Working towards inclusive physical education in a primary school: 'some days I just don't get it right'

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Background

In Aotearoa New Zealand, as it is internationally, there is a desire to ensure physical education is inclusive of all students regardless of their abilities. Yet medical discourses associated with disability continue to position students who are perceived as not having the capacity to participate fully in traditional physical education programmes as the teacher's 'helper', 'helped' or 'helpless'. As a result, these students may have negative experiences of physical education and this can impact on future involvement in movement-related activities within school and community settings.

Methodology

Drawing on the data from a larger critical participatory action research project we explore how one primary school teacher, Joel, attempted to work more inclusively within physical education. Specifically, we draw from personal journaling, student work and records of dialogical conversations to shed light on Joel's experiences.

Conclusion

Joel's experience demonstrates there is not one singular solution to inclusion within physical education and it is a combination of actions that support this process. In Joel's case this included becoming a reflexing practitioner, getting to know his students, being respective to difference in positive ways rather than seeing this as limiting, working imaginatively to reconsider what constitutes learning in physical education, and sharing ownership for curriculum design and learning with his students. Working in this way illustrates how a multi-layered approach can make a difference to how all the students in a class experience inclusion, including students positioned as disabled.

Keywords: inclusive physical education, young disabled people, primary school teachers

Practitioner Summary: As teachers of physical education in primary schools it is challenging to meet the needs of all students, especially when mainstreaming has resulted in the inclusion of more students with disabilities in classes. In this paper, we share the experience of a generalist primary school teacher whose re-imagined physical education programme and pedagogical choices made for a more inclusive learning

environment. In doing so he challenged himself to avoid positioning a student with restricted movement abilities as the helper, needing help, or being helpless. Joel's practice highlights how a multi-layered approach can make a difference to how all the students in physical education experience inclusion, including students positioned as disabled.

Introduction

> In my class in the past, students who had various physical challenges with the learning and activities that are part of Physical Education (PE), have either sat out of the session (helpless), been supported 'one-on-one' by a teacher aid and isolated from the class (helped), or given a role where they are teacher 'helper'. I believe these and previous experiences have taught these students that they can't really be involved PE, and as a result they had become switched off, despondent, and learnt a raft of excuses for why they couldn't participate. The 'choices' I was making, was me taking the easy option and not addressing the learning needs of the physically disabled students in my class. This outlook would not be appropriate in any other learning area, yet in PE I was allowing this to happen. It made me wonder, why is it so easy to fall into putting them in the role of the 'helped', 'helper' or the 'helpless' in PE, and what can I do to do a better job of providing more inclusive learning opportunities for all my students.

Joel, a primary school teacher, crafted this vignette during a two-year collaborative research project involving university partners and primary school teachers. This wider research sought to develop a situated conception of the multifaceted factors shaping teachers' curriculum and pedagogical work and student learning in Health and Physical Education (HPE[1]), as a basis for reimagining HPE in primary schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. This paper reports on one dimension of this research that supported teachers and students to broaden their understandings of what it is to be physically active within physical education (PE). For Joel, exploring ideas of being physically active was seen as an important constituent that would contribute to new understandings and practice around inclusion within PE.

This paper begins by considering how inclusion has been understood within the context of PE, which highlights that inclusion is contested and understood in different ways. Within PE it is interesting to note that inclusion has been discussed conceptually and a range of practical models have also been developed to support PE teachers. With the exception of

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[1] Health and Physical Education is one of eight learning areas outlined in *The New Zealand Curriuclum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). Health and Physical Education are presented as seperate subjects that have a shared philosophy and achievement objectives.

recent research from Overton, Wrench, and Garrett (2017) there are limited insights examining how inclusion is been worked towards in primary school PE settings, where generalist teachers are responsible for PE. Therefore, we offer an account of how one primary teacher attempted to reimagine (inclusive) PE, and in doing so shed light on how the idea of inclusion is been grappled with in the practice of primary school PE. Amongst other things it is evident from Joel's journaling that he had an appetite to embrace innovation and in doing this recognised the important role students could play within this process.

Based on Joel's experiences we highlight some qualities that point to an inclusive PE pedagogue. In concluding, we argue that adopting more inclusive approaches to pedagogy is not enough, and instead it is necessary to do this alongside reframing what constitutes the focus and content of the school PE. This endeavour is strengthened when teachers and their students work in partnership to co-construct curriculum. Next, we consider how inclusion is understood within PE and the implications of these understandings for disabled students.

