen (2008a) pointed out that insufficient facilities were a common barrier to physical education, reported by 189 classroom teachers from 38 primary schools in Australia. Because of increasing class rolls, there was a lack of indoor space for physical education in those schools. Likewise, nearly half of the teacher participants in the study of Gordon et al. (2016) in New Zealand reported that the availability of facilities in their schools was not sufficient. Ovens (2008) has argued that the current gymnasiums in schools cannot meet the requirements for quality physical education in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007). Ovens

(2008) urged that one of the most urgent issues for the future of HPE in New Zealand is to maintain and update dilapidated gymnasiums to support teaching indoors. As per the proposed criteria for quality physical education (Webster et al., 2014), inadequate facilities will affect teachers' planning, implementation of quality physical education and students' learning outcomes. My research finding offers the latest information about this issue in primary schools in New Zealand.

Teachers' lack of content knowledge and confidence in teaching physical education has been reported in previous studies (Gordon et al., 2013; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a; Penney et al., 2013; Petrie, 2010; Pope, 2014). My research found the same scenario among classroom teachers and provides updated information. Penney et al. (2013) reported the insufficiency of content knowledge of physical education among classroom teachers in six primary schools in New Zealand. It is interesting to note that Gordon et al. (2013) reported that, of the 11 physical education specialist teachers in their study, most felt confident in teaching physical education. However, some of them thought that their colleagues lacked confidence in teaching physical education. A similar situation was reported in Australia, where Morgan and Hansen (2008a) noted classroom teachers' low level of confidence and lack of content knowledge in teaching physical education. Pope (2014) argued that neoliberalism and a blurry relationship between sport and physical education have brought initial teacher education programmes of HPE to an unstable position. Notably, the reduced time for physical education in teacher education has partially contributed to teachers' lack of content knowledge and confidence (Dyson et al., 2011; Gordon et al., 2013; Griggs & Ward, 2012; Smith & Philpot, 2011). It seems more professional development programmes with sufficient time for physical education are needed for improving teachers' lack of content knowledge and confidence.

Of the reported barriers, time pressure and finances are beyond teachers' control. The crowded curriculum and insufficient provision of facilities and equipment seemingly cannot be solved in the short term because they are influenced by external factors such as funding policies based on government priorities. A possible solution is to appeal for more funds for primary schools from the Ministry of Education (Ovens, 2008; Penney et al., 2013). Quantitative research should be conducted to raise the issue to a more significant level in the future.

In contrast, internal factors, such as teachers' lack of content knowledge and confidence, can be improved by individual effort. To rebuild teachers' capacities to teach physical education, context-oriented professional development programmes are urgently needed. Primarily, the programmes should focus on "both the content and pedagogy of physical education" (Penney et al., 2013, p. 4) for pre-service and in-service teachers (McKenzie & McKenzie, 2018; Petrie, 2010; Petrie et al., 2007).

8.6 Challenges: outsourcing or a coalition?

Although studies have been conducted in the context of New Zealand (e.g., Dyson et al., 2011; Dyson et al., 2016; Petrie et al., 2014; Powell, 2015), there is minimal evidence about principals' and students' perspectives on outsourcing (Sperka & Enright, 2018; Williams & Macdonald, 2015). The main concerns about outsourced HPE programmes are whether they can be consistent with the requirements of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007) and whether they can meet schools', teachers', and students' needs (Dyson et al., 2016; Petrie et al., 2014).

In the four schools, Sport Waikato was the primary outside provider. This finding is congruent with previously reported findings (Dyson et al., 2016; Petrie et al., 2014). Petrie et al. (2014) found that Sport Waikato, a regional branch affiliated with Sport New Zealand, had 44 programmes for HPE in primary and secondary schools around Waikato. Of those programmes, 86.3 per cent were in primary schools. Dyson et al. (2016) reported that many other outside providers were in 133 primary and intermediate schools across New Zealand. In 422 out of 487 teachers' questionnaire responses, the outside providers' total number was up to 638. Employing outside providers to deliver HPE in primary schools seems common in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2018).

The majority of principals and teachers commented that these outside providers were supportive, but they lacked knowledge of the NZC. The participants' perspectives resonate with previous research findings – that is, these programmes seem not to satisfy or be in line with the aims and content of the NZC (Dyson et al., 2016; Petrie, 2012; Powell, 2015). Petrie et al. (2014) reported that not all students could be fully engaged in an outsourced programme. In addition, the provision of the programmes was sport- and skill-oriented (Petrie et al., 2014), and the providers had limited pedagogical knowledge of the curricular objectives in four strands in the NZC (Dyson et al., 2016). It means that these programmes only meet part of curricular achievement objectives of the NZC (e.g., movement concepts and motor skills), while the rest of the objectives are absent (Dyson et al., 2016). These omissions lead to physical education classes with a very narrow focus on movement skills and an absence of broader personal and social development goals.

It is noticeable that participants in my research said that the outside providers offer professional development programmes to teachers. Petrie (2011) warned that the people delivering these

programmes, who are not typically trained teachers, have limited “knowledge of the curriculum, pedagogy, context or learners” (p. 15). The aims of these programmes are not to promote teachers to teach physical education in accordance with the NZC, but to concentrate on the aims of their respective organisations (Evans, 1993; Williams & Macdonald, 2015). Macdonald (2011) warned that under the influence of neoliberalism, the outsourcing of HPE, underpinned by the well-promoted knowledge of health issues, disease prevention, and obesity, has an impact on the physical education profession. As a consequence, a narrow conceptualisation of physical education as sport, disease prevention, physical activity, and exercise may obstruct the implementation of the NZC in primary schools (Petrie et al., 2014). Because of the outside providers’ influence, Petrie et al. (2014) urged that principals and teachers should have critical eyes when choosing programmes for their students. They appealed for an inclusive HPE programme that is created by and collaborates with researchers, schools, and classroom teachers (Petrie et al., 2014). It seems that much more effort is needed through pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes for the successful implementation of the NZC.

There has been a paucity of studies about students’ perspectives on outsourcing (Sperka & Enright, 2018). Small-scale study as my research is, it has added new information about students’ perspectives on this topic. My research showed that approximately 50 per cent of participating students would prefer their classroom teachers to teach them physical education. About 30 per cent of participating students indicated that their preference for having the classroom teachers, outside providers, or specialists in this role depended on the content. In comparison, only 20 per cent of participating students indicated that they preferred specialists or outside providers to teach physical education. It seems to be impossible to satisfy all students’ needs. Nevertheless, in most students’

views, having classroom teachers teach physical education is preferable because they know the curriculum, pedagogy, context, and learners (Petrie, 2011).

