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'When it's something that you want to do.' Exploring curriculum negotiation in Norwegian PE

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ABSTRACT

Background: Student participation in curriculum negotiation has been widely regarded as beneficial for student engagement, motivation, and learning. Within the physical education (PE) context however, several scholars claim that these benefits are seldom realized. Interestingly, most investigations into curriculum negotiation in PE focus on teacher actions and behavior. Investigations of students' actions in curriculum negotiation are rare. Further, while much of the literature claims curriculum negotiation is potentially beneficial for student learning, few of the conceptual and analytical frameworks utilized within previous PE literature are based on explicit learning theories.

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to explore student participation in curriculum negotiation in Norwegian PE through the lens of an explicit learning theoretical perspective.

Method: A 10th grade class with 23 students (age 15–16) and an 8th grade class with 30 students (age 13–14) from 2 different schools, and their respective teachers were recruited for the project. Within these classes, participatory observation, video observations, and stimulated recall interviews were conducted to produce empirical material related to curriculum negotiation. The material then underwent qualitative thematic analysis where select parts of John Dewey's educational philosophy were used as the analytical framework.



Results and discussion: With a basis in the analytical framework developed from Deweyan educational philosophy, the results show that students within the two contexts participate in both explicit and implicit forms of curriculum negotiation. Explicit curriculum negotiations to a large degree appear to be governed by the teachers and are deemed by teachers to be part of strategies for upholding Norwegian legislations and recommendations for including students in curricular decision-making. While not as easily noticeable, implicit forms of negotiations were more prominent within the explored contexts. The analysis also suggests that from a Deweyan perspective, possibilities to increase learning through curriculum negotiations occur when teachers notice, help, and guide students in their own reflective processes surrounding how to act in PE. Such pedagogical action makes implicit negotiations occurring more explicit, and explicit negotiations more intelligent.

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Introduction

Educational research suggests that participation in curricular negotiation can significantly increase student motivation and improve learning outcomes (e.g. Boekaerts, Pintrich, and Zeidner 2000; Black and Wiliam 2009). Within physical education (PE), scholars have suggested that curriculum negotiation is important for student engagement (e.g. Mitchell, Gray, and Inchley 2015), motivation (e.g. Hastie, Rudisill, and Wadsworth 2013; How et al. 2013), that it is a key aspect of effective teaching (e.g. Goodyear and Dudley 2015; Mosston and Ashworth 2008), and that it is essential for effective formative assessment (e.g. López-Pastor et al. 2013). Despite its importance, researchers suggest that students still have limited opportunities to make curricular decisions within PE programs (e.g. Kirk 2010; Mordal-Moen et al. 2015). Enright and O'Sullivan (2010) for instance propose that:

students' voices have been largely absent from decision-making processes regarding conceptualizations, implementations and evaluations of their PE curricular experiences' (204).

Given the potential benefits of student participation in curriculum negotiation and concurrent claims that these benefits are seldom realized, the purpose of this paper is to explore student participation in curriculum negotiation in Norwegian PE through the lens of an explicit learning theoretical perspective. To address this purpose, we first present a summary of previous literature regarding curriculum negotiation in PE. Then a section dedicated to our Deweyan framework (Dewey [1910] 1997, [1916] 1980, [1938] 1997) is presented. Here, we describe how curriculum negotiation looks in practice and connect curriculum negotiation to learning. This is followed by a presentation of the methodological steps used to generate and analyze empirical material gathered within Norwegian PE. Following this methodology section, we present examples of practices identified as different forms of curriculum negotiation within two Norwegian PE classes. The paper concludes with a general discussion of the examples presented in relation to existing literature and the Deweyan framework. Here, we provide new insights and recommendations for both practitioners and researchers interested in curriculum negotiation in PE.

PE literature on curriculum negotiation

Curriculum negotiation has been understood in different ways in PE scholarship. In some literature (e.g. Enright and O'Sullivan 2010; Guadalupe and Curtner-Smith 2019a, 2019b), curriculum negotiation has been equated with teachers taking deliberate actions to involve students in planning and implementing content. From this perspective, curriculum negotiation is a pedagogical alternative to traditional teacher-centered practices, is primarily the responsibility of teachers, and is relatively focused on content. Others have suggested that curriculum negotiations are present in all teaching and learning situations (Barker, Quennerstedt, and Annerstedt 2015; Amade-Escot 2006). In this work, curriculum negotiation is not viewed as an alternative approach to teaching, but rather a part of learning itself (see e.g. Barker et al. 2017; Mosston and Ashworth 2008).

