Understanding the Cultural Relevance of Physical Education and Health

from the Perspective of Female High School Graduates from Diverse Backgrounds

by

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Abstract

This purpose of this interpretive research study was to deepen our understanding of the meaning of culturally relevant physical education and health pedagogy (Ladson Billings, 1994; Halas, McRae & Carpenter, 2012) from the perspective of racialized minority women. Four female students from diverse backgrounds participated in a talking circle where they discussed their experiences in physical education and health (PEH) settings. Wilson's (2008) idea of relational accountability, as described through Indigenous approaches to research, was used to help interrogate and interrupt systems of privilege, power and marginalization that characterize many PEH settings. The findings reveal the on-going need for culturally relevant pedagogical approaches that encourage, affirm and recognize the cultural landscapes of students. More research is needed to understand how students can be motivated to learn and grow in ways that develop their critical social consciousness regarding the social inequities that impact their PEH experiences.

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My parents

Thank you for your sacrifices that paved the way to get me here. While we have not always seen eye to eye, I am forever grateful for your persistence and hard work that encouraged all of your children to get an education and to make something of ourselves. I'm doing something I love, and I am living my dreams out loud.

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To my number one fan and biggest supporter. Thank you for pushing me when times got tough and I wanted to throw in the towel. Being a partner to a grad student is not easy. When I worked late hours, and was stressed beyond belief, you held down all aspects of our life and I could not have made it to the end without your unwavering support and love.

Dedication

To the students I have taught past, present and future that make this journey as an

educator worthwhile, meaningful and continually changing and growing for the better.

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Preface

"The path with heart is good

and the journey along it will be joyful"

(Chambers, 2004, p.5).

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge my respect, appreciation and gratitude for Indigenous ways of knowing. Throughout my graduate studies, I have followed a path that has led me in many directions. Each time, I tried to find meaning and connection to ground my research and eventually my journey led me to Shawn Wilson's (2008) notion of 'research as ceremony'. For Indigenous peoples, Wilson explains, "the integral part of any ceremony is setting the stage properly" (p. 69). When thought of within a research context, the process takes the participant "out of the ordinary" into the extraordinary, where a raised level of consciousness can be achieved. Similarly, Palmer (1998) says, "knowing is a human way to seek relationship and, in the process, to have encounters and exchanges that will inevitably alter us. At its deepest reaches, knowing is always communal" (Palmer, 1998, p. 54). My intention for this research was to invite female high school graduates to join with me in a collective effort, using qualitative research methods, to raise our critical consciousness of what it means to teach in culturally relevant ways that create more affirming learning spaces for students from diverse backgrounds.

As a physical and health educator, I have always believed that the teacher-student relationship is key to successful teaching and learning. I also know that these relationships are not always affirming and in fact, can at times be harmful, particularly for those who are marginalized within society (e.g., see Sykes, 2011). Using Indigenous

approaches to research; relationships are not just with other people or "*the other*": relationality includes our relationships with ourselves, the research participants, our ideas and the cosmos (Wilson & Wilson, 1998; Wilson, 2008). As Indigenous educator Kevin Lamoureux (2014) suggests when speaking of his goals for the public school system, everything is connected and "deconstructing otherness" requires of us to challenge our own preconceived notions and stereotypes about people who are different from us, so that we can move beyond an "us versus them" mentality to one that is a shared community. Indigenous approaches encourage us to claim our identities, and in doing so, to reflect upon our worldviews and histories and how, as Lamoureux reminds us, we are all connected.

Born and raised here in Winnipeg, on the lands of Indigenous peoples, my family's Cambodian heritage informs who I am. Like Canada, Cambodia has a colonial history; my parents were forced to leave their homeland during the genocide and came to these lands as refugees looking to start a new life. When my parents arrived in Canada in the spring of 1983, they knew no one and language was a barrier. They were challenged to maintain their Cambodian heritage while also learning to adopt the customs, values and beliefs as "newcomers[1]" in Canada. When I finished reading *Research as Ceremony*, I was able to grasp how who we are and how we connect with the world impacts how, what, and why we research. I was able to see how my family's history and their lived experience as refugees impacted me as a teacher and a researcher. Wilson allowed me to open up more than my head to his work; I was able to feel connected through my heart to

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[1] Statistics Canada (2009) defines recent immigrants (also known as newcomers) as landed immigrants who came to Canada up to five years prior to a given census year. Accessed on February 25th, 2015 from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-562/note-eng.cfm

this research project.

By focusing on relational accountability during the research process, and by always engaging in the research with a good heart, I hoped to utilize the knowledge that I learned from my interactions with colleagues, students, my advisors and thesis committee, as well as from the research literature. I accomplished this in collaboration with young women who were mostly former students in my physical education and health classes. I hoped that we would collectively achieve the extraordinary, leading to improved physical education and health practices for future generations of young people from diverse backgrounds.

As a non-Indigenous researcher, I have attempted to honour Indigenous research approaches with the utmost respect and gratitude, as my own act of relational accountability.

Prologue

In "*Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*" Kovach (2009) encourages the use of a prologue as way to display authenticity in the research process. The use of a personal story in the prologue shifts knowledge construction from objectivity to "holistic narrative, which shows how the self influences research choices and interpretations" (p. 123). Identities are complex; as Taira (2002) says, it "requires continuous deconstruction and reconstruction in concert with the recognition of multiple and evolving relationships and the changing complexities of the social environment" (p. 1270).

In "*Seeing ourselves: Exploring race, ethnicity and culture*", James (2010) provides an in depth look at Canadians (i.e., those born in Canada, immigrants, refugees) who struggle to claim identity and struggle with the societal impacts that race, culture, and other forms of diversity play in their day-to-day lives. He uses the stories of students to describe their negotiations with identity. Early in life, identity was forged in the playfulness I experienced with my family, where I worked hard to be "one of the boys."

Journal Reflections - How I came to be...the ATHLETE (Sopear, 2014)

> *The youngest.*
>
> *The only girl.*
>
> *The attention seeker.*
>
> *The competitor.*
>
> *One-third of the group I call the "Three Musketeers."*

Yet, I know my two older brothers would surely describe me as the annoying pest that would never go away. I just couldn't and I have to thank them for instilling in me a love of physical activity.

Growing up in our "hood" my brothers and I could be found spending hours at our local community centre shooting hoops or playing tennis. When winter rolled around, the hockey rinks became our second home. When winter brought frigid, arctic-like temperatures with extreme wind chill conditions the three of us would lock ourselves in our basement preparing for epic, intense battles of table tennis, or ping pong.

Best of 5 series.

The first to three wins.

Long rallies. Forehand smashes. Backhand smashes.

Games lost. Games won.

This was our Olympics.

And, all I wanted more than ever was to defeat my brothers; to prove to them and myself that I could be the best!

Yelling, laughter, fighting and screaming matches all permeated the atmosphere of our basement. The sibling banter was ever present.

Poor sports or the consummate sportsman/woman … it'd all depend if we won or lost.

At the end of the night, hours into our games, we'd always leave as family. We didn't always get along. We didn't always see eye-to-eye or even have the same interests in common. But, for nights like this the love of being active brought us together and I am grateful for these precious moments.

Now that we've gone our separate ways, I wonder how much of my sporting

cradle to career pathway was rooted in those basement moments with my siblings. From

little tyke shooting on adaptable seven foot baskets to a growing adolescent attacking the

regulation height high school hoops who later graduated to top level university ball, my

brothers and I were a team.

Inspired by James (2010), I recognize now those key aspects of my own internal

struggles to negotiate identity: as a child, I was a "tom-boy", the only girl playing sports

with the boys at basketball club. As a teenager, I struggled to accept my parents' cultural

heritage within Canadian society; I unconsciously conformed to the cultures of whiteness

that surrounded me. As a young adult, I began to recognize my class status and how my

inner-city upbringing differed from my university peers. Nearing university graduation, I

was still working hard to conform to the all-pervasive norms around me: white, middle-

class ... and there was something more.

As the first few years of my teaching came and went I realized how difficult it

was to keep aspects of my personal life separate from my professional life. In not being

truthful and honest with myself, how could I possibly be that way with others? I could

not. How could I expect my students to connect and build relationships with me? They

would not. I was fed up with always hiding behind the mask. I have always wanted to be

a teacher who affirms my students' personal and socially constructed identities (see

Ennis, 1999), but how could I, if I was struggling to affirm my own identity?

Wilson (2008) has been critical of western paradigms that "… amputate your

sexuality, your gender, your language and your spirituality" when we compartmentalize

who we are in absence of the complexity of our connections and relationships (Wilson,

2008, p. 56). This is particularly true of us as teachers, when we hide from ourselves and our students who we really are.

When I wrote the following poem four years ago, I knew I had not honoured the values that I hold as an educator and I had reached my breaking point. I would walk into school with a mask, hiding all the torment and confusion I was dealing with in my personal life. And, when I would try to be genuine in my interactions with my students and colleagues, I felt like a fraud. I was suffocating in a mountain of fear and doubts about being the "real" me.

In sharing this poem, I begin to open my heart to help guide me in this research proposal.

Breaking point… (2010)

I seek solace…

In a temporary space where my body and mind are in harmony.

A perfect note sung/strung.

That feeling in the pit of my stomach that is still.

Empty of the butterflies taking up space…

The space that leads to my mind.

Oh the mind…

Oh the mind it wanders when it's in chaos.

I forget to honour the voice within.

We're at war often.

Head and heart…

It's like an itch that stays persistent and won't go away.

The itch turns into scars from the constant scratching.

I'm trying to release and shed the demons that linger within me.

These demons I call fear and doubt.

Headaches, heartbreaks and body shakes are all present.

They take over me from all the uncertainty.

From the criticisms of the world.

The isms of life overwhelm me.

My voice stays trapped within.

I'm screaming at the top of my lungs, yet no words come out.

I'm so afraid of the reaction that will follow soon after.

What do I have to fear?

It's the unknown that has me terrified.

I'm crippled by confusion.

A bruised state of mind that's got a contusion.

It suffocates me.

In my ideal scenario.

If I could do something…

If I could say something…

I'd say this.

See me as I am.

Don't try to change me.

Love me as I am.

Walk beside me rather than stepping on my pride.

Because the eggshells I'm stepping on,

Echo with hurt and pain.

I search for…

Courage.

Strength.

Confidence.

From within me.

I want to lay these demons to rest.

I want my voice to be validated.

I want my voice to be heard.

As luck would have it, or perhaps the stars were aligning for this event, a school-initiated conference at our school focusing on "celebrating you" finally gave me the opportunity to empower my voice. At the time, I did not know that by sharing my story, opening up to a group of female students would also empower them in the process. Oyler and Becker (1997) recommend that teachers be role models for their students by acknowledging our fears, doubts, questions and struggles; this shared vulnerability creates space for students to also be vulnerable. Being vulnerable in a group setting is scary, yet when you take the steps towards opening up, something special and transformative can occur.

In the next section, I share a reflection that looks back on what would become for me, a seminal moment in my teaching career, but also in the process allowing me to identify a research topic for my thesis.

Looking Back: Teacher Panel about experiences during high school

Approximately 120 students start to fill our theatre for one portion of a girls' only conference dedicated to "celebrating you." Four chairs are placed in front of the row upon row of seats filled by students. The four teacher organizers will lead the teacher panel, with a student moderator asking a list of questions related to the teachers' own high school experiences.

I know the moment is coming quick. This is the time for me to show the "real" me. I'm anxious and nervous. My close friend Anita[2], a colleague is also participating in the panel and that gives me relief knowing she's there, yet I'm terrified at the thought of their reactions. My gut has been churning daily leading up to this session. My hands are sweating profusely and my armpits are drenching the sweater I'm wearing. I want this to end. I stare intently at the door. I can slowly creep out and no one will see me. This is what I tell myself, before snapping back to reality. Here we go…

For the first two thirds of the panel, the questions are easy to get through, but the impending moment for me to reveal myself is coming soon. My stomach is churning even more, and the heartbeats grow stronger, faster and deafening in my ear. The moment is near.

Students seem to be always intrigued about a teacher's life. They ask questions wanting to know more. I stretch the fine line between sharing my personal life at school,

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[2] Names have been changed.

but it is all intertwined. I do not think it is possible to separate the personal and professional parts of our lives. They are connected. I cannot ask students to reveal themselves, if I am afraid to as well. And, to be honest, I have been afraid for a while. I have been teaching five years and it has taken me till now to be okay with it all…

Issues of LGBTQ (acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) have been prominent in the news lately; students are getting bullied and students are committing suicide for being gay. It impacts me daily. I see, I read and I cannot help but be taken aback with strong emotions. I see myself in headlines. It takes courage to be yourself. And to be yourself wholeheartedly in high school is courageous and admirable. It is not easy being a teenager nowadays. The pressures to fit in and be proud of who you are is constantly being challenged by the status quos of society.

Finally the moderator asks the question "*what would you change about your time in high school*?" Each of the teachers answer and then I'm last to go. I fumble through the words. It is like a blur, but I remember answering the question along the lines of "*I wish I had more courage to be myself, and to listen to my gut*." Had I listened to my gut, the transition period of "coming out" to the world wouldn't have felt so catastrophic. And, in the moments to follow, the words "I'm gay[3]" came out.

Some awkward moments of silence soon follow.

My eyes don't want to connect with theirs. I've spent much of the question period looking towards the ground, or on a spot in the room where my eyes would not hit another. "What if I see faces of disappointment?" I start to lift my head and scan the room. There is some surprise and shock in the room. I can feel it, but no one has left the

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[3] I use the term gay in this instance, however I would consider myself lesbian rather than gay, and recognize each term has various meanings, based on how individuals choose to identify themselves.

room. No one's throwing bottles or profanities at me. I'm here. I've made it through this,

thus far. Phew…relief.

A few minutes later as students exit the theatre for a snack break three students who express support and thanks for me being so open and honest with them greet me.

One student stays memorable on my mind.

She approaches me with tears of joy in her eyes. Her hug is a sigh of relief and she says thanks. This student had been struggling for much of the year dealing with her own sexuality and coming out to family and friends.

From my privileged position as an educator, I see the interaction with her as an overwhelming demonstration of gratefulness and gratitude. In empowering myself, I needed to connect with my heart, my mind, my body, and my soul. In doing so, I hope to recognize how powerful our voice can be in helping others. And I think back to my school years: how I longed to have a role model who understood where I was at and here I was finally in a position to support a student who shared with me her own vulnerabilities. It etched a permanent mark on how I must act in order to create, maintain and develop meaningful relationships as an educator. It is these reciprocal and respectful relationships that are at the heart of this thesis.

This is one aspect of my multiple truths.

Just as I am finally free to be myself as a lesbian woman, I also feel ready to claim the intersecting identities that shape who I am as a physical educator. Learning how to affirm the personal and socially constructed identities of our students is at the heart of culturally relevant teaching practices. Learning to affirm who we are and how that shapes our worldviews is at the heart of Indigenous approaches to research.

As I conclude this prologue, Kovach (2009) reminds us how important locating ourselves is by saying "self-locating builds reciprocity, rapport and trust" (p. 110). Absolon and Willett (2005) also suggest that by locating ourselves it ensures that others' realities are not interpreted as a generalization. By locating myself from the beginning, I express my political, cultural and social worldview. It is my worldview that grounds the research. There is no underlying motive. For example, an Indigenous approach to research often asks the researcher to continually be reflexive regarding one's motives. For example, we may ask: "why are we doing the research?" and "who is going to benefit from it"? In self-locating, it helps establish balance so that I may not shy from the values and beliefs that I hold and bring to the research process. As relational accountability suggests, it helps to maintain the integrity of who I am (Kovach, 2009; Palmer, 1998; Wilson, 2001).

As such, let the research begin.

Definition of terms

In the following paragraphs, I define terms used to characterize different aspects of our identity, including race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, and sexuality. I understand that these terms are fluid depending on our experiences and worldviews; they are not static terms and will change over time (Henry & Tator, 2002; James, 2010; Milner, 2007; 2011; Nieto, 1999a).

Understanding how these socially constructed terms and notions intersect to shape student experiences in the gym will better enable educators to challenge the inequitable opportunities perpetuated in PEH.

Race

Henry and Tator (2002) define race as a socially constructed category that uses common ancestry and physical characteristics such as colour of skin, hair texture, stature, and facial characteristics to classify humans. As a socially constructed term, its impact on power relations as it relates to different groups of people is strong and pervasive, and is often entrenched in all aspects of our society.

Using the term racialized minority and racialized groups refers to the idea that all people are raced, including those who label themselves as White (Henry & Tator, 2002). Henry and Tator define racialized minorities as groups of people other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour. They may also choose to identify themselves as such, or agree to be so identified by the term. They are given minority status based on their relation to the White majority, and their abilities to access power, privilege, and prestige. Other ways that racialized minorities describe themselves include the terms such as "people of colour" and "visible minority" (which Statistics Canada[4] uses to describe the population of people who do not classify as White and do not identify as Aboriginal).

Describing certain racial/ethnic groups of people can be viewed as negative or affirming, depending on your interpretation (James, 2010). While Nieto & Bode (2008) use the term 'people of colour', rather than visible minority; the term "people of colour" presupposes that those who are "White" are lacking in colour and culture, which is not

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[4] Statistics Canada (2012) defines "visible minorities" as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." From http://www.statcan.gc.ca/concepts/definitions/minority01-minorite01a-eng.htm accessed on February 20th, 2013. I understand the term has been perceived by some as communicating a racist and deficit viewpoint. I use it in this context to describe how Statistics Canada uses this term as a census category.

the case. People of colour as an identity marker seems to perpetuate the perspective that being White is considered the norm in which others are meant to compare themselves to. The term people of colour lumps together a wide array of cultural, historical and ethnically rich groups of peoples. Nieto and Bode (2008) voice the challenges of using language that clumps groups of people together and offer up using language that will affirm individuals by their ethnic or racial group, or how individuals wish to be identified. In this case, I use the term racialized minority to describe one aspect of my identity.

Ethnicity

James (2010) defines ethnicity as groupings of people who have common historical, cultural and ancestral origin, and are identified as or identify themselves as belonging to these groups of people. This social construct is based on historical, social, religious, geographical, and political elements. Although members may ascribe to an ethnic group (e.g. Filipino, Ukrainian), individuals within that group may not share all the beliefs and practices of that group. How individuals choose to identify themselves can be based on a number of factors including place of birth, social class, ability, education, occupation and also their willingness to adapt to dominant cultural norms.

Culture

Nieto (1999b) describes culture as a socially constructed term where the behaviours and beliefs of a certain culture are impacted by historical, social, political and economic factors; these factors are continually impacted by issues of power and privilege. Culture is not a passive activity, but rather an active process that occurs in interactions with others (James, 2010). Typically the dominant culture tends to emerge as

the one with the most economic and political power (James, 2010). The dominant culture is seen as "without culture" and their norms, values, traditions and practices are taken for granted thus becoming dominant (McIntosh, 1989). James (2010) also highlights how cultural hegemony works as these power relations are embedded into everyday society such that are viewed as normal and remain unquestioned thus providing a re-occurring and re-entrenchment of dominant ways of thinking and seeing the world.

Class

James (2010) uses the term social stratification to describe a hierarchical system where parts of the population are ranked based on power and access to wealth. Wealth is determined by a number of factors such as property, income, education and occupation. Hierarchical structure (i.e., social class) contributes to systems of oppression (Jones, 1998). Social class is often left out of the literature in terms of its impact on identity, however it is a significant factor that influences the lives of students, something that I relate well to growing up in a "low-income" (i.e., poor) home. Social class played a huge factor in how I saw myself growing up in junior high and high school and I recognize its influence in the students I teach today.

Gender

Gender is classifying people as masculine and/or feminine, or neither. As compared to sex, which is an externally assigned classification (e.g., male, female), gender is related to societal appearance, mannerisms, and roles. A person's gender may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth. For example, the term cisgender refers to a person whose gender and birth-assigned sex match. Someone who is transgender does not identify fully, or in part, with the gender connected to one's birth-assigned sex.

Gender identity is internal, and not always visible to others. Gender stereotypes refer to the idea that males and females should carry out specific roles (e.g., boys play football or girls are weaker than boys) (retrieved from mygsa.ca, 2015).

Sexuality

Sexuality is a personal characteristic and there are a variety of human sexualities that range from emotional/romantic and physical attraction felt by an individual towards members of the same sex, the other sex or (n)either sex. The feelings of attraction to another person are based on desire and gender expression. For example, individuals may be categorized as:

- heterosexual (attracted to the opposite sex)

- homosexual (attracted to the same sex – e.g., lesbian or gay)

- bisexual (attracted to individuals irrespective of their sex)

- asexual (a person who does not experience sexual attraction or who has little or no interest in sexual activity)

Gender identity is seen as independent of one's sexual orientation and neither should be predictive of the other (retrieved from mygsa.ca)

Chapter One

Introduction

Growing up in an educational system predominantly seen as "culturally white space" (Douglas & Halas, 2011), I recognize now how I was not equipped with the tools to interrogate and disrupt the spaces I was learning in. Identifying as a female, racialized minority, I found myself unable to completely relate to my teachers who were White, and a curriculum that was not a reflection of my lived experiences. In physical education and health (PEH) spaces in particular, my own cultural landscape still reminds me of the homogeneity of the educators and of the subject area itself. As Halas (2014, p. 49) says, "we can do better … all of our youth deserve it."

There is a need to disrupt the hegemony in PEH settings, yet many experts in the field do not have the expertise or comfort level in addressing/disrupting practices that perpetuate the hegemony (e.g. see Douglas & Halas, 2011; Flintoff, Dowling & Fitzgerald, 2014). As the diversity of the student population continues to grow, it is becoming clearer how necessary it is to provide more relevant school experiences for all students and to utilize their strengths to collaboratively create more affirming learning climates. In my privileged position as an educator I want to use my voice and power as a way to share the experiences that I believe help to create culturally relevant (CR) spaces for students.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings first described the term culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) in the early 1990's. The motivation behind her research was seeing populations of African-American students in America's school systems suffer academically in the

classroom. Through numerous years of research in schools, she was able to reimagine

what education can be for students by empowering them and setting high expectations for

their academic learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Ladson-

Billings, 2001). Ladson-Billings describes CR educators as "committed to collective, not

merely individual, empowerment" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p.160). CRP focuses on three

criteria:

- Students must experience academic success.

- Students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence.

- Students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge

   the status quo of the current social order. (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160).

The criteria related to CRP operate at different levels in a "system of webbed

relationships" (McRae, 2012, p. 39). At the societal/macro level the goals of CR

classrooms are to recognize and acknowledge inequities, while also challenging the

power relations that maintain the status quo. At a program level, the ultimate goal of CRP

in classrooms is to achieve success by collective program planning and providing

meaningful and relevant curriculum. At a personal/interpersonal level, there is a need for

students to maintain cultural competency and develop an ability to be critically conscious

(McRae, 2012).

Teaching at a large and diverse high school in Winnipeg, identifying as a female,

Asian, lesbian educator with a student population that is largely of Asian[5] descent, I

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[5] At the school where I teach, our largest Asian ethnic groups are Filipino and South Asian, which fall in
line with the Statistics Canada (2009) numbers regarding the largest populated visible minority groups in
Manitoba. I use the term Asian to describe group members from Asian or of Asian descent and/or related to
the people, customs and/or languages. It is an all-encompassing term that not everyone may ascribe to. For
example, some Asians may identify as "Filipino" of "Thai" rather than Asian.

became more intrigued and motivated to use my thesis research to uncover how diverse student experiences are impacted in physical education and health (PEH) settings. Using critical pedagogy and CRP as a theoretical framework, I entered into a conversation with my former students regarding the meaning of CRP within physical education and health (PEH) settings. The research question was:

What is the meaning of culturally relevant physical education and health (CRPEH) from the perspective of female high school graduates from diverse backgrounds?

The purpose of the study was to develop a deeper understanding, from the perspective of female high school graduates from diverse backgrounds, as to how the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and social class impact students as they negotiate their multiple identities through culturally relevant pedagogical practices. The issues related to the intersections of race, class, sexuality and gender, and how they influence student identity construction and affirmation are relevant and important for providing an environment for students that is culturally relevant (Halas, 2006) and is related to each students' lived experiences.

Using Ladson-Billings' framework, Halas adapted a CRP model that applies to working in PEH settings. As seen in Table 1 below, she compares the key characteristics of culturally relevant education developed by Ladson-Billings with physical education.

Table 1: Comparison of CRE with Culturally Relevant PEH

Comparison of Key Principles	
Culturally Relevant Education *(Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b)*	*Culturally Relevant PEH* *(Halas, 2006a, 2011)*
Students experience academic success	Students actively engage and participate in ways that lead to the acquisition of learning outcomes

Students maintain their cultural competence	Students' cultural identities are affirmed with the class and curriculum
Students develop critical social consciousness	Students' develop critical awareness toward and actively address inequities as presented, experienced and understood within the context of PE and the larger community

Halas breaks down the circular model to include four key characteristics (see Figure 1 below) that influence the student experience in schools:

- Teacher as ally;

- Students' day-to-day cultural landscapes;

- Supportive learning climate;

- Meaningful and relevant curriculum (Halas, 2011).

Figure 1: CRPEH Model (Adapted from Halas, McRae & Carpenter, 2012)

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH MODEL

MEANINGFUL & RELEVANT CURRICULUM

Student Input & Agency

Critical Reflection/ Critical Action

SUPPORTIVE LEARNING CLIMATE

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

TEACHER AS ALLY

Community of Learners

Caring teacher - Student relationships

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS DAY-TO-DAY CULTURAL LANDSCAPES
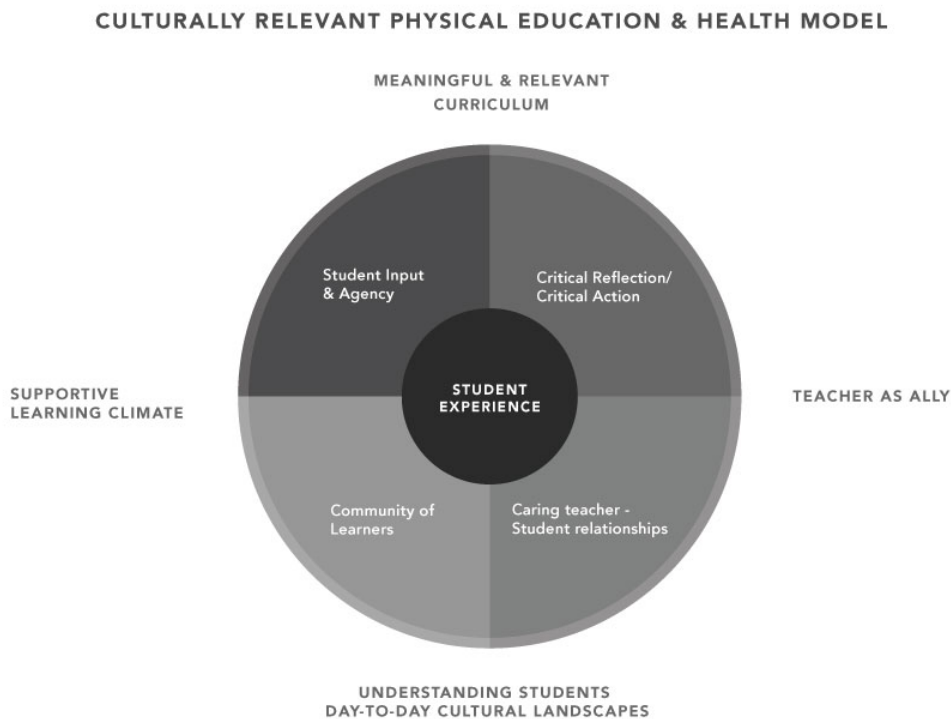
Halas calls her framework, "a pedagogical commitment to social justice, reflexivity and a willingness to shift the power relations and value orientations within the class to be more equitable, humane and affirming" (Halas, 2006a, teaching notes; Culturally Relevant PE and Health class). This model is a holistic, all-encompassing approach to teaching and learning designed to enhance student success and affirm student identities. This model was used to generate discussion from the student participants regarding their PEH experiences and is described in more detail in chapter two.