Jones and Green (2017) categorised the methods of delivering physical education in England into three models: the generalist teachers' model, coaches' model, and physical education specialists' model. Every model seems to have its benefits and detriments. Researchers have pointed out that classroom teachers' main weakness is the lack of confidence and content knowledge of physical education (Dyson et al., 2016; Jones & Green, 2017; Morgan & Hansen, 2008a). In contrast, outside providers and physical education specialists may know more about physical education and sports, and can use appropriate methods to improve students' skills learning (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012; Morgan & Bourke, 2008). However, outside providers and specialists seem to lack knowledge of general pedagogy, context, and learners when compared to generalist classroom teachers (Petrie, 2011). There is no simple solution to deal with what has happened in primary physical education. It appears that, in the short term at least, a combination of classroom teachers, outside providers, and HPE specialists will be required to meet the broad objectives of primary school physical education.

The specific form of a combined approach to physical education teaching needs to be fitted into each school's situation. Williams and Macdonald (2015) described an outsourcing model in an Australian school where an on-site registered teacher oversaw the outsourced activities on behalf of the school. This example illustrates that schools and teachers are still concerned about the quality of these outsourced programmes, but classroom teachers seem to satisfy only general needs when teaching physical education. If some students wanted more expertise on movement, motor

skills, and game understanding in physical education, it appears that it is necessary to seek help from specialists or outside providers. It seems that only if physical education includes outside providers under the guidance of qualified teachers can it be endowed with educational attributes and more in line with the requirements of the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007). Thus, if physical education is to deliver on its potential as stated in the NZC (Ministry of Education, 2007), classroom teachers must play a central role in overseeing the implementation of a broad physical education curriculum, with assistance from outside providers and physical education specialists. The ‘recipe’ for each school will differ, based on the strengths of its teaching staff, facilities, resources, and the available local supporting organizations.

8.7 Chapter summary

Primary school physical education is a domain where many factors enable or limit quality physical education. In the four primary schools, perceived barriers and challenges included time, finances, and teachers’ capacities. As an alternative, many outside providers taught physical education and sport in the four schools. The majority of principals and teachers appreciated these providers. In their minds, the outside providers were professional and supportive, but they lacked knowledge about the school, context, learners, curriculum, and pedagogy. It is worthwhile to mention that most of the students, especially those who may not be as confident and physically able in physical education, preferred their teachers to teach physical education. It seems a physical education programme in primary schools taught by classroom teachers with assistance from outside providers and HPE specialists is a feasible suggestion to meet the requirements of the NZC.

In the final chapter, I present my research contributions, limitations, recommendations, self-reflection, and some conclusions.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

Most participants in the present study valued physical education. They expressed a variety of perspectives; for example, physical education can improve students' social skills and personal development, being a source of fun and enjoyment with friends and families. Interestingly, physical education was valued for its cathartic role and its contribution to learning in other learning areas, such as reducing the need for classroom management and improving students' attention. These participants' perspectives suggest a strong focus on learning in the social and affective domains in physical education (Ciotto & Gagnon, 2018). Physical education seems to go well beyond being just a subject at school, with strong connections to valued social activities in their everyday lives.

From the participants' perspectives and my observation, participating principals and teachers held different perceptions of physical education in the NZC. Some believed that the flexibility offered by the curriculum was positive, while others believed that physical education in the NZC would offer greater clarity for primary school teachers if it was prescriptive. The four schools' physical education programmes were aligned with local sport events and the seasons. The physical education programmes in some schools were severely restricted by a lack of indoor teaching facilities and the weather in regard to what they can offer. Although the classroom teachers lacked content knowledge of physical education, it is worth noting that most students preferred their teachers to teach physical education and wished schools to provide them with a greater variety of activities in their physical education programmes.

9.2 Contributions

The present research showed a living image of the primary school principals', classroom teachers', and students' experiences in primary school physical education. It contributes to a rich, considered analysis of physical education as part of curriculum practice and how it is understood, interpreted, and implemented by these stakeholders in New Zealand.

9.3 Limitations

There are some limitations in the present research in terms of theory and practice. Theoretically, my interpretation and understanding of Mao Zedong's thoughts might not reach its full potential for two reasons: (1) there are limited studies in English about Mao Zedong's thoughts on education and physical education; and (2) no studies previously used Mao Zedong's thoughts on education and physical education in New Zealand. Thus, the limited studies using Mao Zedong's thoughts on education and physical education may have restrained my interpretation.

Practically, some research methods used might not have been optimised to their potential because of my limited research experience. Examples are that: (1) I did not treat visual theory as a primary data source but as a supplement, because the scope of this research was a little broad and there was limited space to interpret and present all of the students' perspectives; (2) while one of the perceived advantages of the focus group interview was to reduce students' fears, it might have cut down the variety of responses to a specific question. Some students duplicated the previous student's opinion and used different words on the same question. In the future, I would choose individual interviews with students to avoid the participants leading one another's answers in the

focus group interviews; (3) participants' perspectives on the value of physical education might be influenced by outside providers because Sport Waikato covered all participating schools.

9.4 Recommendations

Tinning (2012), and Ward and Griggs (2018) warned that primary physical education as cultural heritage has had the appearance of “‘sport as techniques’; ‘anyone can teach it’; ‘busy, happy and good’; and ‘nowhere important’” (Ward & Griggs, 2018, p. 402). This interpretation of physical education may further erode the uncertain status of physical education in the primary school curriculum. Based on the present research and its limitations, further studies should consider the relationship between physical education and other academic subjects, and assessment in physical education. Such studies may arm physical education with potential value in the primary school curriculum. Also, additional research needs to be conducted on principals' and teachers' perspectives on the value of physical education, in particular at schools that are not in the network of Sport Waikato. Furthermore, students' perspectives on whom they prefer to teach physical education should take into account, specifically aiming for students who are not physically able. Last but not least, quantitative research on the lack of facilities and equipment in primary school physical education in New Zealand is needed.

9.5 Self-reflection

As an international student with English as a second language pursuing a doctoral degree overseas was the most challenging decision I had ever made. The study process was not only for a degree but also about self-actualisation. I have learned much through preparing, undertaking, and completing this dissertation. A comment presented here is three essential theoretical concepts I think are essential in research with human participants – reflexivity, discussion, and relationship.

The concepts of reflexivity, discussion, and relationship mingled with research activities from beginning to end in this research (Berger, 2015). For interviews, the asking and answering processes were reflexive discussion activities. Not only did the participants need to think about their answers, but I as the interviewer needed to figure out easy-to-understand questions. For example, I simplified and refined the research questions through pilot interviews and regular discussions with my supervisors. Thus, the participants could quickly grasp the research questions.