The 'semantic chameleon': Inclusion and physical education

Inclusion is a contested concept and continues to stimulate much debate in policy and practice (Overton, Wrench and Garrett 2017). Indeed, Liasidou (2012, 5) believes inclusion is best described as a "semantic chameleon" on account of the multiple meanings associated to the term, depending upon whom, where and when inclusion is considered. At a philosophical level, inclusive education was initially conceived in order to ensure that all children, regardless of their abilities, were educated in the same environment, where they are supported, have their unique learning needs met, and feel a sense of belonging (Ballard 1996; Stainback, Stainback, and Ayres 1996). More recently, the focus of inclusive education has broadened toward viewing inclusion as a social justice process that embraces an outlook akin to the social model of disability. This moves inclusive education beyond the sense of simply

integrating students with special education needs and disabilities into 'mainstreamed' settings (Brown 2016; Liasidou 2012). Instead, it asks that school communities adopt a more nuanced approach that supports reforms, which enable all young people to access education and social opportunities in schools (Mittler 2005). As part of this process some have argued that inclusive education should promote participation by young people through involvement and choice rather than merely positioning them as passive receipts (Florian 2005).

While in Aotearoa New Zealand, and internationally, policy rhetoric has acknowledged the importance of working towards inclusion, the realities of translating these inclusive aspirations into schools, classroom, and HPE, has not been straightforward (Kearney and Kane 2006; Morrison 2012, 2009). Realising the benefits of inclusive education in schools can be challenging when some practitioners value existing practices and do not believe there is a need to change. Relatedly, deficit discourses of disability circulate and this can limit the possibilities for working towards inclusion. This is particularly apparent when disability continues to be defined through medical discourses as "a problem caused by disease, impairment, trauma or other health conditions" (Mauerberg - deCastro et al. 2017, 246). As Barton (2009) points out "the language we use to describe and think about disability will influence our expectations and interactions with them" (85). For young disabled students, and others who are not deemed to possess the requisite 'ability' as it has been traditionally defined, this can result in them being positioned as inferior by others such as senior leaders, curriculum 'specialists' and/or syndicate leaders who determine the focus of the PE programme (Petrie, et al 2007; Gordon et al. 2016). Here there is little scope for the voice of students or for teachers who may imagine genuinely inclusive programmes to contribute to these developments.

MacArthur and Rutherford (2016) also point to how government policy can serve as a conduit that reinforces the position of disabled students as problematic. They are particularly

critical of the *Success for All* (Ministry of Education 2010) framework and argue that it does little to

> "disavow disablist assumptions that 'special needs students' (homogenised as a group distinct from 'normal' students) are problematic, require extra resources and time, have limited/fixed ability, and may disrupt other students' learning through challenging behaviour and additional demands on teachers' time" (MacArthur and Rutherford 2016, 160).

More specifically within schools this kind of discourse of disability also continues to circulate and impact on the pedagogical decisions of classroom teachers. Of course, PE also has particular kinds of cultural-discursive arrangements (Kemmis et al. 2014) that can hinder the scope for people of varied abilities to be included, feel valued as learners and have their learning needs meet. For example, when PE is framed as competitive sport and games (rugby, cricket, cross-country, swimming, netball, dodgeball, etc.) and these activities are not adapted this can negatively impact on the experiences of learners, including young disabled people (Fitzgerald and Kirk 2009; Fitzgerald 2012). Here we are not suggesting competitive sport and games are always exclusionary. However, they can be for some young people if adaptations are not incorporated into lessons. Some teachers though may not be confident or feel sufficiently experienced or skilled to modify activities or their teaching style (Tant and Watelain 2016). More broadly, a number of scholars including Kirk (2010) been suggested that PE teachers are resistant to change. We also believe this outlook can stifle the willingness of practitioners to adapt or rethink the nature of the curriculum so it is more inclusive (Kirk, 2010). Moreover, some PE teachers continue to value particular kinds of activities and abilities in PE. This can be reflected through the choices and decisions made about the activities included within a school curriculum. As already noted, this often features activities framed around competitive sport and games. With the valuing of particular activities teachers also make judgments about the abilities of their learners engaging in these

activities. Evans (2004) believes assumptions about ability are essentially objectified and limited to measures associated with fitness, talent and performance. He goes on to argue that a consequence of this view of ability is that inequities are perpetuated in PE. For example, those who do not match up to performance ideals are considered to lack ability and some disabled students can be positioned in this way (Fitzgerald and Hay 2015).

