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**How Can Autonomy, Culturally Relevant Curriculum, and Scaffolding Impact my
Teaching in a Physical Education Classroom**

By Joseph Gaylord

An Action Research Project submitted to Western Oregon University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Masters of Arts, in Teaching

June 2021



**WE, THE UNDERSIGNED MEMBERS OF THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
WESTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY HAVE EXAMINED THE ENCLOSED**

Action Research Project Title:

Graduate Student: _____

Candidate for the degree of : Master of Arts in Teaching: Initial Licensure

*and hereby certify that in our opinion it is worthy of acceptance as partial fulfillment
of the requirements of this master's degree.*

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During this time while writing my action research paper, there have been a few groups of people who have helped me along the way. The first group that I want to mention is my students. They have helped me throughout the year with my project and it was a tough year with being online so thank you. I want to thank my instructors at Western Oregon for pushing me to my limits and being there to support me. I want to thank my friends and family for supporting me through my project and this tough time of comprehensive distance learning. I especially want to thank my girlfriend for being there for me every night and supporting me. There were a lot of long and stressful nights but having you by my side made a huge difference so thank you. Lastly, I would like to thank Western Oregon as a whole for giving me the opportunity to express myself through action research and overall become a better teacher in the long run.

Abstract

Finding ways to connect with students during comprehensive distance learning has had its highs and lows. Every student is different in the ways they learn and sitting in a room with a laptop all day on zoom calls is not for everybody. That's why I wanted to look at ways in which I can connect with students through culturally relevant curriculum, different scaffolding methods used in the classroom, and how I can use autonomy in my class to increase student engagement. These all tie into my main goal which is inclusion and how can I include all students in a physical education classroom. First, I started to look at my lesson plans that were made throughout my years of student teaching. I wanted to reflect on what I have done prior to this and how I can improve on my own teaching as it relates to these questions. Second, I looked over my field observation notes that my supervisor and the cooperative teacher gave me when they observed me teaching. This helped me get real insight from professionals in the area and I learned a great deal from what they wrote about me. Finally, I had an informal assessment where students answered questions relating to my questions just so I could get a better understanding of where they are coming from. During this tough time of Covid-19, it was hard to connect with students so being able to hear their side of things really helped me learn and gain knowledge on what I need to do as it comes to teaching more equality. The results from my research found that students' engagement and learning improves when given the right scaffolding and autonomy in class. A culturally relevant curriculum was implemented throughout the lessons and connected with the class. It did not serve as great of an opportunity as it would have if it had been in person but improving in my lessons and activities each day to become more diverse and aware is what will inspire me to become a successful educator.

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Chapter I

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

My philosophy and beliefs about teaching, schooling, and learning are integrated into my experiences and observations I have had over my years of education. Throughout the many years I have been in school I have learned and am still learning where my beliefs and understanding of education go. In our textbook, "Human Learning" by Ormrod, it stated that "Learning is a long-term change. It isn't just a brief, transitory use of information - such as remembering a phone number long enough to call someone and then forgetting it - but it doesn't necessarily last forever" (Ormrod, 2020, p. 4). Being able to learn and keep learning is a gift that we humans have and should not be taken advantage of. I will always cherish learning and being able to further educate myself.

When looking back at my own experiences in education, important role models that impacted my life would be my parents and my nana. They taught me the true value of education and how important learning is, as well as how essential it is to increase my knowledge. I learned that there is always something new to learn from whether that's from my past experiences with school and life. My nana was an educator herself and knew the importance of knowledge and being able to learn. Not everyone is fortunate enough to be educated and have the resources that I was provided with. I learned the true value of education and what makes a teacher good, respectful, and caring. Education needs a teacher who is there for them. Someone who is open to new ideas and provides a welcoming environment. Along with this, someone who implements

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs into their class and cares about the students' needs and well-being. This is the kind of teacher I want to be.

Looking back at my elementary school experience, as it refers to what I have learned and experienced, it was a very welcoming and fun time. My teachers taught me the importance of school and why I should continue to further my education. The only negative experience of my elementary school was my physical education class. We only had physical education three times a week for 30 minutes. As someone who enjoys being active and getting my cardiovascular endurance up it was hard to do this. From a young age, I knew the importance of physical activity and the impacts it can have on one's health. Seeing a lack of physical activity in class was very eye-opening and I knew from the start that I wanted to make a change. I knew I wanted to become a physical education teacher and teach the importance of living a healthy life.

Middle School and High School were some of my favorite moments in my academic career. I made numerous amounts of memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. I learned how to interact with peers and the importance of working with others and building those connections. Early on in school, I came across as a shy and quiet person, which indeed I was. I never really talked to anyone that was not my friend or actively participated in classroom discussions. Social anxiety was real for me and I knew that I needed to overcome that obstacle. One thing I did was practice talking in front of a mirror. I would also practice presenting in front of my parents or friends. The more experience that I got while presenting the better I was at it. In addition to my social anxiety, I also developed test anxiety. I would struggle with taking tests. In my science and math classes, there would be multiple-choice tests that were just very confusing

to me and, in my opinion, not beneficial to my learning. Sitting in a lecture-oriented class was not a great experience for me either. My brain and body would get tired and I would lose focus and interest in the topic discussion. The teachers did not do the best job at making the content connect to me or making it fun to learn. I know a lot of my peers loved lectures because that means they did not have to do anything. At times it was nice but thinking of the big picture and the outcomes of sitting down all class and not learning anything had on a person's ability to learn.

A handful of my teachers would make the classes a fun and interactive learning environment. They had icebreakers at the beginning for students to get more comfortable with each other, as well as a lot of small group activities. These classes were fun to go to and I learned a lot without even realizing it. Learning was not as hard for me because we did not just have lectures the whole time. Frank Smith says this best in the book, *The Book of Learning and Forgetting*, “The classic view of learning says that learning is effortless and a social activity” (Smith, 1999, p. 5). Learning should happen naturally and be never forgotten. Working with other peers and socialization is the true meaning of learning. In my school years, I learned best while working in groups and having activities that were fun but still knowledgeable.

Now time to dive into my physical education experience. This one is going to be hard to type because of how poorly and culturally irrelevant the class was. Middle school and high school physical education were just like a standard physical education class. I put on the athletic clothes they gave me, then go and sit down in my row. We ran around the gym and then played games like dodgeball, kickball, basketball, soccer, and free play. I would be graded on my

attendance and if I dressed down and participated in class. There were no written assessments or rubrics that the teacher followed. I was not working on my motor skills or strategies and tactics that would impact my life skills. I did not learn how to be a lifetime mover or learn how to obtain a physically healthy lifestyle. Instead, I learned this from having my parents educate me and watching workout videos on YouTube. This experience was not the best but it shaped who I am today.

Having this experience through K-12 was a great learning opportunity for me. Coming to Western Oregon was one of the greatest decisions of my life. I thought I knew what a good teacher was from my past experiences, but I was wrong. I did not know my past teachers who played movies or had long lectures were teaching kids poorly. As a kid who did not like to talk due to social anxiety, those days in class were good for me but bad at the same time. Two professors at Western really opened my eyes to education. Their names are Dr. Gay Timken and Dr. Jennifer Taylor. Gay Timken taught me the true meaning of physical education and the different ways it can be taught. Taking her classes is when I first started to realize what I had experienced was completely wrong and I wanted to make a change. I learned how important it is to teach all 3 domains (psychomotor, affective, and cognitive). I learned important motivation and educational theories like self-determination theory (Competence, Autonomy, Relationships) and social constructivist theory (Knowledge through human activity). I learned how to apply these theories and models to a real-world classroom by getting hands-on experience. I volunteered at elementary schools, middle schools, and I worked with a special needs' student. Being a kinesthetic learner and having these opportunities was the best thing I could ask for and I am ready to become the next generation of physical education teachers.

Question (1): Where do you stand on the various influences, issues, and ideologies that shape our educational system? When looking at our education system and the issues, influences, and ideologies that take place I first want to dive into the key aspect of having a culturally relevant curriculum in place. Soltero talks about how it affects English Language Learners (ELL), “The integration of the study of ethnic and cultural content into the curriculum is especially important for ELLs, not only for their own development of a positive self-concept but also to promote broader understanding and harmony among diverse groups” (Soltero, 2011, p. 152). Being aware of who my students are and where they come from is vital to me in becoming an educator. This is because I am someone my students can rely on. Becoming a mentor and leader they look up to is important for a class to work efficiently. As a physical education teacher, I can do this by having games and activities that are different from the norm. Get away from basketball and football and find out what other sports/ games students played and implement their ideas into the curriculum. I may be the teacher but I want the curriculum to be around them. Another issue that I have been very passionate about is grading in the schooling system and how we assess students. Looking at this through a physical education lens I noticed what not to do during my experience in K-12. Grading based on if someone can dress down or just show up to class is unacceptable. We need to have authentic assessments that meet students' needs. Instead of assessing if someone dressed down for the day, we can assess their motor skills and if they are progressing over time. We can assess cognitively through exit tickets that focus on their knowledge and understanding of topics. Have the student's design activities or plan goals for personal fitness. Make it fun and educational with assessments that are relevant to the content. When I look at other educational classes, one thing that comes to mind is test-taking. A

lot of other classes such as math, history, science, etc. were all about taking tests to assess the students. Students are not learning from taking tests. They are simply memorizing information that fits into their short-term memory and exiting out of their brain right after the test. Again, Frank Smith talks about the official learning theory and how this is the old way of learning. How learning is hard, easily forgotten, and relying on memorization. Learning should come naturally and easily. Do students actually learn by memorizing information and then circling a letter on a test?

Question (2): Where do you stand in relation to the various prominent philosophies of education?

