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Is meaningful physical education and social justice a complimentary combination? A physical education teacher educator collaborative self-study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) programmes are expected to support future teacher learning about contemporary innovations and big ideas for teaching physical education. Teacher educators are challenged to learn about and incorporate contemporary innovations while maintaining programme cohesion. Exploring how teacher educators make sense of and teach about innovations, such as ideas related to meaningfulness, alongside foundational ideas, such as social justice, can provide insight on teacher educator pedagogies and their professional development journeys.

Purpose: This study explored the concepts of and relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice in our teacher education pedagogies when implemented in combination. We pay particular attention to when ideas of Meaningful PE and social justice were complementary, overlapping and when they were distinctive.

Method: A self-study of teacher education practices methodology supported four teacher educators to collectively and individually interrogate our evolving understanding, decisions and practices across a 13-month period. [Loughran, J. 2014. "Professionally Developing as a Teacher Educator." *Journal of Teacher Education* 65 (4): 271–283] signposts for teacher educator professional development provided theoretical guidance to make sense of our experiences combining the two pedagogies. This paper focuses on the recordings of collective meetings (n = 9, over 12 h) where we shared and analysed experiences, raised questions and formulated developing understandings of the relationship between teaching for meaningfulness and social justice approaches. Data analysis involved thematic analysis methods to review all data and collective identification and refinement of themes through back-and-forth discussion.

Findings: From the thematic analysis, the following themes were cocreated: (a) Meaningful PE can act as social justice but is not social justice per se; and (b) the combination of Meaningful PE and social justice facilitates a dance between 'the individual' and 'the social' with democratic and reflective practices as the choreography. These features of the relationship provide direction and encouragement to combining Meaningful PE and social justice ideas in teacher education pedagogies. **Conclusions:** Through cycles of *experiencing* and *articulating*, we made sense of the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice. Our

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Democratic; reflective; teacher education; pedagogy; pre-service teacher



story highlights the value of teacher educators engaging with knowledge and practice of teaching about teaching and learning about teaching in the context of innovation.

Introduction

Contemporary innovations in physical education (PE) have transformed the way PE teachers approach health, PE and overall wellbeing (Beck and Kosnik 2012; Kosnik 2007). PE teachers and teacher educators are encouraged to challenge the status quo by enacting contemporary innovations, such as ideas related to meaningfulness and social justice. By using a social critical lens, scholars should critically analyse the possibilities of contemporary innovation. For instance, Devís-Devís (2006) emphasised how pedagogical innovations such as Teaching Games for Understanding, and Sport Education can be criticised by failing to challenge the deep structure of classroom communication and the oppression and power relations generated by sport. Contemporary PE fosters inclusivity by accommodating diverse abilities and backgrounds, promoting an environment where all students can participate and thrive (Lynch and Curtner-Smith 2019; Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022). In this sense, it is necessary to critically explore how PE teachers and teacher educators make sense of and teach about innovations.

Promotion of equity and social justice is a foundational driver of contemporary PE (Lynch and Curtner-Smith 2019). Teacher educators are expected to enact pedagogical approaches that support future teacher learning about social justice concepts within a context that models a more socially just experience of physical education as foundational ideas in physical education teacher education (PETE) programmes. Understanding how to enact social justice pedagogies in PETE programmes is developing (Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022; Ovens et al. 2018; Philpot 2016; Walton-Fisette and Sutherland 2018). There is wide agreement that pedagogies of social justice in PETE include a commitment to equity, democracy and social justice, and listening and pedagogically responding to the needs and interests of diverse populations in localised contexts (Enright et al. 2018; Luguetti et al. 2022; Schenker et al. 2019).

Future PE teachers need to be prepared for the realities of the schools and students they will encounter. Learning to enact social justice approaches in teaching PE can be challenging for future teachers (Hennig, Schaefer, and Gleddie 2020; Lynch and Curtner-Smith 2019; Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022; Scanlon, Baker, and Tannehill 2022). Recent discussions of PETE programmes involve controversy over whether pre-service teachers (PSTs) are willing and able to embrace socially just pedagogies (Hennig, Schaefer, and Gleddie 2020). Social justice approaches can often seem overwhelming in aspiration and out of reach to future teachers. For example, the inequalities and marginalised groups may differ from one context to another and, as such, so will the strategies for acting on inequalities (Tinning 2016).

Lack of clarity and confidence about how future teachers and teacher educators might enact social justice education has led to calls for understanding 'how' we might teach for, about and through social justice in PETE (Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022; Scanlon, Baker, and Tannehill 2022). For instance, future teachers and teacher educators need to have both the ability and the desire to teach for a more socially just physical education (implicitly or explicitly) as well as about social justice concepts, with a specific focus on dialogue and action (Hill et al. 2022). Teaching through a social justice lens means incorporating principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion into the educational process. By infusing social justice themes into the curriculum, educators can create a learning environment that fosters empathy, respect for diversity, and a deeper understanding of societal issues. Scholars of social justice have recently begun to invest in explicitly illustrating how teacher educators can help future teachers learn how to teach social justice (Enright et al. 2017; 2018; Oliver, Oesterreich, and Aranda 2015; Shelley, McCuaig, and Shelley 2019). Following this

track, scholars in the area of meaningfulness have proposed further exploration of the potential of pedagogies of meaningfulness to act as a pedagogy of social justice (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2022).