Whilst there are challenges to working towards inclusion in PE it should be acknowledged that considerable attention has been given to pedagogy and practice in terms of the development and use of a range of practical models to support practitioners. For example, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes internationally have been developed that draw on *STEPS*: Space, Task, Equipment, People, Speed (Youth Sport Trust 1996) and the *Inclusion Spectrum* (Black and Stevenson 2011; Stevenson 2009). These go some way towards providing pragmatic strategies that teachers can draw from in order to better support students with differing abilities. However, these approaches are couched in the language of difference and adaption and it could be argued, do little to challenge teachers to move beyond superficial modifications and question what it means to be inclusive within PE. As Fitzgerald (2012, 446) put it, "Does modifying or tinkering around with sport-based skills and the composition of the groups receiving instruction, equate to inclusive practice?" In an attempt to consider inclusion more broadly, and in a manner that extends beyond mere delivery, Vickerman (2007, 98) proposes the 'Eight P' framework.

Table 1: The 'eight P' Inclusive PE Framework

Philosophy	Understand clearly what the principles, concepts and contexts of inclusion stand for and their relationship to children with SEN in PE
Purpose	What are the rationales behind strategies for including children with SEN in PE and how their entitlement and accessibility can be created

Proactive	Being ready to identify challenges and solution to issues and problems you may face within a context of taking flexible approaches and a desire to be innovative and creative with your practice
Partnership	Recognising that inclusion needs to take place within a context of consultation and negotiation as part of a holistic approach to PE and children with SEN
Process	Recognising that inclusion takes time and you may not get it right the first time, but being prepared to try out new strategies and learn from the experience of diversity of styles and experiences
Policy	Recognising that having institutional policies on equality of opportunity and inclusion in PE will demonstrate a commitment to and support for the principles of entitlement and accessibility. The key, however, to any policy on inclusion is the impact it has in making a difference, whether that is strategically or at a practical level
Pedagogy	Recognising that in any inclusive process the key aspect of most significance is the teaching, learning and assessment activity that takes place with the teacher and child with SEN. As part of the process teachers need to adopt flexible approaches, have high expectations and be prepared to modify and adapt their pedagogical practice
Practice	If individual stakeholders take note and discuss, reflect and debate on all the points above it offers the best chance of you making a difference to children with SEN in working towards ensuring they gain successful PE experiences

Vickerman believes this framework offers a holistic approach to thinking about inclusion by accounting for the different layers contributing to the process of inclusion in PE. That is, inclusion cannot be solved solely through the development of policy, such as *Success for All* (Ministry of Education 2010)*,* nor can it be achieved when individual teachers adapt their practice. We recognise that both of these developments are positive but also believe they are less likely to be effective in isolation. Having outlined how inclusion has been, and continues to be, understood within PE we next discuss the methodology underpinning this study.

Methodology

The initial research that informed this paper was made possible as a result of the New Zealand Teaching Learning Research Initiative funded project, a fund designed to enhance links between educational research and teaching practices to improve outcomes for learners. The two-year project (Petrie et al. 2013) provided, time and funding for university partners and teachers to work collaboratively in a practitioner action research process, and was given

approval to proceed by the Univeristy of Waikato Ethics Committee. One aspect of the research was to explore school, teacher and student practices, and the public/professional/personal discourses that shape pedagogical decision-making in PE. This paper, drawn from the broader research project, focuses attention on the process that supported Joel (a primary school teacher) in changing programming and pedagogy to better cater to the diverse needs of a typical mainstream primary school class, including a student positioned as disabled. By support we are referring to the collaborative endeavours engaged in between Joel and university-based researchers. This support was initiated in year one of the project where the project team engaged in an environment audit to determine the current state of two schools HPE programmes and children's knowledges of health, wellbeing, and PE (Petrie et al. 2013). In year two the support became more specific to indiviudal teachers and their particular school setting. In the case of Joel, this support included Kirsten (a university-based researcher) working in Joel's class one morning a week in a teacher aid/researcher role. In addition, Kirsten had weekly meetings with Joel and these provided time for Joel to share his reflections and ideas in relation to forward planning. The focus of these disucssions was driven by Joel and in this way Kirsten acted as a critical friend. It is worth noting that Hayley was not directly involved in the delivery of this school project or the data collection. Instead Hayley became invovled in the later stages of the project when the focus had turned more explicitly to analysis.

This research was situated in a primary school located in an ethnically diverse suburb. It is a large inner-city primary school catering for 670 children in Years 1 to 6, based in 24 classes including three bi-lingual (Māori/English) classes, each taught by a classroom generalist. There are between 12-18 teacher assistants working in the school at any given time, however, this number varies dependent on the funding the school is allocated by the Ministry of Education, and what they have available from their operations budget. Funding

for teacher assistants is determined on a case-by-case basis as "the funding is a finite resource and allocated to students verified on the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) or for School High Health Needs Fund (SHHNF) according to individual needs" (Ministry of Education 2017). If a verified student leaves the school then the funding cesses and the teacher aid assigned to that student will mostly likely no longer have a position at the school.