Notwithstanding differences in conceptualizations, PE scholars have claimed that student participation in curriculum negotiation holds a range of educational benefits (e.g. López-Pastor et al. 2013; Guadalupe and Curtner-Smith 2019a; Shen et al. 2009). A number of researchers have suggested that helping students make curricula decisions can increase student interest, motivation and engagement (Howley and Tannehill 2014; Mitchell, Gray, and Inchley 2015; Shen et al. 2009; Smith, Green, and Thurston 2009). Enright and O'Sullivan (2010) for example, maintain that helping students to take ownership of their own learning through curriculum negotiations can be exciting and energizing for students, and that it contributes to the production of deep learning and insights.

Despite general acceptance of the value of student involvement in curriculum negotiation, there are factors that prevent it from happening. Some scholars point out that power dynamics resulting from differences in ability and status mean that certain students are excluded from negotiation processes.

Brock, Rovegno, and Oliver (2009) claim more specifically that student status understood as perceived popularity affects students' willingness to contribute to group discussions, along with the weight different voices are given in group situations. Other scholars have pointed to the complexity of curriculum negotiation processes, suggesting that they can be difficult for teachers to manage (e.g. Howley and Tannehill 2014; Wahl-Alexander, Curtner-Smith, and Sinelnikov 2016). In this work, issues such as core curriculum restrictions, support from school leaders, student willingness to engage in novel practices, and teacher knowledge and motivation, can all affect if and how curriculum negotiation takes place.

Finally, a small number of researchers suggest that curriculum negotiation does not necessarily impact learning positively. Wahl-Alexander, Curtner-Smith, and Sinelnikov (2016) claim that while involving students in decisions concerning aspects such as task difficulty and complexity can enhance learning, the opposite is also possible. Wahl-Alexander, Curtner-Smith, and Sinelnikov (2016) point out that students sometimes negotiate by giving less effort, refusing to participate, fooling around, or arguing with the teacher (see Cothran and Kulinna 2007; Barker and Annerstedt 2016). As such, Wahl-Alexander, Curtner-Smith, and Sinelnikov (2016) claim that curriculum negotiation can be categorized as positive or negative, where evaluations are normative in that they privilege certain views of actions over others.

Theoretical analytical framework: Dewey and curriculum negotiations

While curriculum negotiation is conceptualized differently within existing PE literature, few conceptualizations are explicitly rooted in learning theories. In this paper, a learning theoretical perspective previously used in PE literature to conceptualize both learning (e.g. Quennerstedt, Öhman, and Öhman 2011; Quennerstedt et al. 2014) and student decision making (e.g. Aarskog, Barker, and Borgen 2018; Aarskog 2020) has been chosen, namely the educational perspective of John Dewey. More specifically we draw upon selected parts of Dewey's works connected to learning and conceptualize these ideas in relation to student decision making. By doing this we present a framework we suggest can be used to understand curriculum negotiation as an integral part of learning experience. In order to present this framework, we will start with some general descriptions of Deweyan ideas related to learning, and then move to more specific concepts related to decision making and curriculum negotiation.

When presenting Deweyan ideas related to learning, a general point for Dewey is that he saw learning as fundamentally connected to the idea that humans act upon their environment and simultaneously undergo the consequences of their actions. For Dewey, learning resides in making connections between these actions and consequences (Dewey [1938] 1997, [1916] 1980). Furthermore, new learning arises in what Dewey termed indeterminate or problematic situations, essentially situations where we do not know what to do. Through resolving such situations through actions and reflection, new knowledge and habits are formed (Dewey [1916] 1980, [1938] 1997). Dewey suggested that in educational contexts however, teachers do not have to wait for problematic situations to arise. Teachers can and indeed should, facilitate or create such situations for students (Biesta and Burbules 2003).

The creation of learning situations is however not something the teacher should do on their own. Dewey asserted that students themselves should in fact be involved in this process (Dewey [1910] 1997, [1938] 1997). This idea can be traced to the notion that for experiences to be truly educative, there needs to be a correspondence between what Dewey termed *internal* and *external* conditions of a situation (Dewey [1938] 1997). That is, there needs to be a match between an individual's internal conditions such as interests, desires, skills and knowledge, and the external demands of a given 'task' or problem. An example could be a teacher assign students the external task of dunking a basketball. If the students can 'match' the task through internal conditions such as being able to jump high enough, the task can be educative. If they cannot, the situation will not lead to growth and will close rather than open avenues of wider and richer experience (Dewey [1938] 1997, [1916] 1980). A

central point within Dewey's educational philosophy that follows such an understanding is that students should be involved in framing the situations, problems and/or tasks they face in education. This because, as Dewey puts it, no one knows students' internal conditions better than the students themselves (Dewey [1938] 1997, [1916] 1980). Dewey therefore suggested that teachers should include students in forming the *purposes* that guide their learning (Dewey [1916] 1980, [1910] 1997, [1938] 1997).

