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**FUN GAMES AND HEALTH:
EVALUATING PHYSICAL EDUCATION RELATED CPD
PROVISION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS:
THE CASE OF THE BUNTÚS PROGRAMME**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Discipline of Health Promotion
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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	i
Declaration	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Abstract	x
Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations	xii
<hr/>	
Chapter One: 1.0 Introduction	1
1.0 Introduction	2
1.1 A Test Case Study: The Case of the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Programme	7
1.2 Justification for the Research	7
1.3 Evaluation	8
1.4 Roles & Responsibilities	9
1.5 Thesis Structure	10
<hr/>	
Chapter Two: 2.0 Literature Review	12
2.0 Introduction	13
2.1 Physical Activity, Physical Education & Lifelong Participation	14
2.1.1 Deliberate Play versus Deliberate Practice	15
2.1.2 The Importance of Movement Skills	17
2.1.3 Perceived Motor Skills Competence	19
2.1.4 Psycho-Behavioural Skills	20
2.1.5 Prevalence of PA in Youth	21
2.1.6 Physical Activity Guidelines	21
2.1.7 How Active are Irish Children?	22
2.1.8 PA Decreases with Age	23
2.1.9 Boys/Girls Vigorous PA	23

2.1.10 Urban/Rural Divide	24
2.1.11 Social Determinants & Environmental Variables	24
2.1.12 Social Determinants	24
2.1.13 Environmental Variables	26
2.1.14 Risk Society: U. Beck & A. Giddens	26
2.1.15 Schools: Safety & Risk	28
<hr/>	
2.2 Physical Activity & School Interventions	32
2.2.1 School: A Setting for Action on PA	32
2.2.2 The Development of the Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools (INHPS)	33
2.2.3 Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE)	34
2.2.4 Are School-Based Interventions Effective?	38
<hr/>	
2.3 Primary Education in Ireland	42
2.3.1 Past & Present: Physical Education Reform in Ireland	43
2.3.2 Curriculum Na Bunscoile 1971	43
2.3.3 The Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999) & Physical Education	45
2.3.4 Primary Physical Education: Initial Teacher Education	46
2.3.5 Teaching Methodologies in Physical Education	47
2.3.6 Implementation of Physical Education Curriculum	49
2.3.7 Teachers' perceptions of the Physical Education	50
2.3.8 Teaching Time	50
2.3.9 Who Teaches Physical Education?	51
2.3.10 Assessment of PE	54
2.3.11 School Policies	55
2.3.12 School Facilities, Equipment & Resources	56
2.3.13 Special Education Needs	58
<hr/>	
2.4 The Games Strand	62
2.4.1 Defining Games	62
2.4.2 Direct Teaching Time	63
2.4.3 Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)	63
2.4.4 The Games Strand Curriculum	64
2.4.5 Games: The Dominant Strand	65
2.4.6 Discourses within Physical Education	66
2.4.7 TOPs Programme	67
2.4.8 The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Programme	69
<hr/>	

2.5 Continuous Professional Development	71
2.5.1 Features of Professional Development	71
2.5.2 Content Focus	72
2.5.3 Active Learning Approach	73
2.5.4 Coherence	74
2.5.5 Duration	74
2.5.6 Collective Participation	75
2.5.7 Continuous Professional Development in Ireland	75
2.5.8 Physical Education Professional Development Provision in Ireland	77
2.5.9 Local Sports Partnership	80
2.5.10 Models of Professional Development	82
2.5.11 Evaluation of Professional Development Programmes	85

2.6 Evaluation	87
2.6.1 Process Evaluation	89

Chapter Three: 3.0 Methodology Chapter	92
3.0 Introduction	93
3.1 Paradigm	93
3.2 Methodology	94
3.3 Criteria for Interpretative Research Studies	94
3.4 Research Design	95
3.5 The Setting	96
3.6 The Participants	96
3.7 A Problem of Accessing the Research Field	97
3.7.1 A Framework for Gaining Access to the Field	97
3.7.2 Gaining Access: Getting In	100
3.7.3 Gaining Access: Getting On & Out	104
3.7.4 Gaining Access: Getting Back	105
3.8 Data Collection	107
3.8.1 Interviews	107
3.8.2 Interview Guide	109
3.8.3 Pilot Interviews	111

3.8.4 Field Notes	113
3.9 Ethical Considerations	113
3.10 Informed Consent	114
3.11 Confidentiality	115
3.12 Data Analysis	115
3.13 Memoing	116
3.14 Data Display	117
3.15 Credibility of Data	117
3.15.1 Researcher Reactivity	118
3.15.2 Peer Debriefing	119
3.15.3 Triangulation of Data	119
3.15.4 Theoretical Stance	119
3.15.5 Respondent Validation	120
3.15.6 Audit Trail	120

Chapter Four: 4.0 Findings	125
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4.0 Introduction	126
4.1 A Narrowed Curriculum	126
4.1.1 PE: No Cognitive – Educational Value	127
4.1.2 PE: The Dominance of the Games Strand	132
4.1.3 Boy/Girl Dynamic	136
4.1.4 Health & Safety Concerns	140
4.1.5 Environmental School Barriers	141
4.1.6 External Coaches & Specialised PE-Teacher	149

4.2 Implementation: Supportive Apprenticeship	154
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4.2.1 Implementation Background	154
4.2.2 Supportive Apprenticeship	155
4.2.3 Active Teacher Approach	156
4.2.4 Special Educational Needs (SEN)	159
4.2.5 Content Focus: Equipment – Cards	161
4.2.6 One-Size-Fits-All Programme	163

4.3 Implementation: Issues & Challenges	165
4.3.1 Teacher Feedback	165
4.3.2 Induction Day Dynamics	166
4.3.3 In-Service Provision	170
4.3.4 Refresher Courses	173

Chapter Five: 5.0 Discussion	176
5.0 Introduction	177
5.1 The Themes	180
5.1.1 PE: Low Subject Status	181
5.1.2 Supportive Apprenticeship: Issues & Challenges	187
5.2 PE: Inclusiveness & Participation	193
5.3 PE: National Framework	194
5.4 Implications	197
5.5 Limitations	198
5.6 Recommendations	198
5.7 Conclusion	200
References	204
Appendices	248

**THE PhD / MD DEGREE
APPROVAL FOR EXAMINATION**

To: The Registrar & Deputy President, the National University of Ireland, Galway

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Thesis Titled:

Fun Games & Health: Evaluating Physical Education Related CPD Provision in Primary Schools: The Case of the Buntús Programme

Submitted by Candidate (please write in caps or type)

Declan Flanagan

I, the **Candidate**, certify that the Thesis is all my own work and that I have not obtained a degree in this University or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work. (If the thesis is based on a group project, then the student must indicate the extent of his/her contribution, with reference to any other theses submitted or published by each collaborator in the project, and a declaration to this effect must be included in the thesis. This declaration should follow the Table of Contents).