Teaching for meaningfulness implies explicit attention to the quality of an individual's experiences within physical education alongside opportunities for them to make personal sense of those experiences. Meaningful PE is one way to approach teaching for meaningfulness in schoolbased PE. Meaningful PE aims to 'support students in coming to value physical education through experiencing meaningfulness ... and recognising ways participation enhances the quality of their lives' (Fletcher et al. 2021, 4-5). Prioritising meaningfulness in PE can enable pupils to find fulfilment, promote a desire to seek out movement experiences again, with resultant benefits for quality of life (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2022). At first glance, the relationship between teaching for meaningfulness and social justice seems to be promising; Social justice approaches and Meaningful PE draw on similar features, both grounded in democratic approaches with care for the quality of experiences of participants. Although, Meaningful PE prioritises a focus on the individuals' quality of experience which differs from the focus on equity as a theoretical underpinning of social justice. On the other hand, Meaningful PE seems to be an accessible idea for future teachers to embrace and adopt in their beginning teacher work (Fletcher et al. 2020). This potential points at Meaningful PE as a possible pathway to promote a social justice disposition with teachers.

We suspect that social justice and Meaningful PE can act as a dance between 'the individual' (as a primary focus of Meaningful PE) and 'the social' (as the primary focus of social justice). Both approaches are primarily anchored in relationships, in the back-and-forth of rhythm and connections that unite beyond dichotomies and binaries. The attention to individual experience within Meaningful PE might provide opportunities for teachers to interrogate their own and others' experiences in a way that attends to positionality, a foundational social justice concept.

We wondered how learning about social justice and learning about Meaningful PE might interact and play out in our teacher education pedagogies given the potential of meaningfulness to be put to work as a mechanism to learn about, analyse and address social justice issues in school-based PE. Our research question became: What is the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice in our teacher education pedagogies? Our purpose was to explore the concepts of social justice and meaningfulness side-by-side, paying attention to when ideas complemented and overlapped and when they were distinctive. By clarifying our developing understanding of social justice and pedagogies of meaningfulness we hoped to add to the knowledge base by identifying key features of the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice in PETE pedagogies. Because we were focused on learning about these pedagogies, and how they were connected, teacher educator professional development (Loughran 2014) provided both a rationale for our approach as well as a theoretical framework to make sense of our individual and collective processes.

Theoretical frame

Loughran's (2014) theory of developing a pedagogy of teacher education centres on the idea that effective teacher education requires a deliberate and reflective approach that is responsive to the unique context and complexities of the teaching profession. This theory emphasises that teacher educators should engage in continuous self-inquiry and critical reflection on their own teaching practices, beliefs, and values (Loughran 2014). By doing so, they can refine their pedagogical strategies, adapt to changing educational landscapes, and align their practices with the evolving needs of their students.

Teacher education is a dynamic pedagogical process involving both teaching about teaching and learning about teaching activities (Loughran 2006). Teaching about teaching represents the teacher educator perspective with explicit attention to pedagogy including the ability to articulate principles of practice, positioning teaching as problematic, and making the tacit nature of practice explicit to yourself and others. Learning about teaching focuses on the knowledge and practices related to the ways in which future teachers learn from teacher education experiences (Loughran 2014, 275).

Teacher educators are challenged to continually develop their pedagogies in response to student needs, the demands of compliance and regulations, as well as the broader remit of teacher education within a socially just world (Ovens 2020); teacher educators' own professional development is a part of this imperative.

A growing scholarship of teacher education contributes to understanding teacher educators' professional development journeys in relation to both teaching about teaching and learning about teaching (Ping, Schellings, and Beijaard 2018). Increased understanding of the importance of consciously teaching with a deep awareness of the pedagogical approaches and decisions teacher educators apply to their practice (Loughran 2006) has promoted greater attention to the practice and pedagogies of teacher education. Loughran's (2014) framework for the professional development of teacher educators' positions *experiencing* and *articulating* provide direction on how teacher educators can plan, map and analyse their professional development journey (Loughran 2014). Through cycles of experiencing and articulating both knowledge and practice, teacher educators can make sense of new ideas and their influence on teacher education practices continually innovate and develop their pedagogical practices.