For Dewey ([1938] 1997), purposes are not simply impulses or desires, but plans and methods for achieving the desires. Dewey's point was that acting on mere impulse or desires means acting without knowledge of consequences and therefore without any form of control (Dewey [1938] 1997). Teaching therefore involves helping learners to form purposes that go beyond impulse and desire. Students should be included in developing plans and methods to achieve the goals they want to achieve (Dewey [1938] 1997, 70). Dewey furthermore stressed that in education, it is valuable for students to learn to develop and re-develop purposes throughout their learning (Dewey [1938] 1997, [1910] 1997, [1916] 1980). Dewey's point was that to help students learn to learn, teachers need to be intelligently aware of the capacities, needs, and past experiences of students and to help students develop plans for learning (Dewey [1938] 1997). According to Dewey, if teachers do this they can help students reach educational goals, while at the same time helping them to acquire the habit of forming purposes when learning (Dewey [1938] 1997, [1916] 1980, 1902).

Dewey's assertions relate to curriculum negotiation in four ways. First, teachers can work from the premises that: (1) different learners have different impulses and desires, and (2) one individual can have several impulses and desires at the same time. These possibilities suggest that almost any educational context contains potential for multiple and conflicting impulses, desires and purposes and therefore multiple and conflicting actions. From this perspective, curriculum negotiation can be understood as a process arising when students and teachers act upon differing impulses, desires or purposes.

Second, Dewey suggested that actions involve undergoing consequences which results in some form of learning. In schools, consequences include reactions from fellow students and teachers. Regardless of consequences, actions and reactions with a basis in differing desires or purposes can be viewed as a process of negotiating the lines of acceptable action. Curriculum negotiation is thus a potential learning process.

Third, from a Deweyan point of view, curriculum negotiation can positively impact learning in two ways: (1) It can help facilitate a match between internal and external conditions of learning situations (Dewey [1938] 1997). (2) It can help students to acquire habits of utilizing purpose formation as part of their learning processes.

Fourth, although many of the actions taking place during lessons are explicit (e.g. verbal suggestions, explanations or appeals), curriculum negotiation does not necessarily need to be verbal or explicit. Even implicit actions taken by students and teachers can be understood as forms of negotiation *if* there exist differing desires and purposes within the context.

In relation to this paper's purpose, the Deweyan framework enables us to understand how students can participate in curriculum negotiation and to discuss these findings in relation to learning. To explore participation however, a methodology enabling such exploration is needed.

Methodology

To explore curriculum negotiation in accordance with a Deweyan framework, a methodology was developed within a research project exploring different aspects of students' decision-making (see Aarskog 2020; Aarskog, Barker, and Borgen 2018). The current paper draws on material obtained within this project. In the following, we first present the steps and preliminary analyses carried out within this project. We then turn to the analysis process specific for this paper. First though, we introduce the research context and participants.

Research context

In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), Norwegian students have the right to participate in decision-making within their own education, in accordance with their age and maturity (United Nations 1989). Since ratifying the UNCRC in 1989, this right has been integral to Norwegian education, and was further strengthened with educational reform in 2006. Norwegian educational policy states that students should be involved in different forms of curriculum negotiation and their own assessment within all school subjects (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2020; Forskrift til opplæringslova 2009). Despite policy however, existing research indicates that while student participation is expected, teachers make most of the curricular and assessment decisions in Norwegian PE (e.g. Mordal-Moen et al. 2015; Leirhaug and Annerstedt 2016). Somewhat paradoxically, research also suggests that student decision-making in PE decreases as students get older (Mordal-Moen et al. 2015).

Participants

As research suggests that student involvement in decision making decreases with age in Norway, students and their teachers from junior rather than senior high schools were recruited. Elementary schools were also ruled out as we wanted to be able to explore decision-making related to assessment and grading practices, which start in junior high in Norway. In addition, we wanted to recruit both a rural and an urban school, and include classes from different age groups. A 10th grade class (age 15–16) with 23 students (9 male and 14 female) from a rural area, and an 8th grade class (age 13–14) with 30 students (13 male and 17 female) from an urban area and their respective teachers, were recruited. Both teachers were male, formally qualified, and relatively experienced. In accordance with ethical guidelines, the project was reported to the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD), and prior to the study the participant teachers, participant students and their legal guardians gave their assent to participate.