Over the many years of education, I have found and learned many different prominent philosophies as it relates to education. I am still open to learning new philosophies and will continue to keep learning new ideas that I will integrate into my teaching career. When I was reading the Ormrod book I ran across a quote that really spoke to me, “Meaningful learning is what we’re referring to when we talk about understanding or comprehension” (Ormrod, 2020, p. 200). As a future educator, I want the content and topics to be meaningful and relevant for my students. Not only do I want them to understand what we are doing, but also ask the question “why”. Thinking outside of the box and more critically about why this information is important. How students can relate it to themselves outside of school and use it to better their knowledge. Another philosophy that I feel is very important is building connections and having an environment where they can grow both physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. As a physical education teacher, I want my students to go beyond what they think they can do. Get out of the comfort zone and try new things. Expanding their knowledge and thinking to become

independent adults who can do great things within society. Soltero mentions how important having a safe and inclusive environment is, “Creating a safe school climate supports students’ healthy development, helps reduce antisocial behavior and discipline problems, contributes to higher morale, promotes positive interpersonal relationships and allows students to learn at the most favorable levels” (Soltero, 2011, p. 46). Having an atmosphere that is promoting safety and inclusion is what it is all about. These philosophies are what I hold true to myself and I look forward to doing more readings and increasing my understanding and knowledge of what else I can do as a teacher to be the best teacher possible.

Question (3): Where do you stand in regard to teaching with social justice—creating an environment that challenges all students at all times, regardless of their ethnicity, socio-economic status, legal status, etc.....? This is a great question and opportunity to share my beliefs on what I would do to teach social justice and teach to all my students. First I wanted to look at my experience as a student. I come from a Caucasian family and grew up in a predominantly white town. Diversity and inclusion were not a major part of my upbringing. Now that I have stated a little about myself in terms of my life as a student, I want to dive into what I have learned as a student from being in college. All students should be equal no matter where they come from. A way to make everyone feel welcomed, but challenging them at the same time is by having authentic assessments. Soltero says this about authentic assessments, “ Some of the most common authentic assessment tools for collecting information and documenting students’ academic knowledge are portfolios, teacher observation, anecdotal records, checklists, rubrics, and self-assessments”(Soltero, 2011, p. 98). These assessments challenge students' ability to think critically and expand more on their understanding. By just having tests and memorizing

said tests, the students are not learning. So, challenging them by collecting real data that helps them is a step in the right direction. I can provide a set of differentiated learning for students and fit their needs as it relates to learning in the classroom. What works best for them, inclusion and challenging them is how I would teach social justice within the classroom.

Question (4): Where do you stand in connection to being an ethical teacher and abiding by the laws that govern our school system? I want to be an ethical teacher who abides by the laws that govern our school. From a personal level, I have always followed the law both inside and outside of school. I am very ethical in the way I go about things and will definitely be the same while I am a teacher. Looking at this from a professional view I have always done this in my past jobs, as well as with being in a school that upheld the laws. It is my duty and responsibility to set an example for the students. Their eyes are always on the teacher and the second one sudden mess up occurs, they will catch it. As a teacher, we are required to be mandatory reporters as well. If I see something suspicious/concerning I have to report it. If there are laws that are unjust and unfair to students and schools then those laws will have to be changed. It is important to follow the law and be ethical in a school environment and even outside of school.

Question (5): Where do you stand with reference to those who lead our school districts: parents, school board members, legislators, etc.....and the decisions they make for you as a teacher?

Parents, school board members, and legislators are super important in the education field. They can make decisions that impact both my future as a teacher, as well as the school's future.

One thing I would want from the school boards and higher-ups is a diverse group of people. People who have backgrounds in all sorts of different types of education. I would like the administrators and school board to be previous teachers, or understand what it takes/ life is like to be a teacher and understand the needs of the students and teachers. Parents play a huge role in a student's life, "Educators recognize that involvement of parents and families in the education of their children leads to increased academic achievement, better school attendance, and lower dropout rates" (Soltero, 2011, p. 180). Parents are crucial in helping their students become successful. That is why I believe it is very important to have a strong sense of communication with them. I want to really get to know my future parents and their child so I can understand how they learn, and what works best for them.

Question (6): What kind of a classroom environment do you feel is conducive to learning?

A classroom environment that I feel is conducive to learning is one that is cooperative, engaging, and provides a welcoming climate and culture. This I believe will maximize student's learning and ability to grow. When I have been in classrooms I have seen these concepts in action and know that if done right, it can work out really well. Having an engaging classroom that is both informational and fun is what learning is all about. Providing expectations and a safe environment for all students is what I believe to be the most important role as an educator.

Question (7): Who are you as a teacher: what is your mission statement?

As a teacher, I am someone who puts time and effort into my job. I want the student to succeed and I will work extremely hard for every student to have the best experience possible in

my class. I am someone who is eager to learn new ideas and philosophies about education. I always keep an open mind and I am ready to learn new teaching strategies that I can implement in my classroom. I want to be remembered as a teacher who brought joy and excitement to education. Learning should be fun and exciting for everyone.

I will provide equality and inclusion in my classroom and throughout the school. I will be one to support students' needs and provide a welcoming and safe environment. Through my past experiences of education, the one thing that I want to take away from all of this is how important equality and teaching a culturally relevant curriculum is. Being able to relate to my students in ways a lot of people cannot is vital to their success in education. I also learned that there are so many ideas and strategies that I still do not know. Being able to keep an open mind and listen to others is something that I will take with me to the grave. Watching my students grow and be able to have fun while learning is what it is all about and I cannot wait to get started.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Purposes and Objectives for the Literature Review

The purpose of my literature review was to examine how teachers can differentiate and include all students. I will look into different strategies of how to be an effective teacher and how I can use scaffolding in a classroom. Lastly, I want to look at autonomy and the role that it plays in our student's lives and how we as teachers can use this to maximize our student's potential. The reason I want to focus on inclusion and differentiated instructions is that as a future physical education teacher it is important to reach all students in my class. I want to engage and connect with students who are not usually active or enjoy physical education and get them moving. I also wanted to look into different ways I can increase engagement in a classroom setting and the importance of supporting each student. Lastly, I wanted to see how autonomy would affect students inside a classroom and see how this can lead students to interact with peers and feel wanted. This literature review will dig deeper into engagement and inclusion for all students in a physical education class and the best practices used for this.

Procedures for the Literature Review

My literature for this review was grounded on engagement and inclusion. I wanted to dive deeper into differentiated instructions and better ways to reach students who are typically not involved in a physical education class. I also wanted to do research on different strategies that would affect students' engagement and personal fitness for the better. Then I wanted to do my research on autonomy and how that affects a student's personal fitness. Each of these

research topic articles was peer-reviewed and read thoroughly to make sure they matched and resembled what my topics were about. I wanted to look at engagement and inclusion online for physical education since we are all online and the different factors that can play.

Personal Connection to Research Choices

As a person who loves the engagement and inclusion of all students, this was without a doubt a topic and research study that I wanted to dive deeper into. I have seen firsthand the impact that physical education has on one's own personal fitness and why engaging in class is vital to students' success. Students want to feel welcomed and wanted while in class and providing them with a safe environment, will encourage them to speak up and participate. It is important for me to be as open-minded as I can be when conducting this research. I will be open to new ideas and new practices that can best fit the students. Trust and honesty are going to play a huge role in my research and students' ability to learn.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theme 1: Differentiation and Inclusive Education:

When examining my first theme I wanted to look at differentiation and inclusive education and what I can do as a teacher to bring awareness to these all-important topics in the education field. Some of my research focuses on the importance of an inclusive environment and differentiation instructions in education and then I dive deeper into physical education and how these are important as well.

The first article by Whitley and Hollweck's *Inclusion and equity in education: Current policy reform in Nova Scotia, Canada* (2020) was a very informative and great article to read and start off with. In this study, the authors explored ways educators can have an inclusive classroom

and provide equity for all students. Whitley and Hollweck state “Inclusive education values, draws upon and includes student voices and choices to assist students in achieving their goals” (Whitley and Hollwecks, 2020. p. 6). This goes back to having autonomy in the classroom and showing the students a sense of respect that they deserve. This article dives deep into the roots of inclusive education and what steps are needed in order to fulfill this agenda. One way they can do this is by “a need for a just and equitable society where all students have opportunities to succeed” (Whitley and Hollwecks, 2020. p. 11). This is one main calling point the article is trying to make. Focus on togetherness and student success in order to achieve inclusion and equity in the classroom. Having an “Inclusive education is a commitment to honor and respect each student’s cultural and linguistic identities and knowledge systems” (Whitley and Hollwecks, 2020. p. 6). Respecting and valuing diversity is one of the key values to a successful classroom. Being culturally aware and including all students is what separates a good teacher from a great one.

The second article I read was by Guay, Roy, and Valois, *Teacher structure as a predictor of students’ perceived competence and autonomous motivation: The moderating role of differentiated instruction* (2017). In this study, the authors explored how differentiated instructions can impact students in the classroom. They also looked into teacher structure and how this has a positive effect on motivation. To start off the article defines that, “structure involves making the learning environment consistent and predictable such that students know what is expected” (Guay, Roy, and Valois, 2017. p. 225). This allows them to self-regulate their behaviors and better succeed in the classroom. The self-determination theory is a key part for students to feel motivated. The article says, “when students feel competent and effective, they

tend to engage in school activities” (Guay, Roy, and Valois, 2017. p. 225). Feeling a sense of worth in the class and feeling good will increase the student’s willingness to participate and lead to long-term success. (p 225). Differentiated instructions and teacher structure go hand-in-hand when looking at autonomous motivation. This article states, “if students are to stay on task, they need to pursue challenges that are suited to their abilities, which is the major purpose of differentiated instruction” (Guay, Roy, and Valois, 2017. p. 227). Challenging students and also changing lessons to fit their needs is an example of an effective way to teach. Using differentiated instruction and teacher structure can help students perceive competence and increase their motivation.

