

**“How I Improved My Teaching Practice In
Grade 9 Boys’ Physical Education
To Increase Students’ Participation
And Enjoyment”**

by
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate how I can improve my teaching practice in Grade 9 boys' physical education to increase students' participation and enjoyment. By investigating my own practice, my hope was to improve the quality of my instruction and the physical education program. The rising number of health problems in today's youth related to a sedentary lifestyle, makes it critical that they develop an appreciation for physical activity.

This action research included strategic planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and re-planning. Journal entries, audio recordings and student questionnaires that investigated their level of enjoyment and participation were analyzed. Participants included myself, a fellow teacher, and a physical education class of thirty-three Grade 9 boys. I taught this particular class for 5 weeks in order to perform the proposed research. Data were analyzed using the following methods; coding, memos, and summarizing the data. "Triangulation" of multiple sources of data was used to confirm the findings.

The findings revealed both strengths and areas for growth in my teaching practice. The action research process improved my teaching, especially in the areas of planning, acting, and reflection. The results suggested that this group's level of enjoyment increased when students were given freedom to choose activities, when they were adequately challenged by someone of similar ability, when they received encouragement, and when they did not misbehave. The findings revealed that free play and game situations, novelty, fast-paced lessons, equal play time, skill evaluation, orderly use of equipment, and plenty of gymnasium space improved students' enjoyment and participation. The implications of this study support a need for the ongoing practice of action research among teachers and a need for further investigations to identify how educators can increase student enjoyment and participation.

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Note. All of the researcher's personal information such as telephone number and email address has been removed from all documents to protect the researcher's right to privacy. Also removed was any information that would compromise the confidentiality of others.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance of the Research Problem

Sometimes during one of my physical education classes, I will look over to the side of the gym wall where a row of students in street clothes are sitting on a long bench, watching as their classmates enjoy an organized game or sport. It saddens me to see part of the class having so much fun, while others sit off to the side as spectators, not participating in that day's physical activity. As a teacher, I wish I could motivate all my students to participate fully every day, so that they could get the most out of the program. When I look over at that bench, I begin to wonder if my level of instruction is strong enough to reach these students and to instill an appreciation for physical activities and fitness.

For some of these pupils, physical education class may be the only source of physical activity in their lives. This makes my job as a physical educator extremely important. With the increase in time young people spend watching television, playing computer games, and surfing the Internet, there is very little time left to engage in productive physical exercise. It appears our present society is creating a lifestyle that encourages obesity in young people. For example, Amos (2001) explains that research reported through the media by both national and provincial health promotion agencies continually describes youth as being more obese and less physically active than children 20 to 40 years ago. As a result, kids may be on their way to heart disease, osteoporosis and diabetes if the trend continues. It is critical therefore, that different levels of government, including health and education ministers, work together to increase the amount and quality of physical education in schools.

In reality, this is not happening. A recent article in the Toronto Star reveals that many parents rely on schools to provide their children with the required amount of daily physical

activity, but cuts to education have forced several schools to actually reduce the amount of physical education taught in class (Grewal, April 6, 2002, p. A27). It is also common knowledge among physical education teachers in my school board that a number of schools across Canada have either stopped offering or decreased the number of extra-curricular activities. This presents a significant problem to both teachers and students of physical education classes. From a teacher's perspective, there is continuous pressure to whip the youngsters of today into adequate physical shape, but fewer opportunities to do so. From a student's perspective, there is continuous pressure to become physically fit, but fewer opportunities to do so at school. Thus, what I do during the time of my physical education classes has a huge impact on the well-being of my students. I can motivate unmotivated students to become interested so they may change their attitude toward physical fitness and carry a positive approach into adulthood. I can reinforce and encourage already-motivated students to continue to excel in an active and healthy lifestyle. "In a society where technology is ever present and healthy living habits are more and more a matter of individual choice, quality health and physical education is not a luxury, but an absolute necessity" (Deshaises, 2000, p. 10).

Again, if I could get more students off the bench and onto the gym floor, they may experience greater pleasure and satisfaction in the class. I would also believe I was making a contribution to the students' well being. As Cai (1998) states, "Enjoyment of class is the positive attribute of student emotion as well as the key factor that relates to teaching effectiveness" (p.412). Simply put, what I do in the physical education class should promote maximum participation and enjoyment.

Research Question

The purpose of this action research study was to investigate the question, “How can I improve my teaching practice in Grade 9 boys’ physical education to increase students’ participation and enjoyment.” Teaching practice includes the planning and implementation of instruction and activities. By researching this question, my objective was to shape my instruction and the physical education program so that my students will enjoy and participate in physical activity.

Theoretical Framework

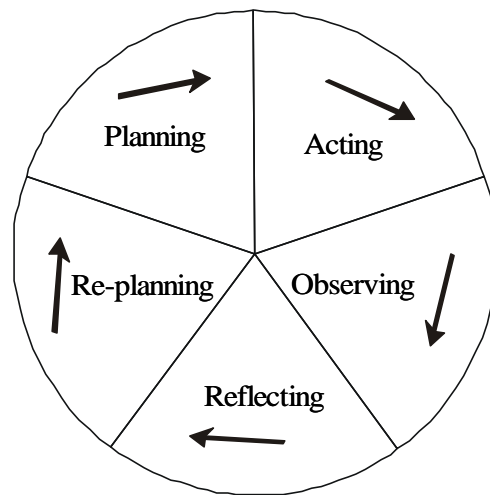
I considered the literature on physical education and applied various teaching techniques to examine and improve my praxis. Praxis refers to the “inseparability of theory and practice”, which contrasts the objectives approach, and “encourages teachers to be inventive and reflective”(Kirk and Tinning, 1992, p.1). Hopper (1996) provides an even more powerful definition as he states that praxis occurs when “...an individual construes a more enabling sense of the reality of his or her own existence and the existence of others” and that praxis serves “to liberate practitioners from the constraints that limit their practice” (p. 5).

It was also my intent to examine my practice using action research as the basis of my investigation. In essence, action research is something many teachers employ as a tool to improve practice. Hopper (1996) described action research “as an ongoing process in which practitioners develop their practice collaboratively with other practitioners” (p. 4). Hopper identified different phases to action research that progress and continue in a cyclical pattern (see Figure 1). The first phase involves *planning*, which is designed to implement teacher intents and address concerns from past lessons. The second phase requires *acting* on the plan. The third phase deals with *observing* while the plan is being acted upon. It entails self-observation as well

as the presence of a colleague who watches as the lesson is being taught. The fourth phase includes the teacher and observer in a *reflecting* session based on the experiences of the lesson. The fifth phase, *re-planning*, completes the cycle and is a result of the work that has transpired over the first four phases. In most cases, this re-planning phase will create a revised or new plan based on new concerns.

Figure 1

Hopper's Phases of Action Research



Tinning (1992) reported that there are very few action research studies within physical education. This may be the case because physical education has tended to rely on a positivistic approach to validate and give credibility to research findings (Hopper, 1996). These approaches typically involve a theoretical construct or hypothesis that can be examined through the collection of quantitative data. This research involved a mixed approach using both quantitative

data regarding students' participation and enjoyment and qualitative data regarding my own observations and reflections and those of my critical friend. My attraction to action research is that it focuses on naturally-occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, and enables the teacher to gain a better understanding of what "real life" is like (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

From a more individual perspective, McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) contended that well-conducted action-research can lead to personal development, better professional practice, improvements in school, and making a contribution to the good of society (p.8). They described what I as an educator strive to do each day.

This study was related to the research conducted by Aicinena (1991) who examined several factors that contribute to students' enjoyment of physical education and the effect the teacher has on their attitudes. The results of his research were informed by questionnaires, critical incident reports, and personal interviews. Similar to his work, this research study investigated several factors related to student enjoyment and participation. Whereas Aicinena studied a wide variety of subjects, this study was limited to boys in Grade 9 with a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities. Data for this research paper was collected quantitatively and qualitatively through attendance and participation records as well as questionnaires and journal entries. Also, the focus of the study was on myself, not the students. Data was collected related to some of Aicinena's factors (such as teacher behavior and attitude) for the purpose of seeing the impact of the changes I made in my practice.

The elements of students' participation and enjoyment were vital parts of this research. In fact, one of the assumptions of this study was that enjoyment and participation are inter-related. Current theories support this assumption. As one journal article (George P. Vanier School, 1999) indicates:

When students are encouraged to participate in an activity and gain appropriate skills through experience, it is more likely that they will learn to enjoy the activity as well. And this increases the probability that they will continue to participate in similar activities in the future (p.29).

It is safe to assume, therefore, that participation and enjoyment do go hand in hand. Students cannot enjoy physical activity if they are not willing to participate. Conversely, if a pupil chooses not to participate, the level of enjoyment cannot be measured.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents information from current literature that relates to physical education practice. It begins with a look into the present day health concerns of children and supplies data that shows an alarming increase in childhood obesity and the related health risks that result from physical inactivity. This leads to discussion of the value of physical education in combating childhood obesity and promoting a healthy, active lifestyle. Next is a focus on the specific role of the physical education teacher and teaching strategies that instill in students an appreciation of physical activities. The chapter concludes with a review of the literature surrounding physical education programming specifically at the secondary school level.

Health Issues Related to Children

More children are obese or overweight than ever before. In fact, the prevalence of obesity in 12 to 17 year olds has doubled over the last 30 years (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1996). This is of great concern because obesity in children is a significant cardiovascular disease risk factor, and the risk continues into adolescence and adulthood if it is not checked during these phases of life. A recent article in the National Post stated that “today’s children could be grappling with heart disease before their teenage years are even finished” (Friscolanti, October 27, 2003, p. AL1). Similarly, during the last decade, there has been a great deal of concern over the inactivity of today’s youth and the potential health risks of this type of lifestyle (Pangrazi, Corbin, & Dale, 1999, and Baranowski, Thompson, Durant, Baranowski, & Puhl, 1993). Those who are inactive in their teenage years especially, compromise optimal bone formation increasing both the risk and severity of osteoporosis in later life (Pangrazi et al., 1999).

Conversely, regular physical activity has significant health benefits. Even a moderate increase in physical activity has been shown to reduce chronic disease risks including hypertension, type 2 diabetes, high blood lipids, and cardiovascular disease (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996).

The Value of Physical Education

Research has also shown that physical activity habits learned as a child are predictors of whether or not a particular individual will lead a healthy active life as an adult (Summerfield, 2000; Raitakari et al., 1994). Such findings make the promotion of physical activity among children imperative. Physical education in schools is an ideal avenue to encourage physical activity and develop fitness among youth because, for many children, school will be their only preparation for an active, healthy lifestyle (Summerfield, 2000). The value of quality physical education in school cannot be emphasized too strongly:

Physical education offers many benefits: development of motor skills needed for enjoyable participation in physical activities; promotion of physical fitness; increased energy expenditure; and promotion of positive attitudes toward an active lifestyle. Evidence also exists that physical education may enhance academic performance, self-concept, and mental health (Allensworth, Lawson, Nicholson, & Wyche, 1997).

It is clear that promoting physical activity may have a significant impact on decreasing obesity, chronic disease, and untimely adult mortality.

Teaching Physical Education that Promotes a Physically Active Lifestyle

As a teacher, working with students in a physical education class can be much different from working with them in extra-curricular activities or recreation leagues. Mitchell and Chandler (1993) wrote, "While participation in youth sports is usually a matter of free choice,

this is not always the case for students in physical education” (p.120). In Ontario’s secondary schools, for example, it is mandatory for students to complete a physical education course irrespective of whether or not they wish to participate. The majority of pupils choose to earn this credit in Grade 9. As a teacher, this may be the final opportunity to spark a child’s interest in living a physically active lifestyle. Thus, the variables that drive a person’s motivation to participate must be considered.

One of the greatest challenges for a physical education teacher is to create and foster a positive attitude toward physical activity among students. As Wade (2000) explained:

A child’s attitude towards activity is one that cannot be taken lightly. It is so important that children understand that the choices they make and attitudes they develop now relating to physical activity will affect those that they make as adults. Giving children the opportunity to be active is a start, but by assisting in the motivational process and ensuring that they have positive experiences so that they will want to continue to be active is even more paramount (p.38).

The goal of creating positive student attitudes toward physical activity should take precedence over other goals in developing and implementing physical education programs. In the same article, Wade (2000) revealed some of these goals:

We must ensure that the opportunities that we provide our students with will result in the ability to participate, learn skills, play fair and promote fitness. But most of all, we must ensure students develop a motivation to become active on a daily basis that results in such enjoyment and satisfaction that they will naturally carry on with these positive habits throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood (p. 38).

While student participation and enjoyment are paramount, other goals identified by Wade - learning skills, playing fair, and promoting fitness - are important, not only in their own right but also as contributors to improving participation and enjoyment.

Mandigo and Thompson (1998) introduced the concept of a “flow state” (defined as a person’s motivation to do something) and how it intrinsically motivates young people to be

physically active. Their study explained that fun (a flow state) is one of the most common motives cited by adolescents for partaking in sports (p.154). It is crucial that physical education students perceive their experiences in physical education classes as enjoyable. Enjoyment of physical education by students is a direct result of the environment created by the teacher.

Mandigo and Thompson found that:

Physical activity environments which provide children with a sense of perceived freedom or choice to modify their environment so that the challenges match their individual skill level are more likely to produce flow experiences than environments which are very structured or controlled by others and cause a low perception of control (p.154).

It would appear then, that a student's perception of his/her skill level is a strong motivator for enjoyment and participation.

Deshaises (2000) identified 3 factors that lead to a physically active lifestyle. Firstly, enjoyment plays a key role in instilling a lifelong appreciation for leading a physically active lifestyle. Secondly, knowledge and values must be acquired throughout students' school experience to help them develop positive attitudes and habits. Lastly, confidence and competence in physical activity should be established so that health habits can be developed and maintained.

There is no doubt that the type and quality of instruction provided by the teacher has a direct effect on students' learning. The meta-analysis of sixteen individual research studies that was conducted by Goldring and Tenenbaum (1989) supported this concept. They specifically looked at instruction based on the instructional cues provided to the student, the student's participation and involvement in the learning activity, the reinforcement the student received from the teacher, and the feedback supplied by instructors for error correction.

In a later analysis, Behets (1997) broke down the role of teaching a physical education class into two parts: active learning time and instruction time. He concluded that "effective

teaching is characterized by a lot of practice time and limited instruction and management... physical education is 'learning by doing'" (p.215). While this can be helpful information to physical educators, it does not offer strategies for improving student participation. Also, the preceding studies did not take into account the physical ability or skill level of a student. It is essential to note that because "some students lack confidence in their ability to perform motor skills, physical educators must become proficient at encouraging and reinforcing student involvement in activities that lead to competent performance" (Misner and Arbogast, 1990, p.54). Students' perceptions of their ability and their involvement in physical education are interconnected. Therefore, it is essential that teachers create and implement lessons that provide opportunities for student success that results in maximum participation. As Aicinena (1991) indicated in his review, "If indeed teachers can affect student attitudes positively, great things can occur in our profession" (p.32).