Data collection and analysis

The data collection and analysis processes within the larger project contained six different stages, ending with a seventh stage of analysis directed towards different themes and papers. The different stages are briefly presented in Figure 1.

Participatory observations

Data collection started with a four week participatory observation period (Delamont 2004; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011), with one 90-minute lesson observed each week in each class. The first author observed the lessons, alternating between the roles of participant assistant teacher, participant student, and observer researcher. Observation was done in accordance with agreements made with

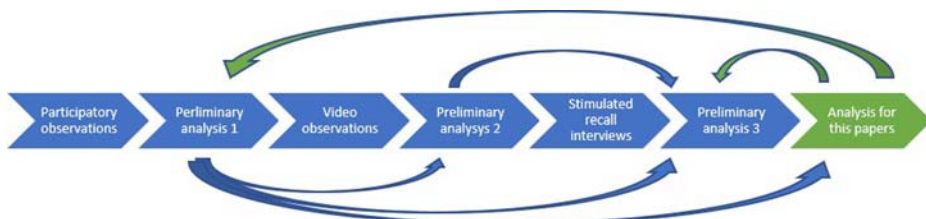


Figure 1. Method steps and analysis process.

both teachers prior to the observed lessons. In addition, the third author observed one of the lessons in each class from the sidelines, as second researcher. The observations were carried out in order to gain insights into student and teacher experiences and context (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). Within the observation period, field notes were taken during and immediately after each observed lesson.

Preliminary analysis 1

Both during and in the week following the participatory observations period, preliminary analyses were conducted. The analyses consisted of hermeneutic reading of field notes by the first author (Fauskanger and Mosvold 2014) and reflexive dialogue between the first and third author (Braun and Clarke 2006). The purposes of the observation period and the preliminary analyses was to develop ideas and criteria for what student decision-making in relation to their own learning looked like. In addition, the analysis helped us to better understand how to conduct video observations of student decision-making.

Video observations

One week after the participatory observation period ended, video observation (Derry et al. 2010) was used to capture one 90 minute lesson with each class. Two cameras on tripods with sensitive microphones were placed in diagonally opposite corners of the gym to capture all the actions occurring. In addition, a third portable camera with a directional microphone was used to zoom in on selected situations. A fourth microphone was placed on the teacher, in order to capture the oral interactions between students and the teacher.

Preliminary analysis 2

Immediately following the video observations, preliminary video analysis was conducted to identify situations of interest and subsequently which students to interview. This analysis process started with the first author editing film from different camera angles into one coherent lesson following the teacher of each class. These video edits were viewed and re-viewed by the first and third author who took notes of situations and students of interest. Video edits for students who were involved in situations of theoretical interest were created from the video that 'best captured' the students' interactions. These students were involved in (a) indeterminate situations on their own, (b) situations where they experienced indeterminateness within group work, (c) situations where the teacher provided feedback one to one, and (d) situations where the teacher provided feedback to a group. The preliminary video analysis thereby closely resembled a part-to-whole deductive approach (Derry et al. 2010). Based on selected clips, selected students, preliminary analysis of the field notes in addition to the larger projects' theoretical framework and purpose, interview guides were (re)developed, and stimulated recall interviews planned.

Stimulated recall interviews

The next step involved stimulated recall interviews (SRI's) (Dempsey 2010). Two male and four female students from the 10th grade, and three male and four female students from the 8th grade, along with both teachers, were interviewed. The interviews were conducted no more than two weeks after the video observations were conducted, and consisted of the first author playing the participants audiovisual recordings of their own behavior, followed by discussing aspects of those recorded situations (Dempsey 2010). In addition, general questions about the planning, implementation and assessment of the lessons and PE were discussed. All interviews were audio recorded.

Preliminary analysis 3

Following the SRI's, the video segments shown during the interviews, and the audio data collected were transcribed and thematically coded by the first author using MaxQDA, a software program for working with extensive qualitative texts. First an *inductive* approach was utilized to code and thematically organize the material using terms and phrases directly from the gathered material. After this a period of *deductive* coding was undertaken where codes and themes used were based upon the theoretical framework (Braun, Clarke, and Weate 2016).