Signed: ----- Date: -----25/9/2014-----

I, the Candidate's **Primary Supervisor**, hereby confirm that I have inspected, and approve for examination, the final draft of the PhD thesis, of title above:

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List of Tables	Page
Table 1: Contrast Between Deliberate Practice/Deliberate Play	17
Table 2: The Buntús Generic/Start Programme	82
Table 3: Getting In: Access of Research Study	103
Table 4: Data Collection Table	106
Table 5: The Coding Process in Inductive Analysis	116
Table 6: Local Sports Partnership (LSP) Tutors	122
Table 7: Primary School Teachers	123
Table 8: Primary School Pupils	124
Table 9: Time: Allocation/Recommendation	143
Table 10: Involvement of External Coaches in Primary Schools	151

List of Figures

Page

Figure 1: A framework for gaining successful access

99

Abstract

Background: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is essential for primary school teachers to change practices to meet the evolving demands of the education system. The teaching and context methodologies are very specific for teaching physical education (PE) compared to core subjects and facilitating effective CPD programmes of PE can be a complex and challenging endeavour for all providers. Current CPD models are considered consistently ineffective, if not, woefully inadequate. For effective CPD to improve both teacher knowledge and pupil learning, it needs to be current, relevant and challenging with many aspects in need of change, including the traditional practices of CPD providers, inhospitable schools and departmental structures. With these key issues in mind, this study set out to evaluate PE related CPD provision in primary schools using the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme as a test case.

Research Design: Qualitative methods are particularly useful in process evaluation for answering these questions and identifying user involvement, organisational pitfalls and problems with the implementation. This study set out to investigate the extent to which the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme and its perceived success was implemented according to plan and was most appropriately examined, using qualitative methods.

Methods: A triangulation of data provided different perspectives that corroborated the findings and improved validity of the data. Three key stakeholders participated in this study. Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors delivered this CPD programme in each county. 14 LSP tutors from seven counties provided data through semi-structured interviews. Primary school teachers and pupils from two counties provided data through group interviews. 17 group interviews with primary teachers and 15 group interviews with pupils were conducted between 2008-2011.

Analysis: Analytic induction is generally used to examine hypothetical problems. Given this study was exploratory in nature and had no hypothetical explanation of a problem to examine, a general inductive approach was the most appropriate for this study as it could

simply be described as a process of ‘making sense of the data’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data were analysed inductively from units of information to subsuming categories and themes in order to define local questions that could be further explored (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings: PE was pupils’ favourite subject and there is evidence supporting the early influence of PE experiences on pupils’ PA behaviours. However, a number of institutional and attitudinal barriers left this subject relegated, of low subject status. Teachers believed PE was beneficial as a vehicle for physical activity; however, the reasons provided for its’ inclusion in their daily classroom practices reflected little educational value and could have been the catalyst for a conflictive dynamic between teachers and pupils during PE classes. The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme set out to provide a fun, high-quality, non-competitive introduction to sport and physical activity. It was considered by the teachers to have positively affected their perceptions of PE (in terms of their confidence in, knowledge of and enthusiasm for the subject) and, in turn, improved their practice (particularly in terms of content ideas and inclusion). Key limitations of this programme were identified as insufficient attention to specific pedagogical issues, the absence of follow-up support and a one-size-fits-all programme design. None of the aims and objectives of this programme permeated and became part of pupils’ PE classes in this study.

Conclusion: The perceptions of physical education by primary school teachers and pupils pertain this subject to be of little cognitive or educational value, which may have affected the implementation of this PE-CPD programme. This programme positively contributed to teachers’ perceptions of physical education; however, beyond this, its impact was limited by a range of factors highlighting the continuing complexities and challenges of providing CPD programmes for physical education in primary schools.

Glossary of Terms & Abbreviations

Primary – elementary or first level school for children aged 4-12

Secondary – second level school for children aged 12-18

Junior – year one in school

Senior – year two in school

First – year three in school

Second – year four in school

Third – year five in school

Fourth – year six in school

Fifth – year seven in school

Sixth – year eight in school

Junior – year one through four

Senior – year five through eight

APA - Adapted Physical Activity

BMI – Body Mass Index

Curaclam na Bunscoile – Curriculum of the Primary School (1971 edition)

CDC - The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

CPD - Continuous Professional Development

DES – Department of Education and Science

DoHC – Department of Health & Children

ENIHPS - European Network for Health Promoting Schools,

ESRI – Economic and Social Research Institute

EU - European Union

FAI – The Football Federation of Ireland

FMS – Fundamental Motor Skills

GAA- Gaelic Athletic Association

HPS – Health Promoting Schools

HDL – High Density Lipoprotein

IFAPA - International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity

IFRU – Irish Rugby Football Union

INHPS - Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools

INTO – Irish National Teachers’ Organisation

ITE – Initial Teacher Education

IPPEA - Irish Primary PE Association

ISC – Irish Sports Council

LDL – Low Density Lipoprotein

LSP – Local Sports Partnership

MPA - Moderate Physical Activity

MVPA – Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity

NDA - National Disability Authority

NGB - National Governing Bodies of Sport

NCCA – National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PA – Physical Activity

PE PAYS - (PE, Physical Activity and Youth Sport).