The third article I read was by Crosland and Dunlap, *Effective strategies for the inclusion of children with autism in general education classrooms*. (2012). In this study, the authors explored the importance of engaging and including students with autism and other intellectual disabilities. Crosland and Dunlap start off by talking about different strategies to achieve successful inclusion. One strategy the article mentions is, “Antecedent procedures. They involve manipulating some aspect of the environment to evoke the desired response or make an undesirable behavior less likely to occur” (Crosland and Dunlap, 2012. p. 254). This can be “altering environments or routines prior to the occurrence of problem behavior” (Crosland and Dunlap, 2012. p. 254). This is a great way to deal with behaviors before they occur in the classroom. The article talks about the importance of making sure the school environment and atmosphere are acceptable for students with disabilities. All these strategies are nice and can be helpful but if the school does not have a philosophy set in place that is focused and desired to help these students then the outcome might not be there. “School systems change may encourage

greater receptivity to inclusion for students” (Crosland and Dunlap, 2012. p. 262). Schools need to be willing to consider and accept new suggestions on how to include students with disabilities in their classrooms.

The fourth article that I read was *School Climate as an Intervention to Reduce Academic Failure and Educate the Whole Child: A Longitudinal Study* by Daily, Mann, Lilly, Dyer, Smith, and Kristjansson. In this study, the authors explore how we as educators can teach the whole child and different ways we can have a positive school climate. They examined how students' perceptions of a school climate can affect their ability to have a higher academic performance and reduce the achievement gap. This article describes school climate as the “spirit” or “heartbeat” of a school (Daily, Mann, Lilly, Dyer, Smith and Kristjansson, 2020. p. 183). The School's climate should be welcoming and fun for all students. It should feel like a home and a place to learn. They also mention how, “Schools focused on integrating a positive school climate may increase the potential to enrich students' lives and strengthen their academic success” (Daily, Mann, Lilly, Dyer, Smith and Kristjansson, 2020. p. 189). We need to have teachers and students supporting each other and their achievements. Teaching the whole child and showing them respect is what the teacher should be doing. The article finishes it off by talking about relationships between the student and the teacher and how the student perceived the relationships as positive leading to higher academic performance than those who did not (p. 190).

The fifth article that I read was by Navarro-Mateu, Franco-Ochoa, Valero-Moreno, and Prado-Gasco, *To be or not to be an inclusive teacher: Are empathy and social dominance relevant factors to positive attitudes towards inclusive education* (2019). In this study, the

authors explored why positive inclusive teachers are the key to achieving an inclusive education environment. The attitudes of the teachers toward an inclusive environment are the make or break for student's success. The teacher's success will rely on three things, the "cognitive component (positive or negative beliefs towards diversity), the affective component (positive or negative evaluations of diversity), and the cognitive-behavioral response (disposition towards diversity in relation to the other two components). It seems that beliefs and attitudes towards diversity can facilitate or hinder inclusion in the educational context" (Navarro-Mateu, Franco-Ochoa, Valero-Moreno, and Prado-Gasco, 2019. p. 3). This was an important read because it opens the door to how important teacher's beliefs are and how that can affect their teaching methods. I looked into my own teaching beliefs and how I feel about diversity in a classroom and I want an inclusive, diverse, and engaging classroom. All teachers should do a deep digging into their own personal experiences and beliefs about diversity.

Theme 2: Strategies, Scaffolding

The first article that I read was by Friedan, Crosby, Boyko, Hatton-Bauer, and Turnbull, *Effective teaching strategies and methods of delivery for patient education: a systematic review and practice guideline recommendations* (2011). In this study, the authors explored effective teaching strategies that can increase knowledge and decrease anxiety. The article looks at patient education (PE) which is a "set of planned educational activities, using a combination of methods (teaching, counseling, and behavior modification), that is designed to improve patients' knowledge and health behaviors" (Friedan, Crosby, Boyko, Hatton-Bauer, and Turnbull, 2011. p. 87). One strategy that was useful is Computer Technology. The article says, "patients were more satisfied with computer-based learning than with standard educational methods" (Friedan,

Crosby, Boyko, Hatton-Bauer, and Turnbull, 2011. p. 90). This increased the knowledge of students with asthma and heart disease. Another strategy that turned out to be effective was writing material. “Written information in the form of new patient information packages or booklets improved patient knowledge and reduced confusion” (Friedan, Crosby, Boyko, Hatton-Bauer, and Turnbull, 2011. p. 90). Written information can help the patient/student who struggles with hearing or audio. They can see the written information and gain a better understanding and knowledge of what the task is.

The second article that I read was by Rashford, Bosanquet, Webster, Blatchford, and Rubie-Davies, *Fostering learner independence through heuristic scaffolding: A valuable role for teaching assistants* (2013). In this study, the author explored why teaching assistants should use heuristic scaffolding when teaching students with special needs. They want the student to be able to think for themselves. The article defines heuristic as, “a method of teaching, allowing students to learn by discovering things themselves, learning from their own experiences rather than by telling them” (Rashford, Bosanquet, Webster, Blatchford, and Rubie-Davies, 2013. p. 8). The goal of the heuristic is to empower the students and have them think for themselves. The three techniques when using heuristic are: “questioning, modeling and prompting” (Rashford, Bosanquet, Webster, Blatchford, and Rubie-Davies, 2013. p. 8). The article dives into scaffolding and why teachers should use this idea throughout their teaching. Scaffolding is “the importance of contingency and, secondly, the need to drive the student towards independence” (Rashford, Bosanquet, Webster, Blatchford, and Rubie-Davies, 2013. p. 23). Our goal is to have students be independent and we can do this by providing autonomous motivation and feedback.

Being supportive of the student and helping them grow is an important role that we play as educators and mentors.

The third article that I read was by Bowles, Radford, and Bakopoulou, *Scaffolding as a key role for teaching assistants: Perceptions of their pedagogical strategies* (2018). In this study, the authors explored different pedagogical strategies and the importance of scaffolding through a teacher assistance perspective. This was a great read and I developed a better understanding of how scaffolding is used in a classroom. The article breaks down three principles of scaffolding, “contingency, fading, and transfer of responsibility” (Bowles, Radford, and Bakopoulou, 2018. p. 505). “Contingency requires adults to alter their support according to children’s responses, with a view to fading this support over time, the ultimate aim being a transfer of responsibility for a learning item to the child” (Bowles, Radford, and Bakopoulou, 2018. p. 505). These three principles are what make scaffolding possible in a classroom. A strategy that comes from scaffolding would be supported. “The support role entails the TA using strategies to encourage, re-assure and direct children and also helping them to pay attention and listen effectively” (Bowles, Radford, and Bakopoulou, 2018. p. 506). The TA should be trained well and be able to help the students out during the class period. This can be using positive feedback, reinforce rules and expectations, or even make accommodations if necessary. Scaffolding is a great support base strategy to use to maximize the students' learning. It gives the students greater independence in the learning process.

The fourth article that I read was by Mesquita, Coutinho, De Martin-Silva, Parente, Faria, and Afonso, *The Value of Indirect Teaching Strategies in Enhancing Student-Coaches Learning Engagement* (2015). In this study, the authors explored the indirect teaching strategies that promoted student-coaches engagement in a positive and active learning environment. One of the main strategies they found was questioning and this had an impact on student coaches. “They used Questioning as the primary strategic pedagogical tool to promote a more active engagement of student coaches with their own learning process” (Mesquita, Coutinho, De Martin-Silva, Parente, Faria, and Afonso, 2015. p. 660). They found that group questioning was the most effective when it comes to engaging students and promoting an active and fun learning environment. Another strategy that they looked at was effective issues. These can be things such as gestures, voice, or humor. “Both were effective in promoting enthusiasm and confidence in student-coaches, leading them to be more actively engaged in their own learning and consequently thinking and acting in a more autonomous manner” (Mesquita, Coutinho, De Martin-Silva, Parente, Faria, and Afonso, 2015. p. 666). This was a great study because they are focused more on a student-led class rather than a teacher-dominated class. Giving the students autonomy and activities that are centered around their learning is a healthy way in promoting a safe learning environment.

The fifth article that I read was by Mullender-Wijnsma, Hartman, Greeff, Bosker, Doolaard, and Visscher, *Moderate-to-vigorous physically active academic lessons and academic engagement in children with and without a social disadvantage: a within-subject experimental design* (2015). In this study, the authors explored how physical activity lessons can improve academic performances in schools. They looked at students who are socially

disadvantaged and students who are not socially disadvantaged and what relationships physical activity had on them. “The findings suggest that physically active academic lessons may be an innovative way for teachers to increase children’s academic engagement and physical activity without losing time intended for academic learning” (Mullender-Wijnsma, Hartman, Greeff, Bosker, Doolaard, and Visscher, 2015. p. 8). As a future physical education teacher, I believe that this is very important to implement in all classes. Students tend to get bored sitting down all day in a classroom and need to have some activity breaks that get them up and moving. They found that an “interaction between aerobic physical activity and cognitive engagement may have a stronger effect on cognitive functioning” (Mullender-Wijnsma, Hartman, Greeff, Bosker, Doolaard, and Visscher, 2015. p. 8). Physical activity will have a higher effect on the cognitive ability to learn. As a future educator, it will be important to get my students involved with physical activity out of my classroom and preach the benefits and importance of it.

Theme 3: Subject-Specific, Disciplinary Issues Related to my Goals for Teaching Improvement.

The first article I read was by Wickens, Manderino, Parker, and Jung, *Habits of Practice: Expanding Disciplinary literacy frameworks through a physical education lens* (2015). In this study, the authors explored disciplinary literacy through the lenses of physical education. They wanted to expand the approaches and framework of disciplinary literacy in the field of physical education. The authors say, “Disciplinary literacy has highlighted differentiated habits of thinking, which is meant to serve as a proxy for the varied practices within the disciplines themselves” (Wickens, Manderino, Parker, and Jung, 2015. p. 76). The way students think is astonishingly different and our ability to teach to a diverse group of learners and learn from

different cultures is a blessing. Physical education literacy aligns with, “notions of participation, physicality, and movement are integral to the field and demonstrate an assets perspective toward students” (Wickens, Manderino, Parker, and Jung, 2015. p. 79). Participation, being able to move are the key parts of a physical education class. It does not focus on the ways in which we can read or write but more focused on the moving and physical side of things. They finish off the article by not pushing their agenda ahead but just getting the message of other courses should be considered when looking at disciplinary literacy.