Analysis for this paper

Following the preliminary analysis of the SRI material, we conducted a qualitative thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006). Analysis started with the authors meeting to discuss the gathered video material on several occasions. Working from these discussions, the first author selected transcriptions of the SRI's related to student and teacher actions and thinking within specific situations based upon the coding in Preliminary Analysis 3. A hermeneutic reading (Fauskanger and Mosvold 2014) was then carried out for each of the selected transcriptions. Through this close reading, examples of curriculum negotiation were identified in accordance with Deweyan ideas. Hermeneutic readings of the field notes were then conducted to identify similar situations to those identified in the SRI transcripts. Our intention here was to identify both explicit and implicit forms of curriculum negotiation, and to uncover how examples of such negotiation were experienced by teachers and students. Identification was followed by a theoretical thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006, 11) carried out by the authors through a reflexive dialogue (Braun and Clarke 2006, 9). This enabled us to consider not only how curriculum negotiation was practiced within the explored contexts, but also how these examples could be understood through a Deweyan perspective. This form of analysis and dialogue allowed us to make connections between the observed forms of curriculum negotiation and Deweyan understandings of learning and growth.

Results

In this section, examples of explicit and implicit ways in which students participated in curriculum negotiation in two PE classes in Norway are presented.

Explicit curriculum negotiations

In line with Norwegian regulations, both teachers described explicit curriculum negotiation as an important dimension of pedagogy. At the same time, the interviews revealed that they do most of the planning and purpose formation. For their parts, the students perceived this as 'normal' in PE. Despite this tendency, examples of explicit curriculum negotiation in the form of *verbal student-teacher interactions* are easily recognizable in the gathered material. The interviews conducted with the teachers and students also reveal other strategies of explicit curriculum negotiation utilized by the teachers. While not directly observed, these forms of explicit negotiation are *teacher facilitated democratic choices of activities*, and *student driven projects and lessons*.

Curriculum negotiation as verbal student-teacher interactions

The explicit curriculum negotiations most prominent in the material were negotiations through verbal student-teacher interactions. These mainly occurred as student and teacher questions or suggestions, or as teachers providing students with alternatives. In line with a Deweyan perspective, we do not interpret questions of clarification as acts of negotiation, but instead focus on questions and suggestions directed towards alternative ways of acting or interacting. Examples included suggesting alternative activities, questioning alternative ways of solving tasks, or suggesting how

to divide the class into teams and groups. Both the teachers and students saw this form of curriculum negotiation as common within PE. However, while the two teachers encouraged student questions and input, they seldom seemed to follow student suggestions. As the 8th grade teacher said in his interview:

We have many students that kind of try to be part of controlling the lesson, to control the division of teams and such. Such suggestions are overlooked, by me at least. It's not the ones that are most eager or good in an activity that should be allowed to control the PE lessons, I think. I tend to focus more on the ones that are insecure.

Both teachers shared the view that every PE class contains students who feel more comfortable making suggestions than others. Both teachers therefore saw their role as ensuring that lessons were adapted to all students and this meant that they made most of the final decisions. Still, the students reported that some suggestions were followed. Suggesting a warmup exercise or proposing that time should be allocated to special interests were both examples mentioned by the students. The 10th grade teacher illustrated this point: 'For example, if somebody is very into skateboarding, and are good at that, they can do that one lesson while the others play handball.' As such, verbal teacher-student interactions not only constituted curriculum negotiation, but occasionally resulted in students getting to decide what occurs within the context.

From a Deweyan perspective, it is worth noting that while the teachers had rationales for either rejecting or following suggestions, these rationales were seldom shared with students. These occasions were missed opportunities to include students in forming reflective purposes. If teachers had shared their reflective decision-making process, the students might have gotten insights into different aspects of different situations and improved their ability to make decisions on their own.

Curriculum negotiation as teacher facilitated democratic choices of activities

While verbal teacher-student interactions were prominent in the observed lessons, the interview material revealed other explicit strategies that the teachers utilized to facilitate curriculum negotiation. One such strategy utilized by the 10th grade teacher was to involve students in activity choice through democratic 'voting' processes each semester. The 10th grade student Ava, explained this strategy by saying:

We are divided into groups and we get a sheet of paper where we write down the things we want to do in PE in the different seasons. When the teacher makes his plans we see, or its almost only the things we have written down that are included in the plan.

At the same time, the 10th grade teacher admitted that: 'I would probably have much of the same activities anyway, but it is important that they feel that they are taking part in deciding what we do.' While the changes resulting from this process might seem arbitrary, the process is an example of explicit curriculum negotiation. It is also a process that according to students, results in increased motivation and interest. As Rachel said: 'I think it is good because then you give more of an effort when it's something that you want to do, and something you think is fun.'