I built and maintained a friendly relationship with the participants by the gatekeepers' help³³ (four school principals and eight teachers) (Reeves, 2010; Riese, 2019). So the participants were pleased to cooperate with me. The relationship in this research was shown not only between the participants and me, but also between physical education and other subjects. For example, the participants' perspectives suggested that physical education contributes to a balanced school life, which embodies a relationship between physical education and other subjects, and between physical education and the participants' school life. Besides, physical education was expressed as a subject for improving interpersonal skills, showing a relationship between physical education and social-emotional development. What is more, the principals and teachers thought that those outside providers were supportive, illustrating a trust relationship among outside providers, schools, and teachers.

In addition, different words used to describe physical education by participating students showed a relationship with what they mentioned. For example, physical education could help students lose

³³ A person controls access to something and somewhere. For example, a school principal has the power to grant or deny permission to a visitor for entering into the school and the classrooms, and access to the students.

weight, suggesting a relationship between physical education and obesity. Physical education was fun, symbolising its relationship with enjoyment and mental health. Physical education was about weekend sports with families and friends, representing a relationship among physical education, the local cultures, and the community. It is noteworthy that participating students said they preferred classroom teachers to teach physical education because they knew them very well, which demonstrates a relationship between students and teachers. Similarly, the context might influence students' choice of who would teach them, showing a relationship between subjects and teachers. These activities indicate that the value of the relationship is not only between the researcher and participants but also between physical education and other themes. Overall, reflexivity, discussion, and relationship are symbolic concepts in this research that helped me understand the participants and their lived experiences.

9.6 Conclusions

This research investigated primary school principals', teachers', and students' perspectives on physical education in four primary schools in New Zealand. The participants' perspectives showed that physical education was perceived to have played, and will continue to play, a central role in students' holistic development in the primary school curriculum. Its influence is building students' interpersonal skills and making lasting contributions to students' physical and psychological well-being.

It seems that physical education can balance a congested school life, create diversified experiences, and support students' development in other academic subjects (Telford, 2017), although the relationships and links between physical education and other academic subjects still need further investigation. Perhaps, if physical education is armed with a health and body discourse (Tinning,

2015a), “together with a process of vertical or compatible integration” (Tinning, 2015b, p. 688) with other learning subjects, “and to move towards more customised forms of physical education that better meet the needs of young people” (Armour, 2018, p. xi), it can further fulfil the holistic development espoused in curriculum documents.

Classroom teachers in charge of primary school physical education have confronted sharp criticism about their pedagogies and knowledge of physical education. In these four schools, time pressure, teachers’ lack of content knowledge and confidence in teaching physical education, the shortage of funding and facilities, and challenges from outsourcing had all influenced the implementation of the NZC to some degree. The perceived barriers and challenges in the present research cannot be resolved simply by initiating more professional development programmes, introducing more physical education specialists, or increasing funding to schools. Ovens et al. (2013) argued that the tricky situation of physical education has been brought into being by a large number of agencies that are intertwined, interdependent, and interconnected in a progressive and constantly changing way. This situation has taken root in the history, culture, institutions, and customs where it is situated (Kirk, 2010). The discussion on how physical education is composed, what components it should include, and who should teach it will be ongoing.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Principals' Interview Questions

1. Could you introduce yourself first? For example, your education background and how many schools have you worked for?
2. Could you introduce your school briefly? For example, how many teachers, classrooms, and students are currently in your school?
3. What are the beliefs and values of your school?
4. Can your school achieve these values through physical education?
5. Are you interested in physical education?
6. What do you think about the usefulness of physical education?
7. What do you think about *The New Zealand curriculum*?
8. Do the teachers use *The New Zealand curriculum* for designing and implementing their own physical education curriculum/programme? Please give a sample.
9. What do you think about the position of physical education in your school curriculum?
10. What do you think about your teachers' ability to teach physical education?
11. Are there any physical education programmes in your school provided by external providers? If so, what do you think about the quality of these programmes? Can these programmes meet the requirements of your school curriculum?
12. What barriers prevent your school from having a quality physical education lesson/programme?

Appendix 2: Teachers' Interview Questions

1. What is your perspective on physical education?

1) What is the usefulness of physical education in your opinion?

2. What do you think about *The New Zealand Curriculum*?

2) Have you used the NZC to design, implement and teach your physical education lessons?

3) Do you prefer having a detailed curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education or using your own one?

3. How do you teach physical education?

4) What type of pedagogy or teaching model have you used for teaching physical education?

5) What topics have you used in physical education?

6) Why do you choose the topics, and where are the topics from?

7) Have you used online or pre-packaged resources to teach physical education?

8) How many physical education lessons do you teach per week?

9) How long do you usually need to prepare for a physical education lesson?

10) How long is one physical education lesson?

11) How do you evaluate students' performance in your physical education lessons?

12) How do you judge your own teaching?

4. What barriers have you experienced in teaching physical education?

13) What barriers/obstacles have you faced when teaching physical education?

14) What other curriculum areas do you feel need to be supported?

Appendix 3: Students' Interview Questions

1. Could you introduce yourself first? Like how old you are and your interests.
2. To you, what are the benefits of physical education?
3. What is your best experience in physical education?
4. What have you learned from physical education?
5. Do your parents support you to take part in physical education? And how?
6. Does your school encourage you to participate in physical education?
7. Who do you prefer to teach physical education, your classroom teachers, a physical education specialist or a coach? Why?
8. Would you be happy if there were more options in physical education provided by your school, such as dance, outdoor education, sports, and so on? Why?
9. Do you like group work or individual learning?
10. What kinds of physical activities do you often do after school?
11. Could you talk about the photos you have taken? Like when you take the photos, what is in your photos, and why you choose the photos, or what you like about the photos.

Appendix 4: The Advertisement for Recruiting Schools

Four Primary Schools Wanted



This research is planning to investigate primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives on physical education in New Zealand by Cheng Deng. Cheng is a doctoral student studying at The University of Auckland and supervised by Dr Ben Dyson and Dr Maureen Legge. Cheng aims to recruit four primary schools in Waikato District. Cheng will be at each school for a term (6-10 weeks) and use interviews, observations and visual theory to collect data. In each school, Cheng will interview one principal, two classroom teachers, and six students, and observe and film four physical education lessons.

Cheng will donate NZD 250 to each school upon completing data collection.

If your school is keen to join this project, please contact Cheng Deng for more information.

(Email: cden328@aucklanduni.ac.nz)

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800

Appendix 5: The Board of Trustees and Principals' Participant

Information Sheet



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

Epsom Campus

Gate 3, 74 Epsom Avenue

Auckland, New Zealand

Telephone 64 9 623 8899

Facsimile 64 9 623 8898

www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

Participant Information Sheet: Principals & the Board of Trustees

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Name of student researcher: Cheng Deng

Name(s) of supervisor(s): Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Researchers' introduction:

All researchers are working at the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, The University of Auckland. Cheng Deng is a doctoral student. His supervisors are Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen

Legge. Dr. Ben Dyson is an associate professor who has carried out extensive research on physical education. Dr. Maureen Legge is a senior lecturer teaching physical education. She has conducted studies about teaching physical education in New Zealand teacher education with particular reference to being bicultural.