PE – Physical Education

PCSP – Primary Curriculum Support Service

PPDS - Pirmary Professional Development Service

PDST – Professional Development Service for Teacher

PSSI – Primary School, Sports Initiative

RCSS – Regional Curriculum Support Service

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SIDO - Sports Inclusion Disability Officer

SDPS - School Development Planning Support

SPHE - Social Personal and Health Education

TGFU – Teaching Games for Understanding

VPA – Vigorous Physical Activity

WHO – World Health Organisation

YST - Youth Sports Trust

Chapter 1:

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

School is the principal societal institution for the development of physical skills and provision of physical activity (PA) in children and youth (Bailey *et al.*, 2009; Donnelly & Lambourne, 2011). In addition, school based physical education (PE) offers regulated, educational, structured opportunities for generalist teachers to introduce PA and a variety of fundamental movement/lifestyle skills, knowledge and understanding to children with the purpose of laying the foundations for youth and lifelong participation in PA (Laasko *et al.*, 2008; O'Connor *et al.*, 2012).

Despite such intentions, the situation of PE in schools from both a European and a global perspective indicates a perceived decline and marginalisation of this subject with apparent deficiencies in provision including time allocation, subject status, quality and delivery of the curriculum (Pickup & Price, 2007; Hardman, 2008). Such marginalisation has permitted this subject to become open to infiltration by dominant performative sporting discourses and public health agendas associated with hypokinetic diseases that call attention to the uncertainty that lies at the foundation of PE (Gard & Wright, 2005; Culpan & Bruce, 2007).

Advocates of PE have confidently listed numerous benefits across various domains, which suggest that their case has been made conclusively with little need for further debate. Yet, such claims have been criticised for lacking empirical foundations and for confusing policy and advocacy rhetoric with scientific evidence (Bailey *et al.*, 2009). There is a dearth of evidence clearly demonstrating the supposedly pivotal role that PE is assumed to play in lifelong participation in PA (Trudeau & Shepard, 2008). A number of studies claim to demonstrate that childhood and youth sports participation can be a significant predictor of adult participation in PA and sport and yet, it remains to be shown that PE in itself has any, let alone important role to play (Perkins *et al.*, 2004; Gard, 2009; Green, 2012). While a few well-designed programmes have demonstrated that PE can have an impact on levels of PA and adiposity, there is little or no evidence that standard PE has had or is likely to have an impact on regular levels of PA in short; medium and long term participation rates (Sallis *et al.*, 1997; Naylor & McKay, 2008; Gard, 2009).

Notwithstanding this issue, PE continues to be proposed as a potentially significant vehicle for enhancing young peoples' engagement in PA in the long-term (Kirk, 2005; Green, 2012). Trudeau & Shephard (2008) claim the most anticipated effect of being exposed to PE at a young age is socialisation into PA with a consequent increase in PA as an adult. Evans & Davis (2010) similarly discuss the various 'assumptions that underpin the alleged capacity for PE to affect the dispositional resources (motivation/attitudes/willingness/desire-fundamental cultural capitals) of pupils and performance or participation in and out of school' (p.768). The embracement of this assumption regarding the alleged impact of PE on participation is not only found amongst PE teachers, PE and sport science academics (Green, 2003; Haerens *et al.*, 2010; Xu *et al.*, 2010; McNamara *et al.*, 2011) but in government policy both nationally and internationally (Government of Ireland, 1999a; Hardman, 2005).

With a growing concern over young peoples' health in recent decades, there has been a plethora of initiatives and pleas implicating PE in physically active and sporting lifestyles of young people (Mountjoy, 2011; McKenzie, 2009). At the *Olympic Movement in Society Congress* in Copenhagen in 2009, the (then) president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Jacques Rogge expressed concerns about the health of young people and the importance of sport in addressing this issue on a global level (Mountjoy, 2011). One of the main themes that came to the fore entitled '*Olympism and Youth*' was discussed during this conference and upon conclusion, recommendation #51 was proposed as a framework for members from the Olympic movement which stated;

Everyone involved in the Olympic movement must become more aware of the fundamental importance of physical activity and sport for a healthy lifestyle, not least, the growing battle against obesity, and [the Olympic movement] must reach out to the parents and schools as part of a strategy to counter the rising inactivity in youth (Mountjoy, 2011; p.1)

Shaping a Healthier Future (Department of Health, 1994) and subsequent health promotion strategies (Department of Health, 1995a; Department of Health and Children, 2000a) have advocated a comprehensive approach to health promotion, using a combination of topic based approaches, focusing on specific populations and settings. *Shaping a Healthier Future* (DoHC, 1994) also identifies exercise as one of six lifestyle factors to be targeted to reduce levels of premature mortality. This is built upon by the *National Health Promotion Strategy*

(DoHC, 2000a), which has, as one of its strategic aims, the achievement of increased participation in regular moderate physical activity (MPA). Families, peers, schools, work places and communities all have a major role in encouraging active lifestyles. Promotion of daily PA by teachers in schools and in particular, PE can contribute to the development of lifelong habits. Such major reform initiatives have placed the responsibility on teachers to develop their capacity to become adaptive lifelong learners and it has become imperative that they are equipped to meet the challenges of these reforms and are encouraged to do so through continuous professional development or CPD (Conway *et al.*, 2009).

Strategies to improve the quality of PE require well designed curricula to maximise PA, greater awareness and support for the role of PE in improving nations' health and strategies to achieve long-term health and movement skill improvements in youth (Australian Government Preventative Health Taskforce, 2010; Australian Independent Sport Panel, 2009; US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010). The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (1997) has stressed the importance of *Physical Education and School Sport* (PESS) as being enjoyable for young people, recommending the use of active learning strategies to facilitate this. Such strategies include promoting *(i)* high levels of PA participation, *(ii)* movement skill instruction and practice, and *(iii)* active learning strategies with an emphasis on enjoyment (Kahn *et al.*, 2002).

A crucial obstacle to improving strategies, enabling the delivery of quality PE is Initial Teacher Education (ITE) provision, which is deemed the end rather than the beginning of teachers' CPD, and is one that affects the quality and delivery of this subject (Smith & Thomas, 2005). The literature suggests that many primary teachers receive little more than an introduction to PE, resulting in limited subject content knowledge, subject planning and lack confidence in teaching this subject (Griffiths & Armour, 2013; Ofsted, 2009; Sloan, 2010). Keay (2006) states that such issues 'lead to teachers making few alterations to their practice and subsequently maintain a role with which they are comfortable' (p.370). It is not claimed that PA is not delivered in schools through PE but rather a 'quality' not a 'quantity' issue with a significant number of teachers simply feeling they do not have the subject content knowledge required (Doherty & Brennan, 2008).