While this strategy seemed to have a positive impact on student engagement, motivation and interest, from a Deweyan perspective, it falls short of involving and guiding students in purpose formation. For one, a voting process does not enable each individual student to adapt activities or tasks to their own needs and desires. Secondly, for a voting process to function as purpose formation in PE, the process would need to include discussions of different learning goals and include students discussing which activities they saw as suited to reach these goals.

Curriculum negotiation as student driven projects and lessons

Where the 10th grade teacher referred to the voting process as his main strategy to involve students in curricular decision-making, the 8th grade teacher explained that he has different strategies in

place to facilitate curriculum negotiation throughout the 3 year cycle of junior high school. His teaching is based on a 3-year plan developed within his teacher collegium where the learning activities are set. Still, his plan does include strategies to facilitate student participation in explicit curriculum negotiations. As the teacher pointed out:

All in all, it's me as a teacher that makes most decisions about the activities, but we do for example have the 9th grade dance project. Here the students make their own groups, they develop their own dance, and here they really control the whole thing themselves.

The 8th grade teacher went on to explain that students also have a period in the 10th grade where they choose the activities as well.

We have some student instruction in the 10th grade, where everybody goes together in pairs, and gets to be PE teachers for a lesson. Then they all kind of choose something they are good at, and then its 100% student driven. As teachers we are just there to provide some guidance before the lessons, and check that the plan they have made is somewhat possible to do, but the rest is all up to the students.

The strategies applied by this teacher therefore enabled students to negotiate between themselves when deciding on what and how to do things. As students' ideas and plans can be supervised by the teacher, the strategies themselves also allow for the teacher to help and guide students. However, the statements made by the teacher indicate that he does not actively or systematically utilize these opportunities to help the students as they negotiate in relation to the core curriculum or between themselves. Again, from a Deweyan perspective, this teacher's approaches do not include purposefully inviting students into and guiding mutual reflective processes framing the purposes that guide student learning.

Implicit curriculum negotiation

The teachers suggested that curriculum negotiations of an explicit nature were an important way in which they uphold students' official rights. Nonetheless, *implicit* negotiations also take place, and are in fact more prominent in the material gathered. In this section, three different ways in which student actions can be viewed as forms of implicit curriculum negotiation are presented: (1) student 'off-task' behaviors, (2) students adapting tasks to themselves, and (3) negotiating through bodily positioning.

Curriculum negotiation as 'off-task' behaviors

The empirical material holds many examples of student actions that are not part of solving tasks provided by teachers. Examples from a dance lesson in the 8th grade are presented and discussed in order to show how such actions work as forms of implicit curriculum negotiation.

The teacher starts off by explaining the content of the lesson. During his explanation, the teacher explicitly states that in dance lessons, students often 'screw up their grades by fooling around and not giving enough effort.' The lesson continues with a traditional demonstrate, explain, and practice logic. During practice, the class is split into groups of six by the teacher, and the teacher provides feedback and encourages students to practice as much as possible. During the lesson, the teacher joins different groups to show new steps or turns and uses groups to demonstrate for the rest of the class. Despite efforts made by the teacher to keep the students on-task, the students often stop practicing, make jokes, laugh, and play around. This happens both when they are told to observe demonstrations and when they are supposed to be practicing the dance.

Despite the teacher's initial comment about potential negative consequences of fooling around, he never actively discourages off-task behavior. Instead, he tries to encourage students to focus on the tasks at hand. The negotiation is thereby constituted by students acting out on their impulse and desire to socialize and have fun, and the teacher's purposeful encouragement to keep focus on tasks. In this sense, the teacher is aware of student off-task behavior but, as he said in his interview, he is reluctant to direct his attention towards the unwanted activity. He claimed that students should be able to have fun, but that he tries not to encourage fooling around. While somewhat ambiguous,

this statement indicates that the teacher accepts the implicit negotiation occurring, and knowing or unknowingly, utilizes these negotiations as a means of keeping off-task behavior at an acceptable level. Interestingly, the students perceived opportunities to engage in off-task behaviors and to socialize and have fun as important for their wellbeing and their ability to learn in PE. As Amelia said when asked if it is important for her to be able to fool around in class: ‘Yes because, because it is not fun if we take everything too serious, because then we take all the fun out of it.’