In addition to CRP, key aspects of critical pedagogy related to issues of power dynamics and privilege foregrounded this research study. I situate myself with the notion that PE is a school subject area that perpetuates unequal societal issues revolving around gender, social class, sexuality, identity, and race (Garrett, 2006; Gibson & Hastie, 2011; Kirk & Tinning, 2005; Laker, Laker, & Lea, 2003; Penney & Evans, 2002). It is the inequities that are apparent, although not always visible, that are important and necessary to discuss.

Physical education contexts: an often unquestioned culture of privilege

"Pedagogy must not privilege one culture at the expense of the other, but rather contextualize the curriculum of the dominant culture within the history, language, lore, environment, and games of the subculture" (Brown, 1998, p. 136).

It is important to highlight issues of power and privilege. Once they are acknowledged opportunities to disrupt those notions exist. In this study, seeking insights from female student voices helped to provide perspectives that challenge the dominant norms within society. Discussing issues related to power and privilege can be messy, uncertain, and awkward however, because our identities are fluid and continually

changing, strengthening our understanding of these issues can help students speak to these issues address diversity, difference and equity with a more critically conscious lens. Strengthening our understanding of these issues through a critically conscious lens can further disrupt dominant cultural ideologies.

Much of the discourse around privilege suggests that those often in positions of power do not see their privilege (hooks, 2003). In Canadian society as a whole, and in a similar context in education settings, the dominant perspective is often White, male, middle-class and heterosexual. As a result, the perspectives that get operationalized the most are that of the dominant socially constructed perspective. Thus, the disparity of diversity as it relates to race, sexuality and social class between school educators and the student population continues to grow and be prevalent (Douglas & Halas, 2008; Gause, Dennison & Perrin, 2010; Hodge & Wiggins, 2010; Mayuzumi, 2008; Milner, 2011; Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009).

The number of educators I had that were not White were few. I vividly remember one Asian teacher because she "looked" like me; she was Filipino. Her face left an imprint on my reflections of my school experience, but it was something I never thought twice about until I started my Education degree. Can you imagine going to school, walking the hallways in a sea of racialized diversity, yet as you walk into each and every classroom, you look towards the front of the class and each time your teachers are White? Should my commentary about the lack of diversity of teachers be concerning to the education system? I believe so. What happens when teachers do not reflect the realities of the students they teach? This is also apparent in the area of physical education and health (PEH) (Douglas & Halas, 2011), the subject that I teach.

Until the stages of the graduate student process, I did not question the pervasive, invisible whiteness that is apparent in our society and its impact in the education system. Henry and Tator (2002) refer to whiteness as a socially constructed hierarchy based on race, which has many implications on the cultural, educational, political and economic institutions in our society. They also suggest whiteness "is a form of race privilege that is invisible to White people who are not conscious of its power" (p. 261). Specifically in PEH, as it relates to race, a culture of whiteness is the most prevalent (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Douglas & Halas, 2011). As well, the societal constructions of race, culture and diversity in PEH is shaped to fit that privilege and often the voice that is silenced are those of racialized minorities (Kohli, 2009; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

The educational system is dominated by Eurocentric (Westernized) perspectives and worldviews, which historically have made it challenging for those who fall outside of these norms to be acknowledged (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Hart, 2010). The groups who have been marginalized, misinterpreted, misrepresented and ignored have included indigenous peoples, women and ethnic/cultural minorities (Battiste, 2008).

Historically, PEH has privileged dominant classifications; White, male, heterosexual, and middle class (Case, Iuzzini & Hopkins, 2012; Flintoff, 1997; Laker, Laker & Lea, 2003). Ennis (1999) describes the culture of PEH as displaying assimilationist practices. These practices reinforce and reproduce stereotypes (e.g., gender, ethnic, academic) that maintain the social, economic, and political status quo. In addition, the many "isms" that female students are exposed to on a daily basis is necessary to address. Racism, sexism, ableism, and heterosexism are prevalent issues in

schools. Sometimes whether we are cognizant or not, our teaching practices reinforce our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours regarding gender, resulting in added pressures for female students in particular to "perform" in a certain way (Penney & Evans, 2002; Laker et al, 2003; Sykes, 2011). These attitudes, beliefs and behaviours circulate among students shaping how they should feel about their bodies, who seems to participate in what activities and who remains on the periphery (McLaren, 1991).

Issues related to student engagement call upon educators to critically consider their social interactions, and in particular, the power relations that define how social identities are understood within our schools and gyms (Champagne, 2006; Halas, 2011). The gym can become a space where students with different social identities related to race, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, class, and ability negotiate and navigate through socially constructed hierarchies within teacher-student relationships and peer-to-peer relationships. Socially constructed hierarchies can perpetuate exclusive practices, versus inclusive practices (Casey & Kentel, 2014; Flintoff, 1997; Laker, Laker & Lea, 2003). Sykes (2011) says, "by reinforcing hetero-normative, gender-normative, racist and ableist ideas about body image and appearance, physical educators may contribute to feelings of physical incompetence in minority students" (p. 75). Issues related to body size, gender, class and ability all influence the social hierarchy. Halas (2011) has described the atmosphere of the gym as an exclusionary culture that is perpetuated by inappropriate and irrelevant teaching practices and the culture of the learning climate.

Critical Race Theory and CRP

Canadian society is rooted in colonial history and the dominant cultural influence in society is White, Eurocentric values and beliefs, which continues to be the hegemonic

racial and cultural marker that defines what it means to be Canadian (Dei et al, 2000b; James, 2010). Hegemony is the dominance of one group over all others (James, 2010). Cultural hegemony, as previously mentioned ensures power relations are embedded in the social order, which is considered normal and part of our everyday lives therefore its existence is never questioned. Unless educators are aware of these power relations, and consciously work to interrupt the status quo hierarchies, many students may often find it difficult to recognize the power they have to disrupt, challenge or question their own school experiences.

Using examples of marginalized Black and Latino students, Solorzano and Yosso (2000) define critical race theory (CRT) in education as a framework that seeks to identify, analyze, and ultimately transform social, cultural, political and economic aspects of education that marginalize students. CRT describes the effects of racism and challenges the hegemonic practices, which are reproduced through the systems of meritocracy (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998).

I grew up under the guise that everyone was the same, and that as people we would be afforded the same privileges and opportunities. I have learned during graduate studies that the idea of meritocracy (Case, Iuzzini, & Hopkins, 2012; James, 2010; Sleeter, 2005) continues to maintain systemic practices of oppression (Brown, 2005; Dewar, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2013a; Kirk & Tinning, 2005; Laker, Laker, & Lea, 2003; Penney & Evans, 2002) related to issues of privilege, race, gender, class and sexuality.

The idea of unearned privilege (McIntosh, 1989) as it relates to social class, calls into question the mythology that those who are disadvantaged are that way because they do not put in the work and effort to be successful (Casey & Kentel, 2014; Sleeter, 2005).

By believing in the mythology of meritocracy some cultural groups can be pigeon holed into stereotypes and preconceptions. For example, critical pedagogy scholars in PEH dispel the myth that Aboriginal students do not participate in PEH because they are lazy (Champagne & Halas, 2003). Rather, other reasons they "resist" PEH are based on assimilationist practices that impede a welcoming learning climate. Assimilationist practices can lead to alienating students.

Historically the alienation of students has been linked to racism, with groups of students categorized biologically and culturally leading them to be viewed as academically competent/incompetent or superior/inferior. As such, the complexities related to the social construction of race are influential in CRP, and is more deeply explored through CRT.

Working in concert with each other, CRT and CRP contribute to providing a proactive dialogue that exposes privilege, challenges systems of oppressions and confronts racism. CRT in education is used to analyze and interrogate social inequity that is demonstrated through racist practices in academia (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Within CRT literature stories of people of colour are often described as being "distorted or silenced" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 29). Only when I began my journey as a graduate student did I start to read and reflect on the literature with a more critical lens, making sure to question the who, what, where, why and how things were written and said. There is limited research literature on race and diversity in Canadian PEH (Douglas & Halas, 2008; Douglas & Halas, 2011; Harrison Jr., Carson & Burden Jr., 2010; Hodge & Wiggins, 2010) in addition there is a significant gap in the research

literature on the perspectives of female racialized minorities in PEH in Canada, as well as other countries (Dagkas, Benn & Jawad, 2011; Vertinsky, Batth, & Naidu, 1996), thus this research sought to both inform and add to the dearth of understanding about marginalizing forms of identity, within PEH contexts in particular.

Identity development

Knowing yourself in relation to others is very crucial. In his book "*The Courage to Teach,*" Parker Palmer (1998) supports the notion that we need to know ourselves in order to be effective in teaching. His work gently pushed me to look inward at my teaching practice and philosophy. As he says, "when I do not know myself, I cannot know my subject – not at the deepest levels of embodied, personal meaning" (p. 2). As human beings I believe we are all trying to find ourselves and make sense of where we fit into the world. What is identity? And, how does it develop? Marcia (1993) describes identity as our ideas of who we are and how we define ourselves in terms of those ideas.

To know yourself is a never-ending journey. It is continually evolving and it is a process that requires us to be vulnerable and open to seeing aspects of our being that we may celebrate or that we may want to change for the better. We all have an identity, but making sense of that identity is the key point to consider. Some people may never explore who they are in a reflective and vulnerable way. It has only been recently that I have given the time and energy into reflecting and acknowledging how my identity has been shaped by various life factors.

Waterman (1993) describes the basis of identity development as transitioning from adolescence to adulthood, where one's sense of identity is strengthened. Identity development is not just something that stops or you cross a finish line, complete the race

and you are done; it is on-going and constantly evolving and changing, based on what's occurring in your life (school, work, family, friends etc.) and by the social constructions of race, gender, social class, sexuality and culture, among others. These social constructions help in developing intersecting identities for individuals. Palmer (1998) acknowledges identity as the movement of the intersections of a person's inner and outer being, "converging in the irreducible mystery of being human" (p. 13). One theme that will be prevalent in this study is to provide space and voice for that "being"; to understand how negotiating intersecting and multiple identities can influence our school experiences. Recognizing students and their multiple and intersecting identities is a crucial piece to CRP.

Intersecting and Multiple Identities

"When both discourse and practice consistently, explicitly, and

critically interrogate the historical and present-day intersections of

race, culture, gender, and foster a self-reflexive engagement with

difference, teachers can open up more meaningful, situated ways of

knowing self and other and rethinking extant relations of power"

(Asher, 2007, p. 65).

The term intersectionality has historical roots in feminist theory and critical race theory, especially in the area of legal studies (Cole, 2009). Crenshaw (1989) suggested that intersectionality uses approaches that consider both the meaning and consequences of multiple and intersecting categories of identity, difference, and disadvantage. Cole (2009) defines intersectionality as the process by which "gender, race, class, and sexuality simultaneously affect the perceptions, experiences, and opportunities of

everyone living in a society stratified along these dimensions" (p. 179). In education, Taylor & Peter (2011) define the term as categories such as age, class, education, ethnic background, gender expression, gender identity, geographic origin, physical and mental ability, race, religion and sexual orientation being experienced simultaneously and not being able to be genuinely separate from one another.

Building on the notion of intersectionality, in a thorough ten-year literature review, Grant and Sleeter (1986) argued for an integrative analysis that includes more than one frame of reference when discussing identity. Within other disciplines (e.g., psychology; social work), the literature on intersecting identities has expanded since Grant and Sleeter's article, however within education (PEH in particular) it is not as prevalent. As Cole (2009) expresses, "less attention has been paid to how social categories depend on one another for meaning, despite the obvious fact that every individual necessarily occupies multiple categories (i.e., gender, race, class, etc.) simultaneously" (p. 170). In the area of identity development, scholars have also discussed the importance of intersectionality (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Asher, 2007; Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008; Nash, 2008).

Within the area of PEH, Azzarito & Solomon (2005) use a feminist, poststructuralist theoretical framework to deconstruct dominant gender, race, and social class discourses around the body to demonstrate the fluidity and contradictory nature of these categories. Using intersectionality as a framework to understand the complexities of student engagement within PEH settings can be powerful and transformative (Azzarito & Solomon).

Intersectionality is an important term to consider in this study because it recognizes that individuals occupy multiple identities. To describe social factors such as race, without acknowledging others such as gender, sexuality, or class within the same conversation would not be realistic (Aylward, 2010; Cole, 2009). By using multiple axes of reference (i.e., points of intersection), the stories shared by myself and the students will be a more accurate, fluid and authentic representation of our lived experiences and realities. As mentioned earlier, we all occupy multiple identities and this study will seek to express that and understand how these intersecting identities are influenced within the PEH context.

Summary

"...teacher educators and students engage in critical reflection and analysis with the intention to uncover the dominant ideologies; deconstruct taken-for-granted knowledge, meaning, and values; and practice pedagogy as a means for human agency and civic and environmental responsibility"

(Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p. 127).

Scholars/researchers bring their varying beliefs and assumptions to their research, with different ways to share, write and convey their points of view and it is the beauty of education and research that we invite and give opportunities to hear different voices and stories (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). We should not be narrowed in our ways of knowing. As McRae (2012) expresses, "by telling the stories that enliven our research questions, we humanize our research participants and ourselves" (p. 91). My hope was that sharing the depth and diversity of diverse female student experiences of PEH, as

informed by my own experiences, would be an opportunity to explore rich lived realities as we deepen our understanding of culturally relevant learning spaces.

This research study sprung from the experiences I have had as a student and educator in the public school system. In seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the perspective of diverse female high school students, I articulate the meaning of culturally relevant PE and health from their voices, alongside my own. Using CRP as a theoretical framework, this study was designed to show why diverse voices, distinct from the dominant norm, are necessary when cultivating more CRPEH spaces.

Not feeling adept to reflect critically about social issues that impacted my daily experiences as a racialized minority was challenging. Now as an educator my goal is to better reflect upon and then put into action how I can help cultivate spaces in PEH that allow female students to feel their multiple, personal and socially-constructed identities affirmed and to encourage engagement. In my own eyes, I have tried to embody what it means to be a culturally relevant educator, which is the basis of this thesis.

The layout of the remaining chapters will be: Chapter Two will include a literature review that will describe the CRPEH model highlighting the four quadrants: teacher as ally; understanding student's day-to-day cultural landscapes, supportive learning climate and meaningful and relevant curriculum. In Chapter Three, I describe the methodology and methods for the research study. Chapter Four will introduce the participants and describe their cultural landscapes as related to their high school and current life experiences. In Chapter Five I share key themes that emerged from the talking circle that elucidate the meaning of CRP from the perspective of the four women as they reflected on their PEH experiences. In Chapter Six, I summarize the key findings

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and use these to construct a revised definition of the meaning of CRPEH; I also assess the

value of the study and offer concluding recommendations for research,

policy/programming and practice.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter, I provide a review of literature of on gender and sexuality in relation to CRP in PEH settings. Following this section, I will discuss CRP in education settings, before describing the CRPEH model adapted from Halas, McRae & Carpenter (2012) in further detail. In particular, the four quadrants: teacher as ally, student cultural landscapes, supportive learning climate and meaningful and relevant curricula will be defined and research from education and PEH literature will be reviewed and analyzed to support the model.

Gender, Sexuality and CRP

Gender

Gender is a key vehicle for the expression of subject knowledge (Clarke, 2002). And, individuals gender themselves based on the multiple/intersecting identities they choose. As humans, we perform our subjectivities and by being subject to viewing, bodies are exposed and open to the gaze of others. Issues related to gender are socially constructed, therefore are learned stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours that students and educators come to see as common and are considered normal. These impact identity formation and physical development of students within schools (Penney, 2002).

The learned stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours related to gender that are constructed/performed in school settings can make certain learning spaces unsafe and marginalize students. For students who fall outside of the socially constructed norms of gendered practices, a safe school climate can be difficult to achieve. In a national climate survey, Taylor and Peter (2011) found change rooms to be one of the most unsafe spaces

in schools. Others scholars (Clark, 2002; Halas, 2002; Halas, 2011; Sykes, 2011) also share experiences from the research with marginalized youth who attest to change rooms being a prominent factor in their negative experiences in the gym. This is concerning, and an issue that needs to be addressed.

As more research and discussion has enhanced the gender agenda, the reality is that the normative practices of PEH and the binary notions we have about gender are marginalizing students. What happens if a student is not reflected in the gender ideals of dominant discourses? For example, if female students do not act "feminine" as defined by socially constructed norms of what it means to be female, they can be marginalized.

Like the larger society, the hegemonic influence in PEH related to gender produces a single and stereotypical image that gendered identities should be either masculine or feminine. Students learn what "doing girl" and "doing boy" are within traditional body performances (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010). Historically PEH curricula for female students has emphasized content more aligned with social constructions of femininity, such as gymnastics, dance, fitness, and cooperative games (Ennis, 1998). As well, the culture of PEH often reflects a patriarchal perspective, and a focus toward masculinity, and physical activities with emphasis on competition and domination (Casey & Kentel, 2014; Ennis, 1998).

The binary gender discourse that normalizes stereotypes of what it means to be masculine and/or feminine is present in PEH settings and is ingrained in many teaching practices in the gym, often showing up in co-ed PEH, "all-girls" or "all-boys" classes. In the quest for gender equity, we often marginalize the students that do not fall in prescribed "categories" and PEH as an educational site has tremendous difficulty moving

beyond binary categorization. However, recent scholarship offers opportunities to think beyond masculinity and femininity in PEH. For instance, Sykes's (2011) in her book, *Queer Bodies: Sexualities, Genders, & Fatness in Physical Education,* provides a more inclusive lens in which to view PEH settings, and asks educators to disrupt and dismantle the binary discourse that often gets played out in the subject area. For example, identifying as transgender for some high school students can be difficult in the sense that the school environment may not be adequate to help students "decide about, develop, and live their transgendered subjectivities" (Sykes, 2011, p. 2). She includes trans-inclusive approaches and strategies in her book that move beyond binary gender thinking in physical education to help educators provide more safe and welcoming spaces for their students. Some examples include inclusive materials and books that re-imagine the "gym" and spending more time in classes discussing issues related to gender identity. But beyond a normalized way of viewing inclusive strategies, Sykes (2011) uses the term *ethics of vision* where individuals learn to idealize an aspect of their image previously despised. As well, Sykes describes the approaches for social change as psychoanalytic in nature, requiring individuals to reimagine what normal is.

The report from Taylor and Peter (2011) represents a national survey of Canadian high school students undertaken in order to investigate what life at school is for students with sexual or gender minority status. The study looked at the demographic (e.g., age, province, gender identity, sexual orientation), experiences (e.g., hearing "gay" used as an insult, being assaulted, feeling very depressed about school), and institutional responses (e.g., staff intervention, inclusive safer schools policies) (Taylor & Peter, 2011).

The work of Sykes (2011), alongside Taylor and Peter's (2011) national climate

survey, strike crucial conversations about how normalized patterns of stereotypes, behaviours and attitudes often leave many LGBTQ students on the margins and further alienated from school and a positive and inclusive climate.

Gender and student engagement

In Canada, there are signs of a move toward more critical engagement within the scholarship of physical education. Researchers have long addressed issues related to female student disengagement in PEH settings (Gibbons, 2009; Gibbons & Humbert, 2008; Gibbons, Humbert & Temple, 2010; Gibbons, Wharf Higgins, Gaul, & Van Gyn, 1999; Humbert, 1995; Humbert, 2006; Olafson, 2002, Pfaeffli & Gibbons, 2010 Vertinsky, 1992). In Gibbons & Humbert's (2008) research on female student engagement (using homogenous groups of students), key themes included making female experiences in the gym fun, enjoyable, positive, while offering variety in the activities chosen, and choosing activities that were meaningful and relevant to students' personal lives. The research studies mentioned here help us to learn to better support female student engagement, and help to affirm identities, much more research can be done to describe a more diverse and complex understanding of the experiences of students. How many physical and health educators, like me, have struggled with colleagues to justify providing more time and space for female students to participate in intramural activities, which historically are dominated by male students? Students in my classes have also expressed that PEH class is one that is too competitive with not enough choices, or choices that are meaningful and interesting to their lives.

While gender in PEH literature has focused on engagement, research around intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexuality in PEH is becoming crucial in

understanding the diverse experiences among young people and their engagements with physical cultures (Garrett & Wrench 2011). For example, Petherick's (2013) research related to female experiences in PEH settings provided a critical analysis of the gendered dynamic of fitness and fitness testing by looking at student narratives. One example that includes multiple socially constructed ideas and points of intersection – race, gender, class, sexuality, and culture – is Ennis (1998) and she uses gender and ethnicity as points of intersection to describe how PEH settings are contested terrain.

More recently, Fitzpatrick (2013a & 2013b) uses critical ethnography as a methodological approach to address issues related to urban youth in Otara, New Zealand. Using a critical pedagogical approach, issues related to injustice and power relations are interrogated. With concern for how social categories of culture, ethnicity, gender and sexuality merge she describes students' experiences of schooling and PEH in particular. Fitzpatrick (2013) describes PEH settings as reinforcing narrow conceptions of race and gender related to the body, sexuality and ability. Her book "*Critical Pedagogy, Physical Education and Urban Schooling*" describes how PEH settings are "overtly critical and inclusive spaces for urban youth to "play up" to dominant perceptions of the body" (p.3). She takes the experiences of the youth beyond the school and explores their lives in relation to place and space, and also how their bodies and community exist in relation to broader political and social hierarchies.

As well, Penney & Evans (2002) discuss gender issues and describe it within the intersections of race, culture, class and sexuality. They encourage the profession of PE to embrace multiple identities, as well as be critically aware of how inequities, whether visible or invisible, shape who gets to enjoy the opportunities that PEH have to offer.

Ennis (1999; 2000) challenges teachers within PEH settings to adopt more culturally relevant pedagogical practices to engage female students, as well as help these students develop and negotiate their identities to grow themselves. However, if educators can create equitable spaces and work towards gender equity, then female students in particular may be empowered and can showcase their multiple selves (Azzarito & Katzew, 2010).

Azzarito & Katzew (2010) urge educators to be reflexive in recognizing how students form, disrupt, interrupt and learn gendered identities, and how schools themselves function in the production and perpetuation of gender inequities. As well, they suggest the importance of viewing identity as fluid and interconnected within the embodiments of femininity/masculinity taking form through physical education practices.

Penney (2002) suggests we broaden how we view the behaviours that females should display, the body shapes they have, and the activities that they participate in. When she speaks to gender equity she discusses not only access to equitable experiences, but also "whether they can express and develop attitudes and behaviours relating, for example, to their sexuality, shape and physical cultures, that help frame their identity, define who they are and what they want to be" (p. 14). However, it is important to note that the experiences of female students are not to be lumped together. When we look at the experiences of female students within intersecting social categories of gender, race, class and sexuality, some females are more privileged than others (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Fitzpatrick, 2013b). For example, Azzarito and Solomon (2005) describe African-American women as active agents in their resistance against racialized, classist, and gendered barriers in society, however their voices are more silenced than their White

female peers.

Despite the tensions related to gender identity and its impact on students in PEH settings, there is hope for change in that the socially constructed norms are subject to interrogation and revision. Educators and students can play a strong role in disrupting gender stereotypes and attitudes (Casey & Kentel, 2014). And, the recent research from Sykes (2011) and Taylor and Peter (2011) are demonstrating the need for change in schools. It is necessary to provide a space in PEH settings that is safe from gender discrimination and harassment.

Sexuality

Sexuality can be a difficult topic to discuss in education, however it represents a significant factor contributing to student identity. In PEH, sexuality and gender identity are topics discussed in health class. However, the degree to which it is discussed often depends on an educator's comfort level in speaking to and across these issues (Sykes, 2011). Differences in values, beliefs and orientations towards sexuality and sexual health bring diverse topics into the discussion. How educators respond to these differences opens up opportunity for or forecloses learning about difference. Heterosexuality is seen in society as the dominant orientation, which can make it challenging to disrupt the stereotypes and norms (Morrow & Gill, 2003; Vavrus, 2009). Homophobia consists of prejudiced comments/attitudes/thoughts towards sexual minorities, however heteronormativity is viewed as natural, normal, desirable (Montgomery & Stewart, 2012).

Taylor & Peter (2011) define homophobia the term as "fear and/or hatred of homosexuality in others, often exhibited by name-calling, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, discrimination, or acts of violence—anyone who is LGBTQ or assumed to be LGBTQ

can be the target of homophobia" (p. 37). The term homophobia is seen as a more common term to use within schools. However, they also use the term bi-phobia and trans-phobia within their research, recognizing that the latter term has yet to be commonly used in educational circles. The use of the term "homosexual" or "homosexuality" has historical roots in law and medicine and has been viewed as very derogatory, signifying immorality and mental illness (Taylor & Peter, 2012).

Taylor and Peter (2011) acknowledge homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia as a dangerous threat to many LGBTQ students in schools. Students who are perceived to identify as LGBTQ or may look that way can be bullied, which have led in extreme cases to suicide (Morrow & Gill, 2003; Sykes, 2011; Vavrus, 2009). Gender and sexuality represented two socially constructed terms that influence students' negotiation of their multiple identities.

In the remaining sections of this chapter I will describe CRP literature within the broad educational context and more specifically in relation to physical and health education contexts and research-based studies. Finally, I will introduce and describe Halas' culturally relevant physical education and health (CRPEH) model in more detail, and include research from the literature to support this approach to teaching.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

I was drawn to CRP because of its focus on relationships and how a student's cultural landscape can positively or negatively impact his/her learning. I say this because a student will struggle if teachers and/or classmates denigrate his/her cultural identity. From my experiences, as well as from the literature, this is the case with many Aboriginal students and newcomers to Canada (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Curwin & Linda, 2003).

CRP, a branch of critical pedagogy, aims to disrupt all forms of oppressive power and marginalization, with the hope of encouraging learners to critically reflect on how society influences their lives and how they see themselves (i.e., their multiple identities within society) (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994). CRP encourages student input, and stresses the importance of community-based learning, where student, and teacher, work cooperatively in the teaching and learning process and incorporate aspects of the students' day-to-day cultural lives into the curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Within PEH literature, Casey and Kentel (2014) describe CRP as an approach "which acknowledges that each student comes with lived experiences that are an intersection of race, ability, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, somatotypes, and cultural and family traditions. It builds on the premise that everyone and everything is interconnected" (p. 125). Providing opportunities for students to develop and maintain cultural competence is crucial in CRP. I spoke about cultural competence in chapter one as it related to educators, however in this context students developing cultural competence consists of "students using their own cultural ways and systems of knowing," (Milner, 2011, p. 71) to positively influence their ability to understand broader cultural ways and knowledges. Being culturally competent means knowing your own cultural worldview, having a positive relationship with your own culture, having knowledge about other cultural worldviews, and having a respectful attitude towards cultural differences. Being able to develop skills to work inter-culturally with their peers is necessary for students and is a key characteristic of CRP.

CRPEH Model

As mentioned in chapter one, the study will use the CRPEH model which is adapted from Halas, McRae & Carpenter (2012), and the four quadrants (teacher as ally, students' day-to-day cultural landscapes, supportive learning climate and meaningful and relevant curriculum) to generate discussion regarding students' experiences in PEH settings. In the upcoming sections of this chapter, I will break down the CRPEH model and describe in further detail the four key quadrants. While I separate the four quadrants of the CRPEH model into sections, it is important to note that each aspect is interrelated and impacts one another. It is important to let the characteristics not be tied down by the quadrants they are a part of, but rather understanding that they are relational. The elements of the CRPEH model are dependent upon and inform one another.