The second article I read was by Bailey, *Evaluating the relationship between physical education, sport, and social inclusion* (2005). In this study, the author explored the outcomes of participating in physical education and the social inclusion benefits that participants have on students. This article is from 2005 but I had to add this because of the great information it provided. The article breaks down social inclusion into four parts, “bringing individuals from a variety of social and economic backgrounds together in a shared interest in activities that are inherently valuable (spatial); offering a sense of belonging, to a team, a club, a program (relational); providing opportunities for the development of valued capabilities and competencies (functional); and increasing ‘community capital’, by extending social networks, increased community cohesion and civic pride (power)” (Bailey, 2005. p. 77). These four inclusion definitions are vital to a successful physical education class. Becoming culturally aware and relevant as a teacher is important for building trust and respect from students. Sometimes students are shy and not engaging because the activity is not fun to them. Having a different curriculum that is built around the students is welcoming to a successful learning environment. The article ends by talking about, “The personal qualities and teaching styles of physical

education teachers can be significant factors in the development of pupils' perceptions of the subject" (Bailey, 2005. p. 85). This is exceptionally true when looking at my past experience. I never liked my physical education class because my teacher did not make it a safe learning environment. The activities and curriculum were not culturally relevant and it was just not fun.

The third article I read was by Thorjussen, *Social inclusion in multi-ethnic physical education classes: Contextualized understandings of how social relations influence female students' experiences of inclusion and exclusion* (2020). In this study, the author explored how inclusion and exclusion in PE can be understood in light of social relations in multi-ethnic classes. This article also looked at where female students with diverse backgrounds stood in a physical education class. Out of the three girls that Thorjussen researched each had their own stories. One loved physical education and being active in the class. Another did not really like it and never participated but that is because she felt lazy and showed up late. The last one felt unathletic and unskilled. Felt very uncomfortable in the class (Thorjussen, 2020. p. 7). These are all fascinating stories and experiences that each went through. Having a positive or negative experience can really impact how one views physical education. The findings stated, "all three girls indicated that a lack of friendships and social relations in class caused experiences of exclusion in PE, particularly in situations where the students were asked to form pairs or teams on their own" (Thorjussen, 2020. p. 11). This is a prime example of what not to do as a teacher. This is one of the main components of why I am becoming a physical education teacher. As a physical education teacher, I would design activities that are interactive and fun for all students. Inclusion is very important for students' success because if they are not participating then they

are not learning. The most important day of the class is the first two weeks. That is when relationships and social interactions take place and that teacher-student connection is made.

The fourth article I read was by Flory and McCaughtry. *Culturally Relevant Physical Education in Urban Schools* (2011). In this study, the authors explored the teacher's and students' perspectives on physical education in urban schools. Reading this article was very informative on different ways I can teach to all my students and become more culturally aware. The articles found four different themes, "care, respect, language and communication, and curricular content" (Flory and McCaughtry, 2011. p. 52). The teacher should care for their students. The teacher does not know what the student goes through and instead of yelling and putting kids into detention start by getting to know them and their culture. Respect is not just between the teacher and student but also between the student and student. Here is a strategy that the article talks about, "to overcome students' aggression, teachers wove social and interpersonal skills into the curricula. Several teachers used behavior contracts" (Flory and McCaughtry, 2011. p. 55). Teachers started to use fitness stations and not competitive play because fitness stations are about bringing each other up and no competition is there. Language and communication are also key to becoming culturally relevant. The article talks about English language learners (ELL) and what teachers can do to teach them. They also mentioned different cultures' ways of talking and how some teachers might interpret a saying differently than what it actually means (Flory and McCaughtry, 2011. p. 56). Lastly, the article mentions curricular content and how teachers are expanding their knowledge and listening to students to build their content around them and not themselves.

Summary:

The literature review here is a strong indicator of how I perceive different strategies and beliefs about education. Inclusion and differentiated instructions are key values to what I as a future educator am about. I want to implement scaffolding and a variety of different strategies in my classroom that meet the needs of my students. Becoming culturally aware and teaching a culturally relevant curriculum is what will strive me to become a better educator and help my students become exceptional learners. Having a safe and respectful environment for all my students and teaching to a diverse group is one of my main goals. Knowing that the students' learning comes first and their well-being. Showing care and commitment to the students and the work is how I perceive a successful teacher. This is not just another 9-5 job. This is more than that, this is a passion, a career, a family.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

The methods of inquiry for this study focused on the principles and practices of action research, using a self-study aligned with professional teaching standards, teacher artifacts, lesson plans, observation from my cooperating teacher and field supervisor, and interviews with students and teachers as a means of data collection. I will begin with a review of action research principles to establish the foundation for this study's method of inquiry. Second, I will review the choices and purposes of data collection that helped to highlight my instruction and means for searching for improvement. Third, I will detail my context for the study, methods of data collection protocols, maintaining credibility and trustworthiness of the data, and acknowledge my limitations as a researcher. Finally, I will present the procedures used for studying my practice, while providing data and analysis that speaks to adaptations and adjustments made to my instruction as I implanted this study.

Research Question

My focus for this research was to understand the practice of building a classroom conducive to student autonomy and scaffolding and to figure out how I can become a culturally responsive physical education teacher. Specifically, I examined my practice and how I learned to use scaffolding and voice and choice to improve my teaching. I also examined different ways that I can become a more culturally appropriate teacher through my lessons and overall teaching and the impact this has on students. This focus aligned with the following INTASC Standards for

teacher professional development. Additionally, I considered how studying my own practice in line with INTASC Standards could improve my own instruction and therefore, student learning. My purpose of this study was to understand and learn different teaching methods and strategies that I can use in my physical education classroom. The research question (s) for this study were:

1. *How can I integrate culturally responsive teaching within my curriculum?* When looking at this question, I hope to learn different ways in which I can make my curriculum more culturally relevant and overall become a culturally responsive teacher. Data gathered from a focus on this question was used to test the impact of a curriculum that is focused on student engagement, inclusion, learning, and a diverse set of activities.
2. *How can I implement scaffolding throughout my teaching that works best for my student's individual needs?* I hope to learn and understand different ways I can support individual students' needs in a classroom and see what works and what does not work. Data gathered from this question was used to validate the effect that scaffolding had on students' learning and to see what support system worked versus what did not work for those individual students.
3. *How can we as teachers use autonomy in our classroom to maximize students' learning and engagement?* I hope to learn what the impact autonomy has on students when it relates to engagement in class and overall understanding of the content. Data gathered from a focus on this question was used to describe the effects that autonomy had on student learning, inclusion, and their ability to work together with peers.

My goal as a teacher is to have a safe learning environment for all my students. Using a culturally relevant curriculum that is founded on reaching all my student's needs. Having an inclusive learning atmosphere that brings students together and makes learning fun and easy.

Providing students, the opportunity to choose their own activities or assessments to fit their best learning style while also scaffolding student learning through the use of visuals, demonstration, and feedback. All of these ideas make physical education a place for all students to maximize their learning and will make me a better teacher.

INTASC Standards

The INTASC Standard that best fits this study would be Standard 3: Learning Environment. Standard 3 states that the teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. My three research questions and goals that I have all fit into standard 3. When looking at having a culturally diverse curriculum that ties into creating that environment that supports individuals' needs. Having support strategies and providing students with autonomy are key parts to making the learning environment a safe and engaging place where students can learn freely.

Creating a safe learning environment seems to be a hot topic right now in the education field. That is why I can use this standard and dig deeper into what actually makes a safe/positive learning environment in a physical education class. I believe that there are many factors that play into this and I will be looking at the curriculum itself, what support strategies are we providing for our students, and how autonomy can impact students' social interaction and overall success. These all tie into standard 3 and what a learning environment is all about.

Methodology and Research Design

Qualitative research is a way to analyze the data that was collected through observation, interviews, and lesson plans. This form of non-numerical data is a great tool for understanding many different concepts in teaching and learning. I want to gather new ideas to improve my teaching. I want to ask questions that are open-ended and that do not follow the quantitative research standards of numerical data. Asking the question “why” and trying to learn more and more of what strategies work in teaching and what does not work.

Since my purpose was to describe my own teaching practice as well as how I use data to improve my own practice in line with the INTASC professional standards, it was important to choose a method that could account for both what the standards are for teachers and how I was paying attention to my own practice through data collection to improve it. Accordingly, this study was designed as an action research study. McNiff (2016) said it best, “Action research is about finding ways to improve your practice, so it is about creating knowledge. The knowledge you create is knowledge of practice” (pg. 7). I believe this to be true in my own study and why action research is important. Having my own beliefs or understanding of topics and going out to practice these in a classroom to learn and gain my own knowledge is crucial for any teacher to better oneself. This philosophy and framework about bettering yourself as a teacher is one that I have adopted. Using action research as a way to grow and build oneself as a teacher and individual is very important. As a future teacher, it is important to always be open-minded and to keep increasing one's knowledge. School may be over but learning is forever.

Action Research is a great tool for teachers to use to see and learn different methods and strategies to improve their teaching. New learning and understanding are vital for educators and this gives us opportunities to enhance our teaching in many different ways. I want to use Action Research as a way to grow as a teacher and learn from others their best practices. Building my knowledge up and learning new methods will help my overall teaching.

Methods for Data Collection

The basic steps in action research are 1) identify a topic or issue to study, 2) collect data related to the chosen topic or issue, 3) analyze and interpret the collected data, and 4) carry out action planning, which represents the application of the action research results. Data collection in an action research project typically is related to the topic or issues and provides answers pertinent to the research questions. As Padak and Padak observe, “Any information that can help you answer your questions is data” (1994). Therefore, I used a variety of data collection tools related to my topic to ensure the validity of my results. Furthermore, I adhered to the following four characteristics in determining the data I would collect for my study, 1) anonymity of students, 2) comparison in data collection was built in so that the results could be judged against themselves both before and after the intervention period, 3) aspects of performance to be examined were identified prior to data collection so that the information was relevant and connected to the research questions, and 4) a variety of data was collected so that different aspects of the topic could be brought to light (Padak and Padak, 1994). Finally, because I was studying my own practice while I was in the middle of said practice, I acknowledge the

“spiraling nature” of data collection in action research (Padak and Padak, 1994). By focusing on data in connection to my research questions, my attention turned to other pieces of data that emerged in relation to my questions. These emergent data pieces were included as part of the study as they had relevance to my research questions. Table X (below) will summarize the details of my data collection plan.