In this paper, we focus specifically on Joel's class, which was a composite class of Year 5/6[2] primary school students (in both years of the research project); the students in his class (some of whom changed between the two years). Across both years, Joel's class was representative of a typical Year 5/6 class in a New Zealand school, and according to Joel included students across the range of academic abilities, some of whom had serious behavioural issues (for which they were medicated), others who lacked confidence broadly and as movers, and others who viewed themselves as capable movers. During the period of the study Joel had a teacher aid (Kate[3]) specifically assigned to his class to provide learning support for Hamish, a student verified (by the Ministry of Education) as having special educational needs associated with a motor neuron condition.

In line with the tenets of a practitioner inquiry methodologies, systematic and intentional data collection methods were employed (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993). Most data collection occurring as part of the classroom programme, and was undertaken as university partners and teachers worked collaboratively. With the exception of initial interviews with both teachers and students carried out by the university partners, data were collected as teachers went about their daily work, and university partners were in school each week. Data collected took the form of: school documents; journaling (teachers, students, and

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[2] Year 5/6 is the final two years of primary school in Aotearoa New Zealand. Students ages range between approximate 9 and 11 years old.
[3] Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the students and all other particiapnts, with the exception of the authors who are indeitfiaable from other publicaitons.

university partners); class blogs; student work; resources; professional development materials and advertising materials provided to the school; and team meeting transcripts and emails that have been on-going through-out the research. Within the paper we specifically draw on the Joel's personal journaling and the documentation of students work.

Analysis of data was cyclical, on-going, occurred collaboratively, privately and across both informal and formal sites. Analytic activity did not simply happen in relation to 'data' collected, nor at specific times in the project, rather, our analytical work took the form of oral inquiry and dialogical conversations (Cochran-Smith and Lytle 1993). For example, Joel and Kirsten meet weekly during school visits and set aside time to discuss what we were observing, noting, and reflecting. In addition, the collective research team gathered every two months for two-day retreats where we could discuss, debate, analysis and extend our collective understandings of the data we were gathering across sites. Within this, analysis of the varied data sources was primarily oral and constructed as the members of the research group collectively and actively engaged in dialogue. The systematic and intentional data collection and on-going interaction of the research team with the data allowed for accounts of student and teacher learning that were multi-layered (Cochran-Smith and Donnell 2006).

A teacher's account: Reimagining PE in my class

As part of the broader research project we had collectively identified the dominance of a sport and games approach to PE in Joel's school. This approach did not align with the intent of HPE in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), or meet the needs of all learners at the school. The research team were particularly concerned with student's narrow concepts of what it meant to be physically active, and how those students who were not deemed by others or themselves as physically less competent, felt anxious about engaging in physical activities as part of the school programme. For the teachers, including Joel, the

second year of the project provided the opportunity to do PE differently, and in doing so promote learning opportunities articulated within *The New Zealand Curriculum.* This included challenging students to see the possibilities to be movers and active more widely, and meeting the needs and desires of all the learners in their respective class.

In the following sections, we draw from Joel's personal journaling and evidence from student work to describe the process adopted in beginning to reimagine what and how PE in his Year 5/6 class looked like, and how this would contribute to extending students' understandings of what constituted 'being active'. This is not a moment by moment account of each lesson, but instead provides an illustrative example of the reimagining of PE across one year. We use this example to explore how changing the focus of the class PE alongside adopting a range of inclusive pedagogies, challenged both Joel and his students to co-construct PE as a more inclusive learning experience. It should be noted that as a classroom generalist teacher, Joel was able to utilise classroom time as well as dedicated PE time in his endeavours to reimagine PE, and in doing so was able to explore the possibilities for integrating PE into other learning areas. In undertaking this collaboration, it was important to avoid providing students with predetermined 'correct' answers, and so in order to broaden understandings a guided discovery approach (Mosston and Ashworth 2002) was drawn on as part of a process of co-construction. As already discussed, and in a similar manner, Kirsten took a supportive role as teacher aid/researcher. In this way Kirsten engaged in open dialogue with Joel about working towards inclusion. In taking this collaborative approach it should be noted that we did not explicitly offer any specific models or frameworks associated with inclusion to Joel, such as the eight Ps, STEP and the Inclusion Spectrum, outlined earlier. Instead, we wanted inclusion to evolve in a way that spoke to Joel's (and the school's) needs rather than them feeling constrained by a framework we had imposed. That said we do use the eight Ps later in this paper to help guide our discussions about Joel's reflective accounts.

