

Understanding the Experiences of School Teachers and Administrators Involved in a Multi-Sectoral Approach to the Creation of a Physical Literacy Enriched Community

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Abstract : Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life. In recent years, physical literacy has emerged as a determinant of health, promoting a positive lifelong physical activity trajectory. Physical literacy's holistic approach and emphasis on the intrinsic valuation of movement provide an encouraging avenue for intervention among children to develop competent and confident movers. Although there is research on physical literacy interventions, no evidence exists on the outcomes of multi-sectoral interventions involving a combination of home, school, and community contexts. Since children interact with and in a wide range of contexts (home, school, community) daily, interventions designed to address a combination of these contexts are critical to the development of physical literacy. Working with school administrators and teachers, sports and recreation leaders, and community members, our team of university and community researchers conducted and evaluated one of the first multi-contextual and multi-sectoral physical literacy interventions in Canada. Schools played a critical role in this multi-sector intervention, and in this project, teachers and administrators focused their actions on developing physical literacy in students 10 to 14 years of age through the instruction of physical literacy-focused physical education lessons. Little is known about the experiences of educators when they work alongside an array of community representatives to develop physical literacy in school-aged children. Given the uniqueness of this intervention, we sought to answer the question, 'What were the experiences of school-based educators involved in a multi-sectoral partnership focused on creating a physical literacy enriched community intervention?' A thematic analysis approach was used to analyze data collected from interviews with educators and administrators, informal conversations, documents, and observations at workshops and meetings. Results indicated that schools and educators played the largest role in this multi-sector intervention. Educators initially reported a limited understanding of physical literacy and expressed a need for resources linked to the physical education curriculum. Some anxiety was expressed by the teachers as their students were measured, and educators noted they wanted to increase their understanding and become more involved in the assessment of physical literacy. Teachers reported that the intervention's focus on physical literacy positively impacted the scheduling and their instruction of physical education. Administrators shared their desire for school and division-level actions targeting physical literacy development like the current focus on numeracy and literacy, treaty education, and safe schools. As this was one of the first multi-contextual and multi-sectoral physical literacy interventions, it was important to document creation and delivery experiences to encourage future growth in the area and develop suggested best practices.

Keywords : physical literacy, multi sector intervention, physical education, teachers

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