Teacher as Ally

Journal Reflection (Sopear, 2013)

Advocating for equity. Fighting the good fight. Why do our female students need just as much time and space in the PEH settings as their male peers? It can be a frustrating uphill climb justifying why systems of oppression in a very male-dominated space impact the overall climate of our students…

"Teacher as ally" is one of four key aspects that encompasses the CRPEH model. What is an ally? Casey and Kentel (2014) provoke reflection by asking, "in what ways can teachers use their positions of privilege to build equitable, respectful, and supportive relationships with all students?" (p. 125). This question begins to describe how important teacher allies are to creating CR learning spaces.

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Allies interrogate power and privilege

In, *"Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression"* Bishop (1994) shares her experiences defining and describing experiences of oppression. She defines *"ally"* as a member of an oppressor group who works to end a form of oppression that privileges them. In her book, the oppressor group is seen as White, however in education that is not always the case. At times, those in the oppressor group are unaware of the privileges that afford them their power.

Those who are oppressed are often more aware of it than those who are not. Allies "anticipate potential barriers to participation that their students may face, all the while recognizing the individuality of each student, the diversity of student needs, and the potential for each student to be successful" (Halas, 2006b, p. 170). While I may be described as having many oppressed labels (racialized minority, female, lesbian), I choose to be an ally in the sense that my privilege as an educator affords me many opportunities to use my voice and "power" to exercise my support for student success and to disrupt systems of oppressions. Privilege is fluid and always contextual.

Allies develop critical social consciousness in themselves and students

Allies who are socio-culturally conscious display an awareness of how societal structures impact individual experiences and opportunities. Being socio-culturally conscious means understanding the way people think and behave, which are impacted by intersections of race/ethnicity, social class, gender and language (Banks, 1996; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Allies understand that social inequalities are produced and perpetuated through oppressive means that are justified through the ideologies of merit, social mobility, and individual responsibility.

Also, allies recognize their position in the social, historical and political context by questioning their own attitudes, behaviours and beliefs. They are able to interrogate their perceptions about their students, and the stereotypes and images that may promote negative thoughts towards students, especially those that may come from backgrounds different from their own (Halas, 2011).

In the CRPEH model, critical reflection is a key area of CR teaching that allies should possess in order to be effective educators. Allies are critically reflective of their preconceptions, values and beliefs and understand the role that their worldviews play in impacting the student's school experience (Howard, 2001). Critical self-reflection is important for recognizing how our multiple and intersecting identities are constructed, positioned and shaped by society.

In addition to being critically reflective, allies also act as moral change agents who have a responsibility to facilitate the growth and development of their students to make learning more equitable (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Gay (2000) describes allies as cultural organizers and mediators for students. As cultural organizers they understand how culture operates, and create learning climates that celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity, where students can culturally express themselves through their voices and experiences and they are reflected in teaching and learning practices. As cultural mediators, allies help students to engage in critical dialogue by creating a community of diverse learners who celebrate and affirm each other and work collaboratively for mutual success, as they disrupt powerlessness and oppression (Gay, 2000; Nieto, 1999b; Tatum, 1999).

Teachers as allies integrate critical thinking skills for students within their classes to challenge the status quo (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Increasing critical consciousness will allow students to make better-informed decisions that will impact their lives in meaningful and relevant ways (Champagne, 2006; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006).

Allies build reciprocal relationships

"Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able

to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their

subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world

for themselves" (Palmer, 1998, p. 11).

Being able to understand the student in a more personal, authentic matter is key to building relationships. It creates reciprocity among students and teachers. But, how does one create reciprocity? With regards to the teacher-student relationship, there is a notion of power of the teacher over the student, often where the teacher imparts knowledge to the student. However, in CR settings, students play a prominent role in knowledge acquisition and exchange. The research in CRP says we must provide a context for students to bring their personal experiences into the learning climate (Milner, 2011).

Allies in CR classrooms use their students' knowledge and expertise in a proactive way where student input is highly valued and welcomed. Allies show interest in their student's lives and get to know them (Champagne, 2006). Student participation is always encouraged but not forced, and there are clear expectations that foster accountability towards everyone's actions, all within a communal setting.

Allies are caring

Gay (2000) describes CRP as a teaching approach set within caring and supportive learning communities. Focused on high expectations for students, Gay (2000) characterizes caring interpersonal relationships as being reciprocal and displaying patience, persistence, facilitation, validation and empowerment, with demand for accountability. The act of caring is a key characteristic in CRP. A caring teacher can have a powerful effect when connecting with students.

Owens and Ennis (2005) take a deep look into the ethic of care and how it can play a role for educators. Noddings (1992) initially articulated and developed the ethic of care in relation to the work of educators in the early 1990's. Building on the work of Noddings', Owens and Ennis (2005) describe the characteristics of an ethic of care as "engrossment in the cared-for student, a commitment to the cared-for student, and a motivational shift from a focus on the teacher self to a focus on the student other" (p. 394). Educators who exhibit an ethic of care in their practice go beyond the development of skills. These educators take the time and effort to get to know their students. These educators are dedicated to learning more about their students and are genuine in their interactions. However, the time and effort to care for students is complex, with the many intersecting social categories that each student brings to class each day.

Understanding students' day-to-day cultural landscapes

Journal Reflection (Sopear, 2013)

Activity: Indoor Soccer.

In my attempts to be more equitable, I make it a point to make teams fair by putting an equal number of skilled/lower-skilled students on each team. While I'm usually

with it and pride myself in understanding the social interactions of my class, today it's a complete debacle. I'm having an off day.

Here are the Afghani sisters. Their English is not as polished and much of our banter is met with "No, ma'am" and "yes, ma'am"; typically they are always eager and keen to participate in class, and always with a smile on their faces. Not today. As I think about what's happened, I recall that they are only a month removed from their home in Afghanistan. I hadn't considered what, or even if they had participated in "play" with someone of the opposite gender. I didn't ask, and I assumed that they would adjust and figure it out…

And, now one of them is crying because of the aggressive nature of one of the boys.

I forgot to take the time to ask. And, to learn what it means to be new from Afghanistan. I assumed. Six years into this teaching career, and I will always have something to learn about my students, especially with the diversity of our student population.

Lesson learned…

Teachers who are allies work to understand their students' day-to-day cultural landscapes. Students' cultural landscapes and perspectives should be considered as teachers operate within learning climates, as they teach curricula, and through daily interactions with their students and peers.

In understanding the cultural landscapes of our students, the term cultural competence has been used in the same breath as cultural relevancy. A culturally competent educator is someone who understands the cultural landscapes of their students.

Educators are respectful of the diversity of their student population, and recognize and appreciate how important it is that students' identities are reflected repeatedly throughout their school experience. Along with being culturally competent, educators who are critically conscious of their practices will assist in affirming the identities and cultural landscapes of their students, which all positively influence a culturally relevant learning space (McRae, 2012). Culturally competent educators are also able to recognize the cultural hegemony that seeps through our learning spaces, and they are able to challenge the social hierarchies in places that can be limiting to students.

Our cultural landscapes are informed through various social factors that are not limited to race, language, gender, sexual orientation, and class, as examples (Nieto, 1999b). By taking initiative to understand the cultural landscapes of our students, educators may find it more helpful in navigating the messy and oppressive colour-blind discourses that are prevalent in education (Halas, 2002). Tatum (1999) describes colour-blind discourses as ones that treat all students as if they are same, without recognizing racial or ethnic differences among students. In this way discourse works to suggest that treating students equally is appropriate. However, when educators claim not to notice student differences, and teach students the same, they disregard key features of a student's identity that can inform their learning (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999b; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Exercising caution when confronting difference, to not homogenize groups based on their shared social and cultural characteristics is important.

Teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward students influence and shape the expectations they have for student learning, as well as how they treat students and what

students ultimately learn. Teachers also need insight into how their students' past learning experiences have shaped their current views of school and school knowledge (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). At times educators must unlearn how their values and beliefs influence their interactions with their students. Educators must increase their awareness and commitment to disrupting stereotypes of their students, particularly racialized minorities (Halas, 2006b). The inter-connection between teacher as ally and understanding students' cultural landscapes is displayed here.

Everyone has culture, yet despite that Western society reinforces the dominant culture's values and beliefs as the norm. As a result, practices within school settings reproduce stereotypes related to gender, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation that often marginalize students and maintain the status quo (Ennis, 1999). In North America, the dominant White culture views itself as the source of knowledge, creating a sense of power from which to speak. The dominant culture often remains the unchallenged norm (Blodgett et al., 2011).

Douglas & Halas (2011) speak to the issue of the culture of whiteness in PEH settings, suggesting that:

an unmarked culture of whiteness is (re)produced through pedagogical practices and materials, and social relations; the norms, values, practices and emphases of physical education programs, as well as through the continued reference to those visibly identified as 'non-white' (i.e. Aboriginal people and racialized minorities) as the only members of racial groups (p. 4).

As a result of the culture of whiteness, students from diverse backgrounds often find themselves trying to negotiate their lives within the context of the dominant culture. At

its worst it can marginalize students, thus diminishing their self-worth and sense of belonging. I struggled immensely during the latter part of junior high and through most of high school navigating my Cambodian culture among the dominant White, Eurocentric norm. I lacked a sense of pride and belonging when it came to identifying as Cambodian (i.e., Asian) because my teachers never spoke of difference and the curricula never reflected my culture.

Culture is about how people live, and understanding how culture impacts the day-to-day experiences and interactions is important in CRP. As educators we must believe our students are capable of being culturally competent and that their experiences are of value in their education. Just as important it is for educators to understand the cultural landscapes of their students, it is also necessary to recognize the impact of culture on that process, as well as how educators can help to cultivate a space for students to negotiate/navigate through their multiple identities. As Champagne (2006) states, "teachers need to act as cultural coaches by reinforcing positives and bridging skill development. They need to plug into who their students are" (p. 42).

CR teachers hold positive and affirming views of all students of all backgrounds. They respect student family histories, and see the multiple identities that students hold as assets rather than deficits or limitations (Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006). Regarding the strength of student diversity, Nieto (1999b) says, "all students of all backgrounds bring talents and strengths to their learning and as educators we need to find ways to build on these" (online article).

Supportive learning climates

Journal Reflection (Sopear, 2013)

Setting: Class discussion on experiences in PEH settings

The students acknowledge that PEH settings are not a place where they have always wanted to be. This group is special. They are not the jocks or the overly skilled students who shine in every activity. They are a mixed bag of skill levels, interests, strengths and weaknesses', yet somehow their spirit, respect and commitment to the entire group as a whole has created a supportive learning climate where they feel empowered. Students who rarely associate outside these settings are working cooperatively, opening themselves up to each other and are appreciating the similarities and differences they bring to the class.

Like the broader society, students encounter learning environments that produce racist, sexist, and homophobic discourse. For example, "everyday racism", a term used by Essed (1991), is meant to describe racism operating in everyday routines and practices that are unrecognized and unacknowledged, thus becoming normalized behaviours. Culturally white spaces, as well as gendered and sexed assumptions that take place in the gym promote western values related to competition, individualism and domination, which can marginalize many students, often resulting in a negative PEH experience. Halas (2011) and Ennis (1999) suggest that privileged hierarchies exist within PEH spaces. Skilled students and fit students along with males often find themselves ahead of the pack in terms of being successful in the gym. By developing a CR approach to teaching and learning, student knowledge acquisition and learning becomes less about who wins and

who gets left behind. Instead it is a collective process that utilizes the strengths of the students, set within a learning environment that stresses community.

The purpose of CRP is to provide an environment where all students feel affirmed, respected, included, supported, and engaged in the learning process, regardless of the axes of difference they situate themselves in (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Casey & Kentel, 2014; Gay, 2000). How does CRPEH achieve this?

Providing supportive learning climates is crucial. In CR learning spaces, the climate is one where students feel comfortable and welcomed to express their thoughts. Educators and students are able to discuss key social issues in ways that enhance learning, increase student voice, and disrupt the hierarchical power relations that often exist in teacher-student relationships. Rather than just acknowledge the uniqueness of student cultural landscapes, CR teachers also intentionally nurture a learning climate that promotes student diversity, which is seen as a strength to enhance learning (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011).

Other factors that help to establish/maintain supportive learning climates is the ability to build and establish trusting environments. Trusting environments are created when teachers and students work cooperatively and maintain reciprocity in their respect for each other (Ennis & McCauley, 2002). All students should feel a sense of safety, self-worth and sense of belonging when they are in school (James, 2010). In providing a supportive learning climate of inclusivity, the environment must promote a community of learners (Laker, 2000).

As Laker (2000) says, how we identify ourselves is done in relation to others; our experiences are set within a larger community. Our identities are socially constructed and

continue to change and be influenced by the people and locations we encounter. Therefore, having supportive learning climates in PEH settings will promote a positive sense of self and belonging for students.

Meaningful and relevant curriculum

Journal Reflection (Sopear, 2013)

How can we engage students even more in the development of curriculum? What are or aren't we doing to connect students' lived experiences with the physical activities and health topics we discuss? As educators, what is our ultimate goal in delivering PEH to students?

Earlier I spoke of how understanding the day-to-day cultural landscapes of students, providing a supportive learning climate and having teachers as allies all contribute to enhancing what, how, and why students learn in PEH settings. Now the last approach of this model to review is to discuss how the curriculum can enhance a student's overall experience in PEH settings. Some key issues to consider during this section are describing learning experiences that will be meaningful and relevant for students and developing lessons that will fit into students' personal and social constructions of themselves (Casey & Kentel, 2014). Ultimately the goal is to find out what interests the students we teach, and to do so in a way that is relevant to their lives, while also exposing them to broader inter-cultural learning experiences. Azzarito & Solomon (2005) also asks, "how can the curriculum be reconceptualized to reach, to empower girls and boys of different ethnicities and social classes to express their bodily capacities freely and fully, and to learn about the fundamental role of physical activity in their lives?" (p. 40).

Schick and St. Denis (2005) have described the public education system in Canada as continuing to reflect White, Eurocentric interests. The implication of the hegemonic influence is that most students who are not White are rarely reflected within the curricula, while those who belong to the dominant culture are represented within school curricula. As it relates to the content itself, sport-based curricula in PEH settings has constrained and alienated girls (Ennis, 1999). In her research she has proposed a "Sport for Peace" model that engages, and empowers female students in PEH.

Ladson-Billings (1995) has argued that teachers must shape curriculum and instruction in a way that uses the cultural knowledge and frames of reference from students' diverse cultural backgrounds, to validate their cultural knowledge in school. In critical pedagogy the goal of teaching the curriculum is to allow student's life experiences to question/reflect about values, morals and ethics contained within the curriculum (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). The goal for students then will be to "define what alternatives and actions are best for them so that the values they adopt and the choices they make may be both conscious and intentional, not based on tradition or uncritical inertia" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p.128).

As well, CR teachers must also assist students in interrogating curricula critically by looking at inaccuracies, omissions, and distortions in texts (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). CR teachers facilitate students in their ability to understand and demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills, as well as the ability to collaborate with peers and recognize multiple perspectives (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Research in the field of PEH has also indicated learning will be enhanced if the pedagogical goals involved link learning to student, community and social interactions

(Cothran & Ennis, 1999; Ennis, 1999; 2000; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; 1998). Working together students can learn from and with each other. Taylor and Peter (2011) discuss issues related to sexual and gender minority youth and describe how policy, programs and curricula development must reflect the understanding of the intersecting systems of power related to racialization and poverty, and recognize that they all work together to impact the school climate. Some suggestions they provide from the national climate survey include: school divisions require inclusive and respectful representations of LGBTQ people in courses; that they provide curriculum guidelines and resources for mainstreaming LGBTQ-inclusive teaching including intersectionality, across the curriculum; and they provide auditable evidence of meaningful implementation. School divisions should provide professional development to assist schools to implement LGBTQ-inclusive and intersectionality curriculum.

Tinning (2009) has suggested creating curricula that allow for personal development of the students within the social and economic circumstances surrounding them. This supports Laker's (2000) goals of helping students be informed critical learners. As stated earlier, for students a meaningful curriculum will connect to their lives and interests, including the social and economic inequalities that shape our society. Some examples that Casey and Kentel (2014) suggest for working towards a meaningful and relevant curriculum in PEH involves students developing learning experiences that pertain to the difficulties they encounter when confronting matters related to sexual orientation, body image, racism, social class and sexism. Providing inter-cultural learning experiences where students are able to share their place of origin (through music, dance, and games) with their classmates and learn from their peers is also important. Accessing

community partnerships that expose students to a wide range of activities they normally do not have access to is also necessary. The curriculum should promote equitable engagement of all students. Providing learning experiences where students are not limited by their gender, ability, race, ethnicity, sexuality and social class are crucial for student development and growth.

Manitoba PEH Curriculum

Manitoba's most recent PE/HE (2000) curriculum suggests a goal of "physically active and healthy lifestyles for all students." The curriculum also provides guiding principles for educators to consider when teaching students. I have highlighted a few of the principles (see below) that correlate to the CRPEH model.

1. Developmentally and age-appropriate — Students' learning should be achieved through appropriate, relevant, and sequential learning experiences that meet the developmental and age-appropriate needs of students.

2. Involvement of parents, families, and communities — A shared responsibility among the home, school, and community should be adopted for the development and reinforcement of healthy lifestyle behaviours.

3. Holistic — Children should encounter meaningful, experiential activities and materials in purposeful and authentic contexts.

4. Quality — Programming should provide a climate that fosters excellence through dedication, determination, creativity, initiative, and high achievement.

5. Addresses elements of integration — Programming should address:
    1. - curriculum integration
    2. - human diversity

3. - sustainable development

4. - anti-racist/anti-bias education

(From: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes for Active, Healthy

Lifestyles. Kindergarten to Senior 4 Physical Education/Health

Education, 2000)

These principles show how the PEH experience for students can be community oriented

(see bullet #2), have supportive learning climates, inter-cultural learning experiences, and

more importantly are meaningful and relevant to the student's lives. With regards to

bullet #5, despite it being written within the curriculum document, I believe there is more

room for this to be developed and described in greater detail. As this was written in 2000,

there is a need for this document to be updated and reflect the shifting dynamics among

the student population, and consider incorporating more diverse and inclusive approaches

in the PEH curricula. Throughout this study, I will highlight those guiding principles

stated above in more detail as it relates to the CRPEH model.

Chapter Summary

The CRPEH model is an approach that aims to disrupt the hegemonic influence

through values, attitudes and beliefs, and aims to challenge the system in place by

providing conditions that values a community of learners, while also displaying

uniqueness, and voice among the learners. This model strives to provide students with the

space to develop their critical consciousness and question the world around them through

their own lens. This model encourages students to develop self-confidence, facilitated by

educators who are genuine in their commitment to knowing their students on a more

personal level, disrupting their own preconceptions, and providing a learning climate that

celebrates individuality within a community of learners.

Chapter Three

Methodology and Methods

Journal Reflection (Sopear, 2013)

> *What led me here? I was drawn to indigenous approaches because it all leads back to connection and relationships. In this research process I realize how my head and heart must connect in order for the transmission of knowledge to be holistic and respectful. My goal is to bring female students together and discuss how to create learning climates that celebrate the diversity of the student population. My wish is that sharing their voices will help to disrupt the unhelpful dominant perspectives that often permeate PE culture.*

Methodology

In this chapter I discuss why I chose to use an Indigenous approach to research and highlight the methodology and methods of the research study as viewed through these perspectives. Research that is set within an Indigenous approach is grounded by relationality (Wilson, 2008). Indigenous ways of knowing are personal and experiential. Yet, I was schooled in Western thought processes throughout my entire education, which taught me to separate my heart and mind. I had not questioned that there might be other perspectives in which to access knowledge and to disseminate it. As discussed, growing up female and a racialized minority in the field of education, it was only when I began graduate studies that I finally encountered perspectives different from the dominant norm. It took some time, but when I was encouraged to read more about Indigenous approaches to research everything started to connect for me. Shawn Wilson (2008) teaches that

research can be personal and that it will be influenced by our experiences, and that is "okay".

I enter into the research process acknowledging that I bring a subjective stance to my inquiry. Qualitative research assumes that subjectivity within the research process will be constant (Kovach, 2009). The researcher is not a neutral instrument in the research study. As McRae (2012) expresses, "by accepting subjectivity as a factor that impacts research, knowledge is understood as a human construction that is shaped by context, history, and culture" (p. 91). I use my worldview to influence the way I view my social location. Our social location within the world influences how we interpret the world and make sense of the social landscape (McRae, 2012; Hart, 2010).

I was hesitant to include Indigenous approaches to research because as a non-indigenous person, I wondered if it was ethical to adopt Indigenous approaches in my research. Kovach (2009) suggests some ways. One would be to have a decolonizing aim, by examining the impact of whiteness on the transmission of knowledge (i.e., what voices are more privileged than others? What perspectives are considered the norm? What perspectives are outside the norm?). Disrupting the privileged Western epistemologies and voicing perspectives different from the norm is necessary. It is important to see and write knowledge in ways that can invoke change, and to celebrate diverse worldviews.

Looking at an indigenous axiology (ethics) recognizes that the researcher will be *respectful* of the knowledge that is acquired. It also means that during the research study we are accountable to our relations. As well as maintaining respect of the participants and the ideas they share, the results that come from the study need to be of use to the community, providing *relevance* and *reciprocity*. In addition to respect, relevance and

reciprocity, *responsibility* is another key characteristic of Indigenous approaches to research.

I used interpretive research methods to enter into a collective dialogue with graduated high school female students regarding their meaning of CRPEH. Julia Ellis (1998) writes about interpretive inquiry as a method for teachers to use in their research within schools. In "*Teaching From Understanding: Teacher as Interpretive Inquirer*" she says, "every teacher – in fact – every person is an interpretive inquirer. We interpret events, people, objects in order to participate, interact, or behave in ways that make sense" (p. 6). Within interpretive inquiry, the writing process is a journey and making sense of it is what I have become drawn to. The process of writing can be transformative. It "invites reflection and deliberation: reflection on meaning as we search for the right words, and deliberation about the relationships among experiences or ideas as we evaluate the argument or interpretation we put forward in writing" (Ellis, 1998, p. 6).

By drawing upon already established trusting relationships with my past students in this qualitative research study, I hoped to create an environment that was community oriented and open to the free exchange of ideas. Qualitative research is interpretive in nature, which can imply that there is a relational approach when it comes to the research process (Kovach, 2009). Ellis (1998) also speaks to the importance of collective knowledge: "By sharing the knowledge from each of our locations through dialogue we develop a fuller understanding of the places we inhabit together" (p. 8). When we allow ourselves the permission to share our stories, especially those that are often untold within the dominant cultural norms of society, it can be a very empowering experience. Indigenous approaches to research are purposeful, involve stories, is done relationally, is

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experiential, and is community oriented (Kovach, 2009). Relationships are at the cornerstone of my teaching practice, and provide the foundation for teaching and learning. Thus, it makes sense that relationships should foreground my choice of research methods.

Journal Reflection (Sopear, 2013)

Within the Faculty of Education the constant word of the day was to 'reflect': reflect on your philosophy of teaching and your professional practice. At the time, I never really comprehended the depth of what reflecting as a teacher truly would mean, but as I started to read more about the 'why' we reflect and 'how' to reflect, I have honestly seen teacher growth. I know as I continue in my teaching career, the focus of my reflection will change, and it will always be important to make a concerted effort to critically reflect.

Critical reflection and why reflexivity matters

Howard (2003) uses the term critical reflection as an encompassing way of viewing our experiences in teaching. He explains how reflection focuses on one's experiences and behaviours in order to create meaning and use these interpretations to inform future decisions. Specifically, critical reflection pays attention to the moral, political, and ethical contexts of teaching (Howard). Referring to the work of Ladson-Billings, Howard (2003) explains how culturally relevant teaching can be affected in a positive way if educators are able to critically reflect. He calls critical reflection an opportunity for educators to look at their multiple identities in a personal and challenging manner, from a professional and personal stance; this, he argues, explains why critical reflection is essential to teaching.

For this research study, I define reflexivity as the researcher's own self-reflection in the meaning making process and a recognition that our conscious and subconscious thinking (i.e., our assumptions, worldviews, experiences, etc.) needs to be continually interrogated in relation to questions of power relations, oppression and privilege. As McRae (2012) states, "a reflexive approach to writing requires that researchers acknowledge that how we write about the social world implicates our social location within it. This does not legitimize the dominance of the storyteller's voice above the research participant or subject" (p. 91). Given the subjective nature of the proposed study, reflexivity has been on-going throughout from proposal writing to data collection through to analysis and writing of the final research report.

In the next section I will describe the methods that were used in this research study. Included in this section are the participants of the study, data collection methods, data analysis and interpretation, ethical considerations, delimitations and limitations.

Methods

Participants

I drew upon pre-existing relationships with students from my grade 12 *Active Living* class, a number of whom have remained in contact with me via Facebook. I posted a call for research participants on my Facebook page (see Appendix A). This was a primary form of communication for potential participants who were invited to share the information via their own Facebook page and through personal communications of their own with other former students/potential participants. Potential participants who expressed interest in the study were given a copy of the Information/Invitation Letter (Appendix B). When potential participants agreed to participate I forwarded them a copy

of the Informed Consent Letter to review and sign (Appendix C).

Purposeful sampling provided an in-depth opportunity to gather data that showed the lived experiences of the participants. Based on the existing relationships that I formed with students, my assumption was that there would be an openness and comfort during the interview process. I also recognized that although I may have rapport with the students, there could be residual power relations (between former teacher-student relationships) that would need to be considered.

The pre-established connections with students created a space of trust (Kovach, 2009). The connections also allowed me to draw from those relationships when seeking students to participate in the study. Madison (2006) also expresses how important it is to have cooperative, trusting relationships when doing research. As an example, Wilson (2008) invited elders he knew to participate in his research. The idea of relationality once again comes into play when discussing the dynamics I have created with my students. In the eight years I have taught at my high school, I have learned that students want to have their voice heard, and particularly with female students, my conversations with them have been very engaging, informative and enriching.

Having established a prior relationship with participants allowed me to build upon the trust and rapport that I believe strengthened and created a climate of open dialogue and reciprocal knowledge growth and acquisition. In asking students to reveal themselves in an open and vulnerable way through their life stories and experiences, it was crucial to create a place that felt safe. Having already established a trusting relationship provided an opportunity to gain deeper insight into their sense of self and the intersections of gender, class, race, and sexuality shaping young women's lives. As the study was a collective

process, it was valuable and necessary to gain approval of the stories/experiences that I would share from their voices. Every person in this study had a voice, and I hope in the next chapters I am able to share them in a respectful and authentic way.

From the Facebook post, six former students expressed interest in participating in the study. Two other students agreed to participate, however on the scheduled day of our data collection they were unable to attend. In total four students from diverse backgrounds participated:

Divya: female, heterosexual East Indian-Canadian born, 20 years old, attending the University of Manitoba in her 3rd year of the Asper School of Business

Wandaly: female, lesbian, Filipino-Canadian immigrant, 18 years old, attending the University of Manitoba in her 1st year of the Asper School of Business

Lyka: female, heterosexual, Filipino-Canadian immigrant, 18 years old, attending the University of Manitoba in her 1st year of the Faculty of Science

Saedee: female, hetero-sexual, Trinidadian-Canadian born, 20 years old, attending the University of Manitoba in her 3rd year of the Asper School of Business

Ethical Considerations

I submitted my thesis study to ENREB and after three revisions to the document, I received permission under protocol #E2014:166 to conduct the study. Once I received approval from ENREB, I sent a letter regarding the research study to the school division administrator responsible for research in the division, seeking permission to conduct the interviews on school property (See Appendix D). Pseudonyms were used for each participant, however each participant requested that her name be used in the study. A confidentiality statement (See Appendix E) was signed at the start of the talking circle to

ensure the identities of participants were kept confidential. Given the openness and sharing that was anticipated in the research study, the confidentiality agreement provided a further action of respect, affirming that I would use the young women's voices in a good and relevant way. The data was stored in a locked file cabinet in an office located in my home and I only had access to the primary data, transcripts, and journal notes. The data will be destroyed one year after the completion of the study.