Invitation to participate:

You and your school are invited to be part of this study: ‘Primary school principals’, classroom teachers’ and students’ perspectives of physical education in New Zealand’, which is Cheng’s doctoral dissertation.

Project introduction:

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of principals’, classroom teachers’ and students’ perspectives on physical education. For example, how classroom teachers teach physical education and what they think about it.

Participants, methods and procedures:

Cheng will carry out the research procedures. Cheng will recruit one principal, two classroom teachers and six students from your school and will be at your school for six to 10 weeks. Cheng will use individual interviews, observation, document analysis and ‘photo elicitation’ (photo prompting) with focus group interviews to collect data. All interviews will be done at a time and place to be agreed. All interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed by a university-employed transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement or Cheng.

Individual interviews will be used for meeting with the principal and classroom teachers. Cheng will interview the principal first, once for 30 minutes in order to gain a school-wide view of

physical education. Then, Cheng will interview the participating teachers twice. Each interview will take 30 minutes. The first interview will be conducted after the interview with the principal. The second one will be organised contingently in the last week in order to gain more information about issues emerging from the observation and first interview.

Cheng will use photo elicitation (photo promoting) with focus group interviews to interview the six participating students (three students in each of two focus groups). The first interview will focus on gaining the students' initial perspectives about physical education. The second interview with photo elicitation will be in the last week in order to gain more information arising in photos and observation.

Cheng will observe four physical education lessons taught by the two participating teachers. The four lessons will be videotaped. Before videotaping, Cheng will seek consent from those participating teachers, students, and their parents.

In addition, documents about your school, such as the handbook, brochures, unit plans, and other documents, will be collected or copied by Cheng for later analysis.

Data storage, retention, destruction, and future use:

The data, including the interview transcripts, documents, observation notes, photos and videos, and the signed consent forms, will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ben Dyson's office in The University of Auckland, for six years. The electronic data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for the same time. After six years, all paper data will be shredded and digital data will be deleted.

The data will be analysed by the student researcher (Cheng). A hard copy of the transcripts and analysis results will be available to participants who were interviewed individually (in this case they are principals and teachers). If the participants wish to receive it, they can write down their email or postal address on the consent form. The data will be used only for Cheng's dissertation, journal publications and conference presentations. Without permission from the participants, Cheng will not use these data for other uses.

Confidentiality:

Cheng will do his best to keep participant confidentiality. Cheng will disguise any identifying details about participants and schools so they will not be identified in any research reports. The pseudonyms of schools and participants will be used and people's faces in photos will be blurred. The videotapes of classes will be used only for analysis by the researchers and will not be published.

The participating students' identity cannot be kept confidential in focus group interviews. If any student in a focus group interview does not want to share his/her opinion with others, Cheng would interview him/her individually at a place agreed. No data will be shared with third parties, apart from a professional transcriber used to transcribe the audio files, who has signed a confidentiality agreement. The audio files given to the transcriber will not be copied and will be deleted upon satisfactory completion of the assignment.

Right to withdraw from participation:

Cheng will request you as a principal to sign an assurance that involvement in or withdrawal from this project will not affect the employment of the teachers, the education of the students, or their relationships with the school (at the end of this information sheet).

The participating principals, teachers and students have the right to withdraw from the interviews and focus group interviews at any time without giving a reason. The participants can decline to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable, and they can ask Cheng to switch off the recording devices at any time in the interview.

For individual interview transcripts, participants have the right to remove the interview transcripts when withdrawing. The participants should let Cheng know in two weeks upon receiving the interview transcripts. For focus group interview transcripts, a participating student who has withdrawn can take away his/her own transcript. However, the transcripts cannot be removed after the analysis has been done in order to protect the integrity of the research.

Possible benefits and compensation:

There are some possible benefits of joining this project. One of the benefits is that the principal and classroom teachers can have a chance to reflect on their physical education programmes/curricula and practice, and to see whether their programmes/curricula can meet all needs of their students. So, the principal and teachers can design and implement a programme/curriculum that will consider different needs. In addition, when the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into the school bank account as thanks.

Contact details and approval:

If you have questions, you may contact: The Chair of The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone: 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Student Researcher's Name and Contact Details	Supervisors' Names and Contact Details	The Name of Head of School and Contact Details
<p>Cheng Deng; Email: cden328@aucklanduni.ac.nz</p>	<p>Dr. Ben Dyson; Email: bpdyson@uncg.edu Dr. Maureen Legge. Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz</p>	<p>Associate Professor Helen Hedges; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48606; Email: h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz</p>

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

A statement of assurance from the principal and Board of Trustees

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

On behalf of our school, I _____ (write your name here)

assure you that involvement in or withdrawal from this project - primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand, which is the doctoral dissertation of Cheng Deng - will not affect the employment of my teachers, the education of my students, or their relationships with our school.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

School name: _____

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800

Appendix 6: Consent Form of Principals



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako
Epsom Campus
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Telephone 64 9 623 8899
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October 2017

Consent Form: Principals

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Student researcher: Cheng Deng

Supervisors: Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Contact details of the researchers:

Cheng Deng - Email: cdan328@aucklanduni.ac.nz;

Dr. Ben Dyson - Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48337; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz;

Dr. Maureen Legge - Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
- I have had opportunities to ask questions and have them answered.
- I agree to take part in this research voluntarily.
- I have signed and given the assurance that participation and non-participation in this study will not affect the participating teachers' employment, students' education, or their relationships with the school.
- I understand that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that my voice will be recorded. I can agree or not agree for my voice to be recorded in the interviews.
- I understand that I can ask Cheng to turn off the recorder at any time in the interview.
- I understand that four physical education lessons taught by two participating teachers may be videotaped. Before videotaping, Cheng will seek consent from the teachers, students and their parents.
- I understand that a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality form may be employed to transcribe the audio files.
- I understand that the videotapes of the classes will not be published and will be used only by the researchers above for reflecting, reviewing and analysing.
- I understand that the schools and participants will have pseudonyms and that people's faces in photos will be blurred in order to ensure confidentiality.
- I understand that without permission from participants, the photos will not be used for any publication.