Table 1.0 Data Collection Procedures

Research Question	Data Sources	Procedures	Purpose	Timeline
1.How can I integrate culturally responsive teaching within my curriculum?	Lesson Plans Observations Informal Assessments	I will be using parts of my lesson plan to show what culturally responsive teaching looks like in a lesson. I will use observations from my cooperative teacher and field supervisor on how my teaching was culturally responsive and then lastly use informal assessments to get a better understanding of what students have to think about becoming more relevant and inclusive with our curriculum.	To understand my own teaching and how I can implement culturally responsive teaching into my lessons and class.	Get Data by April 16

<p>2. How can I implement scaffolding throughout my teaching that works best for my student’s individual needs?</p>	<p>Lesson Plans Observations Informal Assessments</p>	<p>I will use part of my lesson plans that show how I show support to students in the class. I will use observations from my cooperative teacher and field supervisor that focuses on student support and what strategies I used. I will also use informal assessments from my students that reflect on the strategies that I used to see how I met their needs with supporting strategies.</p>	<p>To understand my own teaching and how I can use scaffolding in my teaching that can reach every student's individual needs.</p>	<p>Get Data by April 16</p>
<p>3. How can we as teachers use autonomy in our classroom to maximize students' learning and engagement?</p>	<p>Lesson Plans Observations Informal Assessments</p>	<p>I will use parts of my lesson plans that focus on providing choice and giving the students the opportunity to be independent. I will use observations from my cooperative teacher and field supervisor that focus on seeing how I used autonomy when teaching and how students</p>	<p>To understand my own teaching and how I can use autonomy in the physical education classroom and how that can maximize student learning and engagement.</p>	<p>Get Data by April 16</p>

		<p>reacted to it. I will also use informal assessments from students to get a better understanding of their engagement and learning increased after autonomy was used.</p>		
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Because my research questions focus on culturally responsive teaching, inclusion, scaffolding, autonomy, and a safe learning environment. I chose to collect data that would provide information about how my practice and the interventions I identified aligned with the research topic. The types of data I chose to collect are described next.

Lesson Plans

The first method of data collection that I used was my lesson plans. I have gathered data from my lessons for edTPA and the many that I have taught during comprehensive distance-learning or in-person learning. This form of data collection is a great example that shows how I am able to incorporate autonomy and a culturally relevant curriculum throughout my teaching in these plans. I also supply a great number of strategies that work great for my students. I can see how my teaching can improve and has improved as well through my lesson plans.

Informal Assessment

The second method of data collection that I used was interviewing/student feedback. I wanted to get a feel of what my students were thinking about student choice and strategies to help them be able to learn. These students that I interviewed were from comprehensive distance learning and were very passionate about these topics. I think this form of data collection worked great when trying to learn and see if what I was doing made a difference in their ability to learn. I was also able to see what my student's thought process was, especially during this time of distance learning when I am not able to see them at all.

Observations

The last method of data collection that I used was observations from my cooperative teacher and field supervisor. This data collection was very helpful in learning what works and doesn't work in the classroom. They got to observe me teach lessons that focus on autonomy, engagement, culturally relevant curriculum, and scaffolding. This worked great because I got feedback right away and this helped me learn and dig deeper into my own teaching style and what I want.

Context of the Study

This study will take place at a fairly large school in a medium-sized urban district in the mid-Willamette valley with the total number of students sitting around 2,000 students from grades 9-12. There is an average of around 82 staff and the class size is from 20-25 students. 58% of the students identify as white, while 92% of the teachers identify as white. 28% of

students identify as Hispanic/Latino, 3% identify as Asian, 1% of the students identify as Black/African American. 1% identify as American Indian and 2% identify as Native Hawaiian. There are many different religions, cultures, and socioeconomic differences in this school and that is why it makes it so unique and exciting to teach at. The opportunity to learn and achieve great things is in our hands as teachers.

Right now, my cooperating teacher and I have 3 classes a day on zoom call. She teaches the first period and I teach the second. The fourth period is a mixture of both of us teaching. The average class size of students who show up can range from 15-20. This class lasts 85 minutes. This class is a personal fitness class that digs deep into one's own fitness. We are not currently in a gym but we provide fitness routines that students can go and work out. We provide time in class as well to work out and also provide extra time to support our students. We have teacher-facilitated days and applied days for our students' learning. Teacher facilitated days are when students are supposed to join the zoom call two days a week. This can be either Tuesday/Thursday cohort or Wednesday/Friday cohort. The applied day is the other two days when they are not in class. They will be working on a fitness routine or making up any missing assignments. My cooperative teacher and I run this class very well with both providing support and a well-balanced plan on teaching. My study will be conducted from period 2 on both Tuesday and Wednesday. The overall number of students would consist of around 30.

Participants

Because this study was designed using an action research approach, the main participant in the study is me, as the teacher. As my learning progressed throughout my student teaching program, I became interested in a number of ideas that would help me to improve my instruction. Ultimately, I decided to focus on the main research areas outlined in my research question. To lend credibility to the results I will share from the self-study of my practice, it is important to describe my role in the classroom where I teach. In this section, I will focus on describing my own classroom and my role as a teacher.

I have been a student teacher for around 7 months starting in the Fall term. I will graduate in the Spring of 2021 with my license to teach. Before student teaching, I finished up my undergraduate at Western Oregon University where I worked as a ref and played many intramural sports. I have learned a lot about myself as a person and as a teammate and learned the importance of communication and working together. For my research, I want to look at creating that safe learning environment, and the knowledge I have gained from participating in sports and refereeing that had helped me decide which data to use to be most effective and some ideas about what it takes to make an environment safe and inclusive.

Data Analysis Plan:

Data from this action research project will be analyzed using a 6-step thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clark, 2006). These steps take a look into the data and how I went through each section of it and coded it to find themes and categories that aligned with my research

questions. My goal was to make sure my data was being analyzed correctly and coded to the best of my ability so that I could have multiple different categories outline my questions.

Table 2.0

Data Analysis Plan

	Format this column to fit your study
Phase 1 Familiarize myself with data	<p>Interviews were transcribed and feedback was given back to the interviewees</p> <p>Student assessment was reviewed through the chat box</p> <p>Reviewed and coded lesson plans into categories and themes</p> <p>Begin digital diary of thoughts, observations concerning themes, and any inconsistencies of information</p>
Phase 2 Generate initial codes	<p>Data was collected and organized into meaningful groups based on research questions in mind</p> <p>I manually code the data with notes, observations, lesson plans, and student assessments in a transcribed text to be coded into categories and themes.</p> <p>Begin digital coding the document, collating data within research groups while coding for all potential themes</p> <p>Note tensions & inconsistencies of codes in a digital diary</p>
Phase 3 Search for themes	<p>I organized codes into potential themes using categories that relate to my research questions</p> <p>Note thoughts on relationships between the emerging themes in the digital diary.</p> <p>Three dominating themes emerged when coding my data.</p>

	<p>Add a miscellaneous section in the digital code diary for any seemingly unrelated code</p>
<p>Phase 4 Review themes</p>	<p>I revised my table of potential themes, considering internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity</p> <p>Read collated data extracts for each theme, checking for coherent pattern</p> <p>I ran into some extracts with no coherent pattern, so I re-examined the themes and related coded data for sub-themes or renaming of theme</p> <p>For themes where a coherent pattern exists, examine for individual theme validity in relation to entire data.</p> <p>I Examined transcripts for any missed data extracts needing to be coded for theme</p> <p>I re-read the entire transcripts for any new themes that may have been missed</p> <p>I stopped when no more substantial and relevant themes emerge</p> <p>I examined how themes fit together in relation to research questions and note thoughts and considerations in a digital journal</p> <p>I then create a thematic map</p>
<p>Phase 5 Define & name themes</p>	<p>I then adjusted my digital table of them to organize collated data extracts within each theme for consistency</p> <p>I Identify relative narrative for each theme in the digital diary</p> <p>Write a detailed analysis for each theme, to include individual relevance and how that relates to the overall analysis and answers the questions of this research</p> <p>Examine written analysis for any excessive overlapping of themes</p> <p>Examine each theme for any sub-themes needing to be identified and explained</p>

	<p>For each theme, describe scope and content in no more than two sentences, adding potential names to each theme</p>
<p>Phase 6 Write the thematic report</p>	<p>Write an analysis within and across themes</p> <p>Assure there is written evidence within each theme with related data extracts</p> <p>Choose vivid and relevant extract examples for each point of evidence in answering research questions</p> <p>Create an analytic narrative that incorporates evidential answers to each research question</p>

Looking back at my research questions and goals that I have, I have come up with an outlined plan of action on how I want to go about collecting data. I will be collecting my lesson plans every time I teach and to see where my growth is from my first lesson to my last. This way I can see what I need to work on when it comes to making my lessons more culturally relevant or have it be more engaging. I will be able to use the observation from my cooperating teacher and also my field supervisor to see how I support my students and if active participation is happening in the classroom. These will come during my formal observation. I will also use interviews conducted at appropriate times, given to students and teachers that ask questions that try to get them to think hard about culturally relevant curriculum and also what impact autonomy may play in their lives and in the classroom. These questions and answers I can use to grow myself as a teacher and leader in this community. Being able to be open-minded and think about what I can do better is a very important part of teaching.