What is offered next is Joel's reimagining's of PE. These reflections were at times his alone, or informed by co conversations with Kirsten, the broader research team, Kate the teacher aid, and his colleagues. What is represented here is Joel's account of his learning and practice, and are descriptive in nature to provide the reader, including teachers in schools, with the opportunity to understand the process and thinking. In no way are these the full extent of Joel's reflective notes or documentation of planning, but instead a reflective account of the major developments in a teaching programmes, that have been co-constructed with Kirsten and Hayley.

Opening the inquiry - What does it mean to be active?

Having worked through a process of examining how PE was presented in my class and school as part of the broader research and recognising the narrowness of my previous approach I, Joel, undertook to do PE in a way that better meet the needs of all my students. To do this, we initially focused on what they understood 'being active' meant. I had planned questions that would get students thinking, and used a range of pedagogical tools (e.g. mind maps) that gave them the opportunity to record their thoughts and feelings. There responses all reflected a sport, fitness, and structured activity focus, which confirmed the narrow views that my class, like the others in the broader project, had.

To challenge perceptions and broaden understandings I used graphic organisers that asked my students to consider: What does being active look and feel like for you and others; How are different individuals/groups active - babies, themselves and the elderly; and how they are active in different places and times – at the beach, at home, on the weekend, with friends and with family. Students responses included: hunting, fishing and tramping[4] with Dad and uncles, riding skateboards, scooters, and bicycles with friends, dancing and playing

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[4] Tramping is a New Zealand term for activities inclusive of rambling, hill walking or bushwalking.

hide and seek. Included in their responses were: walking my dog; bouncing on the trampoline or babies in their jolly jumpers; dancing and aerobics; playing with toys; building things (sandcastles, tree houses and real houses if you are an adult), boggie boarding, climbing trees, stretching, playing games (tag, hide and seek, go home stay home, frisbee), swimming, cooking (a physical activity Hamish could do when his motor neuron condition inhibited his movements); kicking balls; playing on the playground; hunting, fishing and tramping (with fathers and uncles); play 'war' games (nerf guns, water fights, laser tag), doing sport (cricket, hockey, golf, soccer, and rugby); bowling (tenpin, bocce, lawn bowls); riding rip-sticks, scooters, and skateboards; and work that involved physical activity (painting the house, gardening, paper rounds).

To extend thinking further, students developed collages in response the question 'how are different people active'. This confirmed the wide scope of what being active looked like for all members of our community. Images included, for example, elder people out in scooters, children at play and involved in sports, para-athletes playing tennis and wheelchair basketball, sports stars, and babies crawling.

Enjoying being active

Having identified the range of ways people are active, I then prompted them to think and note down the different activities that they really enjoy. Several students expressed that they didn't like some of the more traditional activities (such as running or T-ball) but had other activities that they enjoyed (e.g. fishing, dancing, singing, crawling, playing shuffleboard, surfing, Laser Tag). This generated some discussion and sharing amongst the class as they realised there are many ways that people can be active, rather than the traditional mind-set that sports and running is the sum total of being active, and that their 'friends' do a really wide range of stuff. This process also supported Hamish to recognise that he could be active in a range of

ways, such as cooking, quad-biking, fishing, and swimming. The process of sharing their lists with their peers, further extended the collective understanding of the many ways and reasons that people are active. At the same time the personalisation of the pleasure they each found in different activities helped the class realise that no one physical activity is more important than another. It appeared to helped them to realise that they could all be active in different ways and that just because they weren't good at 'sports and running' this didn't mean they were inactive.

Having looked at how different people were being active at different life stages (babies, themselves, families, and the elderly), they were also starting to recognise that as life changes then there are time when we are more active and others, or the nature of the activities changes. This was useful in supporting Hamish to recognise that, just like him, the nature of activity varies for everyone for a range of reasons.

What skills do I need to be a participant – now and in the future?

Using the list they had already generated, about what they enjoyed and wanted to do, we explored what different skills these activities involved. The students immediately listed a whole range of movement skills such as jumping, kicking, and throwing. However, I wanted them to realise that participating and being active is more than just about being physically able and that to be a good participant you also need to have good interpersonal skills and can think strategically. To this end we discussed what thinking, people and movement (TPM) skills were important to be able to participate in the different physical activities they had listed. While I have since come to understand how TPM has some parallels with Whitehead's (2010) conception of physical literacy, at the time I developed the notion of TPM simply as a pedagogical tool to extend student thinking. Using TPM helped students recognise that to participate and find enjoyment in physical activities individuals needed to develop more than

their physical or fundamental movement skills. Of equal importance would be the development of tactical or strategic understandings (thinking skills) and interpersonal skills (people skills).