A proposed solution to this debate has focused on considering the primary specialist PE teacher option. Price (2008) suggests that this 'specialist' should not be the teacher of all school PE, but rather a model of good practice who can support teachers in their development of good practice whilst maintaining an understanding of the education of primary aged pupils. Carney & Howells (2008) argue that the separation and disengagement of the primary teacher does not reflect the holistic view of primary education. Yet Lavin *et al.*, (2008) claim 84% of primary teachers sit in on coaches' delivery of curriculum PE to further their own CPD thus implying that teachers believe the coaches are more knowledgeable than themselves. A stance supported by Griggs & Ward (2010) who support schools reliance on sports coaches to raise the standards of delivery of PE.

While PE is the remit of the Department of Education and Science (DES), outside agencies are evident in Irish schools and their position should be interpreted as a supporting role in implementing the PE curriculum and in delivering quality CPD provision (Marron, 2008). Initiatives at national and local level in primary schools aim to promote children's PA at school including supporting PE programmes, promoting extra-curricular activities and community links providing equipment and resource packs. National Governing Bodies, e.g. Football Association of Ireland (FAI), Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU), the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and the Irish Sports Council (ISC) have made concerted efforts to improve the delivery of the primary PE curriculum and a number of programmes have been implemented in primary schools through coaches that are employed in local clubs (Marron, 2008).

Quality CPD can improve teachers' subject content knowledge and transform their delivery of PE and yet, current models are woefully inadequate (Borko, 2004). The impact of such CPD programmes on changing practices, are still-debated and criticised in part, due to their fragmented provision, a lack of learner centred structures and educational value for both teachers and pupils (Sugrue, 2002; Murphy & O'Leary, 2012). The major criticism of PE-CPD provision within educational contexts and especially with the subject of PE is that it fails to permeate or integrate into the daily life of the school and is distanced physically and conceptually from what happens in the classroom (Murphy & O'Leary, 2012). The implementation of PE-CPD programmes continue to not be aligned with classroom conditions, contexts and daily experiences of teachers and therefore are unlikely to produce enhanced knowledge and skills (O'Sullivan & Deglau, 2006; Timperley, 2008; Armour *et al.*,

2010).

For effective CPD to improve both teacher knowledge and pupil learning, it needs to be current, relevant and challenging (Coulter, 2012). This has led to a rethinking of the nature and type of provision to match teachers' priorities of pupil learning in this subject and to cater more broadly for teachers' learning needs (Armour & Yelling, 2004a). However, Duncombe & Armour (2004) state that if new forms of CPD are to succeed, many aspects need to change, including the traditional practices of CPD providers, inhospitable schools and departmental structures. For teachers to benefit from alternative forms of CPD, schools need to alter radically their structures, processes and priorities to enable this to happen effectively (Duncombe & Armour, 2004).

The aim of CPD programmes within educational contexts is to teach something new and current to teachers with an expectation that they in turn, will be sufficiently motivated and trained to modify their teaching (Ward & Doutis, 1999). However, few have determined the provision of primary school education as an area shaped by complex understandings, beliefs and cultures (O'Connell-Rust, 2009). Resistance to change in primary schools has been an ever present trope; one that perceives educational change as imposed upon by successive governments especially in relation to the way subjects are traditionally delivered. Teachers often oppose change due to the perception of a continuous overloaded curriculum imposed by national reforms that compete, if not impinge, on teachers' time and energies, all the while, working with limited resources (Schmidt & Datnow, 2005). Sugrue (2004) believes that change in educational contexts is challenging an area that is familiar to all and depends very much on what teachers do and believe (Fullan, 2001).

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Initially, this introduction presents the real/naturalistic world context of this PE-CPD programme. This research context is imperative to explicate as it informs decisions on research design and influences the application and operationalisation of the research in the field. Therefore, the introduction reviews this context and makes the research setting explicit. It delineates the roles and responsibilities of the sole researcher and presents the aims and objectives of the thesis. This introduction presents the case study which is at the heart of this study and sets the scene for the subsequent literature review, methods applied, results obtained, discussion of these results and their subsequent impact.

1.1 A Test Case Study: The Case of the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Programme

An objective of this study is to use the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) as a test case in order to evaluate PE related CPD provision from an Irish educational context as it is believed to be relevant to the PE-CPD research continuum both nationally and internationally. Various studies report the dominance of team games that are rooted in cultural practices and criticised for providing an exclusive, non-educational and imbalanced form of PE (Murphy, 2007; O'Connor, 2012). This PE-CPD programme is recognised by the Department of Education & Science (DES) as a resource in the delivery of the games strand of the Primary School Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a). It is nationally co-ordinated, delivered locally by the Local Sports Partnership (LSP), and sets out to facilitate teachers' delivery of the games strand of the PE curriculum in primary schools. It aims to provide pupils with a broad skills-based programme, offering a high quality, meaningful, fun and enjoyable introduction to PA and sport. It incorporates a non-competitive model that grants opportunities to a wide variety of sports and equipment, advocating increased participation opportunities and inclusiveness for all levels of ability.

1.2 Justification for Research

Primary school teachers are also referred to as 'generalists' teachers because of the challenging pedagogical content knowledge they must acquire in order to teach all twelve subjects within the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a). With PE gaining equal subject status with a curriculum comprising of six distinct strands in 1999, provision for CPD is deemed necessary to ensure that primary teachers are competent and confident in their ability to deliver this subject. PE with its distinctive subject content, pedagogy and context is arguably the subject that generalist teachers find the most difficult in which to develop competence (Carney & Winkler, 2008). The necessity for CPD for teachers within the European Union (EU) is highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005) perceiving CPD as a life-long perspective with a need to support teachers through their career stages, providing on-going professional development, resources and incentives. Concerns have been expressed of an overloaded curriculum and subsequent increased workloads eroding teachers' time from planning and delivering PE (INTO, 2007). Hardman (2007) concurs and believes that it needs to be delivered with appropriate expertise, as well as current and relevant content. This is reiterated by Hardman & Marshall (2009) highlighting the scant provision of CPD for PE on a global scale, recommending greater investment, initial and continuous in-service provision for

teachers.

Coulter (2012) states that what is required in the current climate of education reform and investment in CPD is research designed to discover the effective features of CPD and to investigate the impact on teachers' and pupils' knowledge and learning. Guskey & Yoon (2009) illustrate the lack of reliability, validity and scientifically defensible data to assist claims made in relation to effective and ineffective CPD. From an Irish perspective, the majority of CPD research continuum focuses on ITE, perceived as scarce especially in relation to primary school PE. The research available identifies inadequate time allocation, facilities and lack of training as the main barriers to the delivery of PE in primary schools (Broderick & Shiel, 2000; Fahey *et al.*, 2005; Cosgrove, 2006; Deenihan, 2005; Deenihan, 2007; Murphy, 2007; Woods *et al.*, 2010).

Similar barriers prohibit primary school teachers availing of PE-CPD courses such as attending courses on the teacher's own free time, cost, distance from schools, lack of resources and facilities to facilitate the implementation of newly acquired knowledge (Armour, 2010; Irish National Teaching Organisation, 2007). Through evaluating PE related CPD provision in primary schools, this study also examines the extent to which traditional practices of CPD providers, inhospitable schools and departmental structures have changed in order for teachers to benefit from alternative forms of CPD. With calls for alternative forms of CPD in mind, it is now opportune to evaluate PE related CPD provision in primary schools, using the Buntús (Play & Multi Sport) programme as a test case.

1.3. Evaluation

Evaluation concerns the assessment of the context to which an action achieves a valued outcome and in addition, there is usually a value placed on the process by which outcomes are achieved (Nutbeam, 1998). The Ottawa Charter's definition of health promotion identifies both valued outcomes and processes as central to the health-promotion practice (WHO, 1986). With the current emphasis on evidence-based practice in healthcare, it is not surprising that evaluation has become an integral component of health promotion programmes and interventions. While the practice is to conduct evaluations of interventions internally, this evaluation however was conducted externally as the sole researcher had no professional relationship with any of the stakeholders involved in this programme and therefore, there was limited bias in the process. *Process Evaluation* takes places at various stages during the

implementation of a programme and as with this study evaluates the implementation of the Buntús programme.

The advantage of this type of evaluation is that one establishes whether this programme was carried out according to plan. This process evaluation was undertaken using a mixed qualitative methods approach from stakeholders such as Local Sports Partnerships (LSP) tutors and primary teachers and pupils. The importance of client participation first brought to the fore by the World Health Organisation (WHO) 1978, claims that ‘people have the right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care, therefore it is important to get feedback from participants’ (p.295).

Ghate (2001) identifies that the challenges posed to the principles of ideal text-book evaluation research by the real world setting are both powerful and persuasive and argues that researchers in pursuit of academic purity often fail to find pragmatic compromises to problems. However, it may be that these pragmatic compromises are rarely aired, as in the reference to the reality of research. Lewis (2004) states ‘published papers are generally ‘polished accounts’ (p.1). Pragmatic compromises in real world research scenarios are inevitable and usually involve trade-offs between purity and practical reality. This process evaluation is no exception.

1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

This study was divided into three sections that initially included semi-structured interviews with Local Sports Partnerships (LSP) tutors. The researcher identified and negotiated access with seven County Councils and LSPs and developed the interview protocol and question guide for interviewing LSP tutors with contributions from sports coordinators from each of these counties. Sports coordinators from all seven county councils aided with provisional access by providing contact details of LSP tutors who were then employed and were involved in the delivery of this programme in their perspective counties. The second and third stages of this study included group interviews with primary teachers and pupils from two counties. Once again, sports coordinators from two county counties aided with provisional access by providing the contact details of schools that had availed of the programme in their county.

The Thesis Aim is:

Using the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme as a test case, the aim of this study was to evaluate the implementation of this PE-CPD programme in primary schools and its perceived success.

The Thesis Objectives are:

- *To evaluate the extent to which primary school structures, processes and priorities facilitated the successful or otherwise implementation of this PE- CPD programme*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme was integrated into the daily life of the school, aligned with classroom conditions, school contexts, teachers' career stages and daily experiences*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme provided teachers with opportunities to be become independent, flexible and innovative teachers of PE in order to cater for the individual needs of their pupils*
- *To examine school pupils' experiences and attitudes towards physical education as a possible determiner or vehicle for future participation in physical activity*

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured around five chapters. This introduction chapter sets the scene for the subsequent literature review, methods applied, results obtained, and discussion of these results and their subsequent impact. **Chapter Two** provides the relevant literature for this study and is divided into six sections. The first section examines the precise nature of the relationship between early learning experiences, PE, PA and lifelong participation. It discusses the physical, psychological and behavioural skills in promoting PA participation, that are now widely recognised and yet, insufficient PA levels continue to be a national and international issue. The social determinants and environmental variables that affect children's participation in PE and PA conclude this section.

The second section commences by charting the development of the Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools and the introduction of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in primary schools and concludes with a review of school-based PA interventions. The third and fourth sections provide by an historical overview of the Irish education system, followed by a detailed account of PE, its development and CPD professional provision in primary schools. The fifth section examines the games strand and prominent discourses that have emerged in relation to its implementation in schools and an examination of the literature in relation to the TOPs programme in the UK from which this PE-CPD programme test case is closely adopted. Finally, the chapter concludes by briefly examining the importance of evaluation in health promotion focusing the application of a case study as a form of methodology in this study.

Chapter Three presents the methods chapter of this thesis that describes the exact steps undertaken to address the research question. This chapter explores issues around interpretive qualitative research and the rationale and use of the various types of interviews are summarised. A description of the research setting and participants are provided. The choice of inductive analysis to analyse data as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are considered. Ethical considerations are detailed. The chapter concludes by critically evaluating issues around the credibility of the data.

Chapter Four presents the findings of this study structured by the themes that derive from the data analysis. This provides the major themes and descriptions of LSP tutors' experiences and perceptions of delivering this PE-CPD programme in primary schools. It also provides the major themes and descriptions of schools, primary school teachers' and pupils' practices, perceptions and experiences of this PE-CPD programme and PE.

Chapter Five discusses the major themes using an evaluative lens. Each theme is compared and contrasted with the literature and highlights new insights. Finally, the conclusions, limitations of the research conclude this thesis.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In the context of physical education, the revised (1999) Primary School Curriculum has targeted the childhood years as being increasingly critical to developing a foundation of lifelong physical activity, health, and well-being (Government of Ireland, 1999a). However adverse shortcomings in the form of institutional and attitudinal barriers (e.g. inadequate CPD provision and subject relegation) have left the PE curriculum aspirational at best with the games strand the most expedient and dominant of all strands delivered (Hardman, 2009; O'Connor *et al.*, 2012). Armour (2010) argues that improving the quality of teachers' career-long professional learning is pivotal to raising the standards of PE. This may significantly contribute to children's positive early learning experiences in acquiring the fundamental movement skills (FMS) necessary to gain access to a variety of PA experiences leading to lifelong participation in PA (Barnett *et al.*, 2013). This chapter is divided into five distinct sections and are as follows.

Section One entitled *Physical Activity, Physical Education & Lifelong Participation* explores the nature of the relationship between early learning experiences in childhood, PE, PA and lifelong participation. It discusses the physical, psychological and behavioural skills in promoting PA participation that are now widely recognised and yet insufficient PA levels in childhood and youth continue to be a national and international issue. Such PA levels may be influenced by social determinants and environmental variables and are examined further and conclude this section.

Section Two entitled *Physical Activity & School Interventions* is divided into three sub-sections. These sub-sections chart the development of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) as a subject, the concept of health-promoting primary schools and the issue of school as an effective site for promotion of PA. **Section Three** charts the pivotal changes and developments in primary school education with onus on the subject of PE from an Irish perspective. This provides a critical summary of contemporary educational issues including *(i)* Reform within the (1999) Primary School Curriculum, *(ii)* Initial Teacher Training and Education, *(iii)* Professional Development Provision in Primary Schools.

Section Four entitled *The Games Strand* commences with a clear definition of games, the direct style of teaching and the emergence of Teaching Games for Understanding (TGFU). This is followed by an overview of the development of games strand of the Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a) and the discourses that have emerged from its delivery in primary schools. This is followed by a review of the TOPs programme in the UK (a programme closely adapted from in the development of the Buntús (Play & Multi Sport) programme) and an overview of this PE-CPD programme and how it facilitates the delivery of the games strand.

Section Five entitled *Continuous Professional Development* comprises of three sub-sections and discusses (i) the key features required to ensure effective CPD provision, (ii) how models of professional development are valuable and influential in bringing about teacher change, (iii) effective features in evaluation of CPD programmes and issues that require further consideration. **Section Six** concludes this literature review by focusing on the importance of ensuring that CPD is evidence-based and consequently requires research to explore and evaluate its impact on the teachers and pupils for legislative and practical reasons. This section primarily discusses the literature on *Process Evaluation* and how they benefit CPD programmes and their effectiveness.

2.1 Physical Activity, Physical Education & Lifelong Participation

For this study, PA is used as a generic term for every bodily movement produced by the skeletal muscles that raises the energy consumption above the basal metabolism (Caspseren, Powell & Christenson, 1985). Physical movement skills that are well developed provide enhanced experiences that improve quality of life (Whitehead, 2007). Such skills support multiple facets of PA from habitual daily movement skills to elite sports participation and consequently, PA programmes have received considerable attention and financial investment due to the positive effect on the health of the population (Giblin *et al.*, 2014). PA plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases (e.g. heart failure, obesity, diabetes, cancer) mental illnesses (e.g. anxiety, depression) and neurological dysfunction (e.g. stroke, [Seifert *et al.*, 2013; Less & Hopkins, 2013; Lubans *et al.*, 2010]).

PE is considered a universal resource for developing movement competency or mastery of fundamental movement skills (FMS) that is necessary in children, adolescents and adults for them to be able to participate in organised and informal activities (Hardy *et al.*, 2010; Livesey *et al.*, 2011). This subject continues to be a priority in education systems despite adverse shortcomings (institutional and attitudinal barriers) and challenges presented by the current climate of austerity (Marshall, 2009; Ford *et al.*, 2012). The importance of PE and PA is evident, and yet, conceptualisations of both include an eclectic variety of definitions, methodologies and content (Welk, 1999). The objectives and outcomes measures of PE curricula remain unstandardised and mainly correlational, and a lack of empirical-based evidence for best practices in PE could lead to an alienated approach to delivering this subject within education systems (Giblin *et al.*, 2014). The process of evidence-based promotion of PA through PE is crucial and should be a priority with governments, and although substantial, the current literature about effective skill learning in PE remains correlational (Giblin *et al.*, 2014). It is imperative that evidence based practice ensures efficiency and effectiveness of interventions designed to promote health (Bouffard & Reid, 2012). Governing policy in education, nursing, psychology, medicine is informed by scientific gold standard protocols that optimise service provision (Leng *et al.*, 2008), however, inconsistency appears to prevail between the research findings, policy and practice in PA promotion on a European and global scale (Bailey *et al.*, 2009; Collins *et al.*, 2010; Côté *et al.*, 2009).

It has been proposed that PE, particularly for younger children, should focus on improving physical competence rather than short-term transient fitness and achievement outcomes. Moreover, the aim of PE could be restructured as the promotion of long-term health behaviours and transcend the lifespan instead of focusing on the quantity of PA hours (Giblin *et al.*, 214). There has been a constant focus on quantity rather than quality of delivery to regulate curricular content in PE that continues to aggravate policy makers in educational domains (Scottish Executive, 2014). The belief in improving PE through high volume facilitated PA (regardless of the nature of challenge or content) rather than through delivery of well-designed, stimulating and reviewed programmes of study continues to dominate PE discourses (Giblin *et al.*, 2014).

2.1.1 *Deliberate Play versus Deliberate Practice*

Pioneering research advocating the development of expertise through the accumulation of thousands of hours of practice has been coined deliberate practice (Ericsson, 1993).

Succeeding this framework, development systems in PA have strived to provide ability through the provision of early specialised training (Pankhurst & Collins, 2013). The theory being that to achieve success, individuals' physical skills training must start early in order to gain the required amount of time as stated by the universal cited 10,000 hours rule in order to become proficient or gain expertise in such skills (Syed, 2011). However, the deliberate practice model is expert driven or is in favour of developing experts and does not take into consideration the participatory-level of engagement in activities (Giblin *et al.*, 2014). In contrast, the deliberate play model was produced to accommodate either participation or performance and to counter some of the issues evident with the deliberate practice approach when applied to physically challenging physical activities (Côté *et al.*, 2009). This model is mainly based on a socio-psychological perspective and advocates the social and behavioural characteristics necessary for long term participation through a provisional emphasis on fun and wide-ranging activities (Côté *et al.*, 2009).

Côté & Hay (2002) define young people's early experiences in organised sport as the sampling years, (7–12years) where young people participate in a range of activities motivated by fun and enjoyment with an emphasis on playing rather than training. The activities are regulated by rules adapted from standardised sport rules and are set up and monitored by the children or by an adult involved in the activity. Côté & Hay (2002) argue on the basis of empirical studies that successful athletes have experienced prolonged and high quality periods of deliberate play during their early years. Their sampling years suggests, that it is important, in terms of maintaining motivation and interest among children, that deliberate play experiences are across a range of activities and are opposed to the practice of early specialisation in one sport. Cote & Hay (2002) believe that early years are critical years for the development of the kinds of physical competences that place individuals in a position to access and engage actively in the physical culture of society. Kirk (2005) argues that the beginning of PE in lower to middle secondary school, ages 11–14; (See 2.1.3) might be too late to introduce children to deliberate play through specialist teaching and coaching and an appropriately comprehensive and balanced programme of activities. The contrast between the Deliberate Practice/Play approaches is highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1: Contrast Between Deliberate Practice/Deliberate Play

Deliberate Practice	Deliberate Play
• Effortful, not intrinsically enjoyable	• Emphasis on fun
• Focused on specifics	• Focused on generics
• Coach/adult led	• Child centered/minimal adult involvement
• Performance/specialist agenda	• Broad sampling agenda
• One track	• Twin track
• Psychosocially independent	• Psycho socially dependent

(Giblin *et al.*, 2014)

A number of PA participation models (Participation in Youth PA; Physical Literacy) followed this deliberate play model and the importance of both psychological and behavioural skills in concurrence with physical skills in promoting PA participation is now widely recognised (Bailey & Morley, 2006; Fairclough *et al.*, 2012).

2.1.2 The importance of movement skills

Motor skills in general can be defined as the consistent production of goal-orientated movements, which are learnt and specific to task (McMorris, 2004), while motor abilities (balance, endurance) are defined as generic capacities of an individual underlying the performance of a variety of movement skills (Burton & Rodgeron, 2001). FMS comprise of locomotor skills that are used to propel the body through space (hopping, running, jumping) and object control skills which include manipulating an object in action situations (e.g. throwing, catching and are considered the building blocks for more specific skills (Cliff *et al.*, 2009; Robinson & Goodway, 2009).

According to Collins *et al.*, (2012), the proficiency of FMS's interlinks the three domains of PA engagement (Participation, Performance & Excellence). Established (generic) athletic skills (balance, locomotion, strength) permit flexible movement of individuals between domains and levels of PA participation (Seifert *et al.*, 2013; Tucker & Collins, 2012). In addition, motor coordination shapes PA engagement in later life; high levels of motor coordination during childhood positively draw a parallel with academic achievement and physical, psychological and behavioural outcomes measured during adolescence and adulthood (Lopes *et al.*, 2012). In tandem, motor coordination levels in childhood negatively

correlate with sedentary behaviours throughout the life course and sedentary behaviour health outcomes independent of PA and coordination levels are linked to PA and sedentary behaviours inversely and directly, respectively (Giblin *et al.*, 2014).

Children with weak motor coordination in particular, have higher BMI, are at greater risk of cardiovascular disease than those with typical motor coordination development, participate in less PA and struggle with everyday tasks (Fong, 2012). These difficulties experienced by children due to poor motor coordination maintain decreased PA participation and decreased motor coordination level compared to those of standard motor development (Fong *et al.*, 2012; Pesce *et al.*, 2013). Weak motor coordination also negatively effects physical health across the life course; (childhood, adolescences adulthood) having increased adiposity, poor cholesterol profiles (low HDL-higher LDL) and lower physical fitness compared to those of the same age who possess normal coordination. Lastly, motor coordination levels during childhood clearly correlates with the variety and amount of time engaged in extra-curricular PA, engagement of PA measured by the amount of M/VA during PE, perceptions of capability and self-reported enjoyment of PA. These findings in short, mean that motor coordination seems to be a robust candidate as a casual factor in PA.

Kirby & Sugden (2007) state that there are wide-ranging consequences for poor coordination for example, poor coordination is regularly linked to poor academic attainment and cognitive shortfalls. Weaker motor coordination levels relate to lower planning and attention control functions of cognition, however, Best (2012) states that the development of these functions can be improved during childhood through specialist PA training. Consequently, physical, psychological and cognitive advances of PA participation are enhanced when cognitive challenges are integrated into PE lessons at a level that is aligned with pupils' motor coordination ability (Pesce *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, those with poor coordination are aided by physical activities that do not incorporate additional cognitive requirements; however, children with higher levels of coordination benefit more from enhanced cognitive challenges (Pesce *et al.*, 2012). The cognitive abilities to assess the environment and adapt motor skills to satisfy the requirements of innovative movement activities or environments provide increased opportunities to discover and show task mastery in a variety of physical activities (exercise, dance) (Siegrist *et al.*, 2013).

The development of motor coordination in childhood requires the identification, optimisation and assessment of movement competence that take into consideration individual differences (e.g. genetics, gender, physical skill levels and task) (Tucker & Collins, 2012). Further research that includes empirical measures of motor coordination that is sensitive to individual differences and is appropriate for longitudinal research is required to improve the evidence base beyond the cross-sectional, correlational data available (Lopes *et al.*, 2012).

2.1.3 Perceived Motor Skill Competence

To date, there has been a paucity of PE programmes that incorporate psychological and psychosocial components that recognise and tackle varying beliefs, abilities and motivations for PA engagement; an issue, that has not gone unnoticed (Fairclough, *et al.*, 2012). There is substantial research supporting the influence of early PE experiences on PA perceptions of ability and behaviours in adulthood (Aelterman *et al.*, 2012; Kirk, 2005; Lawford *et al.*, 2012; Lopes *et al.*, 2012; Lubans *et al.*, 2010). Children who possess high perceptions of competence are more likely to persist and engage in mastering skills (Goodway & Branta, 2003), and the interaction between actual and perceived competency envisages future engagement in PA more accurately than the level of competence (actual or perceived). Aelterman *et al.*, (2012) gives an example, by stating that individuals who either under- or overestimate their actual level, experience less positive PA involvement than those accurately perceiving their ability, irrespective of level. Developmental psychology has provided significant insights into PE and PA with research showing that children's perception of their physical competence are high irrespective of skill level and that the arbitrating influence of differences between actual and perceived competence is not evident before the age of eight (Kirk, 2005).

