BLOG 1

Country: IRELAND

Teacher name: Caoimhe Costelloe

Teacher School: Our Lady's Abbey, Adare

Teacher Educator: RICHARD BOWLES/ DÉIRDRE NÍ CHRÓINÍN

Teacher Educator affiliation: MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE

Blog Title:

Hi all,

In our school we share a holistic view of Physical Education, where our students receive equal access to all areas of the PE curriculum including: aquatics, athletics, dance, games, gymnastics, and outdoor and adventure. My interest in Meaningful PE derives from the research I did for my master's degree, where I examined inclusive practices of coaching and Meaningful PE was a prevalent feature of the research.

To get started with the children in 4th grade that I teach, I decided to focus on *giving choice* during PE lessons for the first term. I enjoy the democratic nature of Meaningful PE, giving students the opportunity to be decision-makers and influencers of their learning experiences. By providing students with choice, we might assume their learning experiences could be hindered (i.e. 'free time'); however, choice does not always mean full autonomy. Choice can be as simple as selecting between two options or as open-ended as designing an entire activity.

In the first term, I integrated choice across different PE strands. The Dance strand, particularly Creative Dance, provided the perfect opportunity for autonomy. Students choreographed their own routines and selected their own music, fostering creativity, social interaction, and personal relevance. In the Games strand, when focusing on throwing and catching skills, I presented students with two game options that achieved the same learning outcomes. Small choices such as this encouraged them to take ownership of their learning while maintaining structure.

As the weeks progressed, I introduced them to the core features of Meaningful PE and encouraged discussions about which elements were most present in our lessons. Looking ahead to the second and third terms, I plan to build on this experience by introducing reflective journals, allowing students to document and share their PE experiences.