Limitations, Delimitations, Bias/Assumptions1-

While I have experience in research, that experience was previously limited to quantitative research. Qualitative research, especially action research, is an entirely new experience for me as a researcher and my effectiveness as a qualitative researcher is limited in that regard. It is also important to point out that while attempts to remove bias from data analysis are made, my own reflections of my teaching are inherently skewed to perceive my teaching as ever-improving, though I know there may be some fallbacks. In analyzing the notes from my cooperating teacher or my university supervisor, some of the feedback is open to interpretation, so attempts have been made to remove bias from those interpretations. Naturally, I want to succeed in my pursuits to make progress regarding my research questions, but I also do not want to taint the study with inaccuracies. Some other limitations from the study include the aspect of distance learning and the lack of communication from students that either have their microphones off, have their cameras off, or do not attend Zoom meetings at all. The schedule for the classes also limits the number of interactions with the students as this class only meets twice a week for an hour at a time. All of these limitations and biases have been recognized by the researcher and the proper steps have been taken to consider these at the time of data analysis.

Winter term 2020-2021: This term was chosen because I have been doing comprehensive distance learning for a while and my students and I were building better relationships during winter term and I felt that I would get the best data from this term. Students felt way more comfortable this term when discussing my research questions and the student's overall choice. I felt that I could get more data and data that I could trust from this term because students seem to

enjoy the physical education class and wanted to help me as a student as well.

Credibility

Validity and reliability are important aspects of social research and can be accounted for in a variety of ways (Torrance, 2012). Both validity, the quality of being logically sound, and reliability, the degree to which accuracy can be considered dependable, are components of credibility, the quality of being trusted or believed in. Eisner (1991) believes that the credibility of qualitative research is grown through a “confluence of evidence” that includes multiple types of data (p. 110). Validity of research is one component of providing credibility and can be done through the triangulation of data (Lather, 1991). Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCesno, Blythe, and Neville (2014) explain that one method of triangulation is method triangulation which includes using multiple methods of data collection. This is similar to Eisner’s method of structural corroboration (1991). Eisner (1991) also believes that getting input and opinions from others in the same field serves as a means of consensual validation. This helps to further demonstrate credibility.

In my research, I used multiple methods of data collection. These different methods served as method triangulation based on the explanation from Carter et al. (2014). The methods of data collection were through my lesson plans that I have gathered throughout the winter term, observation from my cooperative teacher and university supervisor, and interviews with students. This allowed me to analyze the data through different means to ensure that I was correctly interpreting the data, as well resulting in “a broader understanding of the phenomenon” (Carter et al., 2014, p. 546). In addition, to further strengthen my credibility, I also used member checks to provide a form of consensual validation. These member checks were conducted with the

assistance of my cooperating teacher, as well as my university supervisor.

Chapter IV

DATA FINDINGS

Introduction

My three forms of data collection were: lesson plans, observations, and informal assessments. The research questions in my study were: *How can I integrate culturally responsive teaching within my curriculum? How can I implement scaffolding throughout my teaching that works best for my student's individual needs? How can we as teachers use autonomy in our classroom to maximize students' learning and engagement?* When looking at the data I collected, I wanted to make sure that these three forms of data matched up with the research questions that I provided. In order to answer the questions, the data needed to be something that I could look back upon and analyze from a qualitative perspective. The data collected was from a 9th-grade freshman class that I was student-teaching for physical education. Trying to collect data through comprehensive distance learning was a challenge, however; a challenge I was willing to face. I wanted to know how I can implement culturally responsive teaching in my classrooms. I also want to know what scaffolding strategies would best help my students either during online learning or in-person. I wanted to improve my teaching by providing as much autonomy for my students as possible and to see what this outcome had on their overall learning.

The data that was collected included my lesson plans that were taught throughout the student teaching program. These were broken down into many different themes that each lesson provided. I was looking at specific parts like the strategies for supporting diverse learners, where I provided autonomy in the lesson, and how my lessons were culturally responsive. I will have evidence of these topics throughout this chapter that shows how these questions were

answered in my lesson. This was a great form of data collection because lesson plans have so much useful information in them that touches base on all the important topics I wanted to learn about in order to become a better teacher.

Another form of data that was collected was my observations from my cooperative teacher and field supervisor. They looked at my three themes while they were observing me, and wrote down how I was able to satisfy each question as well as the outcomes of each. Just like the lesson plans, the observations will be screenshots of the questions and then the cooperative teacher and field supervisor are observation notes. Some of these observation notes are both in-person and online, so we have a mixture of both which is great for this study. For most of our time online as well as in general it was hard to get in-depth data to answer these questions, but I believe that I did a great job at implementing these questions as an everyday focus in class.

The last form of data that I used was informal assessments collected during the regularly planned student teaching experience. I asked students questions on how they feel about certain topics or themes and how I did of implementing them into the classroom. I wanted to see the student’s perspective on things and how my teaching has changed from a student’s view for the better or worse. This was an optional assignment to answer but I was fortunate enough to get three students who answered questions from each theme.

Data Analysis: Theme #1

Table 3.0 Data sources for research question 1

How can I integrate culturally responsive teaching within my curriculum?

Data Sources	Data Collection
Lesson Plans: These lesson plans were written two times using the culturally	Lesson Plans: The plans that I was writing focused more and more on the

<p>responsive lesson planning tool and focused on implementing a social problem around the world. Other lessons that I used focused on using a variety of different workouts during this online teaching that comes from all around the world. I have found a dramatic improvement over each term of my lesson planning and ways to incorporate culturally responsive teaching.</p> <p>Observation: These were done by my cooperative teaching and field supervisor four times a term with a focus on equity, teaching with a diverse mindset, and inclusion while I was teaching.</p> <p>Informal Assessments: These were used to gather what students were thinking on topics such as culturally responsive teaching, inclusion in the classroom, and teaching through equity and justice.</p>	<p>inclusion/equity aspect of the class and not making people feel left out or forgotten. I did this by checking up with each student every day in the zoom call and seeing what they needed from me and what they wanted to do in the class. We have different workouts throughout the quarter that have exercises from all around the world but I gave them the idea to design their own workout from their culture and teach the class.</p> <p>Observation: This was the best form of seeing if what I was saying in my lesson plans was actually being taught to my students. An example of this was looking at feedback from my cooperative teacher. She mentions how I was able to use key components of culturally responsive lesson planning to give students a voice in the class.</p> <p>Informal Assessments: Students seemed to enjoy being able to design their own workout from their culture and thought that everyone should be treated fairly. I asked how I was doing in this class and if they thought people were treated unfairly and they thought I was doing a great job at keeping the environment safe and friendly for all.</p>
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Code	Definition
<p>Equity</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Inclusion</p>	<p>Items were coded as "equity, diversity, and inclusion" if they fit into the culturally responsive teaching category. I define equity as being fair and showing value in everyone and every student that steps foot in my class no matter their background. I define diversity as providing quality education to all people no matter the race, sexual orientation, social life, or ethnic background. I define inclusion as being involved in the classroom and having equal access and opportunities as every other student.</p>

Lesson Plans

Figure 4.1

Diverse Learners and Culturally Relevant Curriculum.

How have you addressed the needs of diverse learners ? (Ex: IEPs, 504s, linguistic & cultural diversity, students without prerequisite knowledge, etc.)

A way I can do this is by having a transcript of the zoom call so that students can see what I am saying instead of listening. I will also differentiate my instructions to meet my students' needs. I will provide assessments that are in spanish and english. This is important because at my school we have a lot of ELL and I want to provide a fair learning environment for all my students. When looking at students with 504's we will provide them with a variety of modifications when it comes to physical activity. It is going to be at home and this will be harder but if we give them opportunities to be successful then the desired learning will come. I will have my fitness routines be culturally relevant and different each day.

Figure 4.1 shows how I was able to implement culturally responsive teaching by using different strategies to support my students. I focused on inclusion by having differentiated instructions for my diverse students such as modifications on physical activity, different assessments for my Spanish and English speakers, and different fitness routines/exercises in the classroom that come from a wide range of cultures (Kickboxing, Soccer, and Yoga). This shows a variety of ways I incorporated said strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. During comprehensive distance learning, it was hard to incorporate all the teaching methods I learned about, but this was a great start and I will look to improve this section when I start teaching in person.

Figure 4.2

Students get a voice in the classroom

Voice (How will students work together cooperatively to share their learning experiences, strengths, backgrounds, interests, and needs with the instructor and each other?):

Students will work with a partner in a breakout room to share what interests them and who they are as a person. They will come up with an activity/game that we can play or at least learn about playing while being on zoom. This gives the students a voice to be heard and also works on the cooperative part for the student. Giving them an environment that focuses on safety and comfort will also be important. I can do this by talking with each student individually and seeing what I need to do to make this happen and just build that connection with them. Culturally responsive teaching gives students an understanding of who they are as a person and where they come from. Instead of hiding who they are, I believe it is important to express themselves and who they are.

Figure 4.2 shows a great example of an activity I did in class that got students talking about their interests and what their cultural games are about. Giving students a voice in the class is what it's all about. Letting them feel empowered and giving them the right tools to succeed. Allow learning to come from the students and find a matter that impacts their lives, as well as how they are being taught. Expressing themselves through physical activity is a great tool that physical educators can use. During online learning, it was hard to play the games but learning different games from cultures and how to play them was an inspiration to me, and students seemed to enjoy listening to their peers share. Students felt more comfortable in the class and enjoyed this activity overall.

Observations

Figure 4.3

Field Supervisor Observation

Differentiation - There are no IEP students or 504 students in this class. Fitness routine will be culturally relevant / different each day, Weather conditions considered for allergies and movement from inside to outside facilities and safety.

Figure 4.3 shows how I was able to implement a culturally relevant curriculum throughout my fitness routines by having them be different every day. Within each day they are focused on various different activities. This seemed to work well with online learning and student engagement in the class. They seemed to like the variety of activities that were provided in class (Kickboxing, Tai Chi, Yoga). I could have done a better job at trying to implement a more culturally relevant curriculum when teaching, but it was a challenge during online learning. I need to grow from what I learned and start designing my lessons and assessments that reach all students.

Figure 4.4

Cooperative Teacher Observation

Culturally Relevant Content:

Cooperative Teacher: Mr. Gaylord does a great job at implementing diverse and inclusive fitness routines in the classroom that provide students with a range of choice. Mr. Gaylord incorporates culturally responsive teaching in each lesson he teaches by having a variety of activities and asking questions to better understand who his students are. It is a challenge when cameras are all off and students do not talk but he does a good job learning from what works and asking questions to better his understanding on important issues.