I encouraged the students to focus on their own list of enjoyable activities and consider what TPM skills were necessary to participate in all the activities they currently engaged in. I thought, maybe I hoped, that by doing it this way they would start to see how TPM skills cross over into many different activities, and that it's not about being able to play a specific sport, but having transferrable skills to that would allow them to participate in a range of activities. As they shared with each other they were able to make connections with familiar skills, for example students who recognised that bowling, cricket, and fishing all were linked to including principles relating to aiming and being accurate.

As a class, we then considered what skills we needed to develop that would make us better participants in the widest range of activities and were most important TPM skills for the class to be focusing on. Using a simple statistics/count and graphing task we recorded what of our TPM skills were listed most commonly for all the activities we had written down. The top ten were: Vision (T), Communication (P), Aiming (T), Accuracy (T), Honesty (P), Balance (M), Strategy (T), Cooperation (P), Dodging (M), and Defence (T). Given the narrow focus on movement skills in the earlier task it was surprising that students had identified people (P) and thinking (T) skills more commonly than movement (M) skills. Collectively the class determined which we would focus on for the first half of the year, agreeing that we would endeavour to cover them all as the year progressed. It is important to acknowledge that while the class had determined it was best we start with aiming, accuracy, and balance, I had 'selfishly' guided them to begin with aiming and accuracy before tackling balance, as I could much more clearly see how I could make this work in a way that was more inclusive for Hamish.

A co-constructed 'practical' PE curriculum

What was astonishing for me was that the classroom-based process that we worked through created a shift in what my students thought we should be doing in PE time (noting they had not considered our reflective inquiry as PE). The process encouraged them to move beyond thinking a PE lesson should focus on playing sports and games in line with a multi-activity approach, to realise that learning in PE could focus on the development of explicit skills that were transferrable across a range of physical activity settings. This shift in understanding also reflected a move towards closer alignment with how physical education is articulated in the *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007). It also provided me with a clear focus of the learning needs and interests of all my students.

Part of this required that I learn to adapt the activities, equipment, and groupings to meet the needs of all of the students and including Hamish. To help me extend my practice I used a model of differentiation, STEPS (Space, Task, Equipment, People, Speed), I had come across in an inclusion paper during my teacher education course. It challenged me to think outside the square, for example, often we did activities that had students walking instead of running during learning activities, so that everyone was safe and included in the learning, and it meant that all felt like valued members of the class. Students had experience doing activities at walking pace, as when we were confined to the hall for lessons during inclement weather, this was the only way to move safely in the space. The reduction in speed had no impact on the learning, but instead made the activity more accessible to a wider range of students, and meant that Hamish could participate with his peers on his terms. It also helped focus them on the learning, not simply the speed. Changing the equipment used was another way that students who had diverse needs could participate in learning. Providing a range of different equipment allowed students to learn in ways that they felt comfortable and safe. I was fortunate enough to be the teacher in charge of the school PE budget so purchased a

wider variety of equipment (unicycles, foam noodles, slacklines – things other than sports balls), and also worked with the school caretaker to get some items made (stilts, modified log rollers). These, however, were minor modifications, no different from me having diverse books or exercises available in reading and maths time to provide for the varied needs of the learner. More than anything, the aforementioned goals were made more achievable because we were collectively (the students, Kate and I) open to making use of a wider range of contexts and activities that better catered to the widest range of abilities, and focusing on the learning not simple the activity.

The lists of different activities the students had recorded through our inquiry process provided a useful starting point and encouraged me to think more broadly about what we could do. For example, instead of doing cricket and softball, like the other classes were doing, our focus on aiming and accuracy meant we did activities such as tenpin bowling, darts, modified javelin, and other 'games' devised by students. The shared decision-making as to the sorts of activities we did ensured that Hamish could participate regardless if he was walking freely, using a frame, or in his wheelchair. In much the same way when we focused on balance it was very easy to include Hamish, who was able to build on his out of school therapy, and do exercises to help him with balancing. By taking the focus of the PE programme of sports and games, and used a more themed approach, it was significantly easier to provide differentiated learning activities and allow students to work in pairs or small groups to explore the learning focus. Having Kate, the teaching aid, also meant there was some else on hand to work amongst all the groups, as she did not always have to support Hamish.