Pangrazi et al. (1999) provided a study that summarized some of the key components of any physical education program. Their paper concluded that physical education programs should emphasize positive attitudes, feelings of competence, enjoyment in physical activity, and self-management skills because these factors lead to lifetime physical activity.

Teaching Physical Education at the Secondary School Level

Physical education courses that are successful in generating lasting, positive attitudes toward physical activity may exhibit certain similar characteristics. In fact, at the secondary level physical education has often been misunderstood by students. Some students respond negatively when running laps and exercise are used as a form of punishment (Pangrazi & Darst, 1991). Students may see physical education as a time for playing some type of sport on a daily basis with little or no structured teaching or learning taking place. Such perceptions often lead

many high school students to view physical education classes as a subject reserved only for athletic elites. It is unfortunate that these images of a secondary school physical education class exist in today's society. However, many secondary schools dispel these perceptions and provide physical education programs that create a positive, exciting experience for students (Pangrazi & Darst, 1991). Physical education can be viewed as a subject that increases knowledge and also affects attitudes and behaviors that promote physical activities.

As a physical educator, the hope is to instill attitudes in students that will motivate them to make physical activities an important part of their lifestyle. Pangrazi & Darst (1991) stated, "An important goal of a secondary school physical education program should be to help students incorporate physical activity into their lifestyles" (p. 3). This is especially important at the high school level because learners are at the age when they begin to make personal decisions about what they enjoy. The decisions they make are usually irreversible and could last a lifetime.

This presents a great challenge for physical education programs that focus on the adolescent learner. Not only is this age group starting to make important life choices, but they are also at an age when they are sensitive to the many barriers that may negatively affect their attitudes toward physical education. Aicinena (1991) reported that a sample exclusively of high school males indicated unfavorable attitudes toward physical education because large class sizes and crowded conditions were bothersome. As a result, many teenage boys may decide to discontinue their involvement in physical activities while in secondary school.

Thus, it is important to offer secondary school students a physical education program that minimizes the chances of creating negative attitudes toward physical activities. Even as early as Grade 9, certain factors will determine whether or not a pupil will continue participating in physical activities. In a study of Grade 9 students, Allison, Dwyer and Makin (1999) found that "self-efficacy (the degree of confidence one has in being able to perform a behavior) ... is

predictive of physical activity participation” (p. 12). Providing an atmosphere that promotes a high degree of self-efficacy would create positive, lasting attitudes toward physical education. If this can be accomplished when adolescents begin secondary school, it sets the stage for fostering an even greater appreciation for physical activities throughout their high school years and into adulthood.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains how the research question was investigated and why particular methods and techniques were employed. A description of the context of the study is given first. This is followed by details of the research participants and the nature of the program. Ethical considerations are presented next. Also included in this section is information regarding the data collection process, and how data was analyzed. Lastly, the topic of verification of the findings is described.

The Context of the Study

This study took place in an urban Catholic secondary school with an approximate enrollment of 1300 students. It is located in a southwestern Ontario city. The majority of pupils come from middle to upper class socio-economic backgrounds. A small percentage of students come from farming communities.

The study took place in the Grade 9 physical education course. The course is comprised of units lasting approximately two and a half weeks each (the school runs on a semester system) with once a week “fitness” days mixed into these units. Each unit involves physical activities and skill development related to a specific game or sport. Fitness days engage students in fitness activities not related to the specific units. They often include activities such as weight lifting, running, and stationary exercises (sit-ups, push-ups etc.). These days also offer opportunities for pupils to play active sports they normally do not get the chance to do in the course such as wrestling.

I analyzed my own changes in planning and teaching while working with a class of Grade 9 boys, aged 13 to 15 years, during the following two ten-class units of the physical education course:

- low organizational games (LOG) unit; and
- badminton unit.

These two units were chosen over other units because they occurred at a point in the semester when I could devote ample time to record and analyze data.

Research Participants

The purpose of this action research was to investigate and improve my own teaching practice (McNiff, Lomax, & Whitehead, 1996; McNiff, 1998). Thus, I was the subject of my own research. Other participants in the study were the 33 Grade 9 boys in the physical education class. I borrowed this particular class from a colleague for approximately 5 weeks in order to perform the proposed research.

A fellow teacher also participated in the research. In order to help analyze the data and validate my findings, this colleague served as a critical friend (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996). He is referred to under the pseudonym “John” in this research paper. John is a colleague I trust to work with me in a supportive way and someone who shares my values about the importance of student participation and enjoyment. As a critical friend, John observed my teaching, provided feedback, and reviewed my data, findings, and conclusions. He visited the gym during every lesson as I taught and recorded what he saw in the class. Throughout the research, we compared notes and worked collaboratively to plan and re-plan the lessons. In some classes, we also team taught, each of us taking half the students and teaching separate lessons.

Nature of the Program

The classes were held in the high school gymnasium, fitness room, weight room, indoor track and school yard. The materials required were those supplied by the school and needed to enhance my instruction. Specifically, the equipment that was used during the LOG unit included foam dodge balls, nets, pylons, indoor soccer balls, basketballs, floor mats, hockey sticks, and tennis balls. The majority of this unit took place in half the high school gym (a moving cloth wall divides the gym into two areas, each the size of a typical elementary school gym). One of the classes for this unit was held outside, in the school yard, using the basketball court and bus area.

The majority of my instruction occurred from 10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m., during the third period of the day. Table 1 provides specific dates, times and key activities for each class of the LOG unit. An ongoing focus of the Grade 9 course is fitness and, as a result, four of the twenty lessons occurred in the school's weight room and/or fitness room. The two rooms are adjacent to each other. The weight room contains several free weights and machines while the fitness room is an open space with a large floor mat that covers the entire floor.

I used a variety of teaching strategies during the two units. Some of these included organizing class members according to ability level, implementing skill-specific drills, running tournaments, and providing "real" game situations.

Table 1

Details of Low Organizational Games Unit

Date (2002)	Time	Key Activities Conducted
Day 1 – November 13th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-different varieties of dodge ball
Day 2 – November 14th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-continued with dodge ball

Day 3 – November 15th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-personal workout in weight room
Day 4 – November 18th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-walked laps on indoor track -whole class involved in indoor baseball
Day 5 – November 19th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-European handball with pylons as nets
Day 6 – November 20th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-outdoor basketball and street hockey
Day 7 – November 21st	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-indoor basketball
Day 8 – November 22nd	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-team teaching, high intensity warm up in fitness room followed by running indoor track and personal time in weight room
Day 9 – November 25th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-high intensity warm up in gym followed by indoor soccer
Day 10 – November 26th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-performed beep test, half the class at a time, followed by sit-ups and push-ups in fitness room

The materials required for the badminton unit included poles, nets, pylons, racquets, and shuttles. The majority of this unit took place in the entire space of the high school gym. Table 2 provides specific dates, times, and key activities for each class of the badminton unit.

Table 2

Details of Badminton Unit

Date (2002)	Time	Key Activities Conducted
Day 11 – November 28th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-warm up of sprinting and push ups, modeled basic stance and positioning, free badminton play
Day 12 – November 29th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-5 laps around indoor track, personal routine in weight room
Day 13 – December 2nd	12:04 p.m. to 1:19 p.m.	-badminton related warm-up, drills involving underhand clear
Day 14 – December 3rd	12:04 p.m. to 1:19 p.m.	-relays for warm up, drills involving overhead clear, game play
Day 15 – December 4th	12:04 p.m. to 1:19 p.m.	-badminton related warm up, modeled and discussed variety of skills and rules, game play
Day 16 – December 5th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-team teaching, half students performed fitness related activities in weight room while others played badminton games in half gym, students switched activities half way through class
Day 17 – December 9th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-badminton related warm-up, student demonstration of drop shot, game play

Day 18 – December 10th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-began doubles badminton tournament, teams set by randomly drawing names
Day 19 – December 12th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	-continued doubles badminton tournament
Day 20 – December 13th	10:44 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.	- written test, badminton game play in half gym, fitness activities in weight room

Ethical Considerations

The data collected was the kind any teacher might collect as part of his/her responsibility to ensure quality instruction and to assess student learning. However, the results of this study resulted in a research report for academic credit and, for this reason, an ethical review was required. Before beginning the research, I applied to Nipissing University's Ethical Review Committee for approval to conduct the study (see Appendix D). The committee approved the research on November 6, 2002 (see Appendix E). I also sent a letter to the district school board administration (see Appendix A) seeking permission to conduct the study. The school board superintendent granted approval.

The project and its expectations were described before the start of the first class in which data collection took place. Students were given an information/consent form (see Appendix B) to take home to their parents. Students returned the consent forms before data collection began. All parents gave permission for their children to participate in the study.

Participants were permitted to withdraw from the study (in terms of providing the response sheets) at any time without prejudice or penalty. Pseudonyms were used in the written research report to protect the identity of the students.

The data from the students were kept in strictest confidence. It was used only for the purpose of the research study and was kept in locked files. Data from and pertaining to students will be destroyed by shredding six months after the project is completed and approved by the university. I will retain my own lesson plans and reflections about my teaching for my own future use.

Data Collection

During the two units, I collected data about student participation by keeping track of attendance and noting the level of participation and student response in the classes. After each class, I gave each student in attendance a form and asked him to:

- record his level of enjoyment of the class on a scale of one to ten (one meaning he experienced a very low level of enjoyment and ten meaning he enjoyed the class immensely);
- indicate why he enjoyed/did not enjoy the class;
- provide reasons if he did not participate.

In addition, at the beginning and the end of the study, I asked the students to complete similar response forms about their enjoyment and participation in physical education and how it may have changed during the two units. Students handed in the completed forms anonymously.

The majority of the qualitative data consisted of my own lesson plans, observations and reflections on my own teaching, and notes on my critical friend's observations of my teaching. Observations and reflections were collected using two methods:

- keeping a daily journal; and

- speaking into an audio recorder immediately following each lesson.

Written observations were performed first, followed by a more in depth, verbal description of what occurred during each lesson.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed both informally and formally (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Informal data analysis occurred on a continuous basis during the term that the data was collected. As notes were written and experiences taped on the audiocassette, I reviewed the accumulating data to identify and record potential patterns and connections. This information was analyzed on a daily basis to help link students' level of participation and enjoyment with the activities and methods of instruction I was using at that time. These findings were held loosely but formed the beginnings of the formal data analysis process that followed.

Formal data analysis began after the data collection was completed. Quantitative data was tabled and compared (Miles and Hubermann, 1994). Qualitative data was analyzed through coding and display, summarization, and the writing of memos.

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe codes as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56). Coding involved sorting through data and attaching short words or phrases to data that were related in some way. It was an effective strategy in finding relationships within the written material by categorizing the material in various ways. However, coding became a very tedious and overwhelming task that did not necessarily condense information to bring about significant findings. For this reason, memos were used to compliment codes. A memo is simply a write-up of ideas about codes, definitions of the codes, and connections among codes as they strike the researcher while coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 72). Memos were a sentence, a

paragraph, or even a few pages. They were conceptual in intent in that they bound together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster to show a general theme. After reading through all the generated notes a number of times, I found that themes kept repeating themselves. It is these themes that are explored under the sub-headings in Chapter 4.

Verification of the Findings

Verification of the findings is an important consideration in action research. Since I, the data collector, was also the subject in this study, I needed a mechanism to test findings and confirm that my findings had some validity beyond my own perception. “Triangulation”, which uses multiple sources of data to confirm findings, was used to address this issue (Miles and Hubermann, 1994).

Triangulation in its basic sense “is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it, or at least do not contradict it” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 266). There are a number of different ways triangulation can work. For the purpose of this research, it involved my colleague John, the Grade 9 students, and myself as the corners of the triangle. My observations and reflections were shared and challenged by John and the students.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It is subdivided into two major sections and focuses on my growth as a teacher and relationships between what occurred during a class and student enjoyment and participation. The first major section presents findings from the quantitative data, which include students' enjoyment and participation rankings and teacher enjoyment rankings. The second major section describes the findings from the qualitative data including information from student comments on questionnaires and my written and audio-recorded observations.

Findings from the Quantitative Data

Analysis of the quantitative data began to reveal connections between what occurred in a particular class and the level of student and teacher enjoyment of that class. It also demonstrated the inter-relationship between student participation and student enjoyment in physical education that is reported in the literature (George P. Vanier School, 1999).

Relationships Between Class Content and Student Enjoyment

The findings in this section demonstrate a connection between what occurred in a particular class and the level of student enjoyment of that class. The most enjoyed class and the least enjoyed class are revealed as well as what occurred on those specific days. Also, the relationship between student and teacher enjoyment is discussed and the different rankings of pupil enjoyment at the beginning of the research and the end.

Table 3

Average Daily Results of Student and Teacher Class Enjoyment

Day	Students' Ranking (out of 10)	Teacher's Ranking (out of 10)
1	8.44	8
2	7.82	7
3	7.90	7.5
4	6.98	6
5	8.35	6
6	7.82	7
7	6.68	5
8	8.17	8
9	7.21	7
10	5.32	6
11	9.10	7.5
12	8.00	6.5
13	7.91	7
14	8.00	6.5
15	8.56	8.5
16	9.42	9
17	9.00	8.5
18	8.36	9
19	9.37	9.5
20	8.53	9.5

Table 3 compares student and teacher enjoyment rankings on a class by class basis. Perhaps the most striking result revealed by Table 3 occurred on Day 10 of the research. This particular day was unquestionably the least enjoyed class out of the twenty days that the data were collected. There are several reasons why students may have rated this lesson so low on the enjoyment scale.

The activities for the class on Day 10 were unlike most of the other classes that were researched. During the course of the semester, there are three short periods of time that are dedicated to fitness testing – the beginning, middle and end of the term. This involves pupils attempting different athletic events where their personal results are compared against a standard. Twenty per cent of their final grade is tabulated from how well they perform on these sets of tests. The decision to evaluate and test students in this manner is that of the physical education department of this specific school, so all Grade 9 students must undergo this type of fitness testing and all Grade 9 teachers encompass this exercise as part of their instruction.

Testing on Day 10 consisted of a beep test in which participants continued running at a minimum pace for as long as possible. In this fitness test, students must run the width of the gym before a pre-recorded beep sounds. If they are unable to reach the opposite side of the gym before the sound of the beep on two consecutive attempts they are eliminated and given a corresponding level rating. As the test progresses the time between beep sounds shortens. The longer an individual fails to be eliminated the higher their score. The beep test was conducted twice during this class with half the students running each time. It took approximately fifteen minutes per beep test. Afterwards, all members of the class proceeded to the school's fitness room where further testing was conducted. This entailed pupils attempting the greatest number of sit-ups and push-ups they could complete in one minute. This was also conducted with half

the class performing each time. All individual results were recorded by a partner in their course journals, which were collected at the end of the period (Journal, November 26, 2002).