Figure 4.4 shows that my cooperative teacher observation tells me that I was able to have diverse and equitable lessons in the classroom. I was able to give students choices in the class on what to do and have them pick what they will be doing. This shows that I am growing as a teacher and learning different ways to incorporate culturally relevant curriculum in my lessons. It is still a challenge dealing with societal problems in a physical education class but I believe I am making the right steps to incorporating a culturally relevant curriculum into my everyday class.

Informal Assessment

Figure 4.5

Student Answer

What does inclusion mean to you?

Student 1: Inclusion to me is having the opportunity to express myself in things we do in class.

Being involved in activities or games that we do without sitting out.

Student 2: Being involved and accepted in the school and area that I live at. Not being bullied or left out but included in things we do all around campus.

Student 3: Just being a part of something. Not being left out. Example of this would be getting picked to play basketball. If I was not picked then that would be bad and the opposite of inclusion.

Figure 4.5 shows what my students felt when it came to inclusion in the class and what it means to them. This piece of evidence tells me that these three students have a good fundamental grasp of what inclusions are and some good examples of them. This shows me that my teaching

was focused on inclusion and a safe environment. This goes back to my question on culturally relevant curriculum. This needs to happen by having students feel safe and respected in the classroom to then focus on themselves as individuals and what impacts their life. I know my lesson plans and assessments were meaningful and diverse to meet the needs of my students.

Figure 4.6

Student Answers

Did I implement a culturally relevant curriculum throughout the school year and if so what did I do?

Student 1: I felt that you did a great job at implementing a culturally relevant curriculum in the classroom. Mr. Gaylord allowed us to express ourselves in ways many teachers did not. We were allowed to do exercises we wanted and dig more into exercises in our own culture.

Student 2: During online learning and zoom meetings, it was hard to implement culturally relevant curriculum into the classroom. One thing that Mr. Gaylord did was use the breakout rooms to connect with us. Everyday we would go into a breakout and work on an assignment but Mr. Gaylord made it a must for him to go see each one of us and talk about how we are and build that connection and make everyone feel at home.

Student 3: I did not know what culturally relevant curriculum was until Mr. Gaylord explained it to me. Other classes were doing a poor job at using this into the classroom. Mr. Gaylord used this throughout his fitness routines he had us do. He asked us what activities we do at home and had us explain it to the class. He made us feel wanted which was awesome.

Figure 4.6 shows students' response to the question of how I did with implementing culturally relevant curriculum in my classroom with examples provided of how. The students picked examples that I did in class and shared them with me. I defined what a culturally relevant curriculum is in the beginning because many students had no idea what that term meant. Some

examples used in class were the fitness routines that had activities in which students wanted to do. I used breakout rooms to connect with students for a more one-on-one level. I allowed students to dig into their own culture as well as what games they play. By doing all of this in the classroom the students seemed to be more engaged and active all around. When the content revolves around the students then learning can be implemented into the class.

Data Analysis: Theme #2

Table 4.0 Data sources for research question 2

How can I implement scaffolding throughout my teaching that works best for my student's individual needs?

Description	Examples
<p>Lesson Plans: Lesson plans worked great for this because I was able to say exactly what I was going to do in my lesson to reach all my students and what strategies I would use. For my students a lot of the strategies were the same but being online it was hard sometimes to see if they actually had an outcome on their learning.</p> <p>Observation: This form of data worked perfectly because I got to see if what I was saying in my lesson plans was used in my actual teaching. Was I implementing scaffolding and how did this work for students? How did this impact my teaching and improve my support for students?</p> <p>Informal Assessment: This form of data was great because I got to hear firsthand from my students if what I was doing helped them in the class. If the different support systems used in class impacted their learning.</p>	<p>Lesson Plans: These showed the exact support strategies I was giving to my students like extra time to work on assignments, more one-on-one support from the teacher in breakout rooms, and modifications to the fitness routines so that students who have physical limitations or struggle doing activities can participate.</p> <p>Observation: These show what exactly I was doing in the class to support students from the eyes of the cooperative teacher and field supervisor. Supports like helping students find assignments in Canvas focus on individual development in the class, and different ways to communicate with students through the chat box or microphone.</p> <p>Informal Assessment: These interviews focused on the individual of the students and if I was able to help them in the class. Out of the 3 students, 2 said that they felt that their</p>

	<p>needs were met in class and the other student said that they wished to have more options on assignments. Have a variety of assignments instead of just 1 all the time.</p>
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Code	Definition
<p>Extra Time One-on-One Inclusion Modification</p>	<p>Items were coded as "Extra Time, One-on-One, Inclusion, and Modification" if they fit into the multitude of teaching strategies used in our physical education class. I define extra time as providing students with more time while working on assignments during the class. Do not rush students to finish because some may need that additional time to get their work finished. I define one-on-one time as providing extra support with individual students. This is where an IA would come in handy where they can spend that time with that student. Have your office hours be open so you can have that one-on-one time with that student. I define inclusion as being involved in the classroom and having equal access and opportunities as every other student. I define modification as providing different variations for physical exercise that students do in class. These are different ways of doing the activity that best fits their needs.</p>

Lesson Plans

Figure 4.7

Strategies from Lesson Plans

Strategies and opportunities for supporting academic language:

Content will be differentiated in order to connect with the variety of learning styles. I will have a transcript of the zoom call going so if people have hearing disability they can follow along with that. I will ask questions to engage students learning and they can either type in the chat or unmute their microphone. We will have break out rooms available if students need help or extra time to work. I will also have audio and video clips for testing for students to choose from. This will be linked in the powerpoints. I will provide extra time for the students who need it when doing the fitness testing. I will also go over different modifications for students who may need it due to injury, or a disability.

Figure 4.7 shows an example from one of my lesson plans that goes over the many different strategies I used during my online class. These strategies helped me better connect with students and see the advantages of having a support system in place. Some of the strategies I used were the use of breakout rooms for providing extra time to work. I went over modifications for students with any physical disabilities. We have a student with a hearing disability so we have a transcript of the zoom call for that student. All the support systems played a huge role in increasing engagement and learning in the classroom. Students seemed to want to be there and want to learn. Being that support system for the students really helped me grow as a future teacher, as well as ensure my students' needs were met.

Observations

Figure 4.8

Observation from Cooperative Teacher

Are lessons sequenced and scaffolded appropriately?

Mr. Gaylord showed students where to find assignments and how to complete the assignments. He offered help by having students comment in the chat or with their mic. Mr. Gaylord provided appropriate time for students to complete the assignments and was able to check progress using Canvas and student's responses. Mr. Gaylord helped students practice checking their pulse on their neck and wrist prior to doing this on their own in the fitness routine.

Figure 4.8 shows an observation from my cooperating teacher of how I was able to apply teaching strategies to my classroom. My cooperative teacher watched me teach in person and wrote the paragraph above about her observations of my teaching. One strategy that I wanted to focus on was providing extra time to students and in Figure 4.8 it shows that exactly. I gave students extra time to complete assignments and provided help/ elaboration to students to ensure overall higher grades. During this lesson, I was able to use a wide variety of different strategies to support my students and improve their overall learning in the class.

Informal Assessment**Figure 4.9****Students Answers**

What strategies worked best for you in the classroom?

Student 1: One strategy that worked best for me this quarter was having additional help time near the end of class. I struggle with assignments so having that time to get one-on-one help was very beneficial to me.

Student 2: A strategy that helped me was having extra time in the class to take the quizzes. It takes a little longer for me to process stuff so being able to not stress on the time aspect helped me.

Student 3: Mr. Gaylord was able to have modifications written out on the fitness routines for me to do just in case I was not able to do the original way.

Figure 4.9 shows the informal observation I did with my students where they answered the question on what strategies worked best for them in the class. As the figure states, each student was able to receive meaningful help/support in the classroom in many different ways. One of the main ones that I noticed throughout this example and many others were providing extra time on assignments or quizzes. It was not fair for me to give a time slot of when to finish assignments/ quizzes, so allowing flexibility in this area reduced students' stress and anxiety in the class. I gave additional help to some students in breakout rooms or after class as well. This way they can get that one-on-one feedback and connection. Lastly, I was able to provide modifications for students if they had any type of injuries or physical limitations. All these strategies that were given showed how students were engaged and supported by myself in the class. I believed I did a great job at meeting most students' needs in my class.

Data Analysis: Theme #3

Table 5.0 Data sources for research question 3

How can we as teachers use autonomy in our classroom to maximize

students' learning and engagement?

Description	Examples
<p>Lesson Plans: Lesson plans were a great form of data used for theme 3 because I was able to show how I used autonomy in my lesson plans and how it can impact students' learning and engagement. It was hard to give much autonomy during online learning but I was able to show examples and provide choices to my students.</p> <p>Observations: Observations were a great form of data because I was able to get instant feedback from my cooperative teacher and field supervisors focused on giving autonomy to students. They were able to see me teach what I wrote and how it worked in a classroom.</p> <p>Informal Assessment: This was used to see exactly how students were feeling about autonomy and having freedom in the classroom. This worked great because I got to reflect on my own teaching and how I changed students' lives.</p>	<p>Lesson Plan: This was shown in specific parts of the lesson plan under what students do and the teacher does. I provided examples of specific activities that I gave out that focused on student choice in the classroom. They can choose what variation of the exercise they want to do. They can choose how long to work out for and what they are working out for, but as long as it follows with the desired skill/outcome in class.</p> <p>Observations: The data from observation focuses on seeing if I used autonomy in class and the impact it had on students from a cognitive domain/psychomotor domain. My CT and field supervisor both were looking at how students reacted to being given a choice and seeing how it changed their way of learning in the class. They found that students who were given more freedom to choose felt more comfortable and engaged at a higher rate.</p> <p>Informal Assessment: I asked students a range of questions trying to see where they were at this quarter and how autonomy played a factor in their learning. I found that giving choice to them increases their engagement and they had a lot more fun in the class. They told me that a lot of teachers do not give them the</p>

	ability to choose stuff in the classroom but my physical education they loved because it was more centered around the individual student.
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Code	Definition
Student Choice Engagement Freedom	Items were coded as "Student Choice, Engagement, and freedom" if they followed the principles of autonomy. I define student choice as giving students the opportunity in class to choose how they can learn but still having the desired outcome/skill in place. I define engagement as having students participate in class in activities/discussions. I define freedom as giving space and availability for students to select what they want to select.