Developing new pedagogical approaches, reflecting on and evaluating their effectiveness are considered both necessary and important to the teacher educator role (Koster et al. 2005). Improvement in teacher education practices is a priority for teacher educators (MacPhail et al. 2019). Capturing and making sense of teacher educator experiences is particularly valuable in the context of innovation (Kosnik 2007). Insight on how teacher educators learn about and integrate new ideas into their teacher education practices can guide and sustain new teacher education practices for others (Beck and Kosnik 2012) 'by portraying those learnings, the professional development journey to be embarked upon by others might be made more clear, navigable, and inviting' (Loughran 2014, 272).

Learning about new ideas and developing teacher education pedagogies involves professional learning activities for teacher educators such as engagement with literature and collaboration with others (Ping, Schellings, and Beijaard 2018). Engaging with teacher education research, and, in particular, researching one's own practice, can play a key role in this professional growth journey.

Methodology

This study utilises a collaborative self-study of teacher education practice (S-STEP) as methodology to explore the relationship between teaching about Meaningful PE and social justice in our PETE pedagogical practices. Loughran's (2014) theory of developing a pedagogy of teacher education, which underscores reflective practice and the integration of context, complements effectively with the principles of the S-STEP research methodology. Both approaches advocate for teacher educators to engage in critical self-inquiry and introspection, facilitating the evolution of instructional practices within the distinct landscapes of teacher education. This alignment highlights a shared commitment to cultivating informed, context-sensitive pedagogies that continually enhance the quality of teacher education.

We selected a self-study methodological frame because it is an established approach to inquiring into PETE practices (Ovens and Fletcher 2014) and has proven valuable in the context of developing PETE practices and pedagogical innovation in PETE practices (Casey and Fletcher 2016; Hordvik, MacPhail, and Ronglan 2017). Ovens (2020, 17) connects self-study explicitly with transformative practice, suggesting that 'self-studies provide the means for enacting a politics of action in ways that are transformative for both knowing in action and for pedagogical practice'. Teacher educators have used self-study approaches to explore understanding of new concepts, to experiment with their implementation in their teacher education practices, and to reflect on their value and effectiveness in helping future teacher learning (Hadar and Brody 2017). Given the crucial role of educational innovation in promoting a socially just world (Ellis, Souto-Manning, and Turvey 2019), more understanding is needed of how teacher

educators make sense of and adopt new ideas aligned with social justice approaches into their teacher education practices.

This S-STEP was situated within a larger international learning community including 12 physical education teacher educators. The learning community activities were focused on exploring the implementation of Learning About Meaningful Physical Education (LAMPE) pedagogies across contexts (Ní Chróinín, Fletcher, and O'Sullivan 2018). The four teacher educators in this research formed a group based on their common interest in exploring social justice pedagogies in their teacher education practice. Across the period of this research, the group members engaged in the activities of the larger learning community alongside their participation in this smaller group.

Across a 24-month period we collectively explored, interrogated and tested ideas to position the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice within our teacher education pedagogies. The research design reflected LaBoskey's (2004) five characteristics of quality in S-STEP. First, our inquiry was self-initiated and self-focused. We were drawn together by a common interest in exploring teaching for meaningful experiences. We speculated about the relationship between meaningful experiences and social justice, and we identified specific and salient aspects that provided us with challenging moments, dilemmas, and frustrations. Second, we acknowledged that our inquiry was innovative and improvement-aimed. We recognised the novelty of our inquiry would require deep engagement with ideas and practices and aimed for development of our pedagogical practices as a result. Through sharing our experiences and understandings, we hoped that others could draw upon that information to improve their own practice. Third, our methods were interactive as we relied on sharing of ideas, experiences, questioning and discussion to progress our inquiry. The structure of our data collection processes was built on collaborative inquiry where we used each other's experiences, questions, challenges, and analyses to better understand our own. Fourth, we used multiple qualitative methods to collect evidence of our professional learning journeys including team meetings with all four of us present, peer meetings in twos, peer observations of practice, individual post-teaching reflections and critical friend responses. Finally, we provided exemplar-based validation. To enhance trustworthiness of our processes and findings we shared details of approach in ways that open them up to interrogation by others.

Context and participants

Ethics approval for this study was received from the Mary Immaculate College Research Ethics Committee. All teacher educators taking part in the study signed written consent forms at the beginning of their participation in the study, and their iterative consent was negotiated orally at regular intervals during the study.

The participants in this research were four teacher educators from three different countries (Australia, Ireland and the UK – see Table 1). Two teacher educators were based in Australia,

	Carla	Cassandra	Déirdre	Declan
Country	Australia	Australia	Ireland	UK
Module	Sociology of Health and Physical Activity	Health and PE Studies	Social Context module	Secondary PE
Number of lessons	12	22	4	9
Delivery	Online and intensive (1 month and 11 sessions)	1.5 online/on campus and 1.5 practical on campus 11 weeks	Weeks 5–6 of their 12- week module	Face-to-face
Students	Year 3 – PETE course 36 total	Year 1 – PETE course 25 (on campus) or 110 (online)	Year 4 B.Ed primary teaching 32 students	Year 1 – Postgraduate PETE 18 students

Table 1. Summary of the modules for each teacher education involved in the study.

working in different institutions. Carla is a middle-class Brazilian woman in her 40s living in Australia and speaks English is an additional language. Carla is a teacher educator with nine years of experience using activist teaching approaches in a variety of settings and five years of experience implementing social justice in PETE programs (Luguetti et al. 2022). Carla's university was the first Australian university to use a 'block' model of learning, where the students study one single unit (module) intensively for a four week block. Each unit typically has three three-hour face-toface teaching sessions per week, scheduled over three days; however, during the context of this study, all teaching sessions were online. Cassandra, also living and working in Australia, is a white, middle-class, Canadian born early career researcher. She is a passionate teacher educator who is often drawn to exploring possibilities and pedagogies to improve her practice. She came to this project having limited experience in explicitly exploring social justice pedagogies or a Meaningful PE approach. In this research, Cassandra taught a first year, foundational pedagogy unit (module) in a four year PETE program across an 11 week term.

The other two teacher educators were based in the Northern Hemisphere. Déirdre is a primary/ elementary physical education teacher educator for over 20 years. Déirdre was involved in originally developing Meaningful PE (Fletcher et al. 2021) but has less experience engaging with social justice pedagogies. Déirdre's teaching for this research was in a short 4-lecture block within a 36-hour module focused on social contexts in sport, physical activity and physical education. Declan is a white British, middle-class male living and working in London, UK. Declan is a teacher educator of ten years having a focus on inclusive pedagogies and more recently developing a model for teacher education based upon Meaningful PE. Declan reflected upon their face-to-face teaching in the one-year post graduate certificate in education secondary physical education course, which leads to qualified teacher status in England.

Enacting Meaningful PE and Social Justice in PETE: Group activities and data collection

A self-study of teacher education practices methodology provided the frame for group activities, and associated data collection. Multiple sources of data were collected across 13 months (September 2021-October 2022), including planning documentation, individual reflections, recordings of conversations with critical friends, and recordings of collective meetings. For this study, we paid most attention to the data from the macro-meetings (n = 9, over 12 h) between all four teacher educators, though inevitably we were also coloured by other interactions and experiences.

Our early meetings were dominated by discussion of readings shared within the group related to social justice (for example, Luguetti et al. 2022). Our conversation led us to embrace Philpot and Ovens (2019) five principles of transformative pedagogies in PETE (see Table 2). These principles helped to clarify our thinking, establish common ground to proceed with our inquiry, and provided

Table 2. The five principles of transformative teaching from Philpot and Ovens (2019).

Principle	Explanation
Provoke understanding through an embodied awareness	It is how the learner feels the experience that is crucial. Transformative teaching should enable each student to feel empowered, feel emancipated, feel heard, feel respected, feel expressive, and feel creative.
2. Recognise and work with diversity	A lack of understanding of diversity is a barrier to teaching for social justice, and PETE students need to understand diversity before they embark on developing the agency to address injustice.
3. Involve students as co-contributors to course design	Reposition the student as a subject of pedagogy so that students are involved in the educational process of producing a course that is meaningful, inclusive, and relevant to their lives.
4. Question your own practice	The focus in teaching should be on how the core ideas and concepts central to social justice become enacted within and lived through the instructional practices and structures of the course.
5. Address the mechanisms and consequences of oppression	A transformative pedagogy should be about consciousness-raising and taking action.



direction on what we should be paying attention to in designing, teaching and reflecting on our PETE experiences with social justice ideas in mind.

Similarly, in early meetings, we explored ideas around Meaningful PE (for example, Fletcher et al. 2021; Ní Chróinín, Fletcher, and O'Sullivan 2018). In our group, much of the debate focused on what was distinctive about Meaningful PE, why a teacher might invest in Meaningful PE, and identifying the features that allowed a teacher to claim they were, or were not, teaching using Meaningful PE.

Data analysis and trustworthiness

The analytical process was framed by the research question: What is the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice in enacting PETE pedagogies? We selected the transcriptions of macro-meetings (n = 9, over 12 h) as the best data source to answer our research question because it was in these meetings that we tested, analysed, synthesised and evaluated our developing understandings. Data analysis involved several steps of inductive and iterative analysis using thematic analysis methods (Braun and Clarke 2019). The teacher educators individually read and re-read all macro-meetings transcripts for familiarity and through a coding process identified key ideas in the data. Then, in meeting nine these provisional theme ideas were interrogated and analysed for similarities and differences, which resulted in co-creation of four provisional themes. In meeting four, we agreed that two of the themes could be combined and one removed as it was more related to our individual journey in enacting both pedagogies (paper forthcoming). We then individually reviewed all the data against these them ideas to confirm their content, and by identifying examples, ensure distinctiveness of each theme.

Findings

Our findings are presented in two themes that represent features of the relationship between teaching for meaningfulness and social justice teaching in PETE based on our current understandings: (a) Meaningful PE can act as social justice but is not social justice per se; and (b) the combination of Meaningful PE and social justice facilitates a dance between 'the individual' and 'the social' with democratic and reflective practices as the choreography. Direct quotes from macro-meetings are used in the two themes presented below to illustrate our arguments to answer our research question.

Meaningful Physical Education can act as social justice but is not social justice per se

Our exploration began with an intent to clarify the definitions of fundamental concepts such as advocacy, agency, and action, central to both social justice and Meaningful PE. We acknowledged our varying starting points in terms of experience and knowledge, some with more experience in Meaningful PE, and others with an extensive background in social justice and democratic pedagogies. Through back-and-forth discussion, and informed by a shared reading list, we placed boundaries on each concept to create shared understandings. The primary strategy we used initially was to seek out similarities between ideas to identify what was common between Meaningful PE and social justice pedagogies.

Clarifying definitions of each idea was an important first step in identifying commonalities as it helped build shared understandings of concepts being scrutinised. A broadly shared understanding emerged, characterising social justice as involving advocacy, agency, and action towards a more socially just society, while also acknowledging that there was not necessarily 'a right or a wrong way' (Carla, meeting 2) in teaching about and for social justice. Features that reflect the characteristics of Meaningful PE (Fletcher et al. 2021) were agreed as necessary when implementing a Meaningful PE approach, for example, a focus on the personal relevance of the learning content and experiences, opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences and learning, as well as spaces for students to make decisions about their individual experience within the learning context.

We considered how Meaningful PE fit, or not, with our understanding of social justice. We noted Meaningful PE paid attention to individual learner experience and were encouraged that the emphasis on the personal nature of meaningfulness did not intend for individuals to dismiss or disregard the collective and social nature of physical education (Déirdre, meeting 3). Also, a review of how Meaningful PE is framed revealed a number of social justice advocates; we were reassured that Meaningful PE seemed to complement the foundational ideas and spirit of social justice, primarily democratic, equal and inclusive ideals. For example, democratic pedagogies as a foundational principle was acknowledged as an explicit overlap; 'so many principles align with social justice ... ' (Carla, meeting 2). This overlap prompted some questioning of the value of Meaningful PE if a teacher educator already adopts democratic approaches – 'do I need two names for the same thing?' (Cassandra, meeting 5). This pushed us to think more about what was distinctive about these pedagogical approaches. We clarified that Meaningful PE was possible without social justice and also that social justice education could operate without Meaningful PE. We were curious to explore further the possibilities of what might emerge in combining and drawing on the distinctive elements of each approach (Carla, meeting 5).

Next, we considered whether the goals and approaches of social justice teaching and Meaningful PE in PETE were aligned, or not. Social justice educators 'enact teaching approaches that enable PETE students to examine the educational, moral, and political influences that guide their work as professional teachers, encourage reflective thinking, and foster dispositions for social justice' (Philpot and Ovens 2019, 4). In contrast, the goal of embedding Meaningful PE approaches in PETE seemed quite different, focused on the future teachers (learning how to) promote opportunities for individuals to engage in physical activity, both alone and with others, in meaningful ways that enrich the quality of their lives (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2022; Ní Chróinín, Fletcher, and O'Sullivan 2018). In comparison to the broader overall goals of a social justice agenda, Meaningful PE seemed more focused on the quality of experience within an activity, with 'emphasis on features such as fun, social interaction and challenge' (Déirdre, meeting 4). We concluded that while Meaningful PE does not discount structural change, this is not its starting point for action. Through discussion we teased out a distinction between levels of action, where Meaningful PE goals focus on 'changing what PE looks like' and social justice goals focus on 'changing who the teacher is' (Déirdre, meeting 7). With a clearer sense of how Meaningful PE and social justice approaches might relate, we considered how these ideas might be applied, or already apply, to our PETE practices.

Our investigation uncovered a compelling overlap between the core principles of Meaningful PE and the foundational tenets of social justice. The synergies between social justice and Meaningful PE were evident in how we, as teacher educators, responded to and applied ideas in pedagogical activities. For example, Cassandra, who was relatively new to using Meaningful PE, described her planning, 'I think it surprised me just how easy and natural it was.. nothing for me right now feels forced in the planning process' (meeting 4). Declan, who has experience of teaching Meaningful PE shared: 'I'm quite comfortable with using meaningful PE as a filter for making those professional judgments and decisions. I think, for me, that enables me to make better decisions about social justice issues' (Declan, meeting 8). In contrast, Carla's approach was dominated by social justice teaching and she struggled to find a relevant space for Meaningful PE within her practices. Even though meaningfulness is considered in the Activist Approach which she was familiar with, she struggled to see the features of meaningful experiences (i.e. social interaction, fun, challenge, motor competence, personally relevant learning, and delight) as to guide her planning and instruction.

Delving into the distinctive pedagogical methodologies, we discerned how Meaningful PE's focus on personal experience and engagement contrasts with social justice's broader agenda of fostering critical thinking and political awareness among educators. This led us to recognise that adopting a social justice approach did not require attention to meaningfulness necessarily. Similarly, we acknowledged that a Meaningful PE approach indicates a commitment to inclusive and diverse practices in physical education but does not automatically imply a social justice agenda. We recognised that an educator starting with an explicit social justice agenda, particularly focusing on equity and challenging the status quo of physical education, might use Meaningful PE ideas differently from an educator using Meaningful PE as an end in itself. Still, we saw potential in combining these pedagogies:

... Meaningful PE aligns with the spirit of social justice agendas ... [as a] coalition of all these different ideas that share similar approaches [such as an emphasis on the value of reflection and the democratisation of physical education], and [Meaningful PE is] has packaged it together in a way that's accessible and they can start to make sense of. (Cassandra, meeting 7)

Our exploration into the convergence of social justice teaching and Meaningful PE in PETE highlighted their diverse aims; social justice cultivates reflective and critical dispositions, while Meaningful PE enriches individual engagement with physical activity, revealing how both paradigms contribute to holistic educator development. We concluded that given their common principles, such as an emphasis on democratic approaches, that Meaningful PE and social justice were ideas of similar ilk, though of different scale of aspiration. Teasing out the similarities and differences between Meaningful PE and social justice relative to each other was helpful in making sense of the relationship between ideas; we found no clash of ideas or ideological barriers standing in the way of their interplay. We saw particular value in paying attention to the differences between Meaningful PE and social justice with the potential for the distinctive features of each to combine and form a 'hybrid' pedagogy that adds value (Carla, meeting 6). Ultimately, we wondered whether Meaningful PE in combination with a social justice agenda, when motivated by an intentionality towards equity and challenging the status quo of physical education, might be helpful in building a more powerful pedagogy for PETE.

The combination of Meaningful Physical Education and Social Justice facilitates a dance between 'the individual' and 'the social' with democratic and reflective practices as the choreography

Through teasing out the relationship between Meaningful PE and social justice we identified one key distinction which became a foundational idea in our understanding of this relationship: Meaningful PE focuses more on the individual and social justice emphasises the social. We propose that this distinction provides the opportunity to combine approaches and add value.

We capture this theme using the analogy of a dance between 'the individual' (as a primary focus of Meaningful PE) and 'the social' (as the primary focus of social justice). Social justice pedagogies are framed around naming, critiquing and negotiating and/or transforming social injustices; understanding individuals' lived experiences is a part of this larger agenda. Attention to individual experience within Meaningful PE seemed to provide opportunities for future teachers to interrogate their own and others' experiences in a way that attends to positionality, a foundational social justice concept:

... social justice tends to think about more of a collective bigger social thing and Meaningful PE is about the individual experience. And this might ... make that individuality within the collective more accessible, or more relatable or more meaningful. (Cassandra, meeting 8)

The accessibility of Meaningful PE concepts to future teachers resulted in most of us using these as an entry point to think about bigger social issues (for example, race/racism). We propose that using a combination of Meaningful PE and social justice can support teachers to move between paying attention to individual experience and a focus on addressing social inequalities – we called this back-and-forth shift of focus 'the dance'.

We identified several moments where the identification of individual experiences allowed for a better understanding of social justice matters in our teacher education practices. Declan's practices made explicit links between individual experiences and wider social justice goals. Personal relevance provided a connection between future teacher experiences and possibilities for addressing inequities through PE. Similarly, there were moments when Meaningful PE provided a starting point to think about individual experience that promoted more equitable practices. For example, Cassandra's students used the features of Meaningful PE to make changes to activities to better suit participant preferences resulting in practices that were more equitable in relation to ability and gender. Déirdre approached her course by helping PSTs to first become aware of the needs of individual learners towards identifying their role in wider social justice agenda. She explained:

sometimes for me, the social justice concepts can seem very detached for the students ... what meaningful PE can do is get the pre-service teacher and the beginning teacher to think about the quality of individual experiences in a way that might in time, connect up some of that social justice, bigger ideas. (Deirdre, meeting 5)

For Déirdre, the entry point towards social justice teaching could be the individual: 'Students could focus on their own individual experiences as a starting point, to think about both their own and others' participation experiences critically.' (Deirdre, meeting 9). For Déirdre, considering the quality of individual experience within the collective acted as a scaffolding to facilitate future teachers' understanding of systemic social issues (racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.). Considering the individuals' lived experiences as the entry point might create a space for more tangible social justice matters to be discussed. In that sense, we are not working with abstract concepts but embodied experiences. We also acknowledge that the individuals' lived experiences could be the starting point for the social justice matters and then we are not limiting the social justice matter to the individuals.

In contrast, Carla's primary focus was on social justice pedagogies and, at least initially, she struggled to see value in adding Meaningful PE to her pedagogical approach. Through sharing by others, she came to see potential in using Meaningful PE within social justice approaches. Carla explained:

I think we can see that this dance between individual and social is quite powerful ... understanding that my students' journal could be a tool to better understand the individual ... I experienced this dance ... that sometimes we forgot. (Carla, meeting 8)

There were also synergies between pedagogical principles of each approach. Carla explained: 'at the heart of both Meaningful PE and social justice pedagogies are democratic and reflective practices' (Carla, meeting 8). Still, we made a distinction between the purpose of these practices; Meaningful PE positions democratic pedagogies as foundational but it aims smaller, influencing the experience of individuals in the immediate context rather than a societal-level influence. Again, we saw this distinction as an opportunity; we relied on reflective and democratic practices as the 'choreography' of our dance. The commonality of democratic and reflective pedagogies in both approaches provided some consistent touchpoints for our pedagogical decision-making that allowed us to shift attention with some comfort from the individual experience to the wider social justice agenda within an overall coherent frame of reference. For example, Déirdre made explicit connections by illustrating how Meaningful PE pedagogies can be put to work to respond to social justice issues in reactive and proactive ways. Cassandra's overall pedagogical approach focused on modelling democratic approach to teach for social justice. Sometimes, without necessarily intending to, her approaches mirrored pedagogies that are part of Meaningful PE, such as voice and choice pedagogies. These synergies in pedagogical approaches allowed us to implement a combined pedagogy without always distinguishing which approach each idea belonged to.

In summary, we all danced slightly differently in combining a focus on individual needs and wider social justice goals based on our course contexts, student needs and the principles of teacher education practice. In the end, we came to value the opportunities provided for future teachers to better understand individual experience, and how these might enhance students' understanding of social justice. The complementarity of ideas between Meaningful PE and social justice suggests that learning about Meaningful PE may provide an avenue towards thinking like a social justice educator in physical education teacher education: '..maybe it's just one way that they can head in that direction of noticing, and caring about what's happening to individuals within the group' (Déirdre, meeting 8). Having the flexibility to apply pedagogies that combined Meaningful PE and social justice, that shifted between focusing on 'the individual' and 'the social', yielded powerful outcomes of enacting Meaningful PE and social justice.

Discussion and conclusion

Our purpose in this research was to explore the relationship between teaching for meaningfulness and social justice teaching in our pedagogies of teacher education. From the outset, we recognised that attention to social justice and meaningfulness in teacher education are foci of merit in their own right. A clearly outlined rationale for both social justice approaches (Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022) and teaching for meaningfulness (Ennis 2017) provided the initial impetus for how these approaches might have commonalities that would promote complimentary pedagogies of teacher education. We were curious to see how these two distinct approaches might complement and dovetail in shaping our pedagogy of teacher education, and future teacher learning to teach physical education. There were some important commonalities in our starting point. We all shared a common understanding of the pedagogies of teacher education (Loughran 2006), particularly the understandings of the concepts of experiencing and articulating. We were committed to and enacted teaching about teaching and learning about teaching pedagogies as part of our overall pedagogical approach. We shared a common interest in social justice teaching and a curiosity about how social justice and meaningfulness might interact in better achieving our teacher education goals. The combination of social justice and Meaningful PE expertise and experience within the group was important to our collective processes of articulating and experiencing knowledge and practice; without each other's expertise to question and talk through our ideas, we wouldn't not have made the progress we did. Following others who have found value in guidance within selfstudy (Fletcher, Ní Chróinín, and O'Sullivan 2016), we suggest that careful attention to group composition is needed to ensure progress and avoid misdirection.

This paper responds to Loughran's (2014) call for evidence of how 'teacher educators actively pursue the development of their pedagogy of teacher education'. Like others (Hadar and Brody 2017), the processes of engagement with ideas in the literature together, alongside application in practice, helped us figure out the relationship between ideas. Following Loughran's (2014) framework for the professional journey of teacher educators, we articulated and experienced what a pedagogy that considered both social justice and meaningfulness might encompass. Articulating and experiencing both knowledge and practice was important to our collective arrival at the two key features of the relationship we have identified.

Articulating knowledge included discussion of shared reading and interrogating literature, asking questions and back-and-forth discussion to collectively tease out similarities and differences between concepts. Philpot and Ovens's (2019) five principles of social justice teaching provided a common framework to analyse and position our PETE practices alongside the principles of Meaningful PE (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2022). These processes of articulation and testing of knowledge through experiencing were helpful in moving towards consensus on how features of Meaningful PE and social justice related. For example, principle 3 of social justice teaching that emphasises students as partners-collaborators in the learning experience resonated with the democratic principle of Meaningful PE. Applying these ideas in teacher education pedagogy experiences and then articulating these experiences together by sharing teacher education incidents, impressions and reflections were important to refining our thinking. In exploring the decisions of our pedagogical practices we drew on ideas related to teaching about teaching and learning about teaching (Loughran 2006). Attention to teaching about teaching helped us to articulate principles of our practice, position our practices relative to the ideas we were exploring and made our pedagogical decision-making explicit to ourselves and the group. Attention to how our students learned from these teacher education experiences provided a practical test of our ideas, serving to clarify, confirm or reject possibilities. Student engagement and task responses were critical in evaluating the merits of particular approaches. Together, these practices resulted in our articulating our pedagogy of teacher education, with a clear sense of where Meaningful PE and social justice were positioned, and how they were related.