My instruction time was spent reminding students how the testing worked, ensuring they were honest with their results, encouraging them to work hard and give their best effort, and monitoring any improper behavior (Tape Recorded Comments, November 26, 2002). John was also present during the class and offered the same type of instruction. In fact, since he was already familiar with the procedures of the fitness testing, he did the majority of the explaining to students (Journal, November 26, 2002).

While Day 10 proved to be the least enjoyed class for these Grade 9 students, Table 3 also indicates that Day 16 was the class most enjoyed by pupils. This day was also unique in that it differed from the usual structure and content of the majority of the lessons. In this particular period, John and I decided to take a team teaching approach where each of us took half the students and ran our own different activities (Journal, December 5, 2002). Half way through the class we switched groups so that every student had the opportunity to experience both of our lessons. I continued with the Badminton unit using half the gym, while John took pupils to the wrestling room to perform wrestling activities (Journal, December 5, 2002). The opportunity for two teachers to teach one class is very rare, but, since John and I were in the unique position to do so, we thought we would see how it would affect student enjoyment. Before the class had begun, we had hypothesized that most, if not all, students would react positively to this format and type of teaching (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002).

Some of the reasons we thought students really enjoyed this class were:

- they had the opportunity to participate in two very different activities - even if some students only enjoyed one of the two sports they still played it for half the class;

- two smaller groups have less potential for young people to misbehave than when they are in one very large group; and
- two thirty-minute lessons on two very different sports were easier to pay attention to than one sixty-minute lesson on the same sport (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002).

We also thought that, if the activities were presented in a relaxed, non-competitive fashion, some of the less athletic students would feel more comfortable participating with their peers (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002).

The third significant finding revealed from Table 3 is the relationship that appears to exist between student and teacher enjoyment. In seventy-five per cent of the cases, the difference between enjoyment ratings between students and teacher was less than one. Only one class existed where the difference was greater than two. This demonstrates that, when the students were having fun, usually so was the teacher and vice versa.

Table 4

Beginning and End Results of Student Enjoyment

Day	Students' Enjoyment Ranking (out of 10)
1	7.89
20	8.97

Table 4 compares student enjoyment rankings at the beginning and at the end of the research. It shows that this particular group of Grade 9 students began the research session with an already established enjoyment of physical education. It also reveals that, by the end of the two units, the overall enjoyment of class members increased by slightly more than 1 point.

Student Participation and Student Enjoyment

The findings in this section support the assumption that participation and enjoyment go hand in hand (George P. Vanier School, 1999) and that students are likely not to enjoy physical education if they do not participate.

Table 5

Beginning and End Results Comparing Student Enjoyment and Participation

Day	Students' Enjoyment Ranking (out of 10)	Student's Participation Ranking (out of 10)
1	7.89	8.76
20	8.97	9.38

Table 5 compares the student enjoyment and participation rankings at the beginning and the end of the research. As revealed in the previous section, the student enjoyment ranking at the end of the research was higher than at the start. Table 5 shows that the same can also be said of student participation. While the increase in participation ranking was not as great as the increase in enjoyment, the data supports the conclusion that there was an inter-relationship between student participation and student enjoyment.

Other data from this research showed that individuals who did not participate ranked their level of enjoyment very low. In fact, the highest enjoyment ranking from a person who did not participate was a five with the majority of non-participating students submitting a rating of one (Student Response Sheet, November 18, 2002). It should also be mentioned that only one of the individuals who did not participate in a class did so of his own free will (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002). All of the other students who did not participate did so because they had forgotten their gym clothes on a particular day's lesson and, therefore, were not permitted to take part in the physical activities. After circling an enjoyment ranking of one on their daily

questionnaire, beneath the question, “If you did not participate today, please state why,” the majority of students explained, “I forgot my gym clothes,” or, “I was out of uniform today” (Various Student Response Sheets, November 13 to December 13, 2002). The student who chose not to participate did so on Day 7 and answered, “No; because of basketball tonight I did not want to injure myself” (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002). The only other reason given for non-participation (where the students watched from a bench and did not change into gym clothes) was injury such as a pulled muscle (Student Response Sheet, November 26, 2002) or the wearing of a cast on one arm (Student Response Sheet, December 13, 2002).

Findings from the Qualitative Data

Analysis of the qualitative data explored my use of the action research cycle to improve my practice and revealed in greater detail connections between course content and student participation and enjoyment. The section begins by describing what I learned about planning and implementation related to Hopper’s (1996) action research process - planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning. Then the section identifies specific teaching strategies that impacted on student participation and enjoyment.

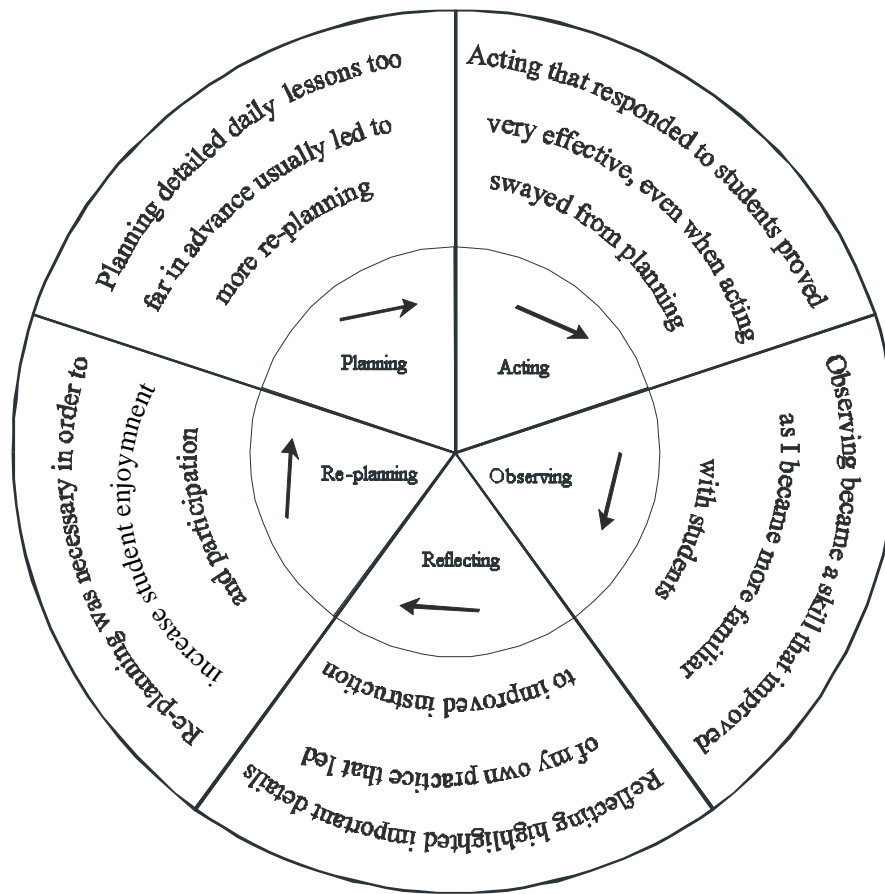
Changes in My Planning and Implementation Practices

As mentioned in Chapter 1, action research involves a cyclical pattern of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning (Hopper, 1996). My action research comprised repetitions of this cycle. This section investigates some of my experiences in each of the 5 phases of the action research process and how they contributed to improving my own professional teaching practice so that students increasingly enjoyed lessons as the research period progressed. The findings presented in this section demonstrate how the action research process occurred in a

cyclical manner. Figure 2 illustrates a summary of the findings related to Hopper's phases of action research. This illustration is presented with Hopper's five phases as the inner slices of a pie chart and the key findings from this study connected to the outer slices. It is presented in this fashion to convey how each phase depends on the previous phase in a cyclical fashion and how each set of findings were generated from the findings of the previous phase.

Figure 2

A Summary of Findings Related to Hopper's Phases of Action Research



Planning

The first phase of the action research process, planning, was conducted on a long-term basis. That is to say that a group of lessons was planned well in advance of implementation. For example, the entire first week's lessons for the initial unit, LOG, were designed before the first class took place. The ideas for lessons were produced from my past experiences teaching these units and this particular age group. The equipment and facilities that would be available during a specific lesson were also considered in the initial planning. Lessons were also created with a certain level of flexibility to allow students some say in what we would be doing on a particular day. Also, there was a need to have back-up lessons in place because, in some instances, the environment would change, for example from a gymnasium setting to a weight room or outdoor facility (Journal, November 13 – 19, 2002).

My experiences during the research led me to conclude that, while long-range planning of an entire unit, before the first lesson even begins is helpful in visualizing the overall goals, it is not a substitute for daily planning. The original long-range plans were changed so drastically during the course of each of the units that it felt almost a "waste of time to have created them so far in advance" (Tape Recorded Comments, November 18, 2002). My preliminary planning for the LOG unit involved students in a different game each day until the final two lessons. Then I was going to allow students the freedom to choose their favorite activities from among the ones they experienced. This is definitely not how things turned out. As I became more responsive to students to improve each successive lesson, the students repeated some activities on consecutive days, played more than one activity during a lesson, and could not come to a consensus on their two favorite activities during the final classes of the unit (Journal, November 13 – 26, 2002).

Acting

The second phase of the action research process is simply acting on the plan that I had created. The question therefore becomes, “Did I in fact act out the lesson that was planned?” The answer for the most part was, “Yes.” The activities that were specifically planned for each of the lessons were carried out approximately 75% of the time. Examples where lessons were carried precisely as they were intended included classes 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 17 (Journal, November 13, 14, 18, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, December 9, 2002). In the other 25% of the cases, I added in more drills that the students seemed to be enjoying, or left out an exercise because the flow of the class perhaps was not going well and I thought a change in pace was necessary to keep pupils interested. In two classes during the badminton unit, the drills and activities were altered because we were only given half the gym instead of the entire facility as is customary with this unit (Journal, December 5, 13, 2002). In both cases, this change occurred at the last minute, just before class was to begin. In one instance, I was told the class could not use the gym at all and I had to resort to the weight room to conduct the lesson. The planning for this class, Day 12, was not acted upon at all and I created activities for students on the spot. For most of the period, the participants were given free time to work out as they pleased on the exercise equipment (Journal, November 29, 2002).

Part of the reason for students’ improved enjoyment was acting on certain planned activities while not acting on other exercises. In other words, I became a better judge of determining what parts of the lesson to act upon and what parts to leave out in order to increase student enjoyment. Day 14 was a good example as I shortened the planned length for certain skill development drills and increased the time to practice these same skills in a game situation (Tape Recorded Comments, December 3, 2002).

It is interesting that, as the level of enjoyment for each class increased, the number of lessons that were specifically acted upon decreased. The audiotapes of my research reveal that this was not because of poor planning. In fact, as I became more knowledgeable of what the students enjoyed, my planning improved and I was able to act out more (but not all) of my planned work. This became apparent by Day 15 when my planning incorporated much more individual feedback and game play and far less Socratic modeling and group drills (Tape Recorded Comments, December 4, 2002).

Observing

The third phase of action research, observing while the plan was being acted upon, also improved as the research period progressed. During the first 10 lessons, the number of written observations was dramatically higher than during the final 10 classes. This was mainly due to “learning the names of several of the students while trying to determine their learning needs” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 15, 2002).

As expected, some students needed greater attention than others did, and I had to observe them more closely than some of the other participants. I also needed to observe closely how I reacted to these and other pupils in order to determine what was effective in improving their enjoyment and also the enjoyment of the class as a whole. The best example of this occurred during the first two lessons when, after the first class, one student complained to John and other members of his educational support team that he was being picked on by other students while playing dodge ball (Journal, November 13, 14, 2002). He mentioned that some participants were intentionally throwing the ball at him. I did not notice this on the first day, so when John pointed this particular pupil out to me at the beginning of the second day, I paid close attention to him and the youngsters around him to see if there was any inappropriate behavior that I could

observe. These observations allowed me to identify students that I would need to watch closely and deal with frequently, especially during the first few classes (Journal, November 14, 2002). As I became more familiar with them, I was better able to predict how they would act in certain situations and how to effectively handle their actions. Similarly, through observations, I was able to “grasp a better feel for what worked well in class” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 28, 2002). Because student behavior and enjoyment improved, especially during the last quarter of the research, I found I did not need to observe as much. This was not due to a decreased need to observe, as the potential for decreased student enjoyment can occur at any time; however, I believe I was a more focused observer since I now knew better what was important to observe (Tape Recorded Comments, December 4, 2002).

Reflecting

The fourth phase of action research involved two types of reflecting sessions. In one, I took a few moments after each lesson to reflect on what worked well and what could be improved and wrote these thoughts in my journal. I then expanded on these personal thoughts and verbalized them on an audio recorder. The second type of reflecting session involved debriefing between John, who was my critical friend (McNiff, Lomax & Whitehead, 1996) and myself. The content of these sessions was also noted on audiotapes and paper. While these sessions took the least amount of time of the five phases, I found them to be the most valuable in enhancing my teaching practice.

I was not surprised to discover that the issues I identified in my own reflection sessions were often analogous to the issues John brought up in our debriefing sessions. This is in part due to the similar values we share as professional teachers and our common ideology as to what we feel is important to emphasize and establish in a physical education class. I was surprised

however at the significance of having a second observer in the classroom and how valuable a tool he really was. Despite sharing the same overall view of what was happening in each class, the fact that I was hearing it from a trusted colleague made the content much more significant. Also, John was excellent in voicing the strength of a particular lesson and all his concerns in a straightforward manner.

There were some issues that arose in our debriefing sessions that I thought were minor. However, John made me realize that they were important and needed to be dealt with immediately. A good example of this took place during a debriefing session after the seventh day when student behavior appeared to start getting out of hand. John made the comment to me that “you expect them (the students) to be nice like you... they need to be watched carefully and be held accountable for their actions” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 28, 2002). While this may have been difficult for me to hear initially, it was exactly what I needed to hear. His comment motivated me to deal with student behavior more seriously and realize a potential weakness in my teaching approach that perhaps has always been there, but has been invisible to me. We both agreed that this issue of behavior management had a large impact on student enjoyment and participation (Tape Recorded Comments, November 28, 2002).

Debriefing also helped me establish new ways of forming small groups within the class. Through John’s guidance and suggestions, I learned new methods of separating students into teams that I had never used in previous classes (Journal, November 28, 2002). I also implemented a new routine at the start of each class for taking attendance and beginning a warm-up (Journal, November 29, 2002). John’s input and my own reflections created an outstanding basis for the fifth and final stage of the action research process, re-planning.

Re-planning

The fifth phase, *re-planning*, completed the action research cycle and set the stage for the next one. It was a result of the work that transpired over the first four phases and, in most cases, created a revised or new plan based on new concerns. It was intriguing to notice that in the end, the time spent *planning* was almost equivalent to the time *re-planning*. This was especially the case during the first half of the research process when I was attempting to establish a feel for the group and come up with different, effective teaching strategies and activities that the students would enjoy. After the first few days of the LOG unit, I noticed that if we were playing a game that some of the participants did not enjoy, it was useful to change to a different game half way through the period to increase their enjoyment (Journal, November 20, 2002). While the original plan was to play one game, the re-planned lesson included two games during the same period (Journal, November 20, 2002).

Plans were also altered as a result of a change in facilities such as only having access to half the gym or losing gym space entirely (Journal, November 22, 29, December 5, 20, 2002). The warm-ups at the beginning of the research looked much different as the days continued. Warm-ups became more complex and increased in physical intensity (Journal, November 22, 25, 28, 2002). Introductions to new skills changed from longer periods of time where students sat and listened to shorter time frames and more time for actual play (Tape Recorded Comments, December 4, 2002). Because of the large size of the class, games during the LOG unit such as indoor soccer, basketball, and European handball were re-planned with shorter shifts (Journal, November 19, 21, 25, 2002). This meant that the students who were sitting off had to be more attentive to what was happening while others were playing so they would not miss their turn to play.

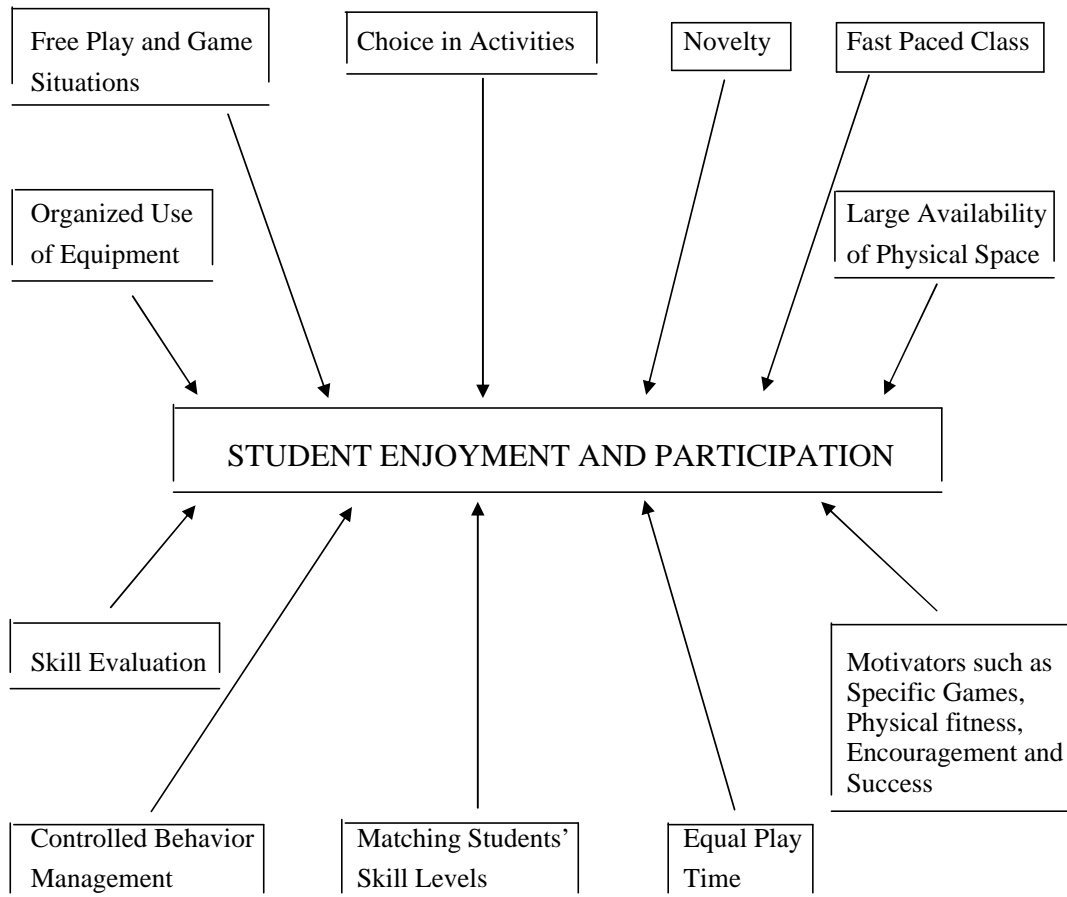
In a couple of instances, lessons were completely re-planned as a result of a reflection session. John and I felt that it would be beneficial for the class if he led the instruction on some occasions (Journal, November 26, 28, 2002). That way he could demonstrate to me some methods of instruction he had found to be very successful in the past. It offered me the opportunity to see first hand teaching strategies we had discussed in our reflection sessions and to view pupil behavior while instruction was being conducted. These specific, re-planned lessons had a very positive effect on student enjoyment as participants ranked them very high on their class questionnaires (see Table 3, Days 8, 11 and 16).

Changes in Teaching Strategies

This section describes my learning about specific teaching strategies that affected student participation and enjoyment. It provides greater detail than the previous sections about the manner of instruction and what students enjoyed and did not enjoy. The term teaching strategies is used broadly here to refer to practices relating to instruction, evaluation, and classroom management. There is discussion of free play and game situations, providing choice and novelty in activities, pace of classes, matching students' skill levels, and equal play time. The impact of teaching on pupil motivation is addressed. There is also discussion of evaluation and behaviour management practices and ways of dealing with equipment and physical space. Figure 3 illustrates a summary of factors that contributed to student participation and enjoyment. The findings are represented in the form of a mind map to convey the idea that all of these factors had an affect on student enjoyment and participation in their own ways. One finding did not hold greater significance than another. While some of the findings may have had a different impact on individual students, all of them were considered important discoveries concerning my teaching practice.

Figure 3

A Summary of Factors that Contributed to Student Participation and Enjoyment



Free Play and Game Situations

The most enjoyed activities by students in this Grade 9 group involved free play and games. Free play involved the opportunity for pupils to work out at their own pace in the weight room and to select the machines and free weights they desired on that particular day (Journal, November 15, 22, 29, 2002). They had experienced all the machines and equipment in this facility during previous lessons and were familiar with the safety rules and proper etiquette. Several students commented on their questionnaires that they liked this type of freedom. Some of the statements included the following:

“I enjoyed it because you let us use the machines we wanted and we got to work out” (Student Response Sheet, November 14, 2002),

“The freedom to work out at your own pace, time, and level” (Student Response Sheet, November 14, 2002); and

“Enjoyed the weight room and the freedom to work out at your own pace” (Student Response Sheet, November 29, 2002).

Games refer to students playing in a “real game” as opposed to performing drills or listening to the instructor describe proper technique. The LOG unit allowed participants to perform a short warm-up and go directly into a game or sport related activity (Journal, November 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 2002). There were no drills during any of the lessons for the ten classes in this unit. Observations and verbal student feedback revealed that the majority of this group of teenage boys took pleasure in playing sports such as floor hockey, indoor soccer, dodge ball, basketball and European handball without discussing the specific skills required to play these games well (Tape Recorded Comments, November 13, 19, 20, 21, 25).

This tendency to want to play the game became even more evident during the badminton unit when many students explained that they greatly enjoyed the tournament portion of the unit. The tournament involved a class design where, once all students arrived, we quickly made up teams and played timed games (Journal, December 9, 10, 12, 13, 2002). Scores were recorded and teams were assigned different courts where they would compete against other teams on an ongoing basis during the period. The tournament platform continued from Days 16 to 20. Remarks such as, “The tournament was very fun,” and, “I enjoyed the tournament style of today and the free badminton play,” were common feelings expressed by participants (Student Response Sheets, December 12, 2002). After ranking one of the lessons a perfect ten on the enjoyment scale, one student wrote that it was “because we got to play games instead of drills” (Student Response Sheet, December 4, 2002).

Interestingly, the majority of pupils enjoyed the tournament regardless of their partners. To organize the teams on the first day of the tournament, I drew names out of a hat (Journal, December 5, 2002). John and I felt this would be the fairest way for all students. On subsequent days, if a player’s teammate from the previous day was absent, I would randomly assign him a new partner from those that did not have one. Through the four days of the tournament, only one student on one of the days complained that the “tournament sucks” because he felt he was partnered with a classmate who was a weak badminton player (Student Response Sheet, December 12, 2002). This was definitely a unique situation since the overwhelming bulk of observations and student remarks supported the structure of the tournament style of play (Tape Recorded Comments, December 10, 2002).

Choice in Activities

The Grade 9 students enjoyed having a say in what took place during the lessons. This was clear at the start of the research and obvious during the LOG unit when participants voted for the sport of their choice. I gave them three sports to choose from and they voted for their favorite (Journal, November 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 2002). The sport with the most votes was the game we played that day. Some students really supported having choices and wrote, "I enjoyed this class because we got to play a fun game and you let us choose the games we wanted to play" (Student Response Sheet, November 13, 2002), and, "I enjoyed the freedom to play the sport I liked and the freedom to play at my own pace" (Student Response Sheet, November 20, 2002). There were no written comments about decision making by pupils during the badminton units but they were given some opportunities to vote on different activities (Journal, December 3, 4, 2002).

Interestingly, the LOG unit also became more enjoyable for participants when two different sports were played instead of one for the entire time of the class. Day 8 consisted of half the period wrestling and the other half working out in the weight room (Journal, November 22, 2002). One member of the class rated the class a ten on the enjoyment scale and explained it was "because we got to wrestle and to work out" (Student Response Sheet, November 22, 2002). Even those individuals that only liked one of the sports still enjoyed the class when two sports were played. Also rating a ten on the enjoyment scale, a second person remarked, "I enjoyed the strength/wrestling part of the class" (Student Response Sheet, November 22, 2002). The two sport lesson also took place during Day 16, the highest student-ranked day, as well as Day 20 (see Table 3). After the final day, a pupil wrote, "I enjoyed this class because we did two activities, badminton and the weight room" (Student Response Sheet, December 13, 2002).

Novelty

Learners enjoyed small twists to an already familiar game. Day 9 consisted of playing indoor soccer for half the period and then, for the second half, playing the same game with two balls instead of one (Journal, November 25, 2002). The effect was that participants tried even harder during the second part of this class and “appeared to be having even more fun than in the regular method of play” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 25, 2002).

This observation led me to discover that many students also liked playing a new game and learning a new skill (Journal, November 19, 2002). The former situation was apparent after Day 5 when most of the class played European handball for the first time. Comments written by participants included “interesting” and, “I enjoyed European handball. I never played it before” (Student Response Sheets, November 19, 2002). The latter situation was apparent after Day 13 when a pupil rated the class a 10 on the enjoyment scale and explained, “because I learned a new skill” (Student Response Sheet, December 2, 2002). My further insight was that the key to the enjoyment of learning a skill was that it indeed had to be new (Tape Recorded Comments, November 28, 2002). Observations made it clear that several badminton players had trouble focusing on instruction when it related to a skill with which they were already familiar. Basic skills such as handgrip, stance, and forehand and backhand clears were of little interest to most of the Grade 9 students. However, drop shots, smashes, and short serves were skills that sparked great interest because many students were unaware these types of shots existed in the game of badminton. Day 15 was a perfect example because this was a rare class in which pupils were seen enjoying drills and listening to information concerning these new skills (Tape Recorded Comments, December 4, 2002). In many of the earlier badminton lessons, students were extremely eager to skip the learning of skills and move directly into game play, which usually took place toward the end of the period (Journal, December 3, 2002).

Pace of Classes

For this Grade 9 group, a fast-paced atmosphere was conducive to an enjoyable class. This type of class was organized so that students moved from one activity to another very quickly. As one student wrote after the first lesson, “I enjoyed playing the game without constant interruption” (Student Response Sheet, November 13, 2002). By the end of the research period, participants still felt this way as comments included, “We played a lot, no stoppages, lots of time, organized too” (Student Response Sheet, December 12, 2002) and “organized and quick to activities” (Student Response Sheet, December 13, 2002). Day 4 showed the opposite to also be true – that a slow paced lesson was not an enjoyable experience - as a class member stated “not as fast paced,” and rated the day a below average, six out of ten (Student Response Sheet, November 18, 2002).

One method of instruction that provided a fast paced, organized class included arranging teams quickly by simply numbering the students from one to six - for example, if six teams were needed to start a game (Journal, November 21, 25, 2002). Another strategy included saving all paper work for the end of the class after physical activities had ended. This meant combining written tests or self-evaluations with the end of class questionnaires and handing out any required literature such as the rules of badminton at the end of class when students were headed to their knapsacks anyway (Journal, November 26, December 12, 13, 2002). Arranging pupils as they chose a badminton racquet was also helpful in keeping them organized and moving. During Day 11, students were permitted to select a racquet in groups of six, instead of having the entire class of 33 teenagers attack the equipment all at once (Journal, November 28, 2002). Each group of six was given seven seconds to choose a racquet and sit down so the next group of six could then do the same. It seemed very simple at the time, but very effective in maintaining a fast paced lesson.

Placing students into smaller groups also proved efficient in other ways. Day 12 involved a lesson in the weight room where the class was divided into groups of ten and each group used the cardiovascular equipment for ten minutes at a time (Journal, November 29, 2002). This made the period seem to go by much more quickly. Grouping allowed me to avoid combinations of youngsters who did not work well together and prevent any misbehavior. When partnering students for the first class of the badminton unit, I had them hit the shuttle back and forth with a classmate of their choice, but had them partner up with the person beside them, not the person they chose to hit with (Journal, November 28, 2002). While they felt slightly disappointed (and perhaps even a little deceived) with this method of organizing partners, they still enjoyed the class and how smoothly it flowed (Tape Recorded Comments, November 28, 2002).

As a fast paced environment became a desired feature by the class, each lesson of the badminton unit began in a way that promoted this feature. Once people arrived, they were to set up the nets. The first individuals to set up the nets properly were given the freedom to obtain a racquet and begin playing. Those who came later did not have the opportunity to begin playing since the courts filled up rather quickly. Once everyone arrived, I would begin the formal part of the class. This was an “excellent technique in establishing a smooth transition to begin the days activities” (Tape Recorded Comments, December 2, 2002).

Matching Students' Skill Levels

The data revealed that when the class was organized according to ability level the lessons ran smoothly and were more enjoyable for the class as a whole (Journal, November 25, December 4, 13, 2002). The badminton unit ran much more smoothly than the LOG unit partly due to my familiarization with the ability levels of all members of the class (Tape Recorded

Comments, December 13, 2002). When setting partners during drills and game play, I carefully paired pupils so that they could be competitive as a team. In some cases, one person on the team would help his less-skilled partner. This also made for closer scores when playing games and greater parity among competitors. It was interesting to observe students at the end of the unit when, on the last day of the unit, I allowed them to choose their own partners. The majority of the youngsters chose a partner with similar ability levels, rather than their best friend or the classmate they usually selected as a partner (Journal, December 13, 2002). By this point in the unit, everyone in the class knew who the strongest badminton players were, but they organized themselves so that the competition would be equal and so that one team would not dominate the others. This proved to be the preferred form for class competitions and resultantly more enjoyable (Journal, December 13, 2002).