Lesson Plans

Figure 5.0

Autonomy in Lesson

Teaching OR Group OR
Independent Application:

The teacher will send students to a breakout room with a partner to talk about activities that they do at home. They will discuss this for about 1 minute for each partner and then come back and share with the class what your partner said.

The goal here is for students to get other ideas from peers and also have students dig into their activity life at home and see what different games/sports/activities people do.

Teaching OR Group OR
Independent Application:

Students will share their activities they do at home with a peer for 1 minute. Then they will listen to their partner and share back to the class what activity their partner does.

Students will start to gather ideas of different activities to do for our project we have on learning about a different sport.

Figure 5 shows how autonomy plays a large role in a physical education classroom. This lesson was during online learning and the objective was to get the students thinking of games/activities that they want/ can do at home. I wanted to get a good grasp on what students were able to do so I could give them more opportunities for choice in the class for their own workouts. This lesson plan shows what the teacher will be doing and also what the student will be doing in the class. I used breakout rooms for students to work with a partner and I saw engagement and overall learning increase once they start interacting with their peers. Autonomy is huge for student growth and development because allowing them to have a sense of freedom in their learning while still having the desired outcome is beneficial.

Observations

Figure 5.1

Cooperative Teacher Observation

Mr. Gaylord's use of autonomy in the classroom

Cooperative Teacher: Mr. Gaylord did a fabulous job when it comes to giving the students options/choices in the classroom. The fitness routines had modifications/variations of different ways to do the exercises in the class. Students also got to design a personal fitness plan where they decide what exercises they want to do. Giving them the option to choose work greatly based on grades and engagement in the class. Some classes were quiet depending on the day but Mr. Gaylord always had a positive attitude and was very passionate about physical education and teaching.

Figure 5.1 shows an observation from my cooperative teacher about how I was able to implement autonomy in my classroom. She goes over some details of how I did this and the impact it had on students' learning. She first mentions the fitness routines were modified so that students could choose different variations of the skill/task. Students also got to design their own

personal fitness plan which they picked their own workouts to do in their plan. Giving them choices really changed their grades and engagement in the class. Students seemed to want to do their workouts and were talking more and more as the class progressed. Physical education is a great opportunity for me when it comes to autonomy and the many different ways we can go about this.

Informal Assessment

Figure 5.2

Student Answers

How did your engagement and learning change by having more freedom in the class?

Student 1: I feel like by having more freedom in the class I was able to express myself as a person and be more comfortable in the class. I was able to meet new people and learning was made fun

Student 2: My learning was improved by having more freedom in the class. I was not restricted in my learning but felt free to show Mr. Gaylord, what I knew and who I was. |

Student 3: The class was quiet at times but when I was in the breakout room with Mr. Gaylord I felt comfortable and free to enjoy. I stress out a lot but this class was not stressful to me at all.

Figure 5.2 shows an informal assessment given to the students that focus on engagement and learning in the class when given more freedom. The evidence shows that students seemed to be more engaged in their learning and discussion when freedom was given to them by the teacher. Student 1 was able to express themselves more in class and was able

to meet new people. Student 2 felt free in the class as if nothing was holding them back and they could express themselves to me. Student 3 felt less stressed and had some nice talks with me in the breakout rooms. That is what my main goal is. I strive for students to feel wanted and that we as teachers care for each and every student. Overall, students' ability to learn and have fun in class at the same time was amazing to see and I cannot wait to be back in person fully so we can do many more fun activities.

Conclusion

In reviewing all the data that was collected from my lesson plans, field observation notes, and informal assessments one key factor that kept coming up was inclusions and how all three of my themes were centered around that. For theme 1 I learned that my lesson plans for physical education class were culturally relevant and this was based on student data from my fitness routines and my actual teaching of equity and diversity. When looking at theme 2 I learned many different strategies that supported my students both during zoom calls and in-person. Two strategies that kept coming up were extra time on assignments and one-on-one support from the teacher. These are what maximized students' learning and engagement in the class. Looking at theme 3 I learned how important the role of autonomy plays in a student's life and the impact it has on their learning. Given more freedom in the class will lead to more student engagement and make learning fun for them. Each of these three themes had one major talking point that kept coming up: inclusion, and equity.

Making sure all students have the same opportunities as others to succeed in the classroom and feel welcomed when entering is the most important part of my class. Chapter 5 will be looking over the whole study and giving closure on my three themes and what it means.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of my action research project was to answer my research questions and to understand and improve my overall teaching practice. I focused on looking at culturally relevant curriculum in my practices, I looked at different strategies to use in my teaching to support students, and how autonomy can play a factor in my classroom. These focuses were crucial in what I wanted to learn and understand throughout my project and teaching. Throughout my studies, I ran into many different factors that were out of my control like Covid and school district restrictions. Through these tough times accrued I feel that the data gathered were both useful and helpful in distinguishing my overall teaching. I learned that the many different teaching strategies and autonomy that were used in my lesson plans, and teaching worked greatly to increase student engagement and maximize their learning. One thing that the data showed that could use some improvement was having a culturally relevant curriculum in my lessons. During distance learning, it was challenging to incorporate this when no cameras were on and we could not do activities like we would in the classroom. I felt that I did a good job at including some culturally responsive teaching through my fitness routines and inclusion in class but I can improve on that aspect of learning how to do this in a physical education setting. Next, I will look at some implications of my action research project.

Current & Future Implications

This action research project has opened a window into my own study and who I want to be as a teacher. Reflecting on my own teaching can help me improve in areas that need to be

improved on. This data collected shows how many of the teaching strategies and autonomy can impact a student's life and learning in the classroom. I would've liked to dig deeper into culturally responsive teaching but current circumstances helped me back. Inclusions and fairness are what strives me as an educator and to do better every day. Teachers can take my findings and use them in their own practices for physical education. They can create a safe environment for their students to learn and feel comfortable every day in class and know that they are welcomed. Next, I will look at my action research strengths and limitations.

Strengths

My action research had many strengths that I am proud of, especially during comprehensive distance learning. One strength that comes to mind was my data collection and the evidence that I gathered. I used my lesson plans, observations, and informal assessments from students. These forms of data helped me answer my research questions thoroughly and overall reflect on myself as a teacher and my philosophy. Another strength that I had in my project was the support I had in my classroom from my students that were in the study, and my cooperating teacher. Without them, my study would not have been successful. The students provided me with helpful data and support that overall impacted my teaching.

Limitations

This action research project was conducted by one physical education class at the high school level. A limitation here was that it was only one classroom of about 15 students. Not a big number of students but there was still some great information to be claimed. Another limitation that I faced during this action research project was balancing my work schedule with my project

during the graduate program. It really had me focus on what each day was going to look like and I would break down what I needed to do which helped me with scheduling and planning.

Another limitation was that this was at the high school level and not at the others. Some of the strategies that were talked about could be used in other grade levels but this was solely conducted by high schoolers.

A big limitation that I faced this year was Covid-19 and having to do school all online. This limited me in not being able to see students and get that interaction that I wanted. Inclusion was a big part of my study and it was challenging to see this take place when every day on zoom nobody has their cameras on or type in the chat. Everything I learned about physical education and teaching strategies was hard to implement online which made it difficult to teach. I had to learn a whole new system and adapt. I learned how to use Canvas, Zoom, and other online systems. Covid-19 had both students and teachers struggling to find answers, but being able to adapt and grow as an individual and teacher was my biggest accomplishment from this time.

My Philosophy

When looking back at the past four chapters my philosophy of education has stayed the same. I have experienced many different ideas of teaching and learning but my overall understanding and way to go about it has always been consistent. This is backed up with what my data was showing in chapter 4. Being able to have an inclusive, safe environment for my students is critical to maximize their learning and understanding of the content. Learning should be fun and easy and it is my job as a teacher to provide an atmosphere that is acceptable of all students. What I gathered from my data is that students learn better when they have support from peers and teachers. Having strategies in place to help my students is key for their learning and

overall engagement in the class. Another major part of my philosophy which focuses on autonomy was looked at in my research. I wanted to see how it changed students' engagement and learning in a class. From my experience having freedom and being able to choose had a great impact on my learning as a student but I wanted to see how it impacted others. I found out that it had the same impact on others as it did on me. This was great to see because I knew that autonomy was a major strategy used in education but being able to see it played out and the many different ways that it can be played out was awesome to witness.

Conclusions

In conclusion, my action research project was grounded on research questions that focused on gathering qualitative data. These data gatherings were focused on lesson plans, observations, and informal assessments. I assumed evidence from these to answer my questions that focus on culturally relevant curriculum, scaffolding, and autonomy. What I have learned and reflected upon was the impact that autonomy and many different teaching strategies had on students' lives. This was shown throughout the three data sources and it impacts students' engagement and overall willingness to learn. A culturally relevant curriculum was shown throughout my lesson plans on becoming more diverse in the way I teach, but it was a challenge when doing online learning because many of the activities that I would normally do have to be in-person. I learned that in order to become a more culturally responsive teacher I need to expand my knowledge and understanding of activities and real-world problems and incorporate this into my physical education class throughout my lesson plans and assessments. Working on this will impact my overall teaching and make me become a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable teacher.

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Appendix A

Name: _____

Date: _____

In a couple sentences, answer the following questions

1. What does inclusion mean to you?

A:

2. Did I implement a culturally relevant curriculum throughout the school year and if so what did I do?

A:

3. What strategies worked best for you in the classroom?

A:

4. How did your engagement and learning change by having more freedom in the class?

A: