Blog 2

Champion teacher: Richie, Ireland

I am a generalist primary teacher in Ireland. I teach 12 curriculum subjects every week. School is a busy place and there are lots of competing demands. I love teaching PE and I have tried to pay special attention to how I teach PE since I became a Champion of Meaningful PE. I am conscious that not every teacher can pay attention to every subject all the time – I see that I have a special role and responsibility in relation to promoting a love of physical activity.

This is my third 4-month term implementing ideas related to Meaningful PE in my teaching. My overall motivation relates to exploring how to deemphasise competitive elements of participation and highlight that successful participation can take many forms. The result would be more (hopefully all) children feeling greater belonging, purpose and success in PE.

This school year I am working with a new class group so in a way, I was starting again. Like last year, I started by trying to build up a shared language related to the purpose of activities and PE and how success might be defined. This was mainly about framing PE as an enjoyable time in which competition was not a priority. I regularly emphasise that PE should be fun for everyone. Building on my approach last year, I planned for a post-lesson reflection time in the classroom after each PE lesson. I established this time as a released, informal time when the children drank from water bottles and shared their thoughts on the PE class they had just participated in. I used three questions to frame the conversation each time:

1. What went well?
2. What do we need to work on?
3. What big moment stood out?

I noted feedback on the board as children shared. This year, to help children begin to think about how others are experiencing PE the focus of the 'big moment' is on others. For example, children may highlight a skilful act, a kind act, a cooperative act, an outstanding act or examples of persistence. This has helped children approach PE in a

more considered way, thinking about how others are impacted and included by the decisions we make together.

There is never a shortage of ideas in these post-lesson reflections together and the conversation generally flows and build towards a shared consensus of what is important. I listened and probed further to position the children as co-planners of their next lessons. I think that the children sustained their investment in providing feedback because they could see the direct link between their ideas and the subsequent PE lessons. I tried to use their feedback in ways that were visible to them.

To build on this, I also introduced an element of co-planning at the beginning of each lesson. To start the PE lesson, I shared my overall plan, and the children made suggestions about how to organise the play spaces, how to make teams and about the timing of activities. Again, the children made great suggestions that made PE work better, and they also were more invested in activities that they had a say in designing what happened.

Overall, the impact of being involved as a Champion of Meaningful PE ideas is visible in the structure of PE lessons as I now include a co-planning and reflection time in each lesson.

This approach has also supported me to self-reflect as a teacher of PE. I hope that all children are finding value and belonging in the PE spaces we create together. The children's feedback stays with me and motivates me to pay attention to how I approach teaching of PE, with increased awareness of how my decisions and actions as a teacher can positively impact children's experiences. I love teaching PE and look forward to each lesson. I want the children to feel the same way and find a place for physical activity in their lives.

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