These changes went a long way to ensuring PE was less about Hamish being helped, or him to have to take on the role of the helper. In contrast, for Hamish our new approach meant that he could also take a lead in modify activities, or determining who he worked with,

to make them either more challenging or less depending on the day and where his body was at. When he determined he needed more support this could be gained from either his peers, or if he desired from Kate.

The major shift was that instead of thinking about the activity as the priority, I was more focused on what we were learning. For example, in our work focused on balance we collectively realised (with some guided discovery and some research on my behalf) that understanding principles such as wide base of support, and positioning of centre and line of gravity were essential to all balancing. Therefore, understanding these principles became the learning focus and students could then explore these in a wide range of activities that they felt comfortable with. For some this meant they progressed to unicycling and slacklining[5], while others stuck with balancing closer to the ground such as scooters, handstands, log rolling, pair balances, and Hamish focused on walking on lines, and balances with a pair or in a small group. The beauty was that everyone was doing balance, challenging themselves and each other toward progressing, all with a common learning focus. This approach appeared to reduce the anxiety associated with demonstrating their ability, or lack of, in front of the entire class.

Reflecting on inclusion as a journey not a destination

I feel that PE in my class(es), since I changed the focus, has been significantly more student-centred, and reflective of a curriculum that centres on the needs and interests of everybody rather than simply the bodies that can run fast, complete the beep test or excel at competitive sport. However, it would be inaccurate to say that this was always the case. There were certainly times when I was challenged to ensure that the 'new' inclusive programme, and modifications to better support Hamish and other students with physical or learning related

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[5] Slacklining – refers to the act of walking or balancing along a suspended length of flat webbing that is tensioned between two anchors

conditions and behavioural issues, was done in a way that supported them in all senses (physical, social, mental/emotional, and spiritual) and at the same time did not disadvantaged the learning needs of other students. While I have continued to work to ensure that no one is positioned as helper, helped or helpless, I acknowledge that amongst the pressures associated with teaching in a primary school, that my imagination and ability to plan inclusively means that some days I just don't get it right.

Working towards inclusion in PE

To align educative endeavours with the intent of the inclusive education philosophy requires addressing what constitutes PE and the learning experiences provided in PE. What Joel's account demonstrates is the possibilities when a teacher, in Vickerman's (2007) terms, is purposeful by asking questions of current practice and proactively initiates change. At the beginning of this paper Joel's vignette illustrates how he recognised the limitations of his practice in PE and the negative consequences this had on disabled students. By acknowledging this he became a broker for inclusion and was willing to invest his time and energy in this process. In part, Joel's outlook and actions signal that he was receptive to change and as part of this process prepared to innovate. This innovation involved Joel working differently by considering PE as something more than sports and games, collectively sharing with students to better understand their views about being active, enjoying activity, and focusing on learning rather than specific activities. What is interesting about Joel's role in this process is that he is not considered to be an 'adapted PE' or special needs expert. In part, the experience of Joel invites us to reconsider what constitutes an 'adaptive PE expert' or an expert in 'special needs'. In particular, it raises questions about what sort of expertise is actually required to best meet the needs of learners in PE classes, including those with disabilities. In the case of Joel, his willingness and open-minded outlook outweighed any lack

of specialist knowledge concerning specific disabilities, medical conditions, or wider PE subject knowledge.

In relation to the eight P's Vickerman (2007) articulated partnership is addressed in a manner that reflects adult-centric and professional expertise. And yet, we would argue that that while the partnerships between Joel, Kate, and the university-based research partners was important, it is productive to also recognise students as partners, as they play a key role in contributing to reimagining practice when given the opportunity. Similarly, Overton, Wrench and Garrett (2017) highlight how developing positive relationships with students supports inclusion and we see this as an important constituent to facilitating partnerships with students. On reflection the process adopted by Joel and the students in his class as they co-construction the curriculum, highlights the need for us to consider how we might use a combination of differentiated instruction (Ellis, Lieberman, and LeRoux 2009; Tomlinson 1999) and the universal design for learning strategy (Rapp and Ardnt 2012; Rapp 2014). These models challenge us to focus on designing curriculum to meet the differentiated needs of all learners and avoiding positioning particular students, such as those who are disabled, as helped, helper or helpless. In saying this though we also recognise that it is possible to sometimes position a student as helped or helper. Indeed, a number of models-based approaches, such as Sport Education, incorporate the idea of adopting different roles in PE. The key point to highlight with this kind of approach is that this is thoughtfully considered and does not presume the helped role will always be taken by a disabled student. Inclusion in this context then moves beyond merely adapted activities traditionally delivered in the HPE classes. Instead, Joel, with the support of his students, reimagined what it means to be active and used these new understandings to inform the nature of the PE curriculum developed.