- I understand that the participants' time committed to this project will be approximately: One 30-minute interview for the principal. Two 30-minute interviews for each teacher. Two 30-minute focus group interviews for students (two focus groups with three students in each focus group, n = 6). It takes three weeks for participating students to take and select photos.
- I understand that the data will be used only for Cheng's dissertation, journal publications and conference presentations. The researchers cannot use the data for other uses without permission from participants.
- This consent form and other data will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ben Dyson's office for six years. The electronic data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for the same time. After six years, all data will be destroyed.
- I understand that when the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into my school bank account as thanks.
- I wish/do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be provided at this email/postal address:

Email: _____

Postal address: _____

School name:

Participant principal name:

Signature:

Date:

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference number 017800

Appendix 7: Participant Information Sheet of Teachers



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

Participant Information Sheet: Teachers

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Name of student researcher: Cheng Deng

Name(s) of supervisor(s): Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Researchers' introduction:

All researchers are working at the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, The University of Auckland. Cheng Deng is a doctoral student. His supervisors are Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge. Dr. Ben Dyson is an associate professor who has carried out extensive research on physical education. Dr. Maureen Legge is a senior lecturer teaching physical education. She has conducted

studies about teaching physical education in New Zealand teacher education with particular reference to being bicultural.

Invitation to participate:

Your school has agreed to participate in this project. Cheng would like to invite you to join his research project that is for his doctoral dissertation.

Project introduction:

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives on physical education. For example, what classroom teachers think about physical education and how they teach it, and so on.

Participants and methods:

Cheng Deng will carry out the research procedures. Cheng will recruit two classroom teachers from your school. Cheng will interview each teacher individually twice and each interview may take 30 minutes. In addition, Cheng will observe two physical education lessons taught by each teacher.

The interviews will be done at a time and place to be agreed. The first one aims to gain your initial perspective about physical education. The second one aims to ask you questions emerging from the observation and the first interview.

Cheng will observe and video two physical education lessons taught by you. Before videoing, Cheng will seek consent from you, students, and their parents. The videos of classes will not be published and will be used only by the researchers for reflecting, reviewing, and analysing. Cheng

may collect or copy documents, such as your term, unit and lesson plans, for later analysis upon your consent.

Data storage, retention, destruction, and future use:

The data, including the interviews, documents, observations, photos/videos, and the signed consent forms, will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ben Dyson's office in The University of Auckland for six years. The electronic data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for the same period. After six years, all paper data will be shredded and digital data will be deleted.

The data will be analysed by Cheng and will be used only for Cheng's dissertation, journal publications and conference presentations. Cheng cannot use the data for other uses without your permission. A hard copy of the transcripts and analysis results will be available to you. If you wish to receive it, you can provide your email or postal address on the consent form.

Confidentiality:

Cheng will do his best to protect participant confidentiality. Cheng will disguise any identifying details about participants and schools. The pseudonyms of schools and participants will be used and people's faces in photos will be blurred, so they will not be identified in any research reports. The videotapes of classes will not be published and will be used only for analysis by the researchers.

No data will be shared with third parties. All interviews may be transcribed by Cheng or a university-employed transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement. All audio files given to the transcriber will be deleted upon completing the job.

Right to withdraw from participation:

The principal has given the assurance that participation or non-participation in this research will not affect your employment or relationship with the school. You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason. You can decline to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can ask Cheng to switch off the recording device at any time in the interview. You have the right to remove your interview transcript when you withdraw.

Possible benefits and compensation:

There are some possible benefits of joining this project. One of the benefits is that you can have a chance to reflect on your physical education programmes/curriculum and practice, and to see whether the physical education programmes/curricula can meet students' needs. In addition, when the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into your school bank account as thanks.

Contact details and approval:

If you have questions, you may contact: The Chair of The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone: 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Student Researcher's Name and Contact Details	Supervisors' Names and Contact Details	The Name of Head of School and Contact Details
<p style="text-align: center;">Cheng Deng; Email: cden328@aucklanduni.ac.nz</p>	<p>Dr. Ben Dyson; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48337; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz Dr. Maureen Legge. Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758 Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Associate Professor Helen Hedges; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48606; Email: h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz</p>

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800

Appendix 8: Consent Form of Teachers



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

Consent Form: Teachers

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Student researcher: Cheng Deng

Supervisors: Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Contact details of the researchers:

Cheng Deng; Email: cdan328@aucklanduni.ac.nz;

Dr. Ben Dyson; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48337; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz;

Dr. Maureen Legge; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.

- I have had opportunities to ask questions and have them answered.
- I agree to take part in this research voluntarily.
- I understand that the principal has given the assurance that participation or non-participation in this research will not affect my employment or relationship with the school.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that my voice will be recorded. I can agree or not agree with my voice to be recorded during interviews.
- I understand that I can ask Cheng to turn off the recorder at any time in the interviews.
- I understand that a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality form may be employed to transcribe the audio files.
- I understand that the school and participants will have pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality.
- I understand that two of my physical education lessons may be filmed. Before that, Cheng will seek consent from students, students' parents and me.
- I understand that the videos of classes will not be published and will be used only by researchers for reflecting, reviewing and analysing.
- I understand that my time committed to the project is approximately two 30-minute interviews and two physical education lessons.
- This consent form and other data will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ben Dyson's office for six years. The electronic data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for six years. After six years, all data will be destroyed.
- I understand that once the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into the school bank account as thanks.

- I understand that the data will be used only for Cheng’s dissertation, journal publications and conference presentations. The researchers cannot use the data for other uses without permission from participants.
- I wish/do not wish to receive a summary of findings, which can be given to me at this email/postal address:

Email: _____

Postal address: _____

School name:

Participant name:

Classroom No.:

Signature:

Date:

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference number 017800

Appendix 9: The Assent of Videoing Lessons for Teachers



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

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Gate 3, 74 Epsom Avenue

Auckland, New Zealand

Telephone 64 9 623 8899

Facsimile 64 9 623 8898

www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

The assent of videoing physical education lessons (teachers)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Researcher: Cheng Deng

I _____ (write your name on the line) agree that the following physical education lessons can be videoed by Cheng Deng.

Lesson 1 Time:

Date:

Venue:

Lesson 2 Time:

Date:

Venue:

I confirm that:

- I understand that the videos are only used for analyzing my teaching work.
- I have had opportunities to ask questions and have them answered.
- I have been informed that this assent form and video files will be saved in the office of Dr. Ben Dyson, and are backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for six years. After six years, they will be deleted and shredded.
- I understand that the videos of my classes will not be published.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Room No.:

School name:

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800

Appendix 10: Participant Information Sheet of Students



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

Participant Information Sheet: Students

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Name of student researcher: Cheng Deng

Name(s) of supervisor(s): Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Researchers' introduction:

All researchers are from the Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland.

Cheng Deng is a doctoral student and supervised by Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge. Dr.

Ben Dyson is an associate professor who has carried out extensive research on physical education.

Dr. Maureen Legge is a senior lecturer who has conducted studies about teaching physical education in New Zealand teacher education with particular reference to being bicultural.

Invitation to participate:

Your school has agreed to take part in this research, so Cheng would like to invite you to join his research.

Project introduction:

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives on physical education.