When interviewing students I have taught, the risk of a power struggle is limited due to the fact I am no longer in a position of power since the participants are over 18 and graduated from school. Questions that students felt uncomfortable with they passed on, and questions related to sexuality elicited very thoughtful and poignant responses. At the start of the talking circle, I reiterated that participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Based on the established relationships, the participants could have felt pressure to say things in a certain way that would "improve" the data, however this was never the case and each of them spoke from their own experiences and expressed genuine and heartfelt responses. I acknowledged my role as their former teacher, but also encouraged and ensured participants that it was okay to disagree and reminded them of the collective process of knowledge production during the data collection period. Talking circles by their very nature are designed to be supportive and affirming of individuals' perspectives and experiences. Also at the start of the talking circle, I mentioned to participants that with regard to difficult stories, that I would offer follow-up one on one meetings and/or interviews along with providing counselling supports (see Appendix F), which I made available at the talking circle. None of the participants requested any one-on-one interviews after the talking circle.

Data Collection Methods

The interview process is a journey and Ellis (1998) speaks to the beauty of interpreting our life histories through that journey. Interpreting experiences of our past are influenced by our current position. How we interpret and make meaning of our experiences will never stay stagnant. It will change and generate new meanings depending on our life experiences at the time. The stories of the young women were shared during the talking circle in a meaningful and relevant ways.

The data collection process was set up as a talking circle (Gietz, 2014) lasting approximately two and a half hours. I did not use a traditional sharing circle as used in Indigenous knowledge acquisition and sharing opportunities. Instead I used a talking circle, often used in classroom settings. The format was semi-structured and invited participants to share experiences in conversational style. Talking circles are meant to engender (i.e., give rise to) story. Our talking circle involved food, and gave time, voice and ears to everyone's story. The talking circle allowed the students to use their voice and share their stories on their own terms. I used an open-ended conversational method, which I believe created a safer space to open up and create dialogue. Kovach (2009) suggests this type of method helps in honouring a participant's story and allows participants to share as much of their experiences as they wish.

To start, participants went around the circle and introduced themselves. For the full talking circle protocol see Appendix G. I started by asking questions related to socially constructed categories (race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class) that impacted their identity development. From there I asked general questions related to PEH settings before moving onto specific questions related to the CRPEH model (teacher as ally,

student cultural landscapes, learning climate, meaningful and relevant curriculum) were asked to gain more understanding of their experiences in PEH settings. During the talking circle, I referred to a list of terms provided in Appendix H from which to draw a working definition of each social category (race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality & class), as well as descriptions of four quadrants in the CRPEH model.

The dialogue between the participants during the talking circle was engaging and insightful. At first, the participants were confused about some of the terms I referred to such as racialized minority, however once I explained the term in more detail, they were able to answer questions in meaningful ways. The interpersonal dynamics of the talking circle was cohesive and helped flowed the dialogue amongst participants despite some of them not knowing each other.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Once the talking circle was finished, I transcribed the audio files verbatim. Each participant was very honoured and excited about using their real names, and providing them with an opportunity to share a piece of themselves in this study was empowering for all of us. I analyzed the transcribed documents, and tried to capture each participants' cultural landscape within chapter 4. As a method of trustworthiness I conducted member checks during the data analysis process. Once I completed transcribing, I emailed the full transcript for the women to view for any changes or errors. When I was sorting through the data there were a few ideas regarding race and diversity (e.g., the definition of whiteness) that required further clarifications from the women and they were communicated back to me through email. Near the end of the analysis I asked participants to compare how I viewed CRPEH during the proposal phase to how I viewed

CRPEH after reading their thoughts about their experiences in PEH settings. Key themes that emerged from the talking circle were also sent to participants to review, clarify and add to if needed.

Kovach (2009) uses a mixed methods approach of story interpretations and thematic groupings referred to as "the findings". Using the experiences described by the students, along with thematic analysis, the goal was to use their experiences to co-create and share knowledge. By writing the findings, it puts the power in the writer to articulate the meanings behind stories. As the researcher it was my responsibility to represent each student's voice in a genuine and respectful way, with the understanding that my interpretation is based on my social location. From the data analysis I was interested in learning how the women's experiences connected to CRP as explained by Ladson-Billings (1994; 1995b). I was also intrigued by the conversations that would emerge related to social categories (race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class) and their intersections.

Along with the data collected during the talking circle, I also recorded my thoughts in my research journal as I collected and analyzed the data. In Chapters Four and Five I use narratives and stories interchangeably. Connelly and Clandinin (1991) discuss the power of narratives by saying "people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives" (p. 121). An objective during the data analysis process was to use the stories and experiences from the participants and interpret the data in my own words regarding how they experience culturally relevant physical and health education.

In seeking validity, the goal of the study is not to say whether the interpretations I have made from the participants' experiences are true or false; rather validation in an

interpretive inquiry is for the interpretive accounts to be comprehensible (Ellis, 1998; Packer & Addison, 1989). Entering into the research process with humility and an open heart helped to provide an understanding that the "data" collected was interpreted with the intent to capture the meaning of CRPEH that the participants felt was valuable.

A goal of validity was to seek verisimilitude, where the reader can feel that the experiences they read are lifelike, believable and possible (Ellis, 1999). I recognized that I had to be open to participants' sharing stories that may not represent CRPEH and would instead encourage educators to seek more culturally relevant ways of teaching to all students. In honouring each participant's voice, I understand stories as being relational and reciprocal, which entails a responsibility. The process of telling and listening to stories requires reciprocity. Reciprocity does not mean just sharing stories back and forth, but rather an obligation to listen and tell in ways that promote dignity of one another and avoid dominance (Hutchinson, 1999). The draw of narrative inquiry is that narrative and life complement each other. It is seen as an attractive method to describe life experiences in meaningful and relevant ways (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991). It speaks to the human condition where we seek meaning and connection in the world in which we live.

Ellis (1998) suggests evaluating interpretive accounts asking whether the motivation of the inquiry has been advanced. She recommends the following questions to consider when evaluating the value of the inquiry:

- Is it plausible, convincing?
- Does it fit with other material we know?
- Does it have the power to change practice?
- Has the researcher's understanding been transformed?

- Has a solution been uncovered?

- Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context? (p.30)

In chapter six, I refer to the above questions to discuss the value of the research study.

Limitations

I had anticipated participants from more diverse backgrounds representing not only racialized minorities, but also participants who are White or Indigenous. While some students who expressed interest in the study identified as such, based on comfort level and conflicts with the meeting time, I was unable to achieve more diversity. However, with that said, I did not set out to adopt any sort of quota related to racialized participants, thus those who were interested in the study responded to the call and were able to participate. I feel that the participants' stories and narratives have much to teach us about culturally relevant physical education as it relates to diversely situated girls even though they may not represent a range of diversities that were initially anticipated.

Originally I was not going to share any terms (such as race, ethnicity, and gender) for the participants, instead just see how they interpreted each term. Because I started with questions related to identity, it ended up being more beneficial for participants to have access to the terms as a means of clarity. For many of them, terms such as racialized minority and intersectionality were the first time they had heard the terms, which could be seen as a limitation, but which also speaks to the importance of introducing this kind of vocabulary when speaking with young women from diverse backgrounds, as the findings revealed.

Another limitation I was cognizant of was that some participants would be

more reflective of their self-identity (ies), and more self-assured/actualized than others. In finding potential participants I recognized this might be a key factor when respondents were deciding whether to participate or not. However, the participants that were a part of the talking circle had varying ranges of reflexivity based on different issues discussed and it added to the authenticity of the data collection process. I was sensitive and understanding of those who did not feel as comfortable sharing during certain questions and respected their silence.

There can be limitations linked to using retrospective research. Bias or faulty recall on previous life events could have impacted the answers given by the women. This could have limited the accuracy and reliability of the data offered by participants (Creswell, 2007). Despite this limitation, research within sport settings has often used a retrospective approach to data collection (Durand-Bush & Salmela, 2002; Gould, Dieffenbach, & Moffett, 2002; Holt & Dunn, 2004; Law, Côté, & Ericsson, 2005).

By identifying the bias, it creates transparency for the reader (Creswell, 2007) and acknowledges how one's perspectives and social location will influence all aspects of the research study. Reflexivity has been used to validate and identify bias in research. Using Indigenous approaches to research places value upon the notion of relationality. There was a concerted effort in the study to balance Indigenous methodologies within western traditions, thus while some might interpret the retrospective method as a limitation for people's current construction of identity, the participants' current accounts of their own histories are valid given the method choices I chose to discuss in this study. Kovach (2009) and Leggo (2004) both describe the power that stories can hold within the research process. Kovach (2009) says:

Stories are who we are. They are both method and meaning. Stories

spring forth from a holistic epistemology and are the relational glue

in a socially interdependent knowledge system. In listening to the

research stories of others, it is evident that research stories reveal the

deep purpose of our inquiries (p. 108).

In writing this thesis, I acknowledge that the women's stories and the inclusion of my

own story is not meant to uncover the truth, but to acknowledge there are multiple truths,

and it is a fluid process of understanding and interpreting stories. As Leggo (2004)

expresses:

I need to return often to the stories I have lived in order to know

the stories in their multiplicity, meaning-making possibilities, and

mystery. Each story, each version of a story, each interpretation, and each

interrogation comprises steps on the living journey that shapes a life.

The narrative researcher needs to be bold and imaginative, courageous

and skeptical, tentative and exploratory (p. 109).

When we hear stories, we are given opportunities to interrogate our own histories and

values. We can create connections with other peoples' stories or realize differences and

contradictions.

Delimitations

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I specifically chose to include only female

students from diverse backgrounds in this research study because of the dominance of

privileged voices of men in the physical education profession and literature that also

privilege White, middle class women and PEH literatures that is predominantly heteronormative research.

Summary

"Narrative habits, patterns of seeing, shape what we see and that to which we aspire. These patterns of perception become habitual, tempting us to believe that the way things are is inevitable, or the best that can be in an imperfect world. Alternative visions of reality are not explored, or, if they are, rejected as extreme or implausible" (Delgado, 2000, p. 62).

How do we challenge normative ways of seeing and knowing? In critical race theory (CRT), scholars suggest the use of counter-narratives as a useful tool to challenge the status quo. The voices of racialized minorities are rarely heard in the PEH literature and having a medium where these stories can be validated and given a chance to be heard by the audience that typically does not hear them is necessary.

Delgado (2000) says, "stories are powerful means for destroying mindset" (p. 61), and it is so very true. Stories bring people together. Counter-narratives tell the stories of people whose experiences are not often told, from participants that typically are on the margins of society. It also helps to expose, analyze and challenge the dominant perspectives of privilege (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Connelly and Clandinin (1991) describe narrative inquiry as one that involves mutual storytelling and restorying experiences as the research proceeds. Connelly and Clandinin add to this by suggesting stories are used as a method to learn about how humans live and understand their lives in relation to their community, in this case, the communal experience of PEH.

Chapter Four

Student Cultural Landscapes

Deck of cards…

We are dealt hands
card upon card
that signify who we are.

who we are is constructed
defined by others, and by...
our own inner angels and demons.

who we are is not necessarily
who we can become or be

the limitations, the labels
that tie us down
that suffocate us

we stuff ourselves into checked square boxes…
that we can't break free from.
progress stalls
we backpedal.

Yet, we can reshuffle the deck or
redefine the cards we've been dealt.

You can live the life you've imagined.
Then "who we are" is all that matters.

In your heart.
In your mind.
In your soul.

The Talking Circle

For two and a half hours on a cold Saturday morning in February, four of my

former students met in our school's theatre to discuss their perspectives regarding the

meaning of culturally relevant physical education and health. As it was my first time

conducting an "interview", I was apprehensive about how it would all unfold and what

would come of the day, but I did hope the dialogue between the five of us might offer relevant and insightful conversations about the high school student experience. I was not disappointed. The four young women ranging from 18-21 years of age represented racialized minority backgrounds of Indian, Trinidadian and Filipino descent. The women were all students with whom I had a good rapport during high school and I was confident they would offer relevant stories and that they would be willing to talk. The young women did not all know each other.

As we began the talking circle, I realized that getting to know each other and how they saw themselves during their high school experience might be a comfortable starting place. We began with their perspectives related to identity, and the social categories related to gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality and social class. The talking circle opened slowly, but as the women became more comfortable with the types of questions asked and with each other, the energy and dialogue built up. I am convinced the talking circle helped to shift the residual power relations that normally exist within former student-teacher relationships. Learning about each of the student's cultural landscapes helped to set the tone for asking questions related to culturally relevant physical education and health, which is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Before the data collection process, I described the importance of understanding and celebrating a student's cultural landscape, but I was not entirely sure if this would resonate with the participants during the talking circle. However, over the two and a half hours of dialogue and weeks of sorting through the data during the analysis portion of the study, it is even clearer now how necessary it is for educators to get to know their students in their practice. While the four women attended the same school and

represented similar social categories, each of the women's experiences were unique and individualized. As an educator, the talking circle demonstrated the benefits of recognizing that each student has a story to tell, and that it is necessary to hear these stories to help our teaching. More profoundly, it reinforced the need to empower our students to love who they are proudly.

Some words that help to summarize the young women include: thoughtful, well-spoken, articulate and always speaking from their heart. When they were in high school, each was well-regarded and spoken highly of by their peers and other teachers. At the time, I felt an immense sense of privilege to have had the opportunity to teach self-aware and responsible young women and I greatly appreciate the time they took to come back and speak to me about their experiences. Each of them brought to the talking circle diversity in the variety and richness of lived experiences they shared within the circle. They took pride in giving back to this process, and seemed to understand the importance of sharing their perspectives in order to enhance and continue the conversation regarding culturally relevant physical education and health. As a way to claim their voices in this study, each one asked that her real name be used in my thesis, which I have honoured.

Divya described herself as Canadian born, of Indian descent, and straight. Wandaly described herself as a Filipino immigrant[6] and gay. Saedee described herself as Canadian born, of Trinidadian descent and straight. Lyka described herself as a Filipino immigrant and straight. They all described themselves as middle class and attending the

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[6] Immigrants (also known as newcomers) are landed immigrants who came to Canada up to five years prior to a given census year. Immigrants are either Canadian citizens by naturalization (the citizenship process) or permanent residents (landed immigrants) under Canadian legislation (Chui, 2011).

University of Manitoba. For each, academics were a priority and emphasis during high school and in university, which is discussed later in this chapter, and again in chapter 5. Divya and Saedee were student-athletes involved in multiple sports throughout grades 9-12, while Wandaly and Lyka were not. Lyka was a key member of the music department, focusing on choral activities.

As with the opening prose, "Deck of cards", the organization of the remaining parts of this chapter include my personal journal reflections related to key aspects of each student's cultural landscapes that resonated with me. The women's perceptions of their intersecting identities in relation to teaching and learning in both high school and university are discussed. While there was much "data" to draw from, I highlight key themes related to culture, race and class that are relevant for physical educators to know and understand; this information is often absent in PEH literature.

Talking Identity

In the following sections, I look at identity from a multitude of ways, focusing on the notion of intersectionality as a process where various social factors such as gender, race, class, and sexuality combine to affect the perceptions, experiences, and opportunities of individuals. Instead of breaking down each social category as a discrete entity, I attempt to illustrate the women's multiple identities as interconnected and continually changing and fluid, always dependent on one's social location and interactions, and intersecting.

Throughout the talking circle, the young women stressed the importance of identity development and negotiation in school settings, but they expressed that it is an internal process that each individual must go through in order to become self-actualized.

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Divya, who viewed herself as very confident and comfortable in her own skin described identity as being important to talk about in schools. As she says, "when you go into the real world you need to have a framework of who you are. You're selling yourself." For Wandaly who struggled negotiating her identity, she too believed it to be important to discuss in schools, but cautioned that teachers should approach these conversations with care and attention, especially because she did not have the courage to ask a teacher for one on one advice regarding aspects of her identity. As she says, "I'd rather have it part of the lesson. I like it informal. I wouldn't want to go up to someone and talk to them. In high school I wouldn't have that initiative and courage to do that, so I'd rather have it as part of the lesson plan." Whether it is through a formal and structured lesson plan or informal conversations, educators need to be aware of how their students see themselves in the world. As Ladson-Billings (1994) reminds us, to be culturally relevant educators, we need to affirm our students' cultural identities; this begins with knowing who our students are, including how they see themselves. This chapter is my attempt to initiate dialogue about the intersecting identities of young women from racialized minority backgrounds, as a means to improve our teaching practices.

Journal Reflection: I am Canadian…am I not? (Sopear, 2013)

I was born here, so I am Canadian. I sometimes think I am more Canadian than I probably am Cambodian. Even though I'm Cambodian, most people would refer to me as Asian. I start to think of all the descriptors I would use to describe myself, and I get confused. Although I would call myself Canadian, when people look at me, they see me as different, so I am Asian, I guess, in the eyes of society. But I'm not just Asian, I am Cambodian and that has greatly influenced my life. However, growing up in Canada, I

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have ascribed to many of the Canadian customs and cultures, so I can go back and forth between the different constructions. I realize how hyphenating myself in the context of the dominant society can be stressful and confusing. As I see many of the racialized minority students I work with negotiate through their multiple identities, I can certainly relate. Their struggles to "fit in" have motivated my own internal dialogue on how I identify myself in this world and what it means to be a racialized minority in Canada and as an educator too. While I want to believe that the issues of race don't impact my lived reality, I am quickly brought down to Earth each time, when I encounter situations where I am judged for being different. As much as I want to think that being Asian doesn't matter, it does and I feel as though I have to walk through life with the preconceptions about what it means to be "Asian." Do they think I was an A-plus student in school or that I loved math and science or even played an instrument? Do they think I'm going to speak with an accent when I meet them? What does being Asian mean to them within their understandings of the dominant cultural norms?

"Canadian unless otherwise asked:" Negotiating one's racialized identity

I began by asking the young women how they identified in terms of their racial and/or ethnic identity. Like me, the young women had experience negotiating how others perceived them. For example, Wandaly struggled with how to identify herself in the context of other people. In circumstances where she would speak with someone Asian, she would specify the country. However, for someone non-Asian, she would just say Asian, just in case they did not know where the Philippines were geographically located. She shared similar experiences as her Laotian friend from university. They both were continually asked, "where are you from?"

"Where are you from?" is a question James (2010) refers to in his work with university-aged students as they share their own stories negotiating their identities within Canadian customs and values. His work with university students offers insights into how powerful and useful student stories can be for educators, as well as for their student's own identity development. The discussions related to being Canadian was enlightening, and given the increasing diversity of our schools, is a prominent issue that should be addressed with students, as I quickly learned. There is diversity among the student population and as such, these issues are necessary to address, as these students must be able to work and socialize in a diverse society.

Within the talking circle, the question "where are you from?" prompted engaged and animated responses from the women. For Divya and Saedee, both Canadian born, they would say they were Canadian, rather than their family's cultural background. They both experienced situations of having to justify themselves as Canadian. For Saedee, from a family of Trinidadian descent, she encounters situations where people will assume she is Indian and will start speaking to her in another language. Reflecting on that she said:

> It happens all the time. I've had a customer point at me and think I can
>
> translate for her. I cannot translate anything [laughter]. It happens all the
>
> time. It's the story of my life. In terms of ethnicity, I always say
>
> Canadian unless otherwise asked.

Who the young women are and how they are perceived is always in relation to who is doing the asking, and as such, they have developed purposeful strategies over time of how to respond to situations where their cultural identity is questioned.

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For Lyka and Wandaly, both Filipino immigrants, their strategies are socially located. For Wandaly, if she is with another immigrant, she will change the way she speaks. She explained:

> My accent purposefully will be Filipino when I'm talking to an older
>
> person because they would perceive you as better than them if I'm
>
> talking to them in English with an accent."

Importantly, she adds, "…so I talk with a Filipino accent or else they would think less of me." As English speakers and ascribing to the immigrant status, they tread carefully within their home environment. Navigating between English and their native language, they consciously try to ensure no disrespect or feeling of superiority is communicated by speaking English with someone in their Filipino community who does not.

Racialized minority students are constantly challenged to navigate the dual role of what it means to be Canadian, while maintaining their family's cultural values and customs. It is not an easy process. For Divya, her greatest challenge is convincing individuals that she is Canadian and Indian. She believes you can be both, yet believes there can be preconceived notions that one can only be Canadian or [Other]. As she said:

> If you identify yourself as both, you are seen to be 'confused'. I have
>
> been brought up to incorporate the values from both cultures. However,
>
> because I am a Canadian born Indian, I don't fit in anywhere. Canadians
>
> [Caucasians] believe that Canada cannot be my home because of my
>
> background. Indians don't believe I'm an Indian because I wasn't born in
>
> India. Therefore, 'where are you from?' becomes a question that takes
>
> forever to explain.

When people ask Saedee where she is from she gets offended that people assume that she is not from Canada. As Canada's population continues to diversify, she says, "I think it's about time that people recognize that Canada already is a diverse country and it's only becoming more and more diverse. So somebody to have my skin colour and be born and raised in Canada isn't abnormal." However, as these young women expressed quite frequently during the talking circle, Canadians, both within the racialized majority and minority groups, automatically resort to using the term "immigrant" when they see individuals who are not white, without considering the possibility that they may be born in Canada. As Saedee expresses, "it comes down to the colour of your skin, not where you were born."

The comments the women make regarding race, ethnicity and culture is interesting to note. The women express a need to represent their ethno-cultural background and one way of doing this is through the manner in which they speak. They struggle to share their full identities, yet when they speak they assume the responsibility of representing not only themselves, but also their entire culture. This places added pressure on these young women because of how race, ethnicity and culture are constructed within their lived experiences.

In a seminal interview, Black critical race scholar Stuart Hall (1997) describes race as a discursive construct that works more like a language. Hall points to race as a floating signifier, which refers to the system and concepts of a classification of a culture to its making meaning practices. Hall explains how differences exist and how we make sense of difference through systems of thought and language that acquire meaning when organized into categories. Categories define and create order in the world, and they often

happen automatically and unconsciously. Humans categorize just about everything from people, actions, emotions and relationships to name a few. Learned assumptions about categories give ascribed meanings to them, which can be viewed as positive or negative. Signifiers gain their meaning in the shifting relations of difference, which intersect with other concepts and ideas. What does it mean to be an immigrant? What does it mean to be Canadian? Because signifiers are relational, they are never fixed and subject to continual redefinition and in some cases constant questioning thus constituting different cultures and different experiences thus the term 'floating signifier' seems highly relevant to my participants' experiences.

In considering her ethnic Filipino identity, Wandaly echoed Saedee's comments about the changing nature of what it means to be Canadian, while also speaking to the internalized feelings about the superiority (of whites) and the inferiority (of immigrants) that, as Hall suggests, often happen automatically and unconsciously. She expressed the following:

> Whenever I think about someone being "Canadian", I would picture a
> white person. Although white people are still somewhat the majority,
> there is a significant change in the Canadian demographics that I should
> think twice about picturing a white person as the quintessential
> Canadian. Since my perception of the Canadian norm is someone white,
> this caused me to feel inferior. This feeling of inferiority breeds into
> feeling like an outsider. I would not feel like I belong whenever
> conversations about Canadians would arise.

In this regard, the seemingly benign question, "where are you from?" reveals tensions about belonging and citizenship that is experienced differentially, and not without consequences.

When asked why it mattered so much where you come from, and how that question was experienced as a racialized minority, Wandaly described a judgmental lens that watches over her, waiting for her to trip up and fail. She said:

> It suddenly matters how I act because sometimes, they have never encountered someone from my race before, and thus, my actions would influence what they think of who we are. It means that for a racialized minority, they are a lot more careful with their actions, words, and they wouldn't speak freely as they feel like.

For Saedee, she says it should not matter where you come from. The comments she receives does not change how she acts or perceives herself, however it is the opinions of her peers she finds annoying. In comparison to her white peers, she gets bothered with questions and assumptions regarding where she comes from even though she was born and raised in Winnipeg. She also expressed that it did not bother her answering questions about her ethnicity and how her parents came to Canada. Her issue arises when people assume that she is not from Canada or cannot speak English, purely out of ignorance.

Saedee's earlier commentary about skin colour captures the enduring prominence of race and ethnicity in Canadian society. For society, race (with its physical characteristics such as the colour of one's skin) becomes the signifier that defines groups of people. Race has meaning in culture, but the meaning of skin colour is not fixed. As cultures differ, so to do the social significances of skin colour. The meaning of skin

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colour floats on the scale of interpretation held by members in society and changes between and even within different cultures. For example, in my experience, I have talked with students who struggle with spring walks in gym class because they do not want to get darker, because in their culture, there is the assumption (i.e., based on a stereotype) that darker skin is associated with a lesser social status, in comparison to lighter skin. While these situations have created opportunities for conversations with my students regarding how we ascribe meaning and learned associations to various social categories and its impact on individuals, they also raise critical questions. How is it, for example, that we have come to associate one's skin colour with being Canadian?

Racial identities are re (produced) through social class, ethnicity, language, geographic location and so forth (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). However, the meaning and significance of the construct of race and the persistence of racism involves more than the "colour" of one's skin (Christie, 2008). While skin colour is an obvious social marker, race is not just about what we see, but rather the meanings we associate with the differences we have learned to notice (Hall, 1997). Each spring when I encounter yet another group of my Asian students not wanting to become darker in our outside classes, I am reminded of how influential the meaning of skin colour is on our self-conceptions. This is racism in action in subtle ways that play out in the absence of overt racism.

Our family, school, media, and friends influenced our experiences. And within certain cultural groups, there are also hierarchies that exist; within Canadian society, Schick and St. Denis remind us that privilege, whiteness and marginalization constructs white people as the privileged and Aboriginal peoples and racialized minorities as lesser than.

Furthermore, we learn about racial differences through race talk (Myers & Williamson, 2001). Race talk is any form of communication (including inner dialogue) that degrades based on race or ethnicity. It is used to rationalize racist attitudes and actions. Race talk maintains the racial hierarchy by conveying discomfort or dislike towards members of racialized minority groups. Returning to Sykes (2011), educators need to adopt an ethics of vision in their classes, and encourage their students to idealize aspects of their identity in ways that affirm and reimagine the norm (e.g., brown is beautiful).

As educators, social constructions related to racial signifiers challenge us to question our assumptions and how they are learned, and to work to unlearn those assumptions that are not helpful and/or affirming of students. Given the pervasiveness of racism and how it affects everyone (Essed, 1991), educators need to also be present to hear the subtle racialized talk and intervene in disrupting its presence within our environments whenever possible.

While Saedee and Divya expressed feeling confident in their identity development during high school, Wandaly and Lyka spoke of the challenges being immigrants and navigating the complexities of identity and culture within normative Canadian values and customs. Lyka had similar experiences as Wandaly when it came to her race and ethnicity. While much did not change for Lyka in high school, she did express that when she came to Canada she had an "inferiority complex about being Filipino as opposed to being Canadian. I never realized that you can be both." In a culturally affirming learning culture, educators would purposefully make efforts to ensure that both identities are

equally acknowledged and valued; that it is great to be both Filipino and Canadian. And that regardless of skin colour, we are all Canadians and that is the reimagined norm.

Lyka reminds us that, as educators, talking about identity can be complicated and value-laden, especially when it is gendered and racialized. These social constructions related to identity are challenging because not only are they personal and social but they are lived and experienced within often inequitable social relations. As I will show in the next section, the young women's day to day cultural landscape is impacted by the inequitable cultures of whiteness they must navigate, particularly in their new university environment.

Whiteness: It's All Around Us, But So Hard to See

As I wrote in the first chapter, a key overarching theme of this entire thesis is whiteness. Everyone experiences culture; however, within Western society, the dominant white culture's values and beliefs are reinforced as the norm (Henry & Tator, 2009; Schick & St. Denis, 2005). So while the young women did not specifically name whiteness during the talking circle, much of their comments related to race and ethnicity all connected back to whiteness. Important to note, this connection was something I didn't see until I transcribed and reflected on the emerging themes in the data; I continue to learn how pervasive whiteness is. Critical reflection allows us to take a step back from our immediate life experiences and sit with our ideas. Although some of the participants were three years removed from high school, which might be seen as a limitation for the study, I believe it allowed the young women to share their varying experiences as it related to race and ethnicity. They left a culturally diverse high school where they were the majority, and moved to a university setting, where a majority of their peers are white

and they are now considered the minority. In their high school experience, the student population was a reflection of them. They "fit in." While the young women acknowledged that most of the teaching staff in high school was white, by contrast, when they arrived at university, they experienced "culture shock," as Divya described it. To their surprise they soon found themselves in the unusual position of being a "minority" in their university classes, where not only professors but also their classmates were predominantly white. Being a "minority" was more visible and apparent.