By remaining implicit, the students’ view that off-task behavior is important for their well-being and learning remained hidden from the teacher. At the same time, the teachers’ view that minimizing off-task behavior is important for student learning was hidden from the students. The teacher did not utilize this opportunity to help students frame purposes that go beyond mere impulse or desire. By remaining implicit, the negotiation thereby concealed aspects of the teaching-learning process viewed as important by the different actors. In this respect, negotiation as off-task behavior fell short in terms of the teacher guiding student reflection.

Curriculum negotiation as students adapting tasks to themselves

Another way that students implicitly negotiate the curriculum is through adapting tasks to themselves. This strategy was common, and all the students either made a given task easier or more difficult. The following interaction occurred between the first author and Robert, a 10th grader who was interviewed about his participation in a floor ball task:

- Robert: Well, I feel that when we have things like leading the ball, and when you can do it on one level, you feel like you could do another level, or like on that difficulty, then you can start challenging yourself.
- Researcher: Ok, what do you think about that?
- Robert: I think that is good. Everyone has a different achievement level in different things, so if we for example have badminton or other activities, then if you can do a trick opening, then you can move on to trying behind your back, or something like that. Like, if you think that you can manage a task, then you start thinking that you might be able to do more, and then its good if you can push on.

On many occasions, the teachers did not explicitly address student adaptations of tasks. Adaptation simply occurred as students – in a Deweyan sense – tried to match the internal and external conditions. The teachers did at times provide feedback when students made adaptations, either positive or correctional depending upon their perception of the adaptation’s appropriateness. While some feedback is thereby explicit, the negotiation constituted by students choosing to adapt tasks to themselves, and the teachers’ reflections resulting in either positive or correctional feedback, remained implicit.

In a Deweyan sense, this is another instance where guidance and teacher feedback into the reflective processes of the students could be beneficial. If these processes had been made explicit, and the teacher and students had discussed different options, ways of adapting tasks, and ways of thinking when adopting tasks, the teacher could have helped and guided student decision making. Such help and guidance could have in turn have provided students with valuable insights for tasks in the future. Further, it could have helped students acquire habits of thinking that are beneficial when developing and re-developing purposes guiding further learning.

Curriculum negotiation through bodily positioning

A third way that students enter implicit curriculum negotiations is through displaying different bodily positions. Contrary to the other forms of implicit curriculum negotiation presented in this paper, this form of curriculum negotiation represents a case in point where keeping the negotiation implicit rather than making it explicit, can be beneficial. The following example occurred during the 10th grade lesson:

The students are given the task of running across the gym on given signals. During the first couple of signals all the students except an injured student participate in the drill. However soon after the drill starts one student

stops participating. She stands directly across from the teacher, silent and looking down at the floor, her hair covering her face. She continues to stand like this for the remainder of the drill.

When the teacher was asked about this situation in the SRI, he explained that while he noticed her stopping, she is a student that he intentionally does not confront when she does not want to do something. He said: 'She stands right in front of me, you can clearly see that she becomes like, she pulls her hair down, and hides away.' He added; 'She hides, and several of her peers obviously notice. I could have addressed it, but I do not think that would have resulted in her participation.' Further on in the interview, he explained that: 'I don't think that [addressing her inactivity] would have resulted in anything other than creating an unpleasant situation for her. And what would that achieve? Nothing.' During the interview, it becomes clear that his commentary is related to fundamental ideas he has about PE and his teaching.

My goal is that as many as possible of my students get changed and show up for PE. Earlier in my career I had more students dropping out of entire lessons than I do now. I try to create an environment in PE where it's safe to come, to get changed and to participate. That's the goal, and I think I have managed that.

A key point with respect to the running drill incident is that the student does negotiate her own curriculum through bodily positioning clearly signaling her own desire. Through such bodily positioning, she signals her desire not to be noticed and 'convinces' the teacher not to comment on her behavior. From a Deweyan point of view, this example exemplifies the importance of teachers being intelligently aware of the capacities, needs, and past experiences of their students. As the teacher points out, forcing a student into doing something she does not want to do, could potentially lead the student to learn that her opinion and choices do not matter within this context. While keeping the negotiation process implicit and not directing more attention to her, and by complying with the student's bodily expressed desire, the teacher intends to teach the student that the PE context is safe. If successful, this choice could potentially be crucial for her further development. This example thereby exemplifies a setting where the negotiation seems to benefit from being kept implicit rather than being made explicit.