Pulling names out of a hat to decide the pairs during the badminton tournament was an exception to my partnering of students and resulted in stronger and weaker teams competing with one another. The parity that existed in many of the preceding badminton classes no longer existed (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002). I was very excited when, the day after the tournament, Day 20, students chose to go back to the more evenly matched organizational method of competition. .

For the LOG unit, matching students' skill levels meant creating teams that were evenly matched so that one team did not dominate another. Even as early as the first day, I had to reorganize teams for dodge ball because the same group of players easily won three consecutive games (Journal, November 13, 2002). As I became more "familiar with the athletic abilities of individuals, making more evenly matched teams became an easier task" (Tape Recorded Comments, November 25, 2002).

Equal Play Time

The LOG unit involved games such as basketball, indoor soccer, and European handball where only two teams of five could play while the others sat out. Consequently, it was important that I organized the games so that everyone received equal playing time (Journal, November 19, 21, 25, 2002). The class played European handball throughout Day 5 and some participants voiced their displeasure at not playing as many shifts as their colleagues (Journal, November 19, 2002). During the period, I lost track of which teams had competed and how many shifts each team played (Tape Recorded Comments, November 19, 2002). I should have been better organized to ensure the six teams received equal playing time. On Day 9, we played indoor soccer. I organized which teams would play each other in a six team rotation and wrote the schedule down before the class began (Journal, November 25, 2002). The students noticed a much more equal system of playing time and enjoyed the class as a result. One youth who rated this class a 9 out of 10 on the enjoyment scale wrote that it was “because everyone got to play at least two games” (Student Response Sheet, November 25, 2002).

Motivation

The most obvious motivator for participants was the specific game or activity that occurred on a particular day. For example, badminton was a popular favorite among this group as well as indoor soccer, the weight room, and basketball. For many of the teenagers, simply playing one of these sports was enough to motivate them to give a full effort and enjoy themselves immensely. Several comments were written by students to support the playing of their favorite game. These included the following comments:

“Badminton is cool, the best game” - ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, December 12, 2002)

“I enjoyed playing badminton” - ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, December 3, 2002)

“Because badminton is one of my favorite games” - ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 28, 2002)

“I enjoy indoor soccer and I believe that most people participated well” - ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 25, 2002)

“I like soccer” - ranked nine out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 25, 2002)

“I liked some of the wrestling moves, they were fun” - ranked nine out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 22, 2002)

“I enjoy working out with weights and testing my strength” - ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 15, 2002)

“I enjoy working out on the weight machines” -ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 15, 2002)

“Basketball is the best” - ranked ten out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002).

After playing basketball outdoors for the entire period, one pupil explained that “ the court outside wasn’t in great condition,” but still ranked the class a nine out of ten for enjoyment because he had the opportunity to play a sport he really enjoyed (Student Response Sheet, November 20, 2002). In some cases during the badminton unit, students asked to continue playing after the class had ended because they were having so much fun (Journal, December 4, 9, 10, 2002).

While the majority of the comments from this group of youngsters reflected the preceding statements, there were a small number who did not like certain games. After Day 12

in the weight room, one student ranked the class a one out ten for enjoyment stating it was “boring” (Student Response Sheet, November 29, 2002). Despite my encouragement and attempts to motivate these few pupils, it was clear they did not enjoy being in the weight room. An observed reason for students not being motivated, and thus not enjoying an activity, may have been “their internal feelings of inferiority compared to other members of the class” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 29, 2002). During Day 8, many participants enjoyed learning some of the basics of wrestling, but one person rated his enjoyment a one out of ten and said it was “because I do not like wrestling and I’m not strong” (Student Response Sheet, November 22, 2002). Another abnormally low score, two out of ten for enjoyment, was received after Day 6 when he explained, “I suck at hockey” (Student Response Sheet, November 20, 2002). There will always be some students who are not as intrinsically motivated as their classmates. In that case, my efforts to create some enjoyment out of an activity become very important. Thus, I continued to search for other motivators.

I found that, for some, motivation came in the form of fitness. Despite not having strong athletic abilities, many were motivated to try hard because they are aware of the fitness benefits from being physically active and simply enjoyed the class regardless of the specific game they were playing. “It felt good to be active,” exclaimed one youth after ranking Day 8 a nine out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 22, 2002). A perfect ten rating came after Day 12, the student noting that “it helps me get in shape” (Student Response Sheet, November 29, 2002). Another insightful response was received after Day 1 when a pupil remarked, “I got a lot of stress out through this game” (Student Response Sheet, November 13, 2002).

The actions and words of fellow classmates and myself were also motivators from many participants. This was particularly the situation during the fitness testing exercises on Day 10.

Despite student scores on the test, encouraging statements like, “Keep going”, or, “Don’t give up,” or, “You’re doing great,” from myself and/or other students motivated them to try a little harder (Journal, November 26, 2002). The absence of any negative comments from the group also provided a positive, fulfilling atmosphere in the class. (Tape Recorded Comments, November 26, 2002).

During other classes, I would choose a certain cluster of pupils to demonstrate drills or skills (Journal, November 26, 2002). This appeared to lift their confidence levels and motivate them to continue to improve their abilities and enjoy the activities. In another situation, I witnessed two students patiently instructing a fellow pupil how to perform a badminton short serve (Journal, December 5, 2002). It appeared that this made the person attempting the skill feel like a valued member of the class. I expressed my feelings of pride and thanked the two players for helping their classmate to achieve personal success. It certainly motivated the student to keep trying to improve his skills in badminton (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002).

I also found that the simple act of providing a commentary while people were playing a sport motivated them to put forth a solid effort. Commentary such as, “Jason makes a great move and passes to Chuck who shoots and scores!” or, “Whatta save!” influenced their level of play in a very positive manner (Tape Recorded Comments, November 20, 25, 2002). One person even wrote, “I really liked the broadcasting,” after Day 9 and ranked the class nine out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 25, 2002).

Increased motivation was frequently noticed when a participant experienced success either by scoring a goal or winning a game. Two individuals ranked the period we played indoor soccer an eight out of ten (above the class average for that particular day) and wrote, “I scored a goal,” as their reasoning (Student Response Sheets, November 25, 2002). This comes as no

surprise as success breeds motivation in almost all aspects of life. It was my intent to offer opportunities for everyone in the class to be successful and motivate them to put forth a good effort and enjoy the day. While I may not be able directly to cause someone to score a goal, I can put things in place for them to experience winning. For example, after the first day of the badminton unit, I separated the class into two divisions (Journal, December 2, 2002). There were two championships to be won - a provincial and national title where the stronger teams played for the national trophy and the others played for the provincial trophy. This way teams were evenly matched according to skill level and more people would experience a feeling of success.

Evaluation

It was clear during Day 10 when the fitness testing took place that the majority of the pupils did not enjoy this activity (Journal, November 26, 2002). Several comments suggested that they found the fitness testing very difficult, stressful, and quite simply not fun. As one student commented, "It was hard and painful" (Student Response Sheet, November 26, 2002). This summarized the majority of the written thoughts. Another member of the class was even more detailed as he stated, "I didn't really enjoy the shuttle run (beep test) because I don't find running fun" (Student Response Sheet, November 26, 2002). Several students argued that they could not perform the tests because they were suddenly injured. However, none of the excuses were valid (Journal, November 26, 2002). As well, I repeatedly overheard statements such as "This sucks, why do we have to do this?" and, "I did so bad. I'm so much better than this" (Tape Recorded Comments, November 26, 2002). The latter comment is, perhaps, an indication of how stressed these students feel when their colleagues see them not performing well.

The only participants that appeared to have some degree of enjoyment were the strong athletes that performed exceptionally well compared to the rest of the class. Even though many learners put forth a strong effort and encouraged one another, the verbal comments from many pupils were that they “hated the fitness testing part of the course” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 26, 2002). This was true regardless of whether they were performing the beep test, sit-ups, or push-ups. Unfortunately, the fitness appraisal is a necessary part of the course that involves 20% of their overall grade.

Written tests are also a required element of the course and, like the fitness testing, the majority of learner’s did not enjoy this activity (Journal, December 13, 2002). Participants completed only one written test. It was used to assess badminton knowledge. The LOG unit was assessed using a self-evaluation that emphasized student conduct and behavior (Journal, November 26, 2002). While most of the youngsters took these forms of evaluations seriously and performed fairly well, they did voice their displeasure in having to do them even though the tests were only a page in length, consisted of multiple choice and short answer items and took at most only 15 minutes to complete (Journal, December 13, 2002). The consensus from these students was that they would have preferred to engage in a physical activity rather than to write on a sheet of paper (Tape Recorded Comments, December 13, 2002).

Unlike fitness testing and written assessments, evaluations that tested the physical skills or technique of pupils were viewed as an enjoyable activity. Before the badminton tournament commenced on Day 17, I informed the class that I would observe them to formulate a grade on their skill level (Journal, December 9, 2002). This resulted in several of the students taking a much more serious approach to the activity and increasing their overall effort. It appeared that “when they knew they were being evaluated, it motivated them to try harder and therefore attain a greater enjoyment of the class” (Tape Recorded Comments, December 9, 2002).

Behavior Management

As I analyzed the data, the effectiveness of my classroom management on student enjoyment became increasingly apparent to me. In fact, behaviour management was an aspect of my teaching on which I tended to focus and reflect more often than any other. It included not only how I handled situations and what prevention strategies I used but also what caused students to misbehave and how their behaviour and mine evolved during of the twenty days. I was struck by the fact that critical incidents occurred on Days 4 and 7 in which, for at least part of these classes, I lost control of the group.

The earliest positive feedback from students came on the first two days when two of them indicated on their questionnaires that they enjoyed the class “because we didn’t get yelled at” (Student Response Sheets, November 13, 14, 2002). Their usual teacher had a tendency to raise his voice when students became rowdy or did not listen to instruction. On Day 10 particularly, John screamed at the class when they were talking while he was attempting to give instructions on how to properly perform the sit-ups and push-ups of the fitness testing (Journal, November 26, 2002). Many of the teenagers responded almost in fear and became completely silent. While raising one’s voice on occasion is an effective way in getting the class to pay attention I personally find the strategy uncomfortable. However, I did raise my voice during Day 12 when some students were attempting to leave early without my permission. I yelled at them to sit down and wait until I said they could leave. They all sat down and listened to me (Journal, November 29, 2002). Despite my discomfort in raising my voice, it felt great to regain control of the class and have them abide my authority. Because I rarely raise my voice, I believe that when I do it, it is much more effective in establishing a serious tone. Since, in my case, it is done so

infrequently, it is even more important that I also use other methods to deal with students when they misbehave.

One behaviour management method I used was to support positive behavior. In one situation, for example, one of the boys in the class, whom I will refer to as Joe, felt classmates were picking on him. The next day, I spoke with him and told him I was glad he notified someone of the situation and did not retaliate in a physical way to the small group of individuals who were bothering him (Tape Recorded Comments, November 25, 2002). He handled the incident in a very mature fashion and I tried to acknowledge his behavior in a positive light.

It was also important for me to investigate the reason a particular student or group was misbehaving. Days 14 and 15 involved several students behaving improperly because they appeared to be easily frustrated and irritated (Journal, December 3, 4, 2002). After both periods, two participants indicated on their forms that “it was fun, but people were fooling around. I was hungry because I haven’t had lunch” (Student Response Sheets, December 3, 4, 2002). This was a valid point as there was an altered schedule in place. Consequently, my period with this class took place later in the day but before any of the students had a chance to eat their lunch. It was important for me to realize this, so I could understand how they were feeling and why they were easily agitated.

On days when learners were easily frustrated, I found it crucial to keep them busy “so that they did not have time to misbehave” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 20, 2002). Much of the misbehavior resulted from having nothing to do. On Day 6 when a cluster of the class played hockey, I started the game abruptly even though I knew some students were not ready to begin and not paying attention (Journal, November 20, 2002). These people quickly joined in and figured out what to do on their own.

On days when pupils appeared better able to focus on my instruction, I used inactivity as a deterrent for not paying attention. For example, during the badminton unit, I often blew the whistle to stop all activity, had them all sit down around one of the courts with racquets on the ground and listen to me while I explained some fundamental skills (Journal, December 3, 4, 2002). When I spotted someone not focusing on my instruction, I stopped speaking and waited for his attention. I stressed that the longer I waited for them to pay attention, the less time they had to play. As a member of the class later said, "It's fun, but too much time was wasted" (Student Response Sheet, December 3, 2002). After the first couple of times using this technique, pupils began encouraging each other to be quiet and listen to me while I spoke. Over time, my waiting diminished. This proved a very effective method of managing students' behavior while giving instructions.

The data also indicated that prevention was a key factor in establishing and maintaining student behavior. One means of prevention was to go over rules for a particular game before commencing play. For instance, an additional rule for dodge ball was not to hit an opponent above the waist (Journal, November 14, 2002). While the intent of this rule is to prevent players from being hit in the face, contact at the stomach or chest area with a foam ball is not as dangerous. Problems arose when individuals were hit above the waist, but below the head, without penalty. I should have presented the rule more clearly and without exception. When several players started breaking the rules, I sat the entire class down and went over any misunderstandings. This decreased the number of infractions but did not stop them entirely (Journal, November 14, 2002).

There were behaviour problems the first time we had a class in the weight room (Journal, November 15, 2002). Although everyone was already aware of the safety procedures that must be followed while using this facility, many chose to abuse some of the machines. This led to

several one-on-one consultations with pupils to discuss how to properly use the equipment. Also, while in the weight room, a few students felt it was perfectly fine to come and go as they pleased without my knowledge of their whereabouts (Journal, November 15, 2002). These individuals also needed reminding of the rules to prevent the behavior from continuing. To prevent further cases of students leaving class before the others, I established a rule that nobody was to leave the class until everything was neatly put away and we were all ready to be dismissed. Then I dismissed the students all at once. By Day 19, the students were accustomed to the end of class procedures and there were no longer behavioral issues for anyone leaving early (Journal, December 12, 2002).

Another prevention strategy included not permitting certain participants to be partnered during activities because of the greater potential to misbehave when they were together (Journal, December 3, 4, 2002). This was also the case when I organized teams; although some people from time to time did not play on the team they were assigned, which led to unfair competition (Journal, November 19, 25, 2002).

Prevention helped control misbehavior, but it certainly was not enough to eradicate all the problems. Once rules and codes of conduct were introduced, it was crucial that all members of the class knew the rules and the penalties for breaking them. I struggled with this point the most throughout the research period. I did not outline the repercussions for students when they went against the conduct that was expected of them. Instead I made them up as I went along (Tape Recorded Comments, November 22, 25, 2002).