When I asked them to compare the experiences of someone who is a racialized minority female versus a white female in society, the young women revealed some interesting observations related to perceived social hierarchies. Speaking to the differences between her high school and university experience, Saedee expressed that being a "white female is what you're supposed to be ... that's how you should look, and dress. That's what you should be. And, I never experienced that before I got to university." Lyka added to Saedee's comments by suggesting that for white girls, within the circulating social hierarchies related to gender and race, they are "up to par with guys." These are further examples of white privilege and the inequitable challenges that racialized minority women in particular encounter. "As a racialized minority", Lyka explained, "I feel you have to meet that standard [of being white] because it's what you see everywhere." Whiteness is a floating signifier of privilege; one to grasp at but never realize.

Saedee reinforced this notion of 'being white' as an elusive goal for racialized minority women. As she says, "Caucasian girls are becoming closer and closer to be

equals with men. They are almost equal and I'm just chasing them. You're almost there, but you're not because you're not white." Divya revealed similar sentiments:

> Since childhood we have been conditioned to work hard because you
> will not get anything easy like white people do. I believe, because we are
> aware of the racial implications, we have to work twice as hard to
> overcome them, in order to prove our worth; be that in our personal or
> professional lives.

Saedee and Divya's experiences are not unlike those expressed by racialized minorities in the critical race literature (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2012; Delgado, 2000; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000) and illustrate how significant race remains in our society.

Once I sorted through the transcript, I realized I needed to ask the young women to elaborate further on whiteness. While they spoke to the term, it was never explicitly said within the talking circle. During the member-checking portion of the analysis, I shared the working definition from Henry and Tator (2002) that I drew from. Henry and Tator refer to whiteness as a socially constructed hierarchy based on race, which has many implications on the cultural, educational, political and economic institutions in our society. Whiteness, they suggest, "is a form of race privilege that is invisible to white people who are not conscious of its power" (p.261). Whiteness is prevalent in PEH settings (Douglas & Halas, 2011; Flintoff, Dowling & Fitzgerald, 2014; Halas, 2011), and it often silences the voices of racialized minorities (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Saedee's experiences with whiteness reinforced the idea of privilege going unnoticed by those who fall into the category of white. She spoke of her own difficulties

with everyday activities she considered mundane that proved to be more challenging for her because of the way she looked. The example she used was airport security:

> Although not explicitly said, it is very apparent that I am searched more
> carefully than others because I am not white. Discussing airport security
> with those who are categorized as "white", it is clear that they have an
> easier time.

In this case, her experiences and perspectives echo that of Hall's (1997) discussion regarding race as a floating signifier.

For Wandaly the term whiteness reminded her that white people are allowed to act a different way than her. As an immigrant, she has felt that white people tend to have more leeway to make mistakes, particularly when it comes to the English language. As she said:

> Since I am an immigrant, I have always feared that people would think of
> me as an outsider with my foreign pronunciations. I was reluctant to
> speak up in group situations as I constantly worried about
> mispronouncing a word or using the wrong euphemism. I did not want to
> be seen as someone who did not know English or tried to learn proper
> English in order to fit in Canada.

By comparison she could not help but notice the mistakes that white people made and got away with. In her view, their papers were riddled with grammatical and spelling errors and it was acceptable. If Wandaly had handed in those papers, she believed she would have been labeled "fresh off the boat." As she reflected on these experiences, she came

away with the impression, just as Divya did, that she would "have to work harder in order to be seen in the same level."

Continuing on with the theme of whiteness, I asked the participants how it made them feel to always be chasing the dominant cultural norm. Divya referred to those who are not white as being the "recessive or subordinate culture." As she says, "we've grown up in an environment that has implied that white people have all the power and we [as a minority] can't do anything about it, no matter how much effort we put in." At university, Saedee describes white as the ideal. If a hierarchy was based on physical appearance she believes those who are white would find themselves at the top. Despite not wanting to believe this as true, she feels that on campus she is an "underdog because of the colour of my skin". In the face of the underdog status, Saedee is motivated to get past the labels and inequities and believes education is the remedy to alleviate the impact of white superiority.

The participants were the majority of the student population in high school. Cultural differences were felt to be more celebrated in high school. However, as many of them acknowledge, university is a different story. At the University of Manitoba the majority of their peers are white and traversing through their shifting identities can be seen as more complex. Divya shared that no one mentions issues of identity in university, which according to Henry and Tator (2009) is not surprising. "Consequently," she said, "these issues become something you have to internally identify with and/or discover."

On the other hand, for Saedee, she found it easier to be herself, and be herself in every aspect of her identity, in university. She described high school as a place where students are hesitant to embrace their culture, religion, and race/ethnicity, partly due to

teenagers seeming to be "naïve to the diversity in our society; at no fault of their own, it is a part of growing up." In university, she describes the differences between individuals as being more apparent, largely to do with the fact that individuals are more comfortable embracing their identities.

Educators must be willing to address the diverse student population through reflective and critical discussions and lesson plans that celebrate, empower and give voice to students from diverse backgrounds, so students like Lyka would not express feeling "inferior" to her peers. As Schick and St. Denis (2005) suggest, "an analysis of racial inequality is necessary to counter the commonplace myth that the effects of racism can be overcome through assimilation or meritorious achievement" (p. 296). In Canada, race is an enduring signifier that defines individuals through the often unacknowledged assumptions of superiority and inferiority that enable and constrain who one can be seen and how one is seen or not seen. When intersected with issues of class, the effects of race can be magnified, as I show in the following section.

Journal Reflection: West End Living (Sopear, 2012)

Oh no! What are they going to say about this area now? I'm excited and unsure about how they will portray the neighbourhood. Hopefully the rest of the city realizes that the front-page news stories aren't the only things that define us. There are so many great people that live here. The West End. That's my hood. I'm proud to say that's where I was raised. Piles of memories formed in the hood. The reputation that follows my hood are warranted, yet not always true. Fact. There is crime and violence in the neighbourhood. There are drugs and the sexual exploitation of women. There are gangs. There are families who are recent immigrants. There are low-income families. There are families

from all parts of the world. Asia. Europe. Africa. South America. It's a United Nations

and it has been the backdrop of my growing up years. I use the words struggle, courage,

strength, determination, and hard-working as the words to describe my hood. Others use

different words, less positive, narrow. Living in the area for over twenty plus years of my

life, I've seen my fair share of stories, positive and negative.

"The Hood": "You're From the Maples?!"

The community you grow up in matters. Whether positive or negative, our

neighbourhood experiences define us. For the young women, they mentioned how their

neighbourhood had a negative reputation, whether warranted or not. I asked them to

clarify what living there was like; how their neighbourhood was perceived, and why it

mattered so much where they grew up. Based on my own experiences in the West End, I

was curious to know whether the negative reputation was related to crime, being poor,

having a large immigrant population or having specific ethnic groups attached to the area.

Wandaly could not pinpoint the exact reason for the negative image of her

neighbourhood, however, her experiences were such that whenever her neighbourhood

came up in most interactions with people from other parts of the city, negative comments

were made. The women did not know of these stereotypes while living and attending

school in the area; however, as Divya expressed, that changed when she was exposed to

the south side of Winnipeg. As she described it:

> Peers usually change their perception of me [when I tell them I'm from
>
> the Maples]. I automatically become someone who has parents working
>
> labour jobs that I am middle class, I didn't receive private education and
>
> I must be "hard core" [a part of many fights].

Saedee identified the stereotypical descriptors of the area as "crime-ridden, ghetto, poor, and immigrant laden, where people lacked motivation". Her experiences in university have caused her to feel that living in her neighbourhood was more of an issue than being a racialized minority. However, race and ethnicity are connected to social class and neighbourhoods. While she is not hurt by the comments, the preconceptions that are made based on her neighbourhood, and the associated assumptions about her family struggling, lacking resources and money to afford university have impacted Saedee's lived experiences.

For Divya, to say you grew up in the Maples "… lets people know where you fall on the social class ladder." Elaborating on this point, she explains how "it's all about the hierarchy of people. For someone who is a racialized minority or Aboriginal person, it means that they fall within the bottom half of the ladder." Neighbourhoods, social class, race and ethnicity, and their intersections, all impact people's perceptions of where one lies on the social hierarchies and are experienced differently, dependent upon where you live. For south end Winnipeggers, the Maples represents a "middle class" upbringing, which is lesser than those from upper classes. For north end Winnipeggers, the Maples can represent a step up to the middle classes, where safety and stability is more prevalent in the suburbs. It is important for educators to try to understand the complexities regarding these social categories, and how issues of race, ethnicity, when intersected with social class, can add to the negative stereotypical assumptions that young people have to navigate.

Journal Reflection: Cultural Influences

There's an unspoken expectation that permeates Cambodian culture and it's called saving face. Saving face in the eyes of my family means never embarrassing yourself or the family through angry outbursts, showing too much emotion or letting others know you have a problem. The goal is obey, be polite and mind your manners. My parents never wanted to let others know if there were arguments or fighting in our house as we had to be the picture-perfect family. I know when my brothers and I were younger, my parents worked long, difficult and low paying jobs and because of that they put a lot of pressure on us to be obedient and to not act out. I am just beginning to more fully realize how difficult it must have been for them to struggle to pay for food and clothes and to put a roof over our heads, while on top of that getting acclimatized to a new society as refugees.

Family Matters

Regardless whether the influences were positive or negative, each of the young women discussed the crucial role their parents play in their identity development, and how that impacted their overall school experience. Wandaly found herself navigating through the interconnecting identity markers of race, ethnicity and sexuality. She struggled with negotiating her evolving identity due to a strict family setting that did not allow her to fully express herself; rather it suppressed who she wanted to be. In speaking about her parent's influence she said:

It's the only thing that has impacted my identity. Let's list it. I'm an immigrant.

There's that expectation that I should go to a job that pays a lot. I'm

Roman Catholic. There's that suppression. I'm Filipino. You can't go to

artsy jobs. It impacts a lot of it.

Growing up in a strict Roman-Catholic family, she suppressed her sexuality up until her grade 12 school year before coming out. She acknowledged that she should have gone to some teachers in high school for help, but because of her upbringing and family values she simply could not do that. As a female Filipino immigrant, the openness that she observed between white teachers and students was something that was foreign to her as she worked through her sexuality. She did not have the comfort level to open up to her teachers, let alone her parents; she experienced a "cultural difference" or disconnect that not all educators are cognizant of, or know how to tread through. She explained: "I don't think in my head that I could have expressed what I wanted to express. So I suppressed and got depressed. It was very depressing overall." While the intersection of cultural and religious influences definitely impacted Wandaly's efforts to come to terms with her sexuality, she was not alone in negotiating her parents' expectations.

Like Wandaly, the other young women also agreed that strict parenting influenced how they might negotiate their identities, and mentioned the positive and negative aspects of not being able to communicate openly with parents. For Lyka, her parents practiced strict parenting as a way to control her and her younger brother, however they recognized eventually it was ineffective. She said, "...being too strict with us, that didn't allow us to communicate what we wanted from them." For example, she stated, "I think that helped pave the way to being able to communicate, but I used to suppress and in that way by communicating I would figure out things easier."

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Negotiating with parents was Divya's experience as well. For her, being an Indian female and being physically active are words that are not typically spoken in the same sentence. Divya continually challenged that notion with her parents when she wanted to participate alongside her peers on sports teams. Her parents expected her to focus on her studies and they viewed physical activity as a childish activity. In their eyes it was seen as a privilege. In order for her to be active, she had to adhere to a GPA of 92% or higher average otherwise her privilege of participation in sport would be revoked. Yuka Nakamura (2009) conducted research on physical education and the experiences of racialized minority youth, in particular South Asian and Chinese students, as they encounter the stereotypes of participating in physical activity and PE. Her article "*Understanding the Challenges of Pursuing Physical Activity*" describes parental views, ethnocentric norms and discrimination as key factors shaping physical activity and PEH experiences that are similar to the views expressed by the young women.

Parental perceptions regarding participating in physical activity was an interesting topic. In Canadian society, the value of physical activity for healthy lives is widely accepted and translates to a positive association with the notion that all students should be active and healthy, participating in various physical activities. However, for some of the young women, the low parental and prevailing cultural opinions of PEH in comparison to other academic subjects made it challenging for the students to feel motivated or care.

Saedee's parents also held high expectations for academic performance. Not unlike other immigrant families, her parent's priority was that she improve her chances of a successful life by having a strong education (Van Ngo, 2004). So with that said, their idea of her involvement in sport was less than ideal. Even though she participated on

multiple teams throughout her four years of high school, her parents watched a game or tournament only twice. As she said, "...it wasn't because they didn't want to support me, but rather because they were trying to be realistic. To them, I was more likely to be a scholar than to make it to the 'pro's'." It was the long term that mattered, not her present joy of playing sports.

The examples provided by Saedee and the other women are instructive for physical and health educators. The women's stories point to an opportunity to communicate the benefits of physical activity and PEH as important to the development of the whole person. Parental influences, as expressed by a strong emphasis on core academic subjects were key factors contributing to each student's identity negotiation. This dynamic has continued even after completing high school. Their stories resonated with my own experiences navigating through similar circumstances, although I must admit that my parents were mostly supportive of my sporting endeavours. Particularly for parents of students from diverse backgrounds, health promotion, including the potential of physical activity to contribute positively to academic performance, is worthy of further consideration in our teaching practices.

Summary

"There is no closet for being a minority. I can't hide my skin colour or

the quality of clothes that I wear. I can't fake what I lived through, and

change my opinions that were largely shaped by how I grew up." (Wandaly)

In Kathleen Cushman's (2003) resource for teachers and parents, titled "*Fires in the Bathroom: Advice For Teachers From High School Students"*, she presents time and

again the student's recommendations that teachers pay attention to their students' lives. In summarizing her work with students in New York City, she advises:

> Getting to know students doesn't happen all at once. It builds over time, through paying attention to what individual students say and do – and what they don't – in the classroom and hallways, in their written work, speech patterns and physical appearance (p.3).

By providing an open, honest account of their personal experiences in school, university, and community, the women in this study showcase the beauty and challenges of their lives. When listening to how they view themselves, we are reminded that their personal and social constructions are always produced in relation to how their lives are embedded within circulating cultural hegemonies, both within the dominant and non-dominant culture.

In this chapter the cultural landscapes of the four racialized minority women were introduced as a way to open up the discussion on culturally relevant education. Understanding the cultural landscapes of students from diverse backgrounds is a first and important step in culturally relevant pedagogy because teachers must first "know" their students in order to validate their intersecting identities through curriculum and teaching practice. The young women have described key findings that influence their identity development.

First and perhaps foremost, the pervasiveness of racism and the cultures of whiteness that permeate their day-to-day lives are identified through conversations about what it means to be Canadian. The women express the challenges of being racialized minority individuals in comparison to their white female counterparts. As educators, we

must continue to challenge our assumptions about the social constructions of racial signifiers and how they are learned and operate within our classrooms. Knowing how to interrogate and address the racial differences that are subtly performed and/or expressed within our schools is necessary for both educators and students. And as the research literature clearly illustrates, much more work needs to be done in this area, particularly within teacher education, as well as in physical education teacher education programs.

Henry and Tator's (2009) interrogation of racism in Canadian universities illustrates how the academy needs to better prepare teachers to recognize and critically analyze the various social structures that oppress marginalized groups. Teachers need to be prepared with the knowledge and skills to be change agents as they work within culturally and racially diverse groups of students. Having confidence to recognize race and racism will allow educators to pass on the knowledge and skills pertaining to social justice and equality to the students that they teach, regardless of their background. This is an idea I re-visit in greater detail in the section on cultural competence in Chapter Five.

This chapter also reinforced the complexities of identity and the intersections of social categories pertaining to cultural values that influence how students see themselves. For example, Wandaly's insights surrounding the intersection of her Filipino heritage (and cultural norms) with her actualized lesbian identity reveal for us the added tensions of "coming out" for some racialized minority women. These tensions complicate conversations around diversity within multicultural classrooms. As the findings illustrate, navigating the dynamics of their neighbourhood and how it was perceived in terms of social class, as well as their family's values and the dominant cultural norms in relation to their schooling (including PEH) was challenging for the women. These aspects of a

student's lived experience need to be understood and addressed by educators in order to teach and learn in culturally relevant ways.

In conclusion, I have presented this chapter as my attempt to initiate dialogue about the intersecting identities of young women from racialized minority backgrounds. Recognizing and understanding the complexities of students' multiple identities is important for educators to know and further affirms the need to get to know our students on an individual basis. In fact, I think it may be the important first step for teachers who wish to be culturally relevant in their teaching.

It is my hope that the experiences that are shared by the women can help educators improve their teaching practices, which leads us into the next chapter on CRP in PE. In Chapter Five, I use Ladson-Billings key components of CRP to discuss the women's understanding of their PEH experiences and culturally relevant practices.

Chapter Five

What They Have Taught Me:

The Meaning of Culturally Relevant Physical Education and Health

"When you put your knowledge in a circle,

it's not yours anymore, it's shared by everyone."

Douglas Cardinal (*Regina Leader Post*, November 28, 1995)

In chapter four the emphasis was to introduce the four study participants and discuss their cultural landscapes as racialized minority women. Areas related to identity development were discussed, with a focus on the intersecting challenges of negotiating the women's identities within mainstream Canadian culture, customs and values. As well, family and parental influences, neighbourhoods (as related to social class) and cultures of whiteness were all discussed using intersecting social categories (markers) to describe each women's lived experiences.

In this chapter, I will discuss my research question in more detail, which is:

> *What is the meaning of culturally relevant physical education and health*
> *(CRPEH) from the perspective of female high school graduates from*
> *diverse backgrounds?*

Using Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995b) three key components of culturally relevant pedagogy and incorporating Halas' interpretation of CR education within physical and health education (see table 5.1), I present the key themes that emerged from the talking circle to elucidate the meaning of CRPEH from the perspective of the four women as they reflected on their PEH experiences. Within the talking circle, the women were asked to share their views related to their teachers, the learning climate and curriculum, and

how these pedagogical components contributed to their success (or not) within the physical education class. I conclude the chapter with a summary discussion of how physical educators might enhance their teaching practices based upon the insights provided by the women in this study.

Table 2: Comparison of CRE and Culturally Relevant PEH

Culturally Relevant Education *(Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995b)*	***Culturally Relevant PEH*** *(Halas, 2006a, 2011)*
Students experience academic success	Students actively engage and participate in ways that lead to the acquisition of learning outcomes
Students maintain their cultural competence	Students' cultural identities are affirmed with the class and curriculum
Students develop critical social consciousness	Students' develop critical awareness toward and actively address inequities as presented, experienced and understood within the context of PE and the larger community

Students experience academic success

Ladson-Billings' (1994; 1995b) first component of CRP is that all students must experience academic success, which Halas (2006a; 2011) translates as being actively engaged and participating in ways that lead to achievement of learning outcomes. Whatever the subject area, students will bring a variety of lived experiences as well as different skills and abilities that will impact their participation in class. The goal as educators is to provide learning opportunities so that all students can succeed, no matter what their skill level or motivation. Particularly in physical and health education classes, the social nature of these classes can be challenging for educators because it exposes students from different backgrounds and varying abilities to one another, requiring them to interact inter-culturally with peers; this all takes place in the open, where one's

performance is public and observed by others.

Equitable and Attentive Teacher-Student Relationships Lead to Greater

Accountability

All of the women expressed how important relationships were in PEH settings
and how a strong teacher-student relationship was a factor in contributing to student
success. As Saedee said, "by having the relationship with the teacher, it makes you more
accountable to them." To which Wandaly added, "you don't want to let them down."
Divya described her gym teachers as being "goofy." She says, "they would make fun of
me, but I never cared. It was in good humour. I think having that made the class better,
and it would have been a lot drier if you didn't have the relationship between the teacher
and student."

Reflecting on their experiences in grade 9 and 10, all the young women expressed
that they and their classmates were engaged in class, and everyone tried to participate in
the activities. There was passion, genuine interest, and a sense of community where the
majority seemed to enjoy class. For Wandaly, student participation and success was
related to her teacher. She said, "I tried really hard in grade 9 and 10, like really hard just
because the teacher encouraged it." Lyka expressed the togetherness of grade 9 and 10 as
contributing to participation. She said:

> I feel that because we're more together, the not as athletic people and
>
> athletic people all meshed together. It made it more exciting. As a less or
>
> not as athletic person I was inspired or influenced to step my game up.

For the most part, all of these students were engaged in PEH settings during grade 9 and
10, however as I discuss in later sections, the women described how the culture of

passion, interest and that sense of community within a class shifted as they reached grade 11 and 12.

The young women were asked to think of specific instances where their teachers had high expectations for them to succeed. For Divya and Saedee, student athletes on multiple sports, there were unspoken privileges. Their teachers expected more from them. They could not be sitting on the benches, they were participating in everything during class. If the activity being offered was their sport, teachers would know that and call upon them to be leaders in the class to help with demonstrations for skill development drills. As Divya expressed:

> In gym class because we played that sport, teachers would use us as
>
> examples and single us out, so there was the expectation to have to do
>
> this in a certain way, so that the others can see how it's actually done.

Teachers would give them more attention and help, regardless if they asked for it or not. For them, it was a motivator as an athlete and student. The teacher motivation and attention, "definitely pushes you to be better because you know someone is relying on you," Saedee said. Divya expressed similar sentiments as Saedee: "I loved gym. There was always a teacher there to help me do something more efficiently or better. They were always there to help."

For Lyka and Wandaly who were not student athletes, they also had teachers who had high expectations for their success. For Wandaly, she turned disappointing fitness tests into motivation to improve on her sit-ups and pushups. Since she had the same teacher from grade 9 to 10, she said:

Went home and started teaching myself how to do proper pushups

because I didn't want to disappoint the teacher. I remember that high

expectations from the teacher contributed to my success even though it

took me a while to get there.

Lyka stood out in her PEH class because she was eager and willing to participate in any

type of activity. In comparison to some of her peers who lacked motivation or did not try

at all, she believed she was noticed in a positive way by her teachers because she was

motivated to participate and always gave her best effort. She shared the following

passage about her PEH experience that is so eloquently expressed. Although she was not

an athlete, Lyka purposefully engaged in her PEH classes with an enthusiasm that led to

improved fitness and an enhanced sense of overall well-being:

When I took Phys Ed in high school, I saw myself as neutral

[neither athlete nor disengaged non-participant]. In this flexible

spectrum of athleticism in any gym class I had, I always made sure

I was somewhere in the middle. Initially, I always felt like there

was some kind of 'hierarchy of fitness'; a survival-of-the-fittest per

se. Nevertheless, I made sure I did my best. Though at times I was

discouraged due to my lack of physical endurance and strength

compared to others I made sure I put my heart into whatever I did.

Though at times I was really tempted to sit it out when I shouldn't,

I was able to resist the enticement of laziness. Even if I was

susceptible to comparing myself to others every time I stepped into

those gym doors, I found an essence of contentment by stepping

out of my comfort zone through fitness. It was a way to release,

refresh, and recharge. Simply, I learned that, in the passing of a

ball, running through the whole six minute run, hitting a bull's eye,

and in many other things, I won by focusing on improving myself.

I just did it.

In our conversations in the talking circle success was attributed to students showing an

interest to actively engage in class activities. Lyka's motivation to participate, both

intrinsically and extrinsically was rewarded by her teachers with the attention they gave

her.

The women in this study indicated that accountability is important to their

engagement and participation in class. As well, Divya suggested that educators should

have a "genuine interest in your job and what you're teaching. And, to add to that, have

interest in who they're teaching." The importance of teachers liking what they do

resonates with other students' comments described in Cushman (2003). With regards to

how teachers teach, Saedee mentioned that it is important that they "keep opinions of one

student being better than another to themselves." "Don't be biased" is what Lyka said.

While the women described examples of teachers who provided equitable learning

experiences for female students who were skilled and less skilled (i.e., on/off school-

based sports teams, they also identified instances where teachers were inequitable in their

treatment of female students. The women shared that it was noticeable who was receiving

more attention in a class, and often it was the student-athletes. Divya shared the privilege

of athletes within a PEH class:

Privilege…it was more so the athletes that were already a part of teams

that were given more privilege because they knew the sport, they knew

how to play. I guess the other individuals that weren't in sports they felt

they couldn't be with groups [in class and/or on sports teams] that were

already athletic and skilled at what they were doing. That's what I

perceived.

To which, Wandaly replied:

That's exactly it. I was a relatively un-athletic person. Well I tried in

gym, but I wasn't part of any groups [i.e., sports teams]. So for example

if you're in a gym class and the teacher is already familiar with some

people, he/she preferred to work with them more. He gave them more

attention. I mean I was cool with it, but you just notice those things. You

feel like it's hard for as a person from the outside to actually break into

that circle, so you just stand outside.

Athletes were affirmed more often than their peers by being given leadership roles within

the class and often, less engaged girls were allowed to quietly participate more so than

their male peers or the athletes in class.

When the conversations with the women moved to issues of gender equality in the

gym classes. Saedee was more vocal in her thoughts about gender (in) equality within the

gym. She said:

I do think that a lot of time gym teachers in my experience would look at

girls as being not as capable, but I think it wasn't fair in the way they

were targeting that issue. They would look at people who were on a team

that were a girl, but people who weren't on a team and girl as being

incapable and I've seen that happen a couple of times.

Additionally, she described students who are constantly being discouraged

because their teachers treat them "as if you can't do something", which she suggested is

tied to ability and success. And she provided good advice:

Sometimes they [the teachers] would just give up. For example some of

my friends would not participate much and in a few instances gym

teachers would try to encourage them at the start of gym, but after a

while they would just give up.

Stated otherwise, teachers should persist in their expectations for students to participate,

even if their initial efforts prove unsuccessful. "Don't give up" on students is the

important message.

It is important to note that as educators affirmed one individual or group of

students, it resulted in the exclusion of another individual or group of students, while the

non-participation of girls was at times ignored. The teaching practices that lead to

inclusion/exclusion practices are often so subtle, yet very recognizable by the students.

Both athletes and non-athletes in this study acknowledged the bias. As Divya explained:

I had friends that were very much not into athletics or moving around

unless they had to so they think that certain teachers were biased towards

the athletes vs. not interested in sports other students.

A self-described "un-athletic person" Wandaly found personal success in certain

activities. She did not fully express if the response of her teacher was related to her race

and/or ethnicity or gender or skill/ability, but she shared one example through dodgeball:

But I liked playing dodge ball. I liked throwing at people. I could throw

fairly not weak. You could feel it. So sometimes when I would throw

very hard and a teacher would notice and the teacher would be pleasantly

surprised. "What you didn't think I could do that?" They would treat me

sort of in higher regard after that.

The women extended the conversations about what it means to be female and

performing their gendered identities in PEH settings. They made remarks about being

female using terms such as being weaker, less physical and performing activities 'like a

girl', which made them feel less than adequate in the gym. These stereotypes were due to

both teacher and student comments. The comments the young women made regarding

gender falls in line with much of the PEH research literature (Laker et al, 2003; Penney &

Evans, 2002; Sykes, 2011) about female stereotypes in the gym. Their negative

experiences and remarks speaks to our on-going failures as physical and health educators

to challenge, confront and dismantle gendered stereotypes that place expectations on

certain students to achieve standards that are low, negative and/or discriminatory (i.e.,

lesser than). For young women, added pressures to fit within the dominant norms of what

it means to be female can be especially challenging to navigate. Saedee shared her

experiences of what it means to "be a girl." She said:

The [teacher] coach pulled me aside and looked and said 'you're running

like a girl.' I replied, "Whoa, what do you mean?" She said, "You're

flailing your arms". The moment she called me out on that, I immediately

fixed it. I started running "normally." Being called out on that made me

realize maybe I'm running like a girl because that's how I think I should

run [said with sarcasm]. I'm running like a girl because that's how we're supposed to run. I think with being a girl the huge thing is the weakness and not being capable and not being able to run properly, apparently.

Whether we realize it or not, teaching practices are reinforced by our attitudes, beliefs and behaviours and are translated into student experiences in the gym. A teacher's lack of effort to engage the disengaged female students; to treat all students (not just the athletes) with the same attention and care; and to challenge our stereotypes and assumptions of what it means to perform like a girl (i.e., "be a girl") further confirms how influential educators' teaching practices are in terms of contributing to the success of their students. Whether unconscious or done explicitly, the women confirmed that teacher expectations, attitudes and beliefs regarding students play a significant part in influencing their success.

Meaningful activities promote positive engagement

All four women described positive experiences in PEH. According to the women, PEH was meaningful when it provided a cathartic break from all the sitting in their other classes. PEH classes often provided emotional responses that were positive and left them energized and confident about their abilities. For Lyka, PEH was positive because "it was a stress reliever going to gym. I wasn't good at sports, but being able to move your body and get stuff out through action would be good. It felt cathartic." Saedee added, "I loved physical activity. It was a break from studying. It was a break from sitting in class and listening and trying to learn." For students who loved physical activity, being in the gym was considered "their second home", which led to success and achievement.

Despite not being an athlete on the school sport team, Wandaly also had positive experiences in class. She shared her thoughts:

> I've always been a more academically inclined person, so to go to gym
>
> and experience something like in basketball or badminton where I'm able
>
> to excel in it, it gave me an adrenaline rush. I've always been a
>
> competitive person, so I loved that. Gym provided that for me.

In her experience, the activities that the teacher offered in class enabled her to succeed and contributed to a positive experience. In the example Wandaly shares here, her competitive nature was able to be actualized with an activity she was good at. Finding activities where Wandaly could succeed is important to note because as mentioned earlier in this chapter, she at times felt excluded from the class because she was not an athlete. Given what we learned about the family and cultural expectations regarding sports and physical activity versus academics for racialized minority students, the examples of loving PEH expressed by Wandaly and the other women is counter to what might be stereotypically assumed.

Some of the ways curricula could have improved the success of the students varied from the women's perspectives. Wandaly spoke of the activities that were offered. Despite liking some of the activities (e.g., dodgeball), for her, the team sports lacked general relevance for students' futures after graduation. Wandaly spoke of the activities that were offered. For her they lacked relevance. She said:

> I think in our gym classes we were put in teams, but after you
>
> graduate high school, unless you join a team or rec team, you don't
>
> play dodge ball. You're on your own. If you're more equipped in

different fitness exercises you can do it by yourself. You could be

more informative about equipment like the weight room. You'll be

equipped with how to be healthier later in life.

Saedee also suggested taking more of a preparatory-based approach in class. She

expressed that the current PEH model did not fully prepare her to be as healthy and

active as she would have liked. She said, "take more of a future orientation. It's focused

on the present. It doesn't equip you with after if you want to continue a healthy

lifestyle." Lyka reiterated similar remarks to Saedee regarding a healthy lifestyle. She

acknowledged, "for me I've only come to realize that recently because I know back in

high school, I neglected my health. You should instill the mentality of taking care of

your body and also taking care of your mind." While health topics within the curriculum

do touch upon issues of mental health and active healthy lifestyles, the dominance of

sports and being active within PEH did not allow for more meaningful health

discussions.

In grade 11 and 12 PEH classes at our school, students only receive one or two

units (approximately 4-5 classes) of health for an entire semester. When you think of the

five modules within the Manitoba PEH curriculum, there does not seem to be enough

time to achieve all the learning outcomes possible. Simply stated, more relevant

curriculum might have enhanced student engagement and lead to more successful

acquisition of learning outcomes if students had input in the types of learning outcomes

more relevant to the lives of the students. The reality, however is that a teacher may not

be able to cover all health issues and outcomes over the course of the semester, which

means students could miss out on pertinent information relevant to their lives.

Curriculum and pedagogy are crucial aspects of education contributing to student success. Within PEH literature, Ennis (2000) has described PEH settings as being predominantly sport based, which have also been my experiences as an educator. As there are many diverse interests, abilities and motivations to draw from, educators can be in a difficult position servicing the needs of all their students. Ennis has also described PEH as being devalued within schools, which subsequently poses many challenges convincing students to stay actively engaged within their classes. Overall, Ennis describes dominant forms of PEH as lacking meaningful physical activity due to it being confined within a traditional sport-based competitive curriculum, with little to no skill development in many situations.

As a result, and as discussed by the young women, PEH can be difficult terrain impacting the role of teachers, the success of students and the curricula. The challenges that face sport-based competitive curriculum may mean a shift towards a games-based model and/or Teaching Games for Understanding approaches (Ennis, 1999) within PEH settings where the competitive and cooperative "spirit" for athletes/non-athletes, skilled/unskilled students can exist, and challenge inequitable learning practices.

Assessment Policy and Reduced Student Engagement

According to the women, in grade 11 and 12 students started to get "lazy", and the pressure of succeeding academically impacted the priority of PEH in their lives. Recently, the Manitoba curriculum policy shifted evaluation from a percentage grade to a complete/incomplete in grade 11 and 12. With PEH now offered as a complete/incomplete course, the perception was that many students would give the bare minimum to pass the course, which diminished the motivational climate of the class.

Stated simply, students were less engaged due to the complete/incomplete nature of the class. Wandaly shared her own perspective and attitude of PEH as she entered the later years of high school. She said:

In grade 11 and 12 phys. ed changed mainly because of increased academic expectations too. I sometimes used that time in gym to think about calculus. You would be thinking of stuff for your other classes. It got more boring. There's less enthusiasm.

Lyka also expressed the stress of academics. As mentioned in chapter four, the priority of academics for many students from racialized minority backgrounds was stressed within the family unit. Particularly in their graduating year, the focus on academics and concerns with applying for university and provincial exams relegated PEH to the bottom of the priority list. As Saedee said:

Because of external factors like applying to university, I was less inclined to wake up early to go to gym because I had to do something else in grade 12. The external factors definitely had an impact on my gym class towards the end. In all honesty because gym doesn't have a grade a lot of people feel as if, 'oh it doesn't matter' as much as other classes.

In comparison to other subject areas in education PEH was perceived by students as becoming less relevant to their lives and growth as they approached. The lack of interest and motivation in PEH, even from students who excelled in PEH settings steadily climbed during grades 11 and 12. If the PEH curriculum was co-created with student input to become more applicable to the student's interests and needs, then the pass or fail

nature of PEH might be less of an issue. This could potentially increase the intrinsic

motivation within students regarding their participation and motivation during activities,

leaving them with a feeling of connectivity during class and subject matter, rather than

disconnected and/or lazy.

As Divya said, "I think a lot of people didn't really consider it to be a subject. It

was something you had to do, but not want to do." Instead they felt that if PEH was

treated with the same consideration as math, with more assessment of learning versus just

participating, then PEH as a subject area would be perceived differently by students.

Wandaly provided an insightful comment and recommends the following:

> ... have more incentives for the students. Especially in the later years
>
> because let's face it if they made gym an S course [a grade given and
>
> counted as part of a student's university entrance] and was considered as
>
> part of the 5 courses you needed to get to university, I would have been
>
> an Olympian. I would have worked so hard.

Students develop/maintain their cultural competence

In Ladson-Billings' (1994; 1995b) second component of CRP, all students should

maintain and/or develop their cultural competence; translated to the CRPEH context,

student's cultural identities are affirmed within the class and curriculum. In previous

chapters I defined being culturally competent as "knowing your own cultural worldview,

having a positive relationship with your own culture, having knowledge about other

cultural worldviews, and having a respectful attitude towards cultural differences" (p.

44). In the following section, I present the young women's perspectives on what it means

to be culturally competent and what teachers do (or do not do) to acknowledge, affirm and promote diverse cultural backgrounds.

Teachers Must Work to Understand an Individual Student's Cultural Landscape

According to the young women, it is very important for teachers to understand the dynamics of a student's cultural landscape, which (as we learned in chapter four) is heavily influenced by racialized minority student's family background. Not every student's story will be exactly the same as another, and it is important for educators to not clump groups of students together based on their ethnic and/or racial backgrounds. Each student's story is unique and deserves to be heard on its own. As Saedee said:

> I think teachers shouldn't give cookie cutter advice to students. Teachers
>
> should be aware that there are different dynamics between families. Even
>
> though this will make it tougher to help everyone, it is sometimes best to
>
> help a few students at full volume rather than attempt to help all students
>
> in a superficial way.

Divya added to Saedee's comments about teachers having an understanding of student's cultural landscapes in order to facilitate their students' cultural competency. She expressed:

> Presently, most teachers in education are Caucasian. Due to this, they
>
> don't have the background knowledge of family dynamics in minority
>
> households. I believe that the best way for teachers to learn more about
>
> the structure would be to talk to racial minority students who are willing
>
> to share their thoughts.

Saedee also mentioned teachers talking to the students and asking them about their parent's expectations of them, and expectations they set for themselves.

As these young women suggested, it is not always easy opening up to your teachers and parents, particularly if you are from racialized minority backgrounds. Understanding the different cultural landscapes of students takes time, effort, a willingness to question our own assumptions, particularly within PEH contexts still defined by cultures of whiteness (Douglas & Halas, 2011; Flintoff et al., 2014), yet it is necessary. Wandaly described the challenges she faced while negotiating her identity:

> I learned to absorb the Canadian values, but I wish the teachers were more aware of the differences in our cultures." In grade 10, I was really depressed about how gay I was and then I had to go talk to a teacher and she was white. She was so open with the way she talked with other people. If I went to the GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) teacher and she was Filipino, I would have never approached her because I would be so terrified, so in that way, a different reflection of not Filipino was good for me. The difference was good. I was able to interact with other cultures my own culture would have prevented me from interacting with. And, I like that. However, I wish that they [the teachers] were more aware of the differences.

For Wandaly, the thought of more Filipino teachers served to remind her of her own parent's judgmental values and beliefs regarding sexuality; this, she suggested, would make it more threatening for her to open up. For her, white teachers were people she would feel more inclined to turn too, more so than teachers who could possibly

represent the constraining stereotypes of her own cultural traditions. While this is her unique experience, the example shows how all educators have to be ready and proactive dealing with the potential cultural impact of teaching students from diverse backgrounds and this demonstrates how teachers' identity categories are equally assessed and evaluated by students.

Supportive Learning Climates Encourage Development of Increased Cultural Competence

One question I asked the women was whether the school gave them opportunities to discuss, navigate, uncover, discover and negotiate their diverse identities. For Saedee, being a part of a female led group called GURLL (Genuine Unique Realistic Lady Leaders) allowed her to fulfill that. She said:

> That was such a big part of my high school experience. I kind of wished that we would have started that earlier in my high school career. It was a good opportunity for us to know each other as females in the school and to get to bond.

Opportunities for women from different backgrounds to explore their intersecting gendered identities allowed them to discuss key issues related to their own privilege and marginalization.

In learning spaces that discuss key issues related to identity, the climate can be seen as supportive or unsupportive depending on who you talk to. Discussing issues of sexuality were considered taboo in Saedee's first few years of high school. By the time she was ready to graduate she felt there was more of an openness to discussing issues of diversity. As she said:

Within four years, things changed so much, but I think it's a bit upsetting

that it didn't happen till two years after I started. If it wasn't when I

started, then all the people who came before me in this high school didn't

experience the same groups and the kind of openness the high school

experiences now.

Saedee's comments remind us that despite changes to policy (e.g., imposition of GSA

policy in Manitoba schools) or an institution's willingness to provide progressive

learning spaces for all students, there is much work left to be done when creating

opportunities to discuss, affirm and celebrate diversity.

Our dialogue also pointed to instances where some educators were unable to

create a learning climate that allowed for the discussion of identity and issues of

diversity, as well as how teachers can improve on their abilities to create learning

opportunities for students to discuss these topics in a safe and supportive space. For

example, Wandaly felt the learning climate was close-minded when it came to discussing

issues related to identity and sexuality issues. She expressed:

It was very close-minded for I hate to say it four years of my high school

experience. It wasn't until grade 12 till it was actually open. Our school

generally touts itself as a very open minded school, but only targets

certain people. There are so many people out there who it doesn't really

reach and I guess I was part of it.

Students need to have self-confidence in their identities and to develop the

interpersonal skills to work inter-culturally with their peers. In order to do that, teachers

play a pivotal role and need to act as facilitators to empower and celebrate student

identities within their classrooms and through curriculum (Tatum, 1999). Divya described the comfort levels of teachers. She said:

I find that nowadays teachers that have just started out are a lot more comfortable. Some are very inclusive. But, there are some teachers it's just because they've taught a certain way for so long, adjusting to the generation that is coming now is making it harder for them.

I spoke to the women about a resistance or fear on the part of teachers to talk about diversity. I asked the women, from their perspectives how educators are able to step outside of their comfort zone to address those issues. When they spoke of their teachers who were able to successfully discuss diversity Divya described them as creating an environment where everyone could freely express themselves because they took the time to get to know each student individually. She said, "diversity was definitely brought up. Race, gender equality was all brought up, but it was brought up in a sense that everyone was so comfortable that the teacher was able to learn more about the students." The teacher was able to create a community of learners by allowing the students to share their stories by disrupting power relations that sometimes get in the way of important conversations about diversity.

The women also spoke about classes that navigated controversial topics because the teacher and students fostered a sense of community together. For some teachers this is created in an easier manner than others. I asked the young women to discuss how teachers could increase their comfort level to discuss key issues related to diversity.

As the young women reflected on their high school experience, I asked them if it was important that their teachers were a reflection of the student population, and to my

surprise they said it did not matter at all. For them a teacher who is open minded and accepting is more important than their ethnic or racial background. They described teacher allies as being "pillars of support" there to help you learn and how they looked did not have to be a reflection of that support. The women appreciated the differences between them and their teachers, and shared that interacting with people from different backgrounds helped them to communicate better with each other, and allowed them to be more open to diversity. That is, they felt culturally competent.

Deciphering the Curriculum and Classroom Protocols

Physical education based on white, Eurocentric traditions can be challenging for some students who are not used to the rules and standards of various games and activities. As Wandaly expressed during the talking circle, for many immigrants, insecurities about adjusting to a new "culture" is scary enough, let alone having to "figure out" the games and activities in PEH, which often takes time and sets them up for failure.

Wandaly compared the difference between Canadian born and immigrant students. Canadian born students often enroll in extracurricular activities, such as club teams, or after school activities like swimming and dance. At home in the Philippines, her school PEH curriculum had a strong focus on dances, calisthenics, and games that were culturally different than those from Canada. She expressed, "the lack of knowledge about the activities considered the norm led me to sometimes feeling as an outsider in the class." In Canada, PEH reinforced for her that she was an "outsider."

Lyka also spoke about the cultural confusion that occurred when she came from the Philippines and participated in PEH classes. As she said:

When I came here from the Philippines about five years ago I felt so lost

because in the Philippines academics were more concentrated on instead

of athletics. I was 'what do I do?' I always felt like I was the last one to

know. I saw that with other newcomers here too. I've learned though that

the more you're curious the more you learn.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Lyka's willingness to put herself out there to try new things allowed her to have positive experiences in PEH settings. However, not all students are as comfortable doing that, and educators must provide the learning spaces that allow students opportunities to develop in their own unique ways.

Wandaly's experiences within PEH settings exacerbated the cultural dissonance she was experiencing as a newcomer. She shares a story about Olly-Olly Octopus, a popular game that many Canadian students know quite well, yet was foreign to her. She said:

It's a given that you should know games like Olly Olly Octopus here,

but if you came from the Philippines you wouldn't know what that was.

Sometimes you feel so clueless about it. But some of the games are

actually the same, but with different names. For example with Olly Olly

octopus, explain first. People will get it. It took me a while to figure out

this version of tag was the same version I had been playing for years in

the Philippines. I didn't have to spend 15 minute trying to figure out

what I had to do.

Teachers who understand a student's cultural landscapes, but are also cognizant of not making assumptions or judging students based on what they know or have experienced in the past are more likely to incorporate games that all their students will understand.

Lyka also suggested that educators need to make sure that everyone knows and understands what games and activities are being taught. Asking students if they know how to play a game is important, and begins by not making assumptions that everyone knows how to play the game or activity. In this context, it would be helpful for physical and health educators to also learn about games from the Philippines so that similarities between games can be explained. Other suggestions the young women offered were to allow students to teach games/activities from their cultural background. Student input, as they suggest, is a key component to delivering a curriculum that is meaningful and relevant to the student's lives.

Delivering curricula that connects to the students' lives is very important, but the examples that the women described when it came to health education speaks to the unfulfilled potential of our pedagogies. For the women, health issues such as sex and sexuality education were not delved into with as much depth as they had hoped for during their high school experience. Nutrition units were not relatable to their lives. As Wandaly said, "part of me laughed at this a bit. The teacher would talk about diets and the food that you eat and it is nothing I eat at home." Divya, of East Indian descent suggested that nutrition lessons in health class should look at different types of foods from various regions of the world that reflect the student population. To make the assumption that all of our students should follow Canada's Food Guide is part of the white, middle class culture that circulates within PEH contexts. Teaching from a student's perspective can

also consider the nutritional and food consumption practices of the diverse cultural groups within educational spaces. The Canada's Food Guide is often referenced as a curriculum resource but its Eurocentric origins mean educators re-integrate dominant cultural norms about healthy eating into their classes.

In terms of classroom protocols, changing for gym was one area of concern that was only brought up by Wandaly, but is worth noting given the challenges that change room policies often present for students (see Champagne & Halas, 2003; Taylor & Peter, 2011), due to comfort and cultural reasons among others, not all students feel comfortable changing into shorts for PEH. Even changing into any type of gym clothing, there have been instances where some students will not change for class, and it is not because they are lazy or disinterested in gym. In fact, some of the students who do not change, often participate more actively than their counterparts. For some, publicly displaying skin is against cultural beliefs, while for others body issues and discomfort changing in public are problematic for students. Wandaly described the process of navigating the Canadian culture with her parent's values and beliefs related to gym clothes. She said:

> It was so funny when you're supposed to wear gym clothes. We didn't
> do this in the Philippines. When I brought it up with my dad that I had
> to buy gym clothes and I had to buy shorts my dad said, 'why can't you
> just wear jogging pants or sweat pants?' I said, 'I see everyone else is
> wearing shorts, and I want to wear them too.'

Wandaly's comment echoes sentiments of students from other diverse backgrounds that I have talked to during my teaching career who are continually learning

the rules and practices of Canadian culture alongside their family's culture. Educators need to be aware that it can be a difficult bridge for students to articulate the demands of their family influences with their teacher's expectations and the circulating adolescent norms in ways that do not leave them feeling like an outsider. Although not a school requirement for gym clothes, for Wandaly wearing gym shorts like her peers was a way for her to belong. Students want to belong especially among their peers and this can be as simple and as important as wearing shorts in gym class.

<p align="center">**Students develop critical social consciousness**</p>

In Ladson-Billings' (1994; 1995b) last component of CRP, she expressed that students must develop critical social consciousness. In a previous chapter I described being critically social conscious as "understanding the way people think and behave, which are impacted by intersections of race/ethnicity, social class, gender and language" (Chapter 2, pg. 47). It also means recognizing the power and inequities that exist within society, and how these inequities are translated within the students' experiences of PEH (Azzarito, 2009; Halas, 2006). This component of CRP can be a challenging task to incorporate and teach within classes. However, it is essential that teachers work at teaching about having a critical consciousness and it seems to be a crucial skill for teachers and students. The young women helped to shed some light on how a critical social consciousness might enhance the PEH experience.

Proactively Sharing Responsibility for the Learning Climate

Given the many intersecting social hierarchies within both society and the PEH class, critically conscious educators will work to establish inclusive, equitable learning environments for students, no matter where they fall on the various gendered, racialized,

sexualized, ability (etc.) axes, as well as identify the socio-cultural structures that may impact students' experiences. When I asked the women to discuss whose responsibility (i.e., teacher or students) it was to create an inclusive learning climate, they agreed that it is the shared responsibility of every person in the gym. They acknowledged that teachers act as support systems helping students navigate or negotiate their identities and social interactions, however they recognize that it is also an internal process that students must take ownership over.

Lyka mentioned the importance of teachers creating a mindset within the class regarding inclusivity. Saedee quickly added to Lyka's comments by reinforcing the notion of shared responsibility:

> Both for sure because there's only so much a teacher can do. Too much pressure is probably put on teachers to do this, but a lot of this has to do with the students. The teacher's role would be to instill a mindset in students to be inclusive and it's the student's role to put that into action. There's only so much a teacher can do.

Divya built on Saedee's comments by suggesting that teachers take the "initiative with inclusivity, but once it's been initiated, and students get into the habit of being inclusive, it is easier for the students."

Wandaly agreed with these viewpoints and she too reinforced that "it's also up to the students to foster a sense of inclusiveness." As was discussed in the previous section, comfort levels among teachers and students contributed to an inclusive learning climate. Divya explained that, "it can only become an inclusive environment if teachers are comfortable and also that students perceive the teachers as comfortable to be around."

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Particularly in PEH settings with all the intersecting identities and social hierarchies, there is a rich and applied learning opportunity for students to become critically conscious about different forms of inequity and what they might do together to help alleviate the pressure on those who may be in marginalized positions. An example would be the presence of inequitable skill levels.

Teachers who willfully attempt to encourage participation and practice inclusiveness with all students during their games and activities display mindfulness in regards to the students that are typically left out. This allows for a positive environment where students can collectively challenge themselves and enrich their overall learning experience. Having a mindset which embraces the differences of all students equally rather than one which ostracizes and segregates individuals will have positive impact on the students' lives in and outside of PEH settings. Negative teaching practices can perpetuate a disconnect during class and will continue to privilege some individuals over others. As the women suggested once the teachers have established a shared commitment toward everyone in the class, it is up to the students to take ownership of maintaining an inclusive and educational learning space.

Proactively Using the Multicultural Learning Spaces as Learning Sites

Dealing with differences among a diverse population was discussed with the women. How students negotiate and navigate their social constructed identities is especially important within a multicultural school. Wandaly and Saedee shared two contradictory experiences and perspectives regarding diversity and cultural differences at their school. Wandaly said:

For all the talk about diversity here at our school, I love that they love to

tout diversity here, but when you actually go to school it is very

homogenous. For example, the Filipinos hang out in the open area there,

and the East Indians hang out in Maples upstairs. So you don't mix. You

hang out with the same people over and over and there's not any

difference. For example, if I look at my friends. They're all immigrants,

part of immigrants who are Filipino we don't talk about any differences

like gender and sexuality. And, most of my friends were female. We

didn't really talk about it [difference]. There's never been a situation

where we have to talk about that difference. I've never really

encountered it.

For Wandaly, being around the same group of like-minded peers contributed to more

segregation rather than inclusivity. She was able to stick with her cultural group, and

never mixed as much as you might expect in a multicultural school. Similarly, Van Ingen

and Halas (2006) studied this phenomena in a large multicultural school where similar

patterns of ethno cultural groupings were observed. In contexts like the one described by

Wandaly, where groups of students from one ethno cultural group stick together despite

the presence of opportunities to meet students from different cultural groups, a form of

"segregated integration" occurs and limits opportunities for youth to develop their

cultural competency.

For example at the school I teach, certain areas of our schools are segregated by

different cultural groups. Often times, these clusters of groups do not mix, except in

subject areas like PEH where there are often multiple opportunities to address the

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segregation of cultural groups. Once again, the social nature of PEH settings provides all kinds of inter-cultural learning opportunities that can help students navigate issues of diversity, particularly in those situations where students need to cooperate inter-culturally to be successful (e.g., games in class, intramural clubs and activities, inter-school sport teams, etc.). This was the case for Saedee.

Saedee believed that the diverse student population contributed to her cultural competency. In high school, she had lots of chances to join groups or meet people from different cultural background, which she believes has helped her later in life. She explained how:

> If I meet someone who is different from me, it's not a huge shock to me
> … I've been exposed to so many different types of people coming from
> different backgrounds. If I didn't I'd have a huge issue in university
> coming across so many different people who look different and like
> different things.

What is different for Saedee's experience versus Wandaly's is that Saedee's friendship groups were more diverse rather than Wandaly's friends who were entirely Filipino.

The implications for PEH are that educators must purposefully students to interact across cultural groups and provide opportunities for inter-cultural relations through games, activities and health lessons. As PEH experiences have strong relational components (learning about one's self, interacting with others, achieving personal and collective goals) thus educators are in a powerful position to capitalize on supporting and encouraging students to develop meaningful cross cultural relationships.

Curricula that Challenges Power Relations and Disrupts the Norms

Today's PEH environments and curricula should be based on cultural consciousness raising, ensuring that all students are included within class activities. However, this is not always an easy task to achieve for teachers. As Saedee said:

I think our generation is in this situation right now where things are changing and they're changing rapidly that I think it's hard for the school curriculum to keep up with that. To be fair, maybe it's not about the school not talking about the stuff, it might just be all the stuff's happening so fast. It's more apparent in society.

Tinning (2009) has suggested creating curricula that allow for personal development of the students within the social and economic circumstances surrounding them. Educators should integrate critical thinking skills for students within their classes to challenge the status quo and dominant perspectives (Laker, 2000; Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Developing these skills will allow students to make decisions in their lives that will be meaningful and relevant (Champagne, 2006; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006).

Thoughtful discussions about the changes happening in students' lives and society allow students to articulate how their lived experiences impact their world, and through the teacher, how cultural landscapes are included or excluded within the curriculum.

Thoughtful discussions and lessons on key issues related to identity and diversity allow students to practice expressing and articulating how their lived experiences impact their world, and through the teacher, their cultural landscapes are reflected within the curriculum.

Health classes provide the opportunity to develop those skills, however the women discussed the lack of relevancy in the topics discussed in class. Wandaly described her health class as "watching videos that scared the living daylights out of you. This girl drank this much, now she's dead [laughter]." Fear tactics with regards to drugs and alcohol were what the women remembered most. As Divya said, "there's always ultimatums. Even with drugs. The reason marijuana is done is because people think there's no effect to it. But doing cocaine or heroin you're going to die." Saedee suggested health class was more autocratic in delivery with teachers telling students, and in some ways moralizing about health practices versus providing a context where students could ask questions and develop their own informed opinions to make personal decisions. She continued with "health classes were pushing opinions as opposed to informing. That [approach to teaching] might have discouraged people from going. Instead of pushing abstinence on someone, say it's an option." For students a meaningful curriculum will connect to their lives and interests. Not surprisingly, having a say in what is taught is also considered important for the students. Despite some notable examples mentioned earlier (e.g., the GURLL group), the cultural ir-relevance, along with the lack of respect for the women to be independent developing people, led to their lack of interest and involvement in health education. Curricula and teaching in the health sections of PEH needs attention, especially if there is a desire to raise critical social consciousness related to issues of identity and health.

Implications for Practice

The four women provided helpful insights regarding Ladson-Billings' (1994) conception of culturally relevant pedagogy that have clear implications for practice.

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Regarding the need for all students to achieve academic success, the women strongly reinforced the notion that the student-teacher relationship is foundational. While this is not a new idea (see Gay, 2000; Halas, 2011), what emerges from the women's perspectives is the reciprocal nature of the relationship; that is, the teacher's care and attention lends itself to increased student accountability for learning. Similarly, in Cushman's (2003) presentation of the diverse student voices from a New York high school, she highlights how a reciprocal relationship between teacher and student creates an environment for learning where students clearly know their teachers care about them, set high expectations and prepare them to succeed. This interpersonal connection sparks in the student a sense of responsibility whereby, as Saedee explained earlier in the chapter, the relationship makes you more accountable to your teachers: "… you don't want to let them down."

The lesson for educator is one that focuses on communicating high expectations for student engagement in class. This motivates students to work harder because they feel a responsibility to their teacher. Students became more accountable because they knew their teachers care about their learning. Physical and health educators can consciously reflect on the types of relationships created with students to ask whether or not there are opportunities for reciprocal learning, relevant teaching practices, respected climates in the classroom and relational and meaningful interactions transpiring between teachers and students and among the students themselves.

In terms of developing and maintaining cultural competence, the implications for practice are that in order for learning climates to facilitate and engage students in complex discussions about diversity, they should be perceived as safe and comfortable.

Safe and supportive learning environments create greater potential for cultural

competency as well as the affirmation of diverse identities. The women expressed an

openness and interest in talking about issues related to diversity, yet they see it as the

educator's responsibility to provide opportunities for dialogue within the classroom

setting. While it was perceived that younger teachers were more open and capable of

introducing more sensitive topics they realized that not all educators are confident and

comfortable to comfortable to pursue these topics in an education institution.

Helping newcomer students decipher the curricula and classroom protocols was a

relevant issue marking the support for cultural diversity in PEH. The women shared that

teachers who took the time to give clear instructions regarding games and/or activities

enabled their participation in class; otherwise, the cultural and language barriers made

them feel out of place. It is not that the students were incapable of participating; rather,

they experienced a cultural disconnect when teachers did not make an effort to ensure

their students understood what was going on. Shaping the curricula to utilize the student's

cultural knowledge and frames of reference is important for physical and health educators

in their practice. Incorporating student input into lesson plans is a way to help students

maintain their cultural competency and showcase a curricula and learning climate that is

more reflective of the diverse student population (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Asking

newcomers to share games and activities from their own culture is a simple way of

expanding the curriculum in inclusive ways.

Similar to Champagne's (2006) notion of the cultural coach, Gay (2000) uses the

term cultural organizers to describe educators who are able to facilitate and encourage

students' celebration and affirmation of their own and each other's cultural heritage

within multi-cultural spaces. Though challenging, these diverse spaces allow physical and health educators to create and encourage inter-cultural connections within their social interactions, as facilitated by the curriculum of activities. Nieto (1999b) reminds us that all students bring strengths to their learning experiences and as educators it is our responsibility to help them build upon these assets. Significantly, the social nature of the PEH class challenges students to connect with all of their peers in ways that move them beyond their own cultural and/or ability groups. This is where the potential for developing a critical social consciousness is great, but remains often unfulfilled.

While it is an important first step to understand the hierarchies that exist in PEH settings, it is another to challenge and act on these inequities (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The women expressed how it is the shared responsibility of students and teachers to create an inclusive PEH learning space. It is not easy addressing issues related to power and privilege partly because we have not been conditioned to not think or talk about issues of identity, which can make some teachers uncomfortable and vulnerable. As mentioned in Chapter Four, cultures of whiteness are so subtle and invisible that for the women themselves, it was hard to name, yet white privilege was tied to many of the stories they shared. Disrupting the inequities of PEH curriculum and learning spaces to make the climate an equitable learning space for all students, requires a consistent effort on the part of the privileged bodies in PEH to acknowledge the intersecting privileges circulating within the curriculum and space (i.e. able-bodied, White, skilled, embodied, thin, middle class, etc.).

To challenge and disrupt normative practices in PEH a critical social consciousness has to be more explicitly articulated as a part of PEH curricula; there is a

need, for example, to integrate lesson plans that work on critical thinking skills or working inter-culturally with peers (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). For the former students in this study, their inter-cultural experiences were mixed. And, as the women acknowledged, before we can expect students to engage in critical thinking and reflection, educators must also be willing to do the same through their own critical reflection (Howard, 2001). The women recognized how the changing cultural landscapes for students' presents real challenges for educators to keep up to date with the latest information regarding key social issues. Incorporating critical social consciousness for physical and health educators and students alike can improve the learning climate and create rich learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant to their lives (Champagne, 2006; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2006).

In the last chapter, I share the meaning of CRPEH that I gained during the writing of this thesis. I will also evaluate the findings based on some key questions posed by Ellis (1998) and discuss future recommendations for research, policy/programming and practice that may be beneficial for educators in their teaching.

Chapter Six

The Meaning of Culturally Relevant Physical and Health Education

from the Perspective of Racialized Minority Women

The purpose of the study was to develop a deeper understanding, from the perspective of female high school graduates from diverse backgrounds, as to how their intersecting social positions impact students as they negotiate their multiple identities in physical and health education. These experiences have been analyzed within the context of Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogical theory, and in this final chapter I set out to revisit the CRPEH theoretical model created by Halas. Specifically, I integrate key ideas from the women's understanding of their PEH experience to elucidate why I continue to believe this model may be useful and relevant for our teaching practices. As well, I will assess the value of the research findings according to Ellis' (1998) recommended questions and conclude by offering future recommendations for research, policy/programming and practice related to culturally relevant pedagogy within PEH settings. Using Ladson-Billing's key characteristics of CRP, the four participants in this study were able to articulate very thoughtful perspectives regarding their past experiences in PEH, both positive and negative.

In Chapter Four I initiated a dialogue about the intersecting identities of young women from racialized minority backgrounds. Recognizing and understanding the complexities of students' multiple and intersecting identities is important for educators to know and further affirms the need to get to know our students on an individual basis (see McRae, 2012; Owens & Ennis, 2005). Listening to the women confirmed for me that

understanding our students' individual cultural landscapes may be the important first step for teachers who wish to be culturally relevant in their teaching.

In Chapter Five, the women shared very rich perspectives that elucidate what it means to be culturally relevant (or irrelevant) teachers. What I have learned from listening to the young women share their perspectives on academic achievement in PEH is that success relies upon equitable, effective student-teacher relationships and meaningful curriculum that is relevant to the academic aspirations of students (Halas, McRae & Carpenter, 2012). Academic achievement begins when all students feel acknowledged, affirmed and supported by their teachers. Teachers who paid attention to their students and helped them improve their skills were appreciated in ways that led to greater accountability on the part of the students toward their learning.

What I have learned from listening to the young women share their perspectives on cultural competency in PEH settings is that the development and affirmation of diverse cultural identities is more likely to occur within learning climates that are welcoming and supportive where teachers share responsibility with students for a more open dialogue (Parhar & Sensoy, 2011). Particularly for immigrants and students from racialized minority backgrounds, they will be more likely to feel supported in their learning climates if their cultural backgrounds are celebrated and reflected in PEH spaces. When educators do not notice student differences, and disregard key aspects of a student's identity (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Nieto, 1999b), the outcome can negatively impact a student's lived experience within a school setting.

While the young women in this study were not bothered by a predominantly white teaching population, they mentioned that teachers do need to understand the
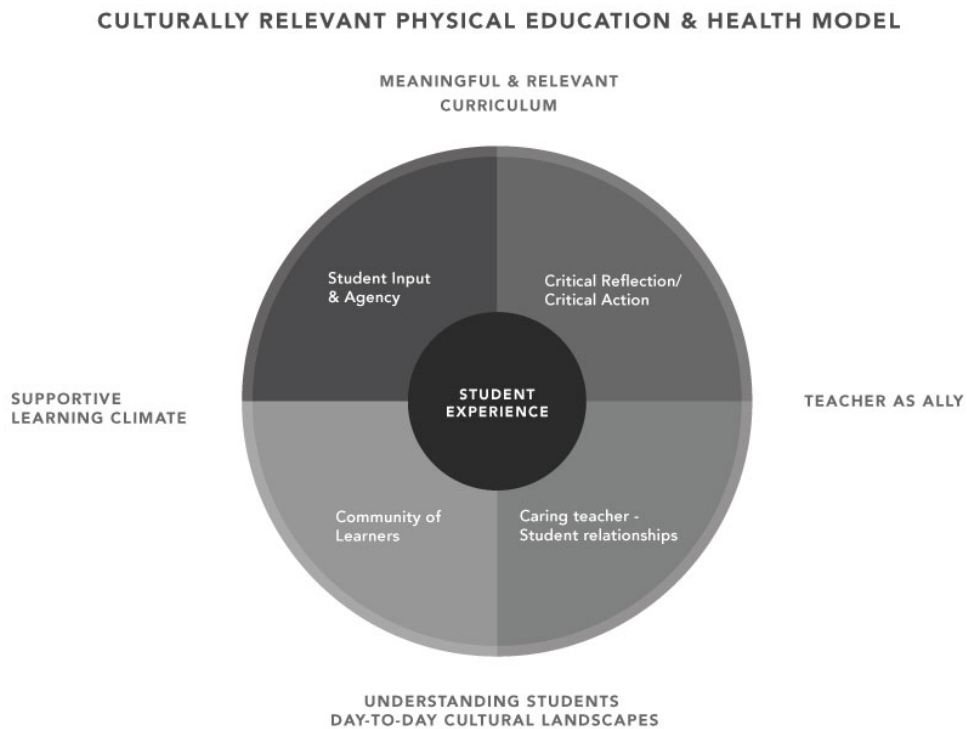
cultural landscapes of their students and act as allies who support and acknowledge their culture. Teachers who act as allies utilize the diversity of student experiences to positively impact the learning climate to be more inclusive and the curriculum to be more relevant (Champagne, 2006). And, as Ladson-Billings (1995b) has argued, curriculum and instruction need to be shaped in a way that uses the cultural knowledge and frames of reference from students' diverse cultural backgrounds and lived experiences.

What I have learned from listening to the young women share their perspectives on critical social consciousness is that it seems to be the least well-understood or developed aspect of CRP and this speaks to the need for educators to think more about what it means to teach in critically conscious ways. As the young women suggest it can be difficult to raise issues related to identity when teachers themselves are unsure of what to say and how to open discussions. Moreover, the women in this study noted that if students do not feel safe expressing their perspectives, particularly when the teacher holds much power over their PEH experience and more general school experience the discussion will remain limited. Nor should students, in particular marginalized racial minorities, be responsible for raising the consciousness level of teachers or their own peers.

There is great potential for PEH as a learning site for critical social consciousness that has been under-utilized and under-exploited by physical educators. We need to more explicitly invite all students to contribute to an equitable, supportive learning climate. This can be achieved by sharing the responsibility for learning that is meaningful and relevant with students by getting them to mix inter-culturally and supporting each other across gender and skill inequities (see Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Casey & Kentel,

2014). As well, incorporating curricula that challenges power relations and disrupts the norms is especially important for all students. Incorporating the feedback from chapters four and five, I now refer back to the CRPEH model introduced in Chapter Two (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: CRPEH Model (Adapted from Halas, McRae & Carpenter, 2012)

CULTURALLY RELEVANT PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH MODEL

MEANINGFUL & RELEVANT
CURRICULUM

Student Input
& Agency

Critical Reflection/
Critical Action

SUPPORTIVE
LEARNING CLIMATE

STUDENT
EXPERIENCE

TEACHER AS ALLY

Community of
Learners

Caring teacher -
Student relationships

UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS
DAY-TO-DAY CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Based on what I have learned from listening to the young women share their perspectives, the findings reinforce the importance of the teacher as ally who works to understand a student's day-to-day cultural landscape; teachers use this information to create supportive learning climates where students enthusiastically engage in meaningful and relevant curricular activities and lessons. Students are motivated to learn and grow in ways that develop their critical social consciousness regarding the social inequities that

impact their PEH experiences and their lives within and beyond the boundaries of their school and community. While the circular format of the model suggests that each quadrant is interconnected and of equal importance, the findings in this research study confirm that teachers need to get to know their students and the cultural backgrounds that they bring with them to class.

Cultural landscapes

The findings presented in chapter four show us how important and necessary it is to understand diverse cultural landscapes of students and utilize their lived experiences that cross many axes of difference within the learning spaces. Educators who encourage student cultural competency are reinforcing student's pride in their own identity, which is extremely important for students from racialized minority backgrounds. The context of their high school was a normative space for the young women in this study. As illustrated in Chapter Four when they entered university their spaces shifted drastically and the impacts of whiteness were experienced and felt in their learning contexts as well as their everyday lives. The persistent, constant, and privileged position of whiteness perpetuated a hierarchy that marks the experiences of these racialized young women. Social markers of skin colour, language, and culture created starkly different experiences than their prior experiences in high school.

From this study, I am learning that I need to let the students know that who they are matters and how they see themselves is imperative within my teaching spaces. Learning about students must start early (Gay, 2000) and be ongoing. When Asian students want to avoid going outside for PEH because they are afraid to let the colour of their skin darken, we are compelled to ask: how does a critically conscious, culturally

relevant PEH teacher respond? The discussion in Chapter Four regarding racialized identities (and who counts as a Canadian) and the intersectionality of concepts like whiteness, social class, familial relations and culture serve as reminders for thinking about the shifting but often constant identity markers shaping student-teacher interactions and experiences.

Facilitating students in opportunities to critically reflect on key issues pertinent to their lives is important within PEH settings. This will build a bridge to developing and maintaining positive and meaningful relationships between the teacher and student. As educators, it is important to continue to be critically reflective in how we may perpetuate a learning climate that excludes certain students or leaves important and meaningful issues ignored within the curriculum. I do not believe these omissions happen consciously or visibly, but there are students who struggle with belonging. Wandaly expressed this during the talking circle. I found her experiences to be upsetting and concerning. It shows me that we have to address and change the culturally relevant PEH experiences within schools (Gard, Hickey-Moodey & Enright, 2013; Halas, 2011). As mentioned in Chapter Five, understanding a student's diverse cultural landscape compels us as educators to identify and acknowledge inequities and critically question our own assumptions about difference, power and marginalization.

Learning climates

An inclusive learning environment is where students of different abilities, gender, race, class and cultural backgrounds learn together in supportive ways. To achieve this goal, the young women advise that teachers and students must share responsibility for inclusion and use the regularly occurring social inequities within the class to develop

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critical social consciousness. Just as important, social action to address the hegemonic and structural inequities people encounter on a day to day basis is necessary in facilitating critical social consciousness.

The conversations with the women also affirm that educators should facilitate opportunities for students to enter discussions about their multiple, intersecting identities within class (Garrett, 2006). The women suggested that this can only take place if students are also held accountable for their actions. Students who do not feel comfortable talking about issues of diversity, or grow up in environments at home that do not openly acknowledge or support diverse identities (e.g., individuals who may fall on the LGBTQ spectrum), will need supportive and inclusive learning atmospheres at school to allow for their sense of identity to develop within an affirming environment. A supportive learning climate promotes a community of learners where all students and the teacher feel a sense of belonging and comfort, no matter how uncomfortable the topics may be.

Curriculum

The teacher as ally is willing and capable of delivering activities that are not only meaningful but also comprehensible to newcomers. Connecting with cultural traditions, foods, games and activities will make PEH a more inclusive learning environment. Casey and Kentel (2014) suggest a meaningful and relevant curriculum would consist of students engaging in learning experiences that pertain to the difficulties they encounter when confronting matters related to sexual orientation, body image, racism, social class and sexism. In addition, the young women suggested there be inter-cultural learning experiences where students can share their place of origin (through music, dance, and games) with their peers.

Teacher as ally

As mentioned by the students, a teacher who acts as an ally engages in culturally relevant practices. These teachers are "pillars of support"; they build relationships where attention and care is directed to all students, regardless of their ability, skill, gender, race, social class or sexual orientation, recognizing that some individuals are more privileged than others. Supportive teachers acting as an ally for his or her students are those who are persistent, empowering and regularly communicate high expectations for their students' success. Because they have developed caring, attentive relationships with their students, they know how to connect the curriculum to their student's lives in meaningful ways.

Defining CRPEH

My research question attempted to deepen our understanding of the meaning of culturally relevant physical education and health from the perspectives of female high school graduates from diverse backgrounds. In chapter two I described culturally relevant physical education and health as such:

> An approach that aims to disrupt the hegemonic influence through
>
> values, attitudes and beliefs, and aims to challenge the system in place
>
> by providing conditions that values a community of learners, while also
>
> displaying uniqueness, and voice among the learners. This model
>
> strives to provide students with the space to develop their critical
>
> consciousness and question the world around them through their own
>
> lens. This model encourages students to stand on their own feet,
>
> facilitated by educators who are genuine in their commitment to
>
> knowing their students on a more personal level, disrupting their own

preconceptions, and providing a learning climate that celebrates

individuality all within a community of learners (p41).

Based on the conversations in the talking circle and through my analysis of the perspectives shared by the women I would now define CRPEH as an approach to teaching where students' cultural identities are affirmed by CRPEH teachers who are attentive, accepting and equitable; where teachers do not discriminate based on skill level, gender, race and other forms of difference. CRPEH teachers set high expectations for student achievement which results in greater accountability for students in terms of productivity, and helps create supportive learning climates. Culturally relevant teachers are able to engage in conversations about identity and difference with students, even if it makes them vulnerable. In addition, CRPEH teachers provide opportunities for meaningful engagement in valued activities that promote an active and healthy lifestyle that connect with diverse cultures and meet the needs of more students within our PEH classrooms.

CRPEH is an all-encompassing way of viewing education that recognizes the interconnected aspects of physical education and health that will impact the student experience. While the women shared stories about their experiences in PEH that were less than ideal and perpetuated gender stereotypes, they also reflected on experiences that were positive and affirming. Overall, I am encouraged by the findings, which indicate a hopeful move towards more equitable learning experiences for every student.

As culturally relevant educators, our goal should be to motivate every student to so thoughtfully and intrinsically engage within the physical practices of the PEH class. I hope the findings expressed in this research study help illuminate how physical and

health educators can create meaningful and relevant experiences like this for all of our students, no matter what their skill level, gender, racialized background, sexuality or social class.

Assessing the Value of the Research Study

I began this research study by honouring and showing gratitude for Indigenous ways of knowing. The inclusion of Indigenous approaches to research allowed me to make connections between my 'head' and my 'heart'. Wilson's (2008) notion of relational accountability motivated me to enter into this research study with a determination to honour all my relations who contributed to this process. I hope I have achieved this.

As a way to demonstrate my relational accountability, I draw upon Ellis' (1998) suggestions on how to assess interpretive accounts and use three of the most relevant questions that consider the value of the inquiry. In particular I answer the following questions:

1. Does the research have the power to change practice?
2. Has the researcher's understanding been transformed?
3. Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context? (p.30)

1. Does the research have the power to change practice?

Incorporating student voice in conversations about issues relevant to their lives is necessary and has the power to change our teaching practices (Garrett, 2006). Student engagement in critical reflection regarding issues related to their body and social categories influencing their identity development presents powerful opportunities for

educators. This study allowed the women, as well as myself, an opportunity to reflect on key issues related to teaching in culturally relevant ways. Issues of race, whiteness and the experience of racism pervade these young women's accounts. The dominant social norms are prevalent and even though societal efforts to advance tolerance and multiculturalism (Lee, 2008) exist, the cultural hegemony of Canadian educational institutions persists. The young women however are inspired by hopefulness and the possibilities of change. The stories shared by Lyka, Divya, Saedee and Wandaly in chapter four compel us as educators to be continually vigilant in working to dismantle assumptions about the superiority and inferiority of racialized groups. We must also work to make visible the power relations within PEH setting that create hierarchies that include and exclude and I believe the findings related to the cultural landscapes of racialized minority females has potential to significantly inform our teaching practices.

My teaching experiences have taught me that understanding our students is crucial in determining how effective we will be as teachers. For many of our students, their "stories" often unfold outside the realm of our gymnasiums and classrooms, compelling us to work harder to understand the day-to-day challenges and opportunities they experience based on their social positions in the world. The women's stories about belonging and achieving success in PEH spaces remind educators to empower our students and use their experiences to create more meaningful and relevant learning experiences that will inspire, challenge, and motivate them to become critical thinkers and learners in our ever-changing world.

2. Has the researcher's understanding been transformed?

Immediately after I had completed the talking circle on a cold Saturday last February, I texted one of my co-advisors with my initial interpretation that "race wasn't that big of deal." However, as I began the analysis portion of the research process, I recognized how much of what was expressed by the women was laden with responses connecting back to race and cultures of whiteness. Even as a racialized minority woman, the ways I continue to confront and challenge issues of race, ethnicity and diversity are essential to understanding who I am and how I belong. The floating signifiers of race are never too far out of mind or sight. My own experiences with conversations about race and whiteness have taught me that these are not always easy conversations to have yet they are absolutely necessary. Educators and students must challenge their assumptions and stereotypes as we interact inter-culturally with one another. I am committed to continually developing my own thinking to gain confidence and competence to engage in discussions that will dismantle dominant norms and engage in anti-racist and culturally affirming dialogue.

This process has already been transformative in my teaching practices. By engaging in such in-depth conversation with the women, I became more equipped with how to better facilitate discussions about issues regarding identity. Who I was when I first started my teaching career has evolved over eight years and will continue to change. Writing this thesis allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of myself as an educator, which I know has translated into my teaching practice. Teaching is not black and white, but a journey of diverse scenarios and experiences based on who the students are, the learning climate, what I teach and who I am as the teacher and what I bring to the class.

The critical reflections I have included through my journal entries have helped to affirm how important culturally relevant pedagogy is for the students I teach. In a way, culturally relevant teaching is what I longed to have growing up in the public school system within my community in Winnipeg. CRP within schools means that each student is confident and sure of his or her identity and can feel comfortable, safe and motivated to succeed without the threat of being ridiculed, stereotyped or discriminated against. As my way of giving back, I feel responsible for providing the time and space for students to see every aspect of themselves reflected within school spaces. This study has further affirmed my commitment to this goal.

3. Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context?

Oberg and Chambers' (1992) research explored the practice of inviting students to write about things that mattered in their lives. They suggest that individuals should locate their research in what matters to the inquirer. In addition to finding research that matters to them, research should also matter to and for others. Within Indigenous traditions, this is a reflection of the reciprocal nature of relationships. I found a research topic that mattered to me and was influenced by my personal experiences as a physical and health educator. And, based on the "data" that was generated from the conversations with the women in this study, I am optimistic about the possibilities of utilizing student voice to continually inform our teaching practices. This research study was a collective process that helped to reaffirm why I try to teach in culturally relevant ways.

There is a pedagogical responsibility for educators to exercise care in facilitating a learning climate that makes it safe and comfortable for students to open up about topics

related to diversity. Shying away from key issues that are prevalent to the lives and health of students is counter-productive. I have learned from this process that students' lived experiences are valid, enriching and empowering for our practice as educators. I hope the young women feel the same way.

Future Recommendations

In the following section I offer recommendations for research, policy/programming and practice. I begin by offering profound and insightful commentary from Henry and Tator (2009) about the possibilities of transformative education:

> We need to provide opportunities for incorporating critical pedagogy and anti-racism perspectives and strategies into our classrooms in order to encourage equity. Teaching environments, curriculum, and pedagogy can more effectively provide tools for emancipation and democratization within the academy and within our society (p.206).

With the goal of more emancipatory and democratic education, I present the following recommendations that can provide transformative educational opportunities in PEH.

Recommendations for research

Future research should:

- Continue to examine student voices from diverse backgrounds within PEH settings, and in particular, examine experiences of racialized minority boys (e.g., see work of Nakamura, 2009) to determine the extent to which their racialized experiences are also impacted by the on-going presence of assumptions regarding the superiority of whites and the inferiority of racialized minority groups;

- Continue to investigate the intersecting social categories (markers) of identity and how these impact on the PEH experience; this can be achieved through community-based research collaborations with teachers who develop and deliver informal and formal lesson plans related to intersecting social identities within PEH settings

Policy and Programming

Future policy and programming should:

- Re-visit the Manitoba PE/HE curriculum for grades 11 and 12. The complete/incomplete policy for students in grades 11 and 12 shapes the legitimacy of the subject area;

- Explore ways to make PEH a required subject that is used for university entrance;

- Incorporate more diverse voices (including student voice) during the program-planning phase of curriculum development so that it is reflective of diverse student populations;

- Continue to revise post-secondary curriculum to ensure that critical pedagogy and culturally relevant teaching prepares students to teach in diverse settings; and

- Examine how to better promote intercultural integration among students within PEH settings.

Practice

The women acknowledged in previous chapters that some teachers are seen as being more natural and comfortable at creating a supportive learning climate where they critically reflect on their attitudes, values and behaviours that impact learning and they

have expectations that their students do the same. Saedee provides the following advice that I believe is important for educators to read:

> I think it's not something you can teach a teacher. I think a lot of it is up to them to work on their interpersonal skills (laughter). It's not as if I can look at a teacher and say this is what you needed to do to be more comfortable with students; look at a student's background and experiences, get what they like, don't like, and what works for them. I understand that's probably hard, but that's one of the only ways to go about it.

This study has shown me that there is no one answer for every single student. And, as a physical and health educator it can be challenging to get to know every single student. But, we must. The social nature of our practices means we cannot dismiss certain students over others. PEH is a challenging subject to teach, but the beauty of our work is that we are able to connect with a wide range of students on a more personal level than some classroom experiences. Based on these findings I suggest a few simple suggestions for our practices:

- Get to know each student individually;
- Do not lump students into categories;
- Ask questions if you have them;
- Do not shy away from the issues you feel are uncomfortable for you; and
- Listen with your heart.

Other practices that educators might consider include:

- Communicate high expectations through a relationship that persists with students of all abilities;

- Work to understand the intersecting cultural backgrounds of students so that you can affirm the diversities that students express in the gymnasium and health class;

- Provide PEH programming that incorporates aspects of the student's cultural heritage and backgrounds in ways that are meaning and relevant;

- Develop your own critical social consciousness in ways that enable you to engage with issues of power, privilege and marginalization across social positions; then, develop this with your students;

  - E.g. Engage students in purposefully creating inclusive learning climates where teachers and students are responsible for each other's learning and positive engagement in class

- Begin the process of interrogating whiteness and what it means for teachers and students who are positioned differently;

  - E.g., white versus a racialized minority or Indigenous person within schools and communities;

  - read books and articles and attend professional development opportunities that discuss race, diversity and whiteness within educational settings

- Create lesson plans that develop critical thinking skills and provide guidance on how to respectfully work inter-culturally with peers.

Research that Matters

In the preface, I quoted Chambers (2004) in the opening lines: "The path with heart is good and the journey along it will be joyful" (p. 5). Her article *"Research That*

Matters: Finding a Path with Heart" describes how the research you choose to embark on should matter. This article helped to affirm the research topic I chose. Teaching in culturally relevant ways is what I want to share in the classes I teach. And, spending the few hours I had with the four young women changed me profoundly. Although I have always tried to get to know my students, I never entered into such in-depth dialogue with them about race, ethnicity, class, culture and sexuality. Having learned so much from these four engaged and courageous women, I am encouraged to change my own teaching practice in the future. And I am grateful that this research process, as my "research as ceremony" allowed me to move from the "ordinary" into the extraordinary, where I believe a raised level of consciousness has been collectively achieved.

My hope for the future is that students work alongside me to co-create meaningful physical education and health opportunities, where everyone feels respected and engaged. For me understanding the landscape in which students lead their lives will allow me to be more caring and open to providing a space where student voices are heard. My commitment is to be an educator that pushes us to see knowledge as a shared path, utilizing the strengths of every individual who participates in the process where learning experiences for students are not limited by their gender, ability, race, ethnicity, sexuality and social class, but rather are celebrated and embraced.

I conclude this study by sharing one last journal entry directed to my students, past, present and future, who inspire me to achieve and strive for more, and to continue to be an advocate for their schooling experiences.

Journal Entry - My words for you (the students)…

You are all not the same.

You are unique, strong, and capable individuals.

You shared your story and what a privilege for me.

Your voice does not get enough credit within our learning spaces.

You do want your voice to be heard.

And, you should have your stories be told within our school walls.

I can't profess to always say or do the right things. But I do promise to be equitable and attentive; to give those who are silenced, who lack belonging, a space to feel noticed, empowered and motivated to be the best you, the healthiest you.