Participants and methods:

Cheng will recruit six students from your school and use focus group interviews with photo elicitation (photo prompting) (two focus groups with three students in each focus group) and observation to collect data. All interviews will be done at a time and place to be agreed. All interviews will be audio-recorded and later transcribed by a university-employed transcriber who has signed a confidentiality agreement or Cheng.

Photo elicitation with interviews is one type of visual theory. Namely, Cheng will provide you with a digital camera and ask you to take and select photos that can best illustrate your experience in physical education and physical activities. This activity may take three weeks.

Cheng will interview each group twice and each interview will take 30 minutes. The first interview aims to gain your initial perspective on physical education. The second interview with photo

elicitation aims to ask you questions about photos you chose and other things emerging from the first interview and observation.

Cheng will observe and video two of your physical education lessons. Before videoing, Cheng will seek consent from your teachers, your parents and you. The videos of classes will not be published and will be only used by researchers mentioned above for reflecting, reviewing, and analysing.

Data storage, retention, destruction, and future use:

The data, including the interviews, photos, videos, and the signed consent forms, will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr Ben Dyson's office in The University of Auckland, for six years. The electronic data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for the same time. After six years, all paper data will be shredded and audio or video data will be deleted.

The data will be analysed by Cheng and will be only used for Cheng's dissertation, journal publications and conference presentations. Cheng will not use the data for other uses without permission from you. A copy of the transcripts and analysis results will be available to the participants interviewed individually. If one is interviewed individually and wants to receive a summary of the findings, please provide your email or postal addresses on the consent form.

Confidentiality:

Cheng will do his best to protect participant confidentiality. If one in a group interview does not want to share his/her opinion with others, Cheng can interview him/her individually at a time and place agreed. Cheng will disguise any identifying details about participants and schools. The pseudonyms of schools and participants will be used and people's faces in photos will be blurred.

So, the participants and their schools will not be identified in any research reports. The videotapes of classes will not be published and will be used only for analysis by the researchers.

No data will be shared with third parties, apart from a professional transcriber used to transcribe the audio files, who has signed a confidentiality agreement. All audio files given to the transcriber will be deleted from all electronic devices upon the completion.

Right to withdraw from participation:

The principal has given the assurance that participation or non-participation in this research will not affect your education or relationship with the school. You have the right to withdraw this research at any time without giving a reason. You can decline to answer any question that you do not want to answer, and you can ask Cheng to switch off the recording devices at any time in the interview.

The participating students interviewed individually have the right to remove their interview transcripts when they withdraw from the study. About focus group interview transcripts, a participating student who has withdrawn can take away his/her own transcript. The transcripts cannot be removed after the analysis is done in order to protect the integrity of the research.

Possible benefits and compensation:

There are some possible benefits of joining this project. One of the benefits is by expressing your opinions about physical education, the principal and teachers can know your needs, and then they can design and implement a programme/curriculum that will consider your needs. In addition, when the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into the school bank account as thanks.

Contact details and approval:

If you have questions, you may contact: The Chair of The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone: 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz.

Student Researcher's Name and Contact Details	Supervisors' Names and Contact Details	The Name of Head of School and Contact Details
Cheng Deng; Email: cden328@aucklanduni.ac.nz;	Dr. Ben Dyson; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48337; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz; Dr. Maureen Legge; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz;	Associate Professor Helen Hedges; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48606; Email: h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz;

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800

Appendix 11: Consent Form of Students



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

Epsom Campus

Gate 3, 74 Epsom Avenue

Auckland, New Zealand

Telephone 64 9 623 8899

Facsimile 64 9 623 8898

www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

Consent Form: Students

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Student researcher: Cheng Deng

Supervisors: Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Contact details of the researchers:

Cheng Deng; Email: cdan328@aucklanduni.ac.nz;

Dr. Ben Dyson; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48337; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz;

Dr. Maureen Legge; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz.

I confirm that:

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
- I have had opportunities to ask questions and have them answered.
- I agree to take part in this research voluntarily.
- I understand that the principal has given the assurance that participation or non-participation in this research will not affect my education or my relationship with the school.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the focus group interview or individual interview at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that my voice will be recorded and I can ask Cheng to turn off the recorder at any time in the interview.
- I understand that two of my physical education lessons will be observed and videoed. Before videoing, Cheng needs to seek consent from my teacher, my parents and me.
- I understand that the videotapes of classes will not be published and will be only used by the researchers mentioned above for reflecting, reviewing, and analysing.
- I understand that a professional transcriber who has signed a confidentiality form may be employed to transcribe the audio files.
- I understand that the schools and participants will have pseudonyms and faces on the photos will be blurred in order to ensure confidentiality.
- I understand that the data will be used only for Cheng's dissertation, journal publications and conference presentations. The researchers cannot use the data for other uses without permission from me.

- I understand that my time committed to the project will approximately be: two 30-minute focus group interviews; three weeks for taking and selecting photos; two physical education lessons observed.
- I understand that this consent form and other paper data will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ben Dyson's office and the digital data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for six years. After six years, all data will be destroyed.
- I understand that once the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into the school bank account as thanks.
- I understand that I can choose to be interviewed individually or in a focus group. I can receive the summary of the findings on the address: _____
- I understand that if I agree with my physical education lessons to be observed and videoed, I need to fill in the consent form attached below. If I do not agree, I can just ignore it.

Student name:

School name:

Parent name:

Signature:

Date:

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference number 017800

Appendix 12: Consent Form of Observation & Videoing for Students



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

Epsom Campus

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Telephone 64 9 623 8899

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www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

Consent Form (observation & videoing): Students

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Student researcher: Cheng Deng

Supervisors: Dr. Ben Dyson and Dr. Maureen Legge

Contact details of the researchers:

Cheng Deng; Email: cdan328@aucklanduni.ac.nz;

Dr. Ben Dyson; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48337; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz;

Dr. Maureen Legge; Telephone: +64 9 373 7999 Ext. 48758; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz.

I confirm that

- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.
- I have had opportunities to ask questions and have them answered.
- I agree to take part in this research voluntarily.
- I understand that the principal has given the assurance that participation or non-participation in this research will not affect my education or my relationship with the school.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the observation at any time without giving a reason.
- I understand that my voice and face may be recorded. I can agree/do not agree with my voice/face to be recorded.
- I understand that I can ask Cheng to turn off the recorder at any time during the observation.
- I understand that two of my physical education lessons may be observed and videoed. Before videoing, Cheng needs to gain the consent of my teacher, parents and me.
- I understand that the videos of classes will not be published and will be used only by the researchers mentioned above for reflecting, reviewing and analysing.
- I understand that my time committed to the project will approximately be: two physical education lessons.
- I understand that this consent form and videos will be stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Ben Dyson's office and the digital data will be backed up and stored in the server of The University of Auckland for six years. After six years, all data will be destroyed.
- I understand that once the data collection and analysis have been completed, a koha/donation of NZD 250 will be deposited into the school bank account as thanks.