To some extent Joel was not just "tinkering" around with sport based skills in the hope of supporting a compromised version of inclusion in PE (Fitzgerald 2012, 446). Rather

with his students he was proactive in holding up to question previously delivered PE within the school and in partnership began to consider alternative possibilities through innovation. Joel used STEPS to support the process of modifying and adapting his pedagogical practice. Interestingly, unlike many teachers, he did this after reflecting collaboratively with his students about the nature of PE delivered. Through his own reflection, the student collaboration and utilization of STEPS, we would argue that through Joel's innovation he was beginning to disrupt abilist and normative understandings of PE.

In this way, Joel's work also reflects a strength-based approach where disability is not viewed in relation to deficit medical discourses. For us Joel's experience demonstrates there is not one singular solution to inclusion within PE and it is a combination of actions that support this process. We would speculate that the shortcoming of many practitioners' attempts to work towards inclusion is the lack of engagement with these multi-layered actions and thus only reflective of the partial qualities of an inclusive PE pedagogue highlighted earlier.

The primary school context and Joel's role as a generalist teacher allowed him significant scope to develop PE as a part of a broader integrated curriculum. For example, he was able to use writing, reading, art, and topic time to co-construct understandings of being active, and this provided space to then use PE time as a time to move. In this respect Vickerman's eight P's (2007) were beginning to be embedded within broader areas of the curriculum beyond a PE. Of course, we recognise initiating this kind of change is much harder in settings where PE specialists are utilised, and learning between one subject and another may be disconnected. Providing scope for teachers to operate in this way requires school leaders, as policy actors, to acknowledge the holistic possibilities of inclusion within schools. That is schools and their occupants are physical, cultural and embodied entities that together cultivate the 'semantic chameleon' that is inclusion.

Conclusions

This paper has offered one primary school teacher's experience of attempting to work towards inclusion within PE. While we focus on one teacher we believe this account begins to shed light on the impasse between conceptual and practical models supporting practitioners and actual attempts to implement inclusion in practice. In particular, this research illustrates the kinds of in-depth insights that can be gained and material changes to PE if primary school teachers engage as practitioner researchers in a collaborative project. Joel's vignette at the beginning of this paper demonstrated how PE can occupy territory that may not instil inclusion in the same way that other areas of the curriculum do. In Joel's account there is a taken for grantedness that PE somehow has permission to sidestep inclusive developments. His vignette also reveals hope; Joel became conscious of the shortcomings in his practice and had the desire to think differently about PE and his students. According to Joel, there were a number of key interactions with his students, other staff and Kirsten that served as a catalyst for supporting his newfound willingness to forward change in PE. For example, the narrowness of student responses to 'being active' all reflected sport, fitness, and structured activity focus, and how this reinforced notions that you had at be physical able to be active, and the accompanying realisation that both the PE programme and pedagogies further exacerbated exclusivity. In part, the collaboration and these kinds of key moments with the university partner facilitated Joel's greater awareness and subsequent attempts to change practice (see Petrie et al 2013). In Harwood (2010) terms, this partnership activated Joel's 'imagination' and enabled him to innovate and think more inclusively. Of course, it should be recognized that innovating does not always lead to success and as Joel highlights in his final reflective account, 'some days I just don't get it right'. Working towards inclusion then requires a sustained commitment to a journey that may sometimes be challenging if practitioners believe the innovations have not achieved their expectations.

Beyond this two-year collaborative project the challenge remains to support initial teacher education and CPD in order that more primary teachers feel better equipped, like Joel, to grapple with inclusion within PE. And importantly to have a sustained spirit that continues to work towards inclusion even when they 'don't get it right'. As part of the process of grappling with inclusion we contend that teachers need to be supported to recognise this as something that is multi-layered. This layering is informed in an overarching sense through Vickerman's notions of philosophy and policy. We maintain that for teachers of PE to take inclusion seriously there is a need to move beyond simply modifying activities. Instead we need to look at ways where curriculum, pedagogy and practice is a shared endeavour in which the voices of all participants, including students, are heard. In this kind of inclusive setting learning is prioritised over activities in the forms of sports or games, and understandings of inclusion, difference and possibility are continually interrogated. As Vickerman's eight P's suggest this will require stakeholders, to discuss, reflect and debate in order to ensure all learners experience challenge and success in PE, and avoid ever being positioned in negative terms as the helped, helper, or helpless.

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