Thank you for showing up each and every day.

Epilogue

In a better place…

You are here.

In a better place.

A place that you only dreamed about.

A place you hoped to be when it felt at its worst.

You are here…

in a better place.

More sure of yourself.

More sure of the voice that you kept hidden for so long.

You are here…

in a better place.

The journey we take is not done alone. The product (this thesis) was a reflection of the process.

To all my relations…

In supporting and lifting me when I couldn't, the strength you provided allowed me to say, "it's okay to be me and to own my truth." In September 2009, I embarked on a journey that I hadn't anticipated lasting over six years. This research study originated entirely as an academic endeavour, meant to quench a thirst for knowledge. I didn't expect in writing this thesis, that I would begin to reveal the real me and become the person I always wanted to be. Exploring the vulnerable aspects of my life truly allowed me to open up my heart and mind to the students that make their way through our school doors each and every day.

Had it not been for the students I teach, and the profession that I love, I would

have stayed a voiceless soul. I wrote "In a better place" to describe coming out of

the darkness and into a light that offers hope, resiliency, courage, compassion

and love.

This journey of learning and growing will never end, and this thesis has reignited and sparked my dedication to my pedagogy to ensure that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, are celebrated for who they are, are reflected in all aspects of our school and curriculum and know that their teachers are committed to providing them an educational experience that is meaningful, relevant and helps them grow into kind, thoughtful, engaged, global and critically aware citizens of this world.

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Appendix A - Facebook Post Invitation

This is the written portion of my Facebook post inviting former students to participate in study.

Attention former Active Healthy Living students!

I am inviting former students who I taught in my Active Healthy Living class to participate in my master's thesis research study about understanding culturally relevant physical education and health from the perspectives of female students from diverse backgrounds.

To be a participant, you need to have taken my Grade 12 Active Healthy Living class, and be a female from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and social identities (related to race/ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality).

Your participation in the study would consist of a 2 hour talking circle, with 4-5 other students, as well as myself, answering and discussing questions related to a culturally relevant physical and health model, and socially constructed terms (race/ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexuality) that impact identity development.

If you are interested in participating or require more information, please email me at umchhin1@cc.umanitoba.ca.

Please share this post or forward this information to any other former students you know that may be interested in this study.

Thank you for your time.

Appendix B - Information and Invitation Letter

Research Project Title: Understanding the Cultural Relevance of Physical Education and Health from the Perspective of Female High School Graduates from Diverse Backgrounds

Principal Investigator and contact information:

Sopear Chhin

Email: umchhin1@cc.umanitoba.ca   Phone: 204-XXX-XXXX

Thesis co-advisors:

Dr. Joannie Halas 204-XXX-XXXX   Dr. LeAnne Petherick 204-XXX-XXXX

DATE:

Dear

Introduction
        I am a graduate student enrolled in the University of Manitoba Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management. I am inviting you to participate in a research project that involves reflection on your past experiences in Physical Education and Health (PEH). I am interested in learning how recently graduated female students from diverse backgrounds (related to race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class) understand culturally relevant PEH.

Purpose of Research
        My research objectives will focus on understanding female student experiences within culturally relevant PEH, which can be defined as a curriculum of meaningful and relevant activities in physical education and health that recognize and affirm the diverse cultural identities of students where teachers act as allies who provide supportive learning climates for all students. You will be asked to share your perspective on your teachers and how they related to students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those who were marginalized on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class. Other questions will seek to develop our understanding of what a supportive learning climate and meaningful and relevant curriculum in PEH might look like for students from diverse backgrounds.

        Regarding questions related to the CRPEH model, example questions for one quadrant (Teacher as Ally) would be:

- Give a specific example of a teacher who made an impression on you as someone who had high expectations for your success.

- How did your teachers contribute to an inclusive learning climate/space?

I am also interested in understanding how female students negotiate their multiple and intersecting identities within PEH settings. I will ask questions to gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and class to gain a deeper understanding as to how these socially constructed categories are experienced, both positively and negatively, within PEH.

I will direct questions related to socially constructed categories (race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class) and how they impact identity development.

Sample questions related to gender would be:

- Do you feel gender impacts your PE experience? If so, in what ways?
- What are some stereotypes of being female in PE and health settings?
- What if you don't fit into the perceived qualities of what it means to be female?

Participation is completely voluntary and there is no obligation on your part to say yes nor are there any penalties if you say no.

How can I participate?

As you know, I work at _____ Collegiate. To be a participant in this study you need to be over 18 years of age, have graduated from the Grade 12 Active Healthy Living class I've taught and be a female student from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and social identities (related to race/ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality).

What am I being asked to do?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and involves reading this document and arranging your availability to meet with other participants in a talking circle, as well as time spent reviewing the transcript, and emergent themes during data analysis.

A talking circle is semi-structured and invites participants to share experiences in conversational style. Talking circles are help to give rise to story. They typically involve food, and give time, voice and ears to everyone's story. This type of method helps in honouring a participant's story and allows participants to share as much of their experiences as they wish.

The talking circle will be recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed verbatim (word for word). You will need 30-45 minutes to review the emergent themes during the data analysis. You can choose to change, or remove any information from the analysis

The results of the analysis will be published in the researcher's master's thesis and could potentially be presented at academic conferences and used in academic journal articles. However, if you choose to use a pseudonym (fake name) to be referred to by, your identity will not be included in any form of dissemination.

As an expression of appreciation for your participation in the study, you will be provided with a ten-dollar gift certificate in recognition of your time and contribution to the research study.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study or stop your participation within the talking circle at any point. Your answers supplied prior to the point of withdrawal will only be used if you provide permission to do so. You can request the audio recording of the talking circle be stopped at any point by verbally indicating your decision. Participants who withdraw from the study can still keep the gift card.

Will anyone know what I said?

Participants will have the right to waive their right to confidentiality, thus allowing their own names to be used and recognized as contributors to this research study. However, for any participants who wish to remain anonymous, they will be asked to choose a pseudonym (a fake name) that will be used throughout the data analysis and reporting of results. Any identifying features will be excluded or changed in the reporting of the results.

Steps to achieve anonymity and confidentiality include:

- Storing data at my home, in a locked cabinet for one year;
- Informed consent documents will be stored separately from transcript data, locked in a filing cabinet at my home;

In February 2016, the audio files, electronic transcription files, hand-written notes, contact information and printed transcripts will be destroyed; audio files will be permanently deleted, the computer storing the transcribed interviews will be reformatted, and the hand-written notes, contact information and printed documents will be shredded. If you would like to receive a copy of the final results, it will be sent to you at the email or mailing address you provide.

The researcher has taken a pledge of confidentiality related to the project and will not discuss your answers with anyone other than her master's thesis supervisors, Dr. Joannie Halas & Dr. LeAnne Petherick, and other members of her thesis committee, Dr. Catherine Casey and Dr. Leisha Strachan. Only the researcher, Sopear Chhin will know your identity; the supervisory committee will only see the pseudonym you select prior to your talking circle with Sopear Chhin. In the thesis, and possible presentations/publications you will be referred to by the pseudonym you chose.

Consenting to Participate

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study my participation will require a talking circle lasting 2 hours, and 30-45 minutes to review the emergent themes. I understand that my interview will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed by the study researcher, Sopear Chhin.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence by informing Sopear Chhin of my decision. I recognize that if I feel uncomfortable with a question I can skip that question and choose to remain in the study or withdraw from the study completely. If I choose to withdraw from the study at any point, I understand any data associated with my participation will be immediately destroyed (electronically deleted and paper shredded) and will not be used in the study.

I understand to further protect my anonymity; I will be asked to read the interview transcript as a method of member checking. I will be sent this transcript by email. This process will allow me the opportunity to change any information, or remove information that I feel would serve to identify me. I understand my name and all identifying features will be kept confidential (unless I choose to waive my right to confidentiality) and will not appear in any written or verbal report, document or presentation that could result from the study.

I understand the data for this project will be destroyed 1 year following the completion of research, which will be February 2016.

If I opt to contact Sopear Chhin about participating in the study, I will review the Informed Consent form fully and state my consent verbally at the time of the talking circle. I will keep this Informed Consent for my records. I know that I will have the opportunity to ask questions about this form before the interview begins.

Risks and Benefits
There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research project. Participants will be asked to voluntarily participate. There are no immediate benefits to the participants in this research project. However, participants may feel a sense of agency and autonomy as they provide insight and direction to dialogue about gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class and identity with their former school with potential contributions to PEH.

Thank you for considering to participate in my research project. If you are interested in the study, please contact me using the information above.

Sincerely,

Sopear Chhin

Appendix C - Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: Understanding the Cultural Relevance of Physical Education and Health from the Perspective of Female High School Graduates from Diverse Backgrounds

Principal Investigator and contact information: Sopear Chhin

Email: umchhin1@cc.umanitoba.ca   Phone: 204-XXX-XXXX

Thesis co-advisors:

Dr. Joannie Halas 204-XXX-XXXX   Dr. LeAnne Petherick 204-XXX-XXXX

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Introduction

        I am a graduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation at the University of Manitoba. I am interested in learning how recently graduated female students from diverse backgrounds understand culturally relevant physical education and health (CRPEH). I would like to do this research project regarding Physical Education and Health (PEH) experiences at _____ Collegiate.

Purpose of Research

        My research objectives will focus on understanding female student experiences within culturally relevant PEH, which can be defined as a curriculum of meaningful and relevant activities in physical education and health that recognize and affirm the diverse cultural identities of students where teachers act as allies who provide supportive learning climates for all students. You will be asked to share your perspective on your teachers and how they related to students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including those who were marginalized on the basis of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class. Other questions will seek to develop our understanding of what a supportive learning climate and meaningful and relevant curriculum in PEH might look like for students from diverse backgrounds.

        Regarding questions related to the CRPEH model, example questions for one quadrant (Teacher as Ally) would be:

- Give a specific example of a teacher who made an impression on you as someone who had high expectations for your success.
- How did your teachers contribute to an inclusive learning climate/space?

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I am also interested in understanding how female students negotiate their multiple and intersecting identities within PEH settings. I will ask questions to gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and class to gain a deeper understanding as to how these socially constructed categories are experienced, both positively and negatively, within PEH.

I will direct questions related to socially constructed categories (race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class) and how they impact identity development.

Sample questions related to gender would be:

- Do you feel gender impacts your PE experience? If so, in what ways?
- What are some stereotypes of being female in PE and health settings?
- What if you don't fit into the perceived qualities of what it means to be female?

Participation is completely voluntary and there is no obligation on your part to say yes nor are there any penalties if you say no.

How can I participate?

As you know, I work at _____ Collegiate. To be a participant in this study you need to be over 18 years of age, have graduated from the Grade 12 Active Healthy Living class I've taught and be a female student from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds and social identities (related to race/ethnicity, social class, gender and sexuality).

What am I being asked to do?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and involves reading this document and arranging your availability to meet with other participants in a talking circle, as well as time spent reviewing the transcript, and emergent themes.

A talking circle is semi-structured and invites participants to share experiences in conversational style. Talking circles are help to give rise to story. They typically involve food, and give time, voice and ears to everyone's story. This type of method helps in honouring a participant's story and allows participants to share as much of their experiences as they wish.

The talking circle will be recorded using a digital voice recorder and later transcribed verbatim (word for word). You will need 30-45 minutes to review the emergent themes during the data analysis. You can choose to change, or remove any information from the analysis.

The results of the analysis will be published in the researcher's master's thesis and could potentially be presented at academic conferences and used in academic journal articles. However, if you choose to use a pseudonym (fake name) to be referred to by, your identity will not be included in any form of dissemination.

As an expression of appreciation for your participation in the study, you will be provided with a ten-dollar gift certificate in recognition of your time and contribution to

the research study.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study or stop your participation within the talking circle at any point. Your answers supplied prior to the point of withdrawal will only be used if you provide permission to do so. You can request the audio recording of the talking circle be stopped at any point by verbally indicating your decision. Participants who withdraw from the study can still keep the gift card.

Will anyone know what I said?

Participants will have the right to waive their right to confidentiality, thus allowing their own names to be used and recognized as contributors to this research study. However, for any participants who wish to remain anonymous, they will be asked to choose a pseudonym (a fake name) that will be used throughout the data analysis and reporting of results. Any identifying features will be excluded or changed in the reporting of the results.

Steps to achieve anonymity and confidentiality include:

- Storing data at my home, in a locked cabinet for one year;
- Informed consent documents will be stored separately from transcript data, locked in a filing cabinet at my home;

In February 2016, the audio files, electronic transcription files, hand-written notes, contact information and printed transcripts will be destroyed; audio files will be permanently deleted, the computer storing the transcribed interviews will be reformatted, and the hand-written notes, contact information and printed documents will be shredded. If you would like to receive a copy of the final results, it will be sent to you at the email or mailing address you provide.

The researcher has taken a pledge of confidentiality related to the project and will not discuss your answers with anyone other than her master's thesis supervisors, Dr. Joannie Halas and Dr. LeAnne Petherick, and other members of her thesis committee, Dr. Catherine Casey and Dr. Leisha Strachan. Only the researcher, Sopear Chhin will know your identity; the supervisory committee will only see the pseudonym you select prior to your talking circle with Sopear Chhin. In the thesis, and possible presentations/publications you will be referred to by the pseudonym you chose.

Consenting to Participate

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study my participation will require a talking circle lasting 2 hours, and 30-45 minutes to review the emergent themes during data analysis. I understand that the talking circle will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed by the study researcher, Sopear Chhin.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or consequence by informing Sopear Chhin of my decision. In choosing to withdraw, I will still be able to keep the gift card. I recognize that if I feel uncomfortable with a question I can skip that question and choose to remain in the study or withdraw from the study completely. If I choose to withdraw from the study at any point, I understand any data associated with my participation will be immediately destroyed (electronically deleted and paper shredded) and will not be used in the study. If I choose to withdraw from the study, I

I understand to further protect my anonymity; I will be asked to read the interview transcript as a method of member checking. I will be sent this transcript by email. This process will allow me the opportunity to change any information, or remove information that I feel would serve to identify me. I understand my name and all identifying features will be kept confidential (unless I choose to waive my right to confidentiality) and will not appear in any written or verbal report, document or presentation that could result from the study.

I understand the data for this project will be destroyed 1 year following the completion of research, which will be February 2016.

If I opt to contact Sopear Chhin about participating in the study, I will review this Informed Consent form fully and state my consent verbally at the time of the talking circle. I will keep this Informed Consent for my records. I know that I will have the opportunity to ask questions about this form before the interview begins.

Risks and Benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research project. Participants will be asked to voluntarily participate. There are no immediate benefits to the participants in this research project. However, participants may feel a sense of agency and autonomy as they provide insight and direction to dialogue about gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class and identity with their former school with potential contributions to PEH.

Signature Section

Researcher: Phone Number: Supervisor: Phone Number:

Sopear Chhin 204-XXX-XXXX   Dr. Joannie Halas 204-XXX-XXXX

                                                    Dr. LeAnne Petherick 204-XXX-XXXX

Acceptance of the Conditions and Consent

My name is: _____

My address is: _____

My telephone is: _____

My E-mail address is: _____

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122 or email: Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Date

Request to Receive a Summary Report of the Findings

You have the choice to receive a summary of findings.

Please indicate your preferred method of receiving the summary of findings.

_____ Yes, I would like to receive a copy of the summary of findings.

_____ No, I would not like to receive a copy of the summary of findings.

Email address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

If at any time you have questions about the research, please contact the Principal Investigator:

Sopear Chhin, Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management (MSc. Degree Program)

Tel: 204-XXX-XXXX Email: umchhin1@cc.umanitoba.ca

Appendix D - School Board Request Letter

Assistant Superintendent: _____School Division

Dear Assistant Superintendent,

Introduction
My name is Sopear Chhin, I am a graduate student enrolled in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation at the University of Manitoba. I am also a teach physical education at _____ Collegiate. I am interested in learning how recently graduated female students from diverse backgrounds understand culturally relevant physical education and health (CRPEH). I would like to do this research project regarding Physical Education and Health (PEH) experiences at _____ Collegiate.

Purpose of Research
Using Halas' CRPEH model, I am asking questions related to the four quadrants of the model: teacher as ally, student cultural landscapes, learning climate and meaningful and relevant curricula. As well I want to understand how socially constructed categories (race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class) impact identity development. My research aims to understand female student experiences within CRPEH, as well as how female students negotiate multiple and intersecting identities within those settings.

The commitment in this project will consist of a talking circle with four to six recently graduated female students from _____ Collegiate.

Research Procedures
After written consent, the data collection will start with a 2 hour talking circle involving all the participants. This will take place at _____ Collegiate.

A talking circle is semi-structured and invites participants to share experiences in conversational style. Talking circles are help to give rise to story. They typically involve food, and give time, voice and ears to everyone's story. This type of method helps in honouring a participant's story and allows participants to share as much of their experiences as they wish.

The talking circle will be audio-recorded for later transcription. Once I have had opportunity to review the transcription of the talking circle, I will give participants a copy of the transcript to review and share my analysis of the topics discussed in the talking circle. They will have an opportunity to verify, clarify and add to the findings that I have described.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the study or stop participation within the talking circle at any point. Answers supplied prior

to the point of withdrawal will only be used if permission is given to do so. Participants can request the audio recording of the talking circle be stopped at any point by verbally indicating their decision. Participants who withdraw from the study can still keep the gift card.

Participants will be provided with a ten-dollar gift certificate in recognition of their time and contribution to the research study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity
All participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement prior to the start of the talking circle, unless they waive their right to confidentiality – thus having their name associated with the research study.

As mentioned, the talking circle will be recorded using an audio-recording device. Completed audio transcripts will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet, in my office, to which only I will have access. Informed consents will be kept separate from transcribed data, in a locked filing cabinet in my home. All data will be destroyed, along with any field notes, one year after the completion of the study (February 2016). As a means to protect confidentiality, all names and identifying criteria will be replaced with pseudonyms during the data analysis and reporting of final results.

Dissemination of Findings
The information collected and analyzed will be used in a master's thesis and may be reported in academic and professional journals and/or presentations.

Risks and Benefits
There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research project. Participants will be asked to voluntarily participate. There are no immediate benefits to the participants in this research project. However, participants may feel a sense of agency and autonomy as they provide insight and direction to dialogue about gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class and identity with their former school with potential contributions to PEH.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122 or email: Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca.

I am seeking permission from the School Division to proceed with this research on school grounds and am happy to reply to any questions, suggestions or comments.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Sopear Chhin   Phone: 204-XXX-XXXX

Dr. Joannie Halas, Advisor   Phone: 204-XXX-XXXX
joannie.halas@umanitoba.ca

Dr. LeAnne Petherick, Advisor   Phone: 204-XXX-XXXX
leanne.petherick@umanitoba.ca

Appendix E - Confidentiality Statement

Confidentiality Statement

I, _____ (first and last name), will promise to keep all identities of participants confidential; that is I will not share this knowledge with other students, co-workers, etc. I also will not share who has been recruited or asked to participate in this study.

_____ Signature _____ Date

_____ Researcher Signature _____ Date

Appendix F – Counseling Supports

<u>Klinic – Drop-In Counseling Program</u>

Central/Downtown location
545 Broadway, R3C 0W3
(Klinic on Broadway)
Mondays & Wednesdays Noon – 7:00 p.m.
Tuesdays, Fridays & Saturdays Noon – 4:00 p.m.

Transcona/River East/Elmwood location
845 Regent Avenue West, R2C 3A9
(Access Transcona)
One block west of Plessis Road
Tuesdays Noon – 7:00 p.m.

Times subject to change. It is recommended to arrive a minimum of two hours prior to closing time. Please call the Drop-In Line, (204) 784-4067, for current times and site closures or e-mail us at: dropin@klinic.mb.ca.

Appendix G –Talking Circle Protocol

The talking circle will involve all participants. It will be in-depth and semi-structured and last two hours in duration. The talking circle will take place at _____ Collegiate. The talking circle will be audio-recorded and later transcribed.

To be read to participants at the start of the talking circle.

At any time during the talking circle, there is always an option to pass on any question. Every voice here is valuable and welcomed within the circle.

We will first go around the circle and introduce ourselves. We will start with questions related to your multiple and intersecting identities (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class). I will then ask general questions about PEH. From there specific questions related to the CRPEH model (teacher as ally, student cultural landscapes, learning climate, meaningful and relevant curriculum) will asked for to gain more understanding of your experiences in PEH settings.

Note: With regards to the following section, I will use the terms provided in Appendix H

from which to draw a working definition of each social category.

Identity Questions (as related to Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Class, Sexuality)

From your perspective,

- o How would you describe yourself?

- o What social aspects make up your identity?

- o In your PE classes, did you ever talk about issues related to race, ethnicity,

  gender, sexuality and class?

- o How does one discover/uncover/negotiate/navigate their identities?

- o Did you see situations of inequality/power/privilege in your PE and health class

  settings? What do they look like?

- o What does it mean to be a _____ female in school? In the community?

  In PE class?

o Is it important to talk about identity? Why or why not?

Gender

From your perspective,

o What does being female mean to you in school?

o What does it mean with respect to PE and health settings?

o Do you feel gender impacts your PE experience? If so, in what ways?

o Do you feel your PE experiences have changed over the last 4 years?

o Is it important to have female role models in PE settings? Why or why not?

o What are some stereotypes of being female in PE and health settings?

o What if you don't fit into the perceived qualities of what it means to be female?

o Is it different to be a racialized minority female versus a white female? What about gay versus straight?

Race/Ethnicity

From your perspective,

o What is your racial/ethnic identity? Preface with a definition for students)

o What is it like to be _____? Tell me the positives and the negatives?

    o Have you ever experienced positive or negative discrimination based on how others have interpreted your race?

o How has race/ethnicity impacted your PE experiences?

o How does race/ethnicity matter in PE and health settings?

o How would you describe your teachers? In your experience, is it important that teachers are a reflection of the student population? Why or why not?

o Do you feel your racial/ethnic identity is visible in the PE curriculum?

- o Should it be visible in the curriculum? Why or why not?

Sexuality

From your perspective,

- o Do you discuss sexual orientation in your PE and health classes?

- o Have you ever felt discriminated or harassed because of your perceived sexual orientation?

- o Have you witnessed discrimination based on sexual orientation at school?

- o Has your sexuality impacted your physical education experiences?

- o What is the climate at your school of the diversity in sexual identities in school?

- o Do you feel uncomfortable around your peers who are gay, lesbian, trans or bisexual in class? If yes why, if no why not?

- o It is important to be public about your sexual orientation in school settings?

Class

From your perspective,

- o Does where you grew up matter at school? Why or why not?

- o Does what your parents do for a living matter? Why or why not?

- o Have you seen discrimination occur in PE and health settings based on what someone wore or what they have or don't have access to in terms of personal or family resources?

- o Do you recognize and notice students who have more privilege in school? What types of privileges are there?

General Questions

From your perspective,

- What did you like about physical education?

- What didn't you like about physical education?

- How can you be successful in PE and health settings? Please respond from the perspective of yourself and the perspective of your teacher.

- What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

- Is there something that was missing from your PE experience that could make it better?

- Is building relationships important in PE and health settings? Why or why not?

- Did you safe feel participating in PE/Health activities? In what ways made you feel safe? Or not.

- What advice do you have for teachers to help them motivate/engage female students in particular to succeed and flourish in PE and health settings?

Note: With regards to the following four quadrants of the CRPEH model, I will use the terms provided in Appendix H from which to draw a working definition of each quadrant.

<u>Teacher as Ally</u>

From your perspective,

- Can you think of a time a teacher acted as an ally for a student who young people see as marginalized?

- Give a specific example of a teacher who made an impression on you as someone who had high expectations for your success.

- How did your teachers contribute to an inclusive learning climate/space?

- Who were the marginalized students in class? How did their teachers relate to them?

Student Cultural Landscapes

From your perspective,

- o Describe yourself.

- o What identity most describes you?

- o What is identity? (Who you are continually changes; it's fluid, never static…)

  - o What areas of your life help you describe your identity?

- o Do educators have an impact on how students negotiate/navigate their identities? And, if so, how do they impact student identity development?

- o Do you notice gender issues in PE? What was happening?

  - o Did it impact you?

- o Give an example of how race, gender, sexuality or class impacted your PE experiences.

- o Do you see discrimination in your PE and health class settings? If so, what types do you see?

- o Tell me a story about a time when you felt your cultural landscapes were acknowledged and affirmed in PEH settings? When they weren't.

- o What is your perception of an average day for a female high school student?

  - o What if they are gay? Not skilled? Poor? Wealthy? Racialized minority?

  - o What if they are gay and wealthy or gay and not skilled?

Supportive Learning Climate

From your perspective,

- o How was the learning climate in PE? Positive or negative? Can you share?

- o Did you feel safe participating in PE/Health activities?

- How do you create inclusive learning climates in PE and health settings?

    - What responsibility is it for students? For teachers?

- How does a teacher build a supportive learning climate that is respectful of each student's cultural landscapes?

- How does a student build a supportive learning climate that is respectful of each student's cultural landscapes?

- Tell me a story about a time when you felt really supported by your teachers or classmates.

- Did you notice social inequities in class? (related to race, gender, sexuality or class)

- Do the supportive learning environments include students who are different equally? Or equitably?

Curriculum

From your perspective,

- How would you describe the relevance of what you learn about in class?

- What health issues do you discuss that are relevant to your life?

- What got you excited to come to the gym?

- How can teachers make lessons more meaningful and relevant for students?

- What opportunities were there to explore your interests?

- What's missing from the curriculum that would make PE and health relevant and meaningful for students?

Appendix H - Terms for Interview Protocol

Identity terms

Gender

Gender is classifying people as masculine and/or feminine, or neither. As compared to sex, which is an externally assigned classification, gender is related to societal appearance, mannerisms, and roles; one's internal sense of being man, woman, or another gender entirely. A person's gender may not correspond to a person's sex assigned at birth. For example, the term cisgender refers to a person whose gender and birth-assigned sex match. Someone who is transgender does not identify fully, or in part with the gender connected to their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is internal, and not always visible to others (Terms and concepts 2014).

Race/Ethnicity

Henry and Tator (2002), define race as a socially constructed category that uses common ancestry and physical characteristics such as colour of skin, hair texture, stature, and facial characteristics to classify humans.

James (2010) refers to ethnicity as groupings of people who have common historical, cultural and ancestral origin, and are identified as or identify themselves as belonging to these groups of people.

Sexuality

Sexuality is a personal characteristic that covers a range of human sexuality of emotional/romantic and physical attraction felt by an individual towards members of the

same sex, the other sex or either sex. The feelings of attraction to another person is based on biological sex and gender expression. For example, individuals may be categorized as:

- heterosexual (attracted to the opposite sex)

- homosexual (attracted to the same sex – e.g. lesbian or gay)

- bisexual (attracted to individuals irrespective of their sex)

- asexual (a person who does not experience sexual attraction or who has little or no interest in sexual activity) (Terms and concepts. (2014, September 13). Retrieved from mygsa.ca.)

Class

James (2010) uses the term social stratification to describe a hierarchical system where parts of the population are ranked based on power and access to wealth. Wealth is determined by a number of factors such as property, income, education and occupation.

CRPEH Model

Teacher as Ally

CR teachers are allies who work in support of his/her students, particularly those who are marginalized in some way or other. Ally teachers also have high expectations for student success and affirm the cultural identities of students.

Student Cultural Landscapes

CR teachers understand their student's day-to-day cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes mean knowing students in relation to the larger world across various axes of difference (gender, sexuality, race, class) and knowing yourself in relation to your students. For students, it means how your day unfolds and is impacted by different aspects of your cultural identity.

Supportive Learning Climate

CR teachers create a supportive learning climate where the power relations of the teacher-student relationship are shifted, and students are encouraged to provide input to their learning experiences while contributing to the learning of themselves and others.

Curriculum

CR teachers create meaningful and relevant curricula for students.