Student name:

School name:

Parent name:

Signature:

Date:

**Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on
17/10/2017 for three years. Reference number 017800**

Appendix 13: The Assent of Publishing Photos (Students)



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy

Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako

Epsom Campus

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Auckland, New Zealand

Telephone 64 9 623 8899

Facsimile 64 9 623 8898

www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

The assent of publishing photos (students)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Researcher: Cheng Deng

I _____ (write your name on the line) agree that the following photos can be used and published by the researcher.

Photo number:

I confirm that:

- I have been shown the photos the researcher intends to use and publish.
- I have had opportunities to ask questions and have them answered.
- I have been informed that this assent form will be saved for six years. After six years, it will be shredded.
- I understand that people's faces in photos will be blurred.

Please tick either agree or do not agree to let me know whether you give the researcher your permission to use or publish these photos in the following domains.

I agree/do not agree to the photos published in the researcher's thesis.

I agree/do not agree to the photos published in academic journals.

I agree/do not agree to the photos presented at an academic conference.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Room No.:

School name:

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800

Appendix 14: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement



School of Curriculum and Pedagogy
Te kura o te Marautanga me te Ako
Epsom Campus
Gate 3, 74 Epsom Avenue
Auckland, New Zealand
Telephone 64 9 623 8899
Facsimile 64 9 623 8898
www.education.auckland.ac.nz

October 2017

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF 6 YEARS

Project title: Primary school principals', classroom teachers' and students' perspectives of physical education in New Zealand

Student researcher:

Cheng Deng; Email: ceden328@aucklanduni.ac.nz

Supervisors of the student researcher:

Dr. Ben Dyson; Email: b.dyson@auckland.ac.nz

Dr. Marueen Legge; Email: m.legge@auckland.ac.nz

Transcriber:

- I agree to transcribe the audio files for the above research project.
- I understand that the information contained within the audio files is confidential and cannot be disclosed to, or discussed with anyone other than the researchers.

- I understand that all audio files given to me cannot be copied and will be deleted from all electronic devices upon satisfactory completion of the assignment.

Name: (please write clearly)

Signature:

Date:

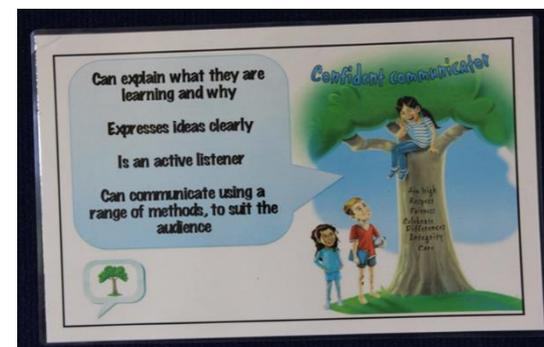
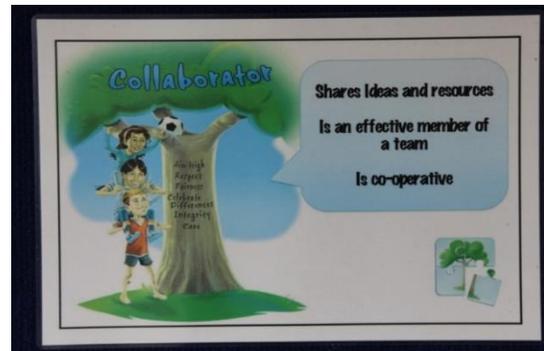
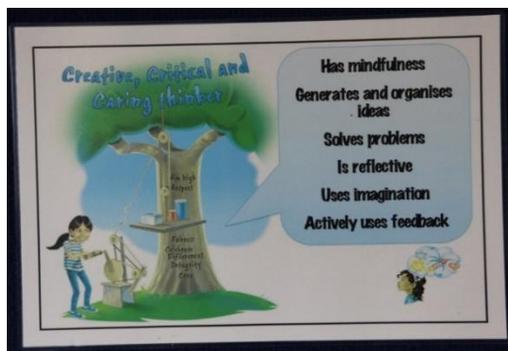
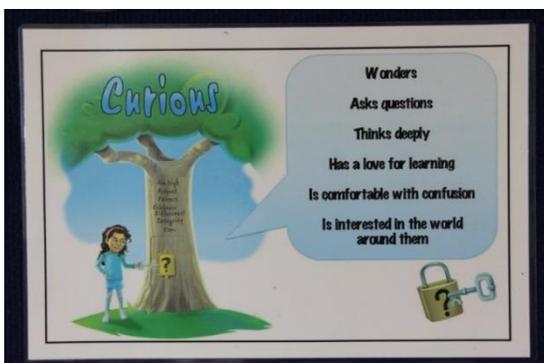
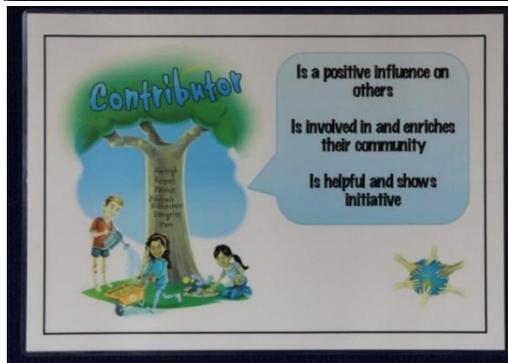
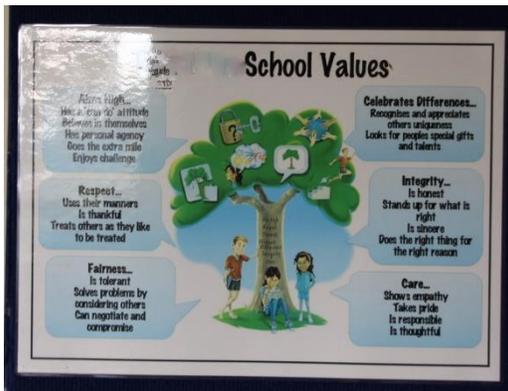
**Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on
17/10/2017 for three years. Reference Number 017800**

Appendix 15: Brook School's Photos



Note. These photos were taken by Cheng in April 2018 in Brook School.

Appendix 16: Meadow Farm School's Photos



Note. These photos were taken by Cheng in June 2018 at Meadow Farm School.

Appendix 17: Blue Sea School's Photos



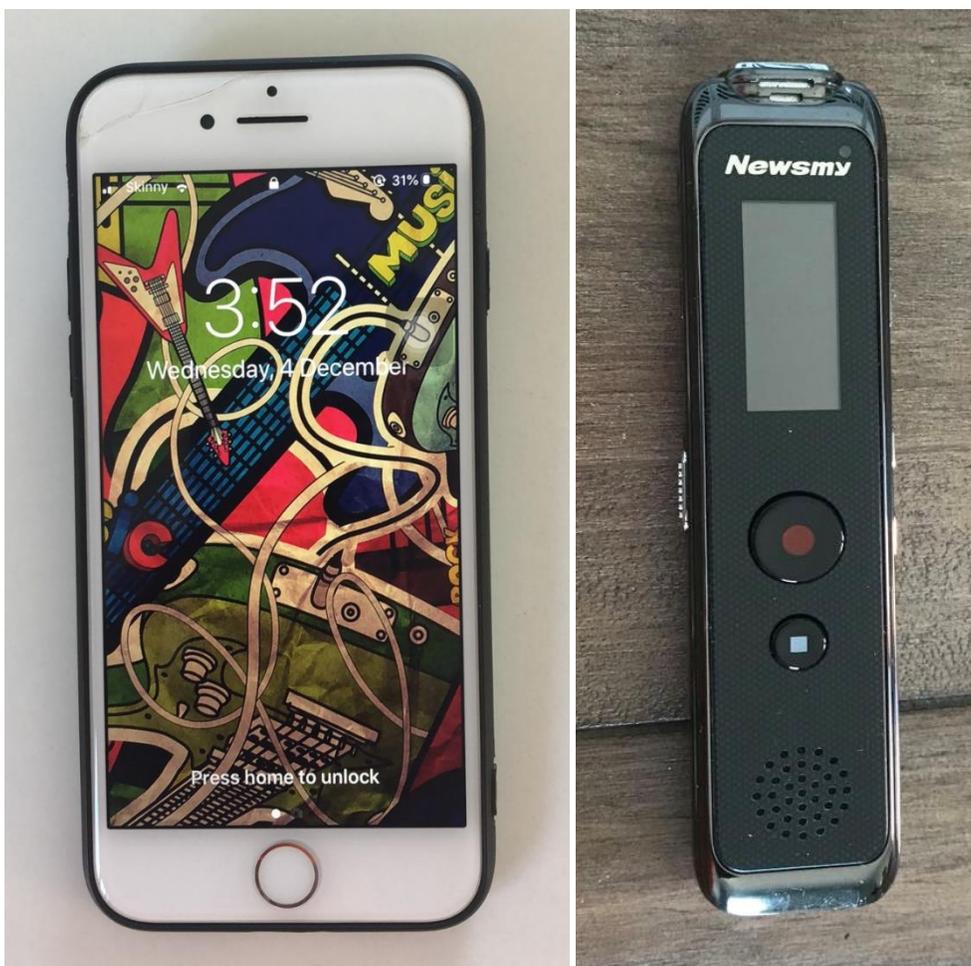
Note. These photos were taken by Cheng at Blue Sea School in August 2018.

Appendix 18: Mountainland School's Photos



Note. These photos were taken by Cheng at Mountainland School in October 2018.

Appendix 19: Voice Recorder and My iPhone 7



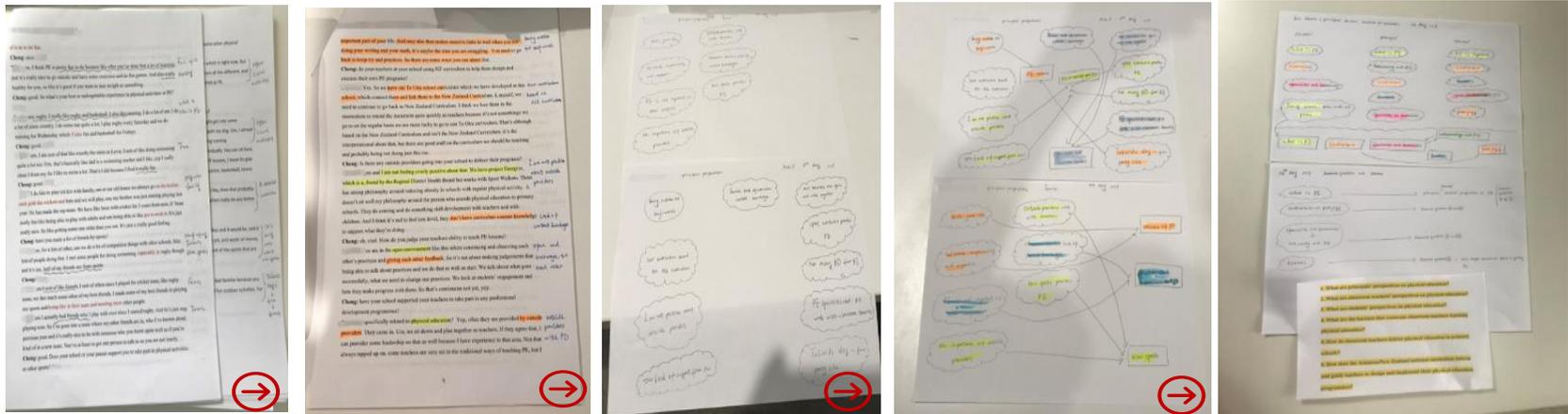
Note. These devices were used to collect data by Cheng. For example, recording interviews.

Appendix 20: Digital Cameras Used



Note. These cameras were used to collect data by Cheng and participating students. For example, Cheng used Cannon 550D for taking photos and filming physical education lessons. The students used Canon IXUS 185 for taking photos.

Appendix 21: The First Four Steps of Thematic Analysis



Note. These photos show how the researcher completed the first four steps of thematic analysis.

Appendix 22: Care and Encouragement in the Cross-County at Meadow Farm School



Note. These photos show how children helped and encouraged their brothers or sisters in the yearly cross-country at Meadow Farm School. Cheng took the top photo and another one was taken by a participating student.

Appendix 23: Tabloids Day at Mountainland School



Note. Cheng took these photos on Tabloids Day at Mountainland School in October 2018. The photos show how children participated in a variety of physical activities on the day. For example, in the middle photo, the boy in the orange and grey hoodie was working as a referee talking rules.

Appendix 24: Touch Rugby at Meadow Farm School



Note. Cheng took the photo at Meadow Farm School in June 2018. The photo shows how the teachers used touch rugby in their physical education lessons.

Appendix 25: Physical Education Lessons at Blue Sea School



Note. Cheng took these photos at Blue Sea School in November 2018. The photos show how the teachers used various activities to develop students' motor skills.

Appendix 26: Tractor Pulling Competition at Meadow Farm School



Note. The participating students took these photos at Meadow Farm School in May 2018. These photos show that the school and teachers had integrated local events into their physical education programme.

Appendix 27: Students' Photos



Note. The participating students took the two photos. The photos show the students had fun with their friends in their school physical education programmes.

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