After reviewing my daily notes, I discovered that when it came to penalizing a pupil for inappropriate behavior, I gave several second, third, and even fourth chances (Tape Recorded Comments, November 25, 2002). I found, I was much too lenient in dishing out punishment when, in several cases, I should have assigned a detention or sent an individual to the vice-

principal, or informed his parent. Examples of my soft approach came as early as the first day when I warned a participant three times for throwing the dodge ball at another person's head (Journal, November 13, 2002). By the third time, the verbal warning I issued was useless. With this Grade 9 group, I did not set the tone for effective behavior management from the outset. Experience has shown me that being strict and consistently enforcing the rules, particularly from the start, is an excellent behavior management strategy that provides more flexibility as a course progresses. John informed me that this has also been his experience (Tape Recorded Comments, November 25, 2002).

There were many situations that demonstrated my overly lenient approach to punishment. After the class was dismissed on Day 3 and everyone went to the change rooms, for some unknown reason two students started yelling so loudly that three teachers came out of the gym to see what was the matter (Journal, November 15, 2002). When I arrived, John was speaking to a student who I will call Bob and was about to assign him a detention. John then turned him over to me, since he was now my responsibility. When I spoke with Bob, he apologized for his rude behavior, so I let him off with a verbal warning. At the completion of the class, John mentioned that I needed to watch this group carefully because "they'll try to push your authority and test your behavior management" (Tape Recorded Comments, November 15, 2002). He also said to be particularly aware of Bob.

The next day in class, after everyone had changed and they were sitting in front of me, I gave the students a short lecture on the importance of obeying the rules and respecting each other. I also told them that I would begin assigning detentions for poor behavior (Journal, November 18, 2002). Despite not feeling well and being unable to speak loudly due to a sore throat, I then introduced a unique game many of my past classes have enjoyed called indoor baseball. Not everyone could hear my information because my voice was soft and the class next

to us was loud, but I proceeded to split the group in half (everyone plays at the same time in this game) and to commence play. The game itself seemed to progress well; however, it took several stoppages to clarify the rules. There was also plenty of horse play, such as running the bases when a player was called out, throwing the ball after the play was over, play wrestling, and blocking the runner (Journal, November 18, 2002). I tried to address an infraction whenever it occurred, but there were so many that I let some go without stopping play. I was not happy with the way students behaved and many did not appear to be having fun (Tape Recorded Comments, November 18, 2002). When playing the outfield, some learners were daydreaming as the ball whizzed by their heads and they made little or no effort to catch the ball. Despite their behavior, I let play continue and nobody was assigned a detention, even after my lecture at the start of the class (Journal, November 18, 2002). Since I was not feeling well, I believe I did not want to deal with their poor behavior and this certainly took away from the enjoyment of the game and set a weak precedent for future classes. The students' enjoyment ranking was low for this class. One pupil indicated that it was "because nobody behaved the way they should" (Student Response Sheet, November 18, 2002). His colleague summarized the tone of the class even better when he wrote, "The game was new and different so it was fun, but some people cheated, lost control" (Student Response Sheet, November 18, 2002).

Day 5 was slightly better in terms of student behavior and enjoyment, but some of the fooling around persisted and a major altercation took place between Bob and a classmate (Journal, November 19, 2002). After scoring a goal, Bob pushed the goal scorer to the ground. The student then got up from the floor and started running toward Bob. The two classmates were about to fight when I stepped in and told them to sit down and stop the foolish behavior. I told Bob to get changed, as he would not be permitted to participate for the remainder of the class. I assigned the other student to clean up the storage room. They behaved appropriately for the rest

of the day. After class, I spoke with both of them and they apologized to each other (Journal, November 19, 2002). I took no further action. Unfortunately, I solved the problem for the short term, but certainly not for the long term.

My weak actions in not penalizing students more heavily for serious infractions finally caught up with me on Day 7. As I made my way into the storage room to grab a piece of equipment, I looked back at the class and noticed five students (Bob included) verbally harassing Joe, their classmate who had already voiced his concerns about being picked on by others. This time, Joe grabbed Bob's neck and yelled, "Just leave me the fuck alone!" (Journal, November 21, 2002). Joe then let go of Bob and burst out of the gym.

I quickly told the five harassers to sit on a bench outside of the gym doors. The teacher in the gym space next to us came to me and asked if I needed any help. I had her supervise my class (and her own) while I went to talk to the group of five students. Upon questioning them, I found out that Bob had provoked Joe to lash out at him. I had them sit on the bench while I went back into the gym. I started a basketball game for the rest of the pupils. I then asked two students to go out of the class to find Joe and ask him to come back so I could speak with him. It took about five minutes for them to retrieve Joe. When I spoke with him, he explained that Bob started making rude comments toward him and the others then joined in.

I told Joe that violence was not the appropriate way to handle the situation and walking away from them was the best course of action. Joe sat quietly on one of the benches for the rest of the class and I later allowed him to get changed a few minutes before everyone else. While Bob was on the bench outside the gym he screamed, disrupting everyone in the hallway. I had him get changed and he was not permitted to participate in any further activities on that day. No other behavior problems were experienced during the period. After class, I assigned Bob a detention for his constant misbehaviors. He was very upset at this, but I felt it was light

punishment considering all the disruption he caused. Joe was assigned to another class for the next day and allowed to return to the group two days later. I wrote reports to the vice-principals describing Joe's and Bob's behavior and phoned Bob's parents to inform them about what had happened. Joe's guardians were also contacted. They were very supportive and said they would do anything they could on their end to ensure it never happened again (Journal, November 21, 2002).

It was evident from observing the class that the incident had affected many of the students. This class was by far the least enjoyable for me and several pupils felt the same way (Journal, November 21, 2002). On the forms that they completed at the end of the period, learners wrote comments about this particular class more often than any other during the research period. Their general feelings about the day included:

“You should watch the class more closely.” - ranked five out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

“The class is not under control” - ranked four out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

“There was violence throughout the period and kids take the game too seriously” - ranked four out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

“I didn't like the fighting” - ranked five out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

“I enjoyed this class somewhat because we played basketball, but the fight ruined the class because it got out of hand” - ranked seven out of ten for enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

“Almost everyone was picking on me” - ranked three out of ten for enjoyment

(Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

“I hated it because I couldn’t play for the worst reason” - ranked one out of ten for

enjoyment (Student Response Sheet, November 21, 2002)

The last two statements were presumably from Joe and Bob. It was clear that the incident that transpired had a very negative effect on the overall enjoyment of the day’s activities.

During our debriefing after this period, John and I felt that future classes needed to have more structure to them and there needed “to be greater punishments for inappropriate behavior” (Tape Recorded Comments, November 21, 2002). The next day, John led the class through an intense warm-up and then I took them to the weight room. We thought that if we let them burn off their energy early in the class it might prevent inappropriate behavior. Also during this period, four members of the class were found in the gym playing three-on-three basketball instead of being with the rest of us in the weight room. They claimed that they were allowed to be in the gym playing basketball because they were part of a special school event. This was not a legitimate excuse because people who wished to be part of the tournament could only do so on their lunch period, not during class time. I assigned all four of them a detention and wrote reports to the school administration to show the students that I was no longer putting up with any form of inappropriate behavior (Journal, November 22, 2002). Although they felt unfairly treated, they were never a problem for the rest of the research period. In fact, with my new, more serious, stance on behavior management issues, the worst was behind me and the attitude and behavior of students progressively improved for the remainder of the research period.

It is interesting that the most well behaved class of the 20 days of research was Day 16 (Journal, December 5, 2002). This was also the most enjoyed class by participants. There was a minor confrontation with Bob on this day when he would not put his racquet away when politely

asked. I was able to calm him quickly, however, and get him to do as I asked. This was a definite sign that my improved efforts toward behavior management, since the incident on Day 7, had paid off (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002).

Dealing with Equipment

Managing equipment was a challenge in each class not only from a planning perspective but also in terms of behavior management. Students enjoyed being able to use the equipment particularly when it was a badminton racquet, hockey stick, free weights, or a soccer ball (Journal, November 15, 29, 25, 28, December 3, 2002). Physical education class is unique in some ways compared to other subjects because it offers teens the chance to handle and build a skill level using certain implements. However, the use of equipment can ruin the flow of a class and cause improper behavior if poorly managed.

For example, Day 6 involved the use of plenty of equipment. Floor hockey sticks, tennis balls, nets, and basketballs were all a part of the activities of the class. Unfortunately, the flow of the class was somewhat spoiled when students took equipment from the storage room that they were not supposed to take (Journal, November 20, 2002). My experience has shown that having too much equipment in one area usually results in clutter and even loss that can be easily avoided. Since two-thirds of the class was playing floor hockey and the rest basketball, I allowed participants to enter the equipment room all at once with the specific instruction to take only the piece of equipment they required and nothing else. Despite my presence in the room, some people still grabbed an extra ball, or the wrong color stick. This led to confusion when we were ready to begin the games. It also created a safety concern because equipment was left lying around with the potential for players to trip and hurt themselves. This led to added work for me,

as I had to remove all the excess equipment that really should not have been there in the first place (Tape Recorded Comments, November 20, 2002).

Dealing with Physical Space

Another safety concern that the data exposed was the connection between the amount of physical gym space and the number of pupils in attendance for class activities. John and I noted that thirty-three students in half the gym often presented a recipe for injury and inappropriate behavior (Journal, November 19, 21, 25, 2002). As mentioned, Day 6 was a session that brought the learners outdoors. My reasoning, despite the protests from some members of the class suggesting the weather was too cold, was that I wanted them to be spread out so that everyone could have space to move about freely. At the end of this period, nobody complained that it was too cold and there were few behavioral issues other than those already outlined dealing with equipment (Tape Recorded Comments, November 20, 2002).

It was also noted that students enjoyed the badminton classes more when the entire gymnasium was used, instead of only half (Journal, November 28, 2002). Interestingly, the final four lessons had at least six students absent for each of the days - these absences were legitimate (Attendance Records, December 9, 10, 12, 13, 2002). This allowed more space for the participants that were in attendance. These were the most enjoyed classes on average (see Table 3). Further, on days when John and I team taught using half the gymnasium and the wrestling room, learner's were very well behaved and showed a high level of enjoyment (Journal, November 29, December 5, 13, 2002). Even from our own experience, we felt we could present a more enjoyable lesson when there were only sixteen students in front of us instead of the usual thirty-three (Tape Recorded Comments, December 5, 2002).

Summary of Findings Related to Teaching Practices

This chapter has presented findings on how teaching practices influenced student enjoyment and participation. Although considered separately in this chapter, the factors summarized in Figure 3 do influence each other. They are not individual findings completely independent of each other. Chapter 5 reveals the connections between many of the findings and discusses how one finding may have been related to other findings.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter discusses the findings of this research as it relates to the current literature. The first section, *Conclusions Related to Professional Practice*, speaks to the results with specific emphasis of my teaching instruction during class. The second section, *Conclusions Related to Development of Physical Education Programming*, refers to the larger role of my teaching practice in terms of school program implementation. My involvement as a member of the physical education department is considered as it involves the entire physical education program. Strengths and weaknesses of the study are then discussed followed by the implications of this study as it relates to my future professional growth and further research.

Conclusions Related to Professional Practice

This section presents the results with specific emphasis on my teaching. It begins with a look into developing my professional practice as a teacher and discusses the action research process - planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning. This is followed by conclusions about developing student enjoyment and participation.

Developing My Professional Practice as a Teacher

This section discusses how the process of action research helped to develop my professional practice as a teacher. It focuses on the major findings of this study related to lesson planning and reflection and connects it to current literature.

The most significant result from the planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning stages was my discovery that long range planning was only a guideline for what actually took place during a class. This finding supports Hopper's (1996) finding that many teachers in his research changed their original lesson plans to something different before the lesson was acted upon. He described planning as a "blue-print from which to work rather than as a map to follow"(p. 17). However, this finding should not be misinterpreted as a reason to minimize efforts toward planning.

A probable reason for last minute changes to some of my planning may have been my lack of attention and effort to such an important aspect of the teaching process. After educating learners in physical education professionally for the last three years, I felt my experience would be able to carry me through any rough spots during a lesson, regardless of what I had planned. This attitude made me lazy and unprepared. In fact, in some cases, I did not even create a written lesson plan (Journal, November 14, 15, 20, 2002). This was an error on my part. The value of good lesson planning cannot be overstated. A strong plan begins the action research process on a strong platform so that it can be well acted upon, allowing greater time for observing and reflecting while minimizing re-planning. As Vickers (1990) explains,

"Lesson planning provides a time for you to become more knowledgeable, for you to research new areas and to translate this knowledge into exciting and rewarding experiences for students...your efforts in lesson planning can make all the difference in their [students'] daily lives and experiences" (p. 157).

Through the observations and reflections gathered in my research, it was evident that I did not, at first, consider lesson planning in physical education as an important contributor to student enjoyment. Instead, I thought that I would be able to act out a lesson that pupils would take pleasure in while minimizing my efforts with planning.

Fortunately, the process of action research was the key to discovering this error in emphasis and led to changes in my planning practices that led to greater success in providing for student enjoyment. Changes such as planning and implementing new activities rather than relying on old ones resulted from this research because of the planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning process.

From a professional practice standpoint, the fact that I made changes to my teaching as a result of the action research process may be more important than the changes themselves. Without working through each of the stages and conversing with all participants in the research, changes in my teaching practice would not have taken place. Similar to Hopper's (1996) study, the process allowed "new knowledge on theories of teaching to be grounded within the community of discussants" derived from "attempts to bring about change, rather than from professional training in universities and colleges of education" (p. 26). The changes in my practice came about because my research group, John and the students, confirmed the reality of my findings and conclusions and helped me realize that, if I was to improve my instruction, I needed to make certain changes. The collaborative support from all members of the research group allowed discussions to be based on real situations from my own teaching – the stories of my practice. These stories, analyzed through the action research process, strengthened the changes in my instruction to provide pupils with more enjoyable physical education.

Developing Student Enjoyment and Participation

This section describes conclusions related to student enjoyment and participation and connects these conclusions to current literature. The first conclusions are drawn primarily from the analysis of the quantitative data. Next, the focus shifts to the qualitative findings with

discussion of free play and game situations, choice in activities, novelty, and matching students' skill levels. The pace of lessons is discussed, followed by motivation, and the evaluation of student learning. Behavior management is then addressed and the use of equipment.

Conclusions from the Quantitative Data

The findings of this study identified aspects of physical education classes many students found enjoyable, as well as those aspects that they did not enjoy. These results are significant because they create a rudimentary starting point that changes practice for the better. Aicinena (1991) agreed, "It would be wise to be cognizant of the factors which make physical education enjoyable for students and of those factors which affect negatively on student attitudes"(p.28). The participants in this research used the word enjoyment synonymously with the word "fun" when they provided comments on questionnaires. Once armed with the information of what pupils find "fun" about physical education, I used more of these types of activities. Instructors should pay particular attention to the many characteristics of "fun" described by adolescents and be sure to integrate these characteristics into the program wherever possible (Mandigo & Thompson, 1998).

This study found a strong, positive relationship between teacher and student enjoyment in physical education classes. When I was having fun, so were the students. This finding should not come as a surprise because in many situations laughter, enthusiasm, and enjoyment are contagious. At the same time, teenagers are very perceptive in identifying features of a class that their teacher does not enjoy and this unfortunately is also contagious. Stenlund (2003) identified fifteen ways to help physical education teachers improve their instructional skills. His final and perhaps most important recommendation is for educators to:

Have fun out there! Why do you do this for a living? If you do not enjoy what you do, it will inevitably show. Both you and your students will suffer, so listen, MAKE IT

FUN!...There are ways to add little games and gimmicks to make your classes more enjoyable for you personally, and this will translate into a more positive student response (p. 6 & 7).

There was also a connection between student participation and student enjoyment. When students did not participate on a particular day they ranked their level of enjoyment very low. The implication of this finding is that educators must make every attempt to ensure that pupils participate in activities on a regular basis. The Grade 9 students in this study already appeared intrinsically motivated and eager to participate in daily physical activity. This continued throughout the research period. Fortunately, when learners are already intrinsically motivated, as in this case, participation becomes a permanent behavior (Mitchell and Chandler, 1993).

The very few students who did not participate on rare occasions needed extra incentive to take part in class activities despite the fact that they were losing marks on that day. In my experience, the number of students in a class that fit this description is often much greater than in the class I worked with in this study. Consequently, there is an even greater need for strategies to motivate students to want to participate. To foster intrinsic motivation in these pupils, teachers should focus on student tasks that promote pleasure of performance and the belief that skills can be successfully accomplished (Mitchell and Chandler, 1993).

Free Play and Game Situations, Choice in Activities, Novelty, and Matching Students' Skill Levels

This study supports the literature (Mandigo & Thompson, 1998; Pangrazi & Darst, 1991) that sees an interrelationship among free play and game situations, choice in activities, novelty, and matching students' skill levels. One of the most prevailing findings from this study was that, for this group of Grade 9s, game situations were favored over performing a series of drills. This

may have had to do with the opportunity to choose the activity or at least have some say in the activities of the day.

In their research, Mitchell and Chandler (1993) found that “students who perceive an environment that is challenging, non-threatening, and in which they have some control over outcomes, are more likely to be well motivated to participate”(p.121). This could explain why many participants in my study enjoyed learning a new skill over an old one. The former experience offers a more challenging environment. Mandigo and Thompson (1998) echoed these findings when they examined what causes a flow state – an enjoyable experience – when they included a student's ability level as an additional factor in providing a fun atmosphere. They found that physical activity environments that offer young people a sense of perceived freedom to modify activities so that challenges correspond to their skill levels are more likely to produce flow states than environments that are very structured or controlled by others. It would seem that the prudent teacher allows some input into classroom decision making, yet maintains control of the process involved in instruction as such actions seem likely to affect positive attitudes toward physical education (Aicinena, 1991). Thus, having learner's vote on the day's game during the LOG unit was an effective strategy that promoted student enjoyment.

Further evidence indicates that, as they begin their high school years, youngsters are ready to start making some choices in the types of physical activity they want to include in their lifestyle (Pangrazi and Darst, 1991). As a coordinator of physical activities therefore, the teacher may want to develop a program that gives learners increasing responsibilities for choosing a personal activity program. This was indicated in the sessions in the weight room when pupils were given the freedom to develop their own set of exercises.

The freedom of choice students had during some of the classes may also explain why they enjoyed game situations, free play, and tournament formats over a structure that involved

several drills. In game situations, free play, and tournament situations, learners can control their physical activity environment by adapting their skill level to the larger group. Providing teens with this opportunity by having them create games, choose their equipment, set personal challenges, and modify activities to their own skill level causes a more enjoyable experience (Mandigo and Thompson, 1998). An example of this occurred on the final day when the Grade 9 students chose their own partners and organized and smoothly ran their own badminton tournament.

Pace of Lessons

An additional strategy that created a more enjoyable experience for the learners became known when the lesson was fast paced and time seemed to go by quickly. The literature supports the idea that the wise instructor should avoid the boredom associated with slow and shallow instruction that affects negatively upon pupil attitudes (Aicinena, 1991). This includes offering more than one activity during one period because students have little opportunity to become bored with one activity. It would seem that a fast paced environment dismisses boredom and also creates the perception that the time spent in class goes by quickly. This transformation of time in which, for some, time speeds up is characteristic of providing an enjoyable experience (Mandigo & Thompson, 1998).

Motivation

It was interesting to note the affirmative effect that positive teacher feedback had on student enjoyment. Although this type of encouragement is an extrinsic reward and thus less effective than intrinsic rewards, it still motivates teens to work hard and take pleasure in their experiences. Deci and Ryan (1994) assert that extrinsic rewards which are perceived as being

informational with respect to one's perceived competence (e.g., positive, constructive feedback) should be used over extrinsic rewards which are perceived as being controlling (e.g., feedback that conveys incompetence and helplessness) to foster participants' desire to continue to enjoy an activity. Thus, positive comments from an instructor can be effective tools in motivating participants, as was the case with this research study.

While students enjoyed receiving positive comments they also liked being treated equally. This not only pertains to the amount of play time each pupil experienced during a particular period, but also in the attention they received from the teacher. It is clear that instructors "should make every attempt to interact with each student individually on a daily basis and that they should treat all students equally ...to do so may increase the likelihood of affecting positive attitudes toward physical education" (Aicinena, 1991, p.31). Thus, my re-planning so that each member of the class received equal playing time, while playing indoor soccer was an effective strategy that enhanced students' experience.

A final motivational strategy identified by this research was providing opportunities for participants' success. It created a positive effect on student enjoyment and participation. For most learner's, repeated success leads to improved perceptions of ability and a lowering in perceptions of threat (Mitchell & Chandler, 1993). Anderson (2001) agrees that when educators enhance a student's chances of success, students are more likely "to improve their skills in their spare time, and perhaps prolong their involvement in physical activity beyond their school years" (p.15). The observation that some participants wanted to stay after class on a few occasions to continue playing badminton was definitely an indication of their success and enjoyment of the class.

Despite the opportunities for success many students were given during a day's activities, a small number of low achieving pupils were still unmotivated to be physically active. There

were three ways in which I handled this type of learner during the study. The first was to emphasize the importance of a physically active lifestyle in developing a strong, positive self-confidence (Pangrazi and Darst, 1991). The second was to explain how the class and entire program was designed to help all students improve and develop, not just skilled athletes (Pangrazi and Darst, 1991). After all, the majority of participants were not skilled athletes and their needs had to be met. The third way was to encourage the students who perceived their ability to be low to think in terms of task mastery and define achievement in terms of personal performance relative to the task and not according to winning or losing (Mitchell & Chandler, 1993). Having the non-athletes focus on the class activities with these perspectives in mind helped them to become more intrinsically motivated.

Evaluation of Student Learning

The findings indicated that many students do not favor written tests. On the final day of the badminton unit, a one-page true/false test was administered and several pupils commented that they would rather be playing badminton than writing the test. While this type of assessment was very quick (ten to fifteen minutes to finish) and easy to complete, several students complained at having to perform this task. My perception from learners was not that they objected to being evaluated in such a simplistic form, but simply that they would rather play than write. Realistically, some type of paper and pencil evaluation must take place at some point to test students' knowledge of the material presented in the course. The key to keeping them enthusiastic about physical education was to make these written components as short as possible so they did not take too much time away from skill development and physical activity.

The testing of skills proved to be a much more enjoyable experience that actually provoked many of the participants to try harder. This type of evaluation helps to motivate

students because of their dependence on grading (Martens, 1990). They want to receive a high mark, so they put forth a stronger effort and this usually results in a better appreciation for physical activity.

From an instructor's viewpoint, regardless of the type of evaluation, the emphasis in evaluation should be on the processes of an activity rather than products or outcomes (Mitchell and Chandler, 1993). In the badminton unit, this was accomplished by gearing comments to participants that focused on proper technique instead of an outcome.

Behavior Management

Much of the inappropriate behavior exhibited by members of the class may have been prevented if certain procedures on my part had been introduced and supported earlier in the units. As early as the first lesson, I should have established classroom rules, even if they were different from the rules that John already had in place with the group. Lavay, French, and Henderson (1997) suggest listing acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in the program, involving students in the development of the rules when possible, and clearly stating the consequences for not abiding by the rules. Once the rules have been established, they recommend posting the rules in an area where all students can clearly see them, such as the change room or gymnasium as well as sending this information home so parents know what is expected of pupils. These are preventative measures that, in many cases, set a serious tone in the class and may cause teenagers to think before they act. There was strong likelihood that if these procedures were in place at the initial stages of the research, much of the inappropriate behaviors that arose may not have occurred.

Prevention, however, was not enough. Once rules were established it was critical that they were consistently enforced. Any punishment should have been handled immediately after

the behavior was observed (Lavay, French and Henderson, 1997). This was one of the biggest errors on my part that led to the explosion that occurred between Joe and Bob on Day 7 of the research. If students exhibit behavior for too long, it is given the chance to increase in intensity (Lavay, French and Henderson, 1997). If I had dealt with the inappropriate behavior right at the outset, there is a strong possibility that the situation that developed between Joe and Bob may have been prevented. When it was finally dealt with, their behavior, as well as others in the class, improved significantly and inappropriate behavior was rarely an issue for the remainder of the research period.

Dealing with Equipment

Rules for the handling of equipment were eventually established during the research period, particularly during the badminton unit, and this improved student behavior. When procedures were established for equipment distribution, use, and collection, the class ran more smoothly and pupils were given little opportunity to misbehave. The initial classes contained a very informal and unstructured protocol regarding equipment and this caused learners to behave inappropriately. A poor process for the distribution of equipment leads to behavior problems (Lavay, French and Henderson, 1997). It was clear that once I began planning the administration of the equipment, there was a better flow to the classes and there were fewer behavioral issues.

Conclusions Related to Development of Physical Education Programming

This section discusses conclusions relating to the larger role of my teaching practice as a designer of the physical education program at the school level. Topics such as dealing with physical space, fitness testing, and team teaching are the focus.

Dealing with Physical Space

As mentioned with respect to gymnasium space, it was very challenging to supervise and manage a class of thirty-three teenagers, especially when only half the gym was available or only the weight room. Despite the economic reasons for allowing large class sizes in a limited amount of space, physical educators and school administrators must consider that this really is a safety concern. When learners are moving about a room at high speeds as they are expected to do, there is always a potential for injury. Also, when students must sit to the side because a game situation only calls for ten participants, it sparks a great potential for the non-participants to misbehave. Further, large class sizes and the resulting crowded conditions affect student enjoyment negatively (Aicinena, 1991).

What should physical educators do about the problem of large class sizes and limited physical space? Martens (1990) argues that

Physical educators need to continue to present strong arguments in favor of class sizes below 30 for activities if quality results are to be achieved in performance and attitude development (p.50).

An increase in finances for schools is an obvious way to help the situation. From an administrative perspective, another option would be to consider placing classes that are physically more passive (classes where students sit in seats and listen while taking notes) at the top end of the range in class size (Martens, 1990). In the very least, the size of the facility should

be considered when deciding on class size. As a rule within the physical education department, the teacher with the most students gets the largest facility whenever possible.

Fitness Testing

Fitness testing was discussed in the findings of this report. It was observed that this type of assessment was not a popular activity among the Grade 9 students. Thus, it is important for educators and physical education departments within a school to consider its real value to the program. It is premature to draw any conclusions on whether fitness testing has benefits on health-related fitness and regular participation in physical activity (Keating, 2003).

On the other hand, there is strong support for continuing regular fitness testing within a physical education classroom (Keating, 2003). Even though fitness testing may be only a small part of a much larger fitness education program, it is an important one. Safrit (1995) lists many benefits for students and teachers that result from a well-administered fitness testing regime. These include tracking student progress, deciding on course content, setting appropriate challenges, motivating youth, promoting physical education, and evaluating the program. Thus, the merit for fitness testing is also justified.

Like many problems in education, youth fitness testing is complicated and as a result requires solutions that meet the specific needs of each individual school (Keating, 2003). In the context of this research study, it appeared that since pupils were not enjoying the fitness testing experience, we the teachers, needed to find ways to promote the value of this exercise in order for it to have any lasting, positive effects on pupils and the program in general.

Team Teaching

A final topic revealed in the findings was the concept of team teaching. Many of the most enjoyed classes took place when John and I taught the class together, offering different activities in a different instructional style. The variety of activities and closer supervision alone, made the period more enjoyable for the majority of participants. Other advantages included specialization of instruction, better planning, meeting individual student needs, ease of outside resources, and teachers working together closely in the program (Martens, 1990).

Team teaching can take on many different forms. At the school where this research was conducted, the only team teaching that occurs involves the classroom teacher and an additional educator to help with mentally or physically challenged students if more than two are included in the class. No other form of team teaching exists in the physical education department. The findings from this research present a strong argument for implementing some model of team teaching within the school in order to improve student experiences. Regardless of how it is implemented, team teaching could have a positive effect on learners, teachers, and the entire school community.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

This section describes strengths and weaknesses of this research study. Some of weaknesses are considered first, followed by some of the features of the research that strengthened the findings in this study.

The findings from this research cannot be generalized beyond the scope of my own personal practice as an educator and the class that participated in the research. Each class that a teacher encounters is unique and, therefore, each lesson taught should also be unique. An effective teaching strategy for one group may not necessarily be true for another group. This

was especially the case with the issue of participation. Learners in this research, for the most part, enthusiastically participated on a regular basis and non-participation for invalid reasons was seldom, if ever, a problem. Historically, this has not been the case. In the past, I have encountered several teens that are not willing to put the effort into daily participation.

On a related note, the group of pupils involved in the research was a borrowed class for a twenty-day time frame. Observations and findings may have been different if the class was mine from the start of the semester. Some rules and routines were already in place from the previous teacher when I began the research. Also, many of the youngsters knew that, although I was evaluating them, I was only there for the short term. This may have had an effect on how they reacted to me as their temporary teacher.

Some weaknesses were also present in the quantitative data. The number of students that completed the end of class form varied from day to day. A small number saw this activity as an added nuisance to their day and did not take this exercise seriously. Despite my best efforts to ensure that everyone completed the forms, some of them chose not to complete or hand-in their forms. This may have had the potential to skew results in terms of their enjoyment rankings. Also on the daily forms, similar comments on different days may have been from the same student. In some instances, there is no real way to tell if more than one pupil was commenting about an issue or if several of them had the same concern. For these reasons, caution must be exercised in extrapolating the results to other classes.

Overall however, the questionnaires were an excellent device in gaining additional insight from participants that would not have been possible through simple observation. This was especially true for the quieter members of the class who chose to express their thoughts on paper rather than voicing them during a lesson.

An additional strength in the research was the effective use of triangulation (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Sharing observations and viewpoints between John, the students, and myself made the experience much more real and provided confirmation of what was happening. It enabled me to experience insights about my practice that I may not have come to on my own.

Implications of the Study

This section discusses implications of this research study related to two important areas of my teaching practice. The first area relates to my own professional growth. It involves the impact this research has had on improving my abilities as a teacher and the professional learning that took place. The second area relates to the implications this research has for future study.

Implications for Professional Growth

Conducting this research has had an enormous impact on my teaching practice and professional growth. Being able to examine my own methods of instruction and the resulting influence on my students has led me to a greater confidence in what I do as a physical educator. I have been able to identify my own strengths and weaknesses as a teacher and discover strategies that worked well in motivating teenagers to get the most out of a physical education class.

This research involved what the Ontario College of Teachers refers to as “job-embedded professional learning” where learning occurs as teachers engage in their daily work activities (www.oct.ca/en/plp). In this context, teachers learn by doing, reflecting, and generating and sharing new insights individually and together. As a result, action research has great potential to fulfill the responsibility teachers have for professional learning. Individual teachers can exercise significant independence in shaping their own professional learning in response to personally-

identified professional needs relating to their own students and classrooms (Browne, 2003; Wideman, DeLong, Morgan, & Hallett, 2003).

In a much more informal sense, this type of research can be continued on a much smaller scale. The time commitment, planning, organizing, implementing, and analysis realistically cannot be conducted on a regular basis. However, on a much smaller scale, I can indulge in researching my practice during times of the school year when the schedule allows it. Even infrequent attempts at action research can provide useful insights into pedagogical work (Kirk & Tinning, 1992).

Implications for Future Study

To determine whether the findings in this research can be applied widely in the school, further study is needed. One possible method is to have the four physical education teachers in the school perform a similar action research study and compare the findings by performing a meta-analysis. It would be interesting to see if the same issues arise or if a completely different set of issues dominate the findings. This may help in further defining what students in this school find enjoyable about physical activity as it relates to teacher practice.

Similarly, surveys could be administered to the entire student body to determine what they enjoy most about physical education class and what they want as part of the program. This is what was conducted at Westdale Secondary School in Hamilton when they designed programs that matched the needs and interests of a varied student population (Nunn & Parkes, 2003). After surveying their students, they took advantage of facilities and expertise available in the local community and built on the specific strengths of teachers in the physical education department to create courses that were exciting and unique (Nunn & Parkes, 2003).

An additional goal of my research was to provide participants with such an enjoyable physical education experience that they would continue participating in a physically active lifestyle after Grade 9. The only way to monitor this would be to conduct a longitudinal study that tracks their involvement in physical activities well into adulthood. The hope, of course, would be that these students internalize a commitment to participate in physical education so they can benefit from a healthy, active quality of life throughout high school and for the rest of their lives.

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APPENDIX A

To: Superintendent of the ----- District School Board

From: Tony D'Oria

Dear (Name of Superintendent)

This letter is to seek your approval to conduct an action research project with the Grade 9, semester 1, period 3, boys' Physical Education class at ----- . The purpose of the study is to help me increase students' participation and enjoyment. I intend to improve the quality of my teaching so that my students will learn a greater appreciation for physical activity and be more likely to adopt a physically active lifestyle as adults.

This research will be conducted as a major research paper for my Master of Education degree at Nipissing University. My Principal Investigator for this research is Dr. Ron Wideman, Associate Dean of Education. He can be reached at ----- extension ---- or e-mailed at ----- .

Please be aware that this is a study of myself and my teaching practices and will be conducted during the volleyball unit and the low organizational games unit. Students will participate in classes and their learning will be evaluated as usual in Physical Education. However, at the conclusion of each class, each student will be given a response form and asked to:

- record his level of enjoyment of the class on a scale of 1 to 10
- indicate why he enjoyed/did not enjoy the class
- provide reasons if he did not participate.

In addition, at the beginning and the end of the study, students will be asked to complete similar response forms about their enjoyment and participation in Physical Education and how it may have changed during the two units.

This information obtained from the response forms will be analyzed on a daily basis to help link students' levels of participation and enjoyment with the activities and methods of instruction I am using at that time.

While all students will attend classes, participation will be voluntary in terms of completing the response forms. Students will not be required to put their names on the response forms.

The forms will be distributed to each student after each class but non-participants will simply hand them in blank. In this way no one in the class will know who is, and is not, participating. A student may withdraw from the study (in terms of completing the response forms) at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. Participating or not participating in the study will not in any way affect students' grades.

Observations of what takes place during the class will be recorded for a 4-week period. The data will be used only for the purpose of my research study and will be kept in strictest confidence. Also, pseudonyms will be used in the research report to protect students' anonymity.

By signing below you will be giving me approval to conduct my research at ----- . I am excited at the potential that this research will have on improving my teaching practices and, thereby positively influencing student's of the ----- District School Board.

If you require further information or wish to discuss this research with me please contact me at --
----- extension ----. Thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tony D'Oria

Signature of Superintendent _____
(Name of Superintendent)

APPENDIX B

Information Letter and Consent Form
Action Research Project
Grade 9 Boy's Physical Education

Dear Parent or Guardian

This letter is to seek your approval for your child to participate in an action research project in the Grade 9, semester 1, period 3, boys' Physical Education class at ----- . The purpose of the study is to help me as a teacher increase students' participation and enjoyment. I intend to improve the quality of my teaching so that my students will learn a greater appreciation for physical activity and be more likely to adopt a physically active lifestyle as adults.

This research will be conducted as a major research paper for my Master of Education degree at Nipissing University. My Principal Investigator for this research is Dr. Ron Wideman, Associate Dean of Education. He can be reached at ----- extension ---- or e-mailed at -----.

Please be aware that this is a study of myself and my teaching practices and will be conducted during the volleyball unit and the low organizational games unit. Students will participate in classes and their learning will be evaluated as usual in Physical Education. However, at the conclusion of each class, each student will be given a response form and asked to:

- record his level of enjoyment of the class on a scale of 1 to 10
- indicate why he enjoyed/did not enjoy the class
- provide reasons if he did not participate.

This information obtained from the response forms will be analyzed on a daily basis to help link students' levels of participation and enjoyment with the activities and methods of instruction I am using at that time.

In addition, at the beginning and the end of the study, students will be asked to complete similar response forms about their enjoyment and participation in Physical Education and how it may have changed during the two units.

While all students will attend classes, participation will be voluntary in terms of completing the response forms. Students will not be required to put their names on the response forms. The forms will be distributed to each student after each class but non-participants will simply hand them in blank. In this way no one in the class will know who is, and is not, participating. A student may withdraw from the study (in terms of completing the response forms) at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. Participating or not participating in the study will not in any way affect students' grades.

Observations of what takes place during the class will be recorded for a 4-week period. The data will be used only for the purpose of my research study and will be kept in strictest confidence. Also, pseudonyms will be used in the research report to protect students' anonymity.

By signing below you will be giving permission for your child to participate in this research study. I am excited at the potential that this research will have on improving my teaching practices and positively influencing your child's education.

If you require further information or wish to discuss this research with me please contact me at --
----- extension -----. Thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Sincerely,

Tony D'Oria

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____

APPENDIX C

Beginning of the Research Study

Given your current feelings about Physical Education, please rank the following statements accordingly by circling one number that indicates your level of response.

1. I usually enjoy physical education classes. . .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

“Not at All”

“A Great Deal”

2. I usually participate in physical education classes. . .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

“As Little as I Can”

“As Fully as I Can”

End of Each Class

Please rank your enjoyment of today’s Physical Education class by circling one number that indicates your level of response.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

“No Enjoyment at All”

“A Great Deal of Enjoyment”

Why did you enjoy or not enjoy today’s class?

If you did not participate today, please state why.

End of Research Study

Considering the last two units of Physical Education class, please rank the following statements accordingly by circling one number that indicates your level of response.

1. I usually enjoyed these physical education classes. . .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

“Not at All”

“A Great Deal”

2. I usually participated in these physical education classes. . .

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

“As Little as I Can”

“As Fully as I Can”

APPENDIX D

<p>NIPISSING UNIVERSITY ETHICAL REVIEW FORM</p> <p>FOR</p> <p>RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS</p>
--

(Submit the **typed** original and four [4] copies of the form and all relevant documentation to the Research Office Room A236. Append pages as necessary.)

For Committee use**DATE:** September 22, 2002**FILE NUMBER:**Revised October 1st, 2002**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)****DEPARTMENT****EXTENSION**

Ron Wideman: Associate Dean of Education, Faculty of education, Nipissing University

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR OR RESEARCH CLASS

(In the case of Student research, the faculty investigator must be listed as principal researcher.)

Tony D'Oria

TITLE OF RESEARCH:

How I can improve my teaching in Grade 9 boys' Physical Education to increase students' participation and enjoyment?

TYPE OF RESEARCH:

STUDENT: Master of Education Research Paper

FUNDING AGENCY:

Not applicable

PROJECT DATES:

ESTIMATED START: October 21st, 2002

ESTIMATED FINISH: June 27th, 2003

A. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RESEARCH

Describe the purpose of the research. Be sure to include sufficient detail so that the Committee understands clearly **WHAT** you are proposing to do.

The purpose of this action research study is to investigate the question, "How can I improve my teaching in Grade 9 boys' Physical Education to increase students' participation and enjoyment?" Research indicates that improving Physical Education instruction in this way can contribute to students' appreciation for physical activity and can increase the likelihood of students adopting a physically active lifestyle as adults. (Deshaises, 2000; Wade, 2000)

I am the subject of this research. The data to be collected is the kind any teacher might collect as part of his/her responsibility to ensure quality instruction and to assess student learning. However, the results of this study will result in a research report for academic credit and, for this reason, an ethical review is required.

I will be teaching a Grade 9 boys' class following repeated cycles of "plan, act, observe, reflect, re-plan" (Hopper 1996) and I will collect qualitative and quantitative data to discover the impact of my efforts to improve my instruction. A colleague will also act as critical friend by observing my teaching, providing feedback, and reviewing my data, findings, and conclusions.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

- (i) Describe the research method for collecting the data.
- (ii) Supply a copy of the questionnaire and details on other research instruments to be used.
- (iii) Describe the characteristics of the subjects; i.e. age, gender, institutional affiliations, and so on.
- (iv) Describe the procedures for selecting the subjects (random sample, convenience sample, and so on).
- (v) Specify the sampling method if a survey is to be used.

For experimental designs, give details regarding the assignment of members to groups.

I will be analyzing my own changes in planning and teaching while working with a class of Grade 9 boys, aged 13 to 15 years, during the two units of the physical education course. Since Grade 9 Physical Education is a compulsory subject the students will be required to take the course.

During the two units, I will collect data about student participation by keeping track of attendance and noting the level of participation and student response in the classes.

The majority of the data will be my own lesson plans, observations and reflections on my own teaching, and notes on my critical friend's observations of my teaching. Observations and reflections will be collected using two methods:

1. speaking into an audio recorder immediately following each lesson
2. keeping a daily journal. _

In addition, after each class, each student in attendance will be given response form and asked to respond anonymously as follows:

- record his level of enjoyment of the class on a scale of 1 to 10
- indicate why he enjoyed/did not enjoy the class
- provide reasons if he did not participate.

This information will be analyzed on a daily basis to help link students' levels of participation and enjoyment with the activities and methods of instruction I am using at that time.

In addition, at the beginning and the end of the study, students will be asked to complete similar response forms about their enjoyment and participation in Physical Education and how it may have changed during the two units.

The response forms are included with this application.

C. POTENTIAL RISKS

- (i) Describe any potential physiological, psychological, social or occupational risks to subjects.
- (ii) Describe the steps that you intend to take to either reduce the risks and/or the action that will be taken once the risks become obvious to you during the research implementation.

There are no potential physiological, psychological, social or occupational risks to the students related to this research.

Students will not be required to put their names on the response forms.

The project and its expectations will be described before the start of the first class in which data collection will take place. Students will be given an information/consent form to take home to their parents. Students will return the consent forms before data collection begins.

If the parents do not give permission for their students to participate in the research, the students will still participate in the classes as they are required to do, but they will not complete the response sheets.

In the event that parents do not give consent for one or more students to participate in the research, the teacher will still give all students the blank response sheets after each class. However, non-participating students will hand the form back without providing any information. In this way, no one in the class will know that a student is not participating in the research. Student's will not be required to put their names on the response forms.

The future of students will not in any way be affected by participating or not participating in the study. A student may withdraw from the study in terms of providing responses at any time without prejudice or penalty of any kind.

D. INFORMED CONSENT

In essentially all cases, written consent forms are required. If you feel that use of a written consent is impossible, state why.

The following eight points need to be addressed in the Consent Form:

1. Purpose and value of the research.
2. Any inconvenience to participants.
3. Nature of tasks to be performed when participating and approximate time commitment.
4. Rights of the subject to withdraw at any time without penalty.
5. Right of the subject to have his/her personal information held confidential.
6. Potential psychological, physiological, social and occupational risks and how they will be managed by the researcher.
7. The name(s) of the person(s)/group(s)/institutions eliciting or receiving the consent.

If the Subjects are a captive population (i.e. students, patients, prisoners) be sure to state that their future will not in any way be affected by participating or not participating in the study.

Deception should never be permitted when there is risk of harm to the subject or when it is not possible to advise subjects subsequently as to the reasons why the

deception was necessary. If deception is needed, describe why it is needed and how it will be dealt with.

*Attach your consent form and detail below your plan for obtaining informed consent.

Deception is not a part of this study. An information letter/consent form for parents is attached to this application.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSENT

How will consent be obtained from agencies which have data needed for the study or which have control over the interview site, e.g., schools, native bands, etc.

The research will be conducted at ----- Secondary School which is part of the ----- District School Board. In this school board permission to conduct research is the prerogative of the superintendent in charge of the school. A letter to the superintendent requesting permission to conduct the research is attached to this application.

F. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

Describe how anonymity of the participants and confidentiality will be maintained including anonymity in publications resulting from the project.

How will the raw data be protected or disposed of at the end of the study?

Students' will not be required to put their names on the response forms.

Pseudonyms will be used in the research report to protect the anonymity of the students.

The data will be kept in strictest confidence. It will be used only for the purpose of the research study and will be kept in locked files. The raw data involving students will be destroyed by shredding six months after the project is completed and approved by the university. The researcher's own lesson plans and teaching notes will be retained for his future use.

G. HOW THE SUBJECTS WILL BE INFORMED OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

Describe how subjects can be informed of the study's results or debriefed.

Upon completion of the study, students and their parents will be given information on how to access the results of the study, if they desire to do so.

H. CLASS PROJECTS and/or STUDENT RESEARCH

N/A

APPENDIX E



**NIPISSING UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE
ETHICAL REVIEW DECISION**

Title: "How I can improve my teaching in Grade 9 boys' Physical Education to increase students' participation and enjoyment?"

Principal Researchers: Dr. Ron Wideman, Tony D'Oria

Faculty/Department: Masters of Education

Date of Review Decision: November 06, 2002

The Ethical Review Committee has completed the examination of your research proposal. As Co-Chair, it is my pleasure to inform you that your proposal meets all the requirements of the ethical review.

Best wishes with your research

Sincerely,

Todd A. Horton
Todd Horton, Co-Chair