Discussion

When conducting a theoretical analysis of the results of curriculum negotiation against the background of PE literature, several of the findings aligned with previous studies (e.g. Enright and O'Sullivan 2010; Mitchell, Gray, and Inchley 2015; Guadalupe and Curtner-Smith 2019a, 2019b). Both teachers facilitated student participation in explicit forms of curriculum negotiation. Here, as suggested by Smith, Green, and Thurston (2009), democratization, informalization and providing students with a means of participating in choosing activities are promoted. At the same time, both teachers seemed hesitant to let democratic processes govern 'too much.' They shared Brock, Rovegno, and Oliver (2009) assertion that students who feel comfortable in PE will make suggestions, while those who do not feel comfortable will not. Making most, or all decisions based on suggestions and inputs from students thereby runs the risk of steering lessons in directions that are more suited to the ones already thriving within this context. It is therefore possible to view the teachers' facilitation of explicit curriculum negotiations as an attempt at balancing potential rewards with potential pitfalls. This results in students feeling that while they have a voice in certain aspects of PE, teachers make most of the decisions.

Implicit modes of curriculum negotiation presented in the literature (e.g. Amade-Escot 2006; Barker and Annerstedt 2016), such as increasing or reducing task complexity, fooling around, or refusing to participate are also prominent in our findings. The example of the 10th grade girl not participating, the example of 8th graders' 'off-task' behaviors, and the numerous examples found of students increasing or reducing complexity of tasks, can all be viewed as 'positive or negative,' 'student initiated' forms of negotiation (Wahl-Alexander, Curtner-Smith, and Sinelnikov 2016). Viewed in this light, increasing the complexity of tasks is likely to be viewed as a positive

negotiation, while decreasing complexity is likely to be seen as negative. Our findings from the 8th grade dance lesson provide an alternative reading to the normative categorization presented in the literature. Our interpretation is that being able to socialize, laugh and talk during practice, are important for students' wellbeing and enjoyment of PE, which in turn are important for engagement and ultimately learning (e.g. Mitchell, Gray, and Inchley 2015; Howley and Tannehill 2014).

When conducting a theoretical analysis of the results through a Deweyan framework, we are encouraged to question the categorization of positive or negative negotiations even further. From a Deweyan point of view, reducing complexity of a task can be just as important as increasing complexity in terms of learning. The negotiation processes observed clearly involve students matching their internal conditions with the external conditions of learning situations. These opportunities for matching are evident in the student driven dance project, the student driven lessons, the ability for students to make suggestions and adapt tasks to themselves. Without such opportunities, it is likely that many of the situations would result in students learning what they cannot do, rather than what they can do. However, when viewed from a Deweyan perspective, there seems to be significant potential missed in relation to explicit and implicit forms of negotiations. This is especially true in terms of utilizing situations as starting points for individual and mutual discussions and reflections revolving around the purposes that frame student learning processes. When such discussions fail to occur, the students miss having a teacher guide their reflective processes. This further disadvantages students as they do not learn how to develop and re-develop their own purposes.

At the same time, it is important to be aware that not all forms of negotiation necessarily benefit from being made explicit. In some instances, such as the example of the 10th grade girl 'hiding' in her hair, the implicit nature of the negotiation seemed to be beneficial. In instances where teachers do keep negotiations implicit, they need to do so in intelligent ways. Teachers need to be aware of the capacities, needs, and past experiences of students and be confident that leaving some negotiations implicit is beneficial in terms of further development and growth.

Concluding remarks

In this paper we have explored student participation in curriculum negotiation in Norwegian PE through a specific learning theoretical lens. By gathering and analyzing material from the Norwegian PE context, we have shown that students participate in curriculum negotiations in several ways. They participate in explicit curriculum negotiation strategies which mainly seem initiated or encouraged by the teachers as attempts to engage and motivate students. In addition to explicit strategies, we have shown how students also participate in implicit negotiations. Our main recommendation for practitioners is that they recognize both explicit and implicit negotiation processes, and that they view these processes as learning opportunities. Practitioners have an opportunity to utilize negotiations as opportunities to teach students ways of thinking critically and reflectively and to help students develop plans and methods that guide their own learning. In other words, teachers can help students learn to act intelligently, and not merely on impulse or desire. We also recommend that further research focusing on the negotiation processes occurring within the PE context is needed. While there exist several well documented methods and recommendations for implementing purposeful curriculum negotiation in PE, we think there is a need for more theoretically driven research exploring negotiations occurring outside interventions. Our hope is that this paper can inspire such investigations, and we suggest that the Deweyan perspective can be a possible framework for conducting such research.

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