Our engagement resulted individually and collectively in a heightened awareness of the pedagogical possibilities of engaging simultaneously with social justice and meaningfulness and an extended understanding of how these ideas might play out within our local contexts and pedagogical repertoires. At the conclusion of our inquiry, reminded of Philpot and Ovens's (2019, 4) caution that there is 'no single transformative pedagogy or model waiting to be discovered', we were comfortable with the recognition that we did not have all the answers. We were, however, in a better place; our thinking was clearer as a result of following Loughran's (2014) signposts by interrogating and articulating ideas, and, through experiencing, playing with ideas in practice. Now, following our initial forays, we can assert with some confidence that the teacher education pedagogical innovation we were exploring, in combining teaching for social justice and meaningfulness, has some merit, and holds possibilities in our developing pedagogy of teacher education.

The second theme highlights the potential value of combining Meaningful PE and social justice approaches in PETE pedagogies. Specifically, we suggest that combining Meaningful PE and social justice pedagogies provides opportunities to dance between individual and social concerns in supporting future teachers learning to teach PE. Meaningful PE prioritises individual experiences. Social justice perspectives recognise the key role of individuals' lived experiences in naming, critiquing and transforming social injustices. Exploring how we could help future teachers to find accessible entry points into teaching PE in ways that accommodate individual differences and with regard to larger social justice issues led us to identify this potentially rich pedagogical dance between individual and collective concerns. Combining these ideas can be useful in a few ways. First, in response to criticism that social justice pedagogies are out of reach for future teachers (Hennig, Schaefer, and Gleddie 2020; Lynch and Curtner-Smith 2019; Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022; Scanlon, Baker, and Tannehill 2022), Meaningful PE pedagogies can help future teachers to pay attention to the quality of individual experiences as a step towards wider interrogation of systemic forms of oppression. Second, future teachers often struggle to see the relevance of particular social justice issues in their teaching contexts (Lynch, Walton-Fisette, and Luguetti 2022). Meaningful PE, given its focus on democratic and reflective pedagogies (Fletcher and Ní Chróinín 2022), can provide a generic pedagogical approach that can be applied in specific contexts and strategies that can be responsive to local issues. Third, democratic and reflective pedagogies provide the choreography, explicit direction, on how to transition between a focus on individual and collective needs. This is important for future teachers because by adopting democratic pedagogies (that are central to both Meaningful PE and social justice approaches) they are making decisions within an overall coherent consistent framework; the focus and ideas are complimentary, and the pedagogical actions are consistent with these ideas. Finally, while optimistic about the possibilities we resist any effort to present Meaningful PE as social justice 'formula' and continue to take a critical stance, reminded that 'PETE pedagogies cannot be reduced to a teaching method that is learned through transmission and then enacted with no consideration of the teacher, learner, and context' (Philpot and Ovens 2019, 4).

While the research supported insights into each of our practice, one limitation of this research is the relatively limited understanding of each teacher educators' practice and context we were able to gain. Individual accounts inherently represent their individual interpretations and perspectives, potentially overlooking alternative angles on their teaching experiences. Moreover, each teacher educator focused on distinct courses, classes and year group. Including a greater variety of contexts,

such as year groups and courses, would increase our experience and expertise in combining ideas of meaningful physical education and social justice to offer more in-depth direction to others. Future research might include a more diverse range of contexts within education and broader movementbased community such as sports clubs and afterschool programs to provide a more holistic understanding of practical implications.

In this paper we lay the groundwork for future exploration of the pedagogical relationships between Meaningful PE and social justice approaches in PETE. Empirical evidence giving direction to, and supporting, this combined pedagogy is needed. Insight on teacher educators' enactment of these pedagogies and how future teaching learn about teaching as a result is critical to evidencebased refinement of this combined pedagogy. For us, the value of this combined pedagogy can be judged on how future teachers take up and implement ideas related to social justice and meaningfulness in their everyday practices; how they manage the dance between the individual and the social, and how democratic and reflective pedagogies facilitate this dance. As well as attention to how Meaningful PE can serve social justice goals, we also see merit in further exploring how social justice ideas might infuse and create new possibilities for prioritising the meaningfulness of experiences for participants, by pursuing questions such as, 'meaningful to whom?' and 'who decides?'

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