Hence, creating a proficient skill level in accordance to children's high perception before the discrepancy becomes a mediating issue on their PE experience could improve future PA engagement. Poor movement skill competence is coupled with lower levels of engagement in PA during late childhood and the onset of adolescence and low levels of PA participation decreases motivation, intensifies the risk of obesity and negative self-perception that could possibly extend decrements in PA through the life course (Stodden & Goodway, 2007). According to Giblin *et al.*, (2014), this underlines the importance of early and well-structured education in physical skills. There is significant data supporting models for developing youth PA participation and have gain greater insights into the concomitants that enlighten students'

perceptions of physical ability and who believe that PE is valuable and therefore engage in more extra-curricular activities (Fairclough *et al.*, 2012).

2.1.4 Psycho-Behavioural Factors

The development of children's skills, positive attitudes, knowledge and confidence to enjoy a physical active lifestyle, one that transcends the cessation of formal PE is an important objective of school PE programmes. There is a growing body of research that has explored the identification, deployment and application of psycho-behavioral skills required to control, develop and manage the variety of challenges and necessities experienced by individuals as they follow personal goals and objectives (Collins *et al.*, 2012; Fairclough, *et al.*, 2012; McNamara *et al.*, 2011). Behavioural characteristics are perceived to play an important role in the realisation of potential by allowing individuals to invest time in practicing, avoiding distractions and maintaining commitment to pursue excellence in any domain (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009). These behaviours are crucial when faced with significant challenges of prolonged engagement in PA and have shown to be vital in weight control in the important transition from childhood to adolescence (Tsukayama *et al.*, 2010).

It is necessary for young people to have the coping skills and self-efficacy to overcome risk factors and to navigate a course through everyday experiences that are deemed stressful and challenging (e.g. social and peer pressures). Psycho-behavioural skills protect against risk factors and facilitate a young person's ability to make appropriate/healthy choices about their PA participation. Research has validated how crucial student's beliefs and behaviours in PE and have shown the effectiveness of autonomy supportive teacher-student interactions (particularly for female) and self-determined motivations for increased engagement in PE (Fairclough *et al.*, 2012; Giblin *et al.*, 2014).

Research has shown that those individuals who possess high autonomous motivation demonstrate higher levels of MVPA during PE classes, continue to master skills and enjoy PE more than those reporting lower levels of autonomous (controlled) motivation (Aelterman *et al.*, 2012). Lessons that are developmentally and instructionally appropriate, where students decide how they use their skills in response to various environmental barriers, increase motivation to show physical and perceived skill competence compared to free play activities (Lawford *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, it is important to facilitate early structured PE lessons that

permit children to make decisions, set goals, experience success and failure, and support PA through self-reflection on their experiences.

Giblin *et al.*, (2014) state that the behaviours required for attaining expertise are transferable across different disciplines of excellence through developing persistence, motivation and decision-making skills in motoric activities. These skills can be used by individuals to pursue excellence in other spheres of life (academic, music). Furthermore, the creation of a learning environment that is structured to encourage autonomously motivated children could provide education through the physical and of the physical and offers a strong argument that PE has the ability to contribute to meeting broader educational initiatives at primary level. There is robust evidence that children learn best through interaction and perception with their physical environment (Newell, 2011).

2.1.5 Prevalence of Physical Activity in Youth

There is substantial scientific research suggesting the physical and psychological health benefits of a physically active lifestyle. Consequently, governments worldwide prioritise policies, finances, and resources in healthcare, education, and sports sectors to increase mass participation in PA (WHO, 2013; Hallal *et al.*, 2012). However, insufficient PA levels in childhood and youth remains a global health issue (WHO, 2009; Kohl *et al.*, 2012). The following section summarises the current state of knowledge regarding how active children and youth at national and international level.

2.1.6 Physical Activity Guidelines

Kohl, Craig, Lambert, *et al.*, (2012) state that there is an increasing number of organisations that are producing policy documents and position statements on the recommended levels of PA which echo both the growing issue about inactivity and its health consequences and the increased knowledge concerning the benefits of regular PA. The Department of Health & Human Services in the US and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have undertaken the largest projects in order to establish definitive guidelines for PA policies and recommendations (WHO, 2012). The most accepted recommendation is that children should engage in 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) including at least 30 min at school is necessary (Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010; WHO, 2012; Yetter, 2009).

According to the HBSC survey, under half of the young people surveyed satisfied these recommendations. Specifically, children living in Canada, England, Ireland, Lithuania, and the United States report relatively high levels of PA, whereas children in Belgium, Estonia, France, Italy, Norway, and Portugal report relatively low levels of PA (Gavin *et al.*, 2013). Data from 105 countries shows that 80% of youth ages 13-15 were not meeting the recommended public health guidelines of 60 mins per day (Hallal *et al.*, 2012). A recent study of 10-12 year olds also reported that that 83% of boys and 95% of girls were not meeting the recommended PA guidelines (Veroligne *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, a longitudinal study conducted in the US found that by the age of 15, 69% of adolescents did not meet the recommended guidelines for PA (60 min/day) on weekdays and 83% did not meet the guidelines on weekends (Nader *et al.*, 2008).

2.1.7 How Active Are Irish Children?

The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) study first conducted in 1982 and conducted every four years since, currently collects data from 200,000 children from 43 European and North American countries and are all affiliated with the World Health Organisation (WHO). The surveys are school-based with data collected through self-reported questionnaires administered by class teachers and the findings indicate that only 34% of all young people report participating in PA at a level that meets the current PA guidelines (Oja *et al.*, 2011).

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) trends report in Ireland presents findings on indicators of children's health and well-being between 1998 and 2010. Overall, there was a statistically significant decrease between 1998 and 2010 in the percentage of young people who reported they exercise on four or more times a week (Gavin *et al.*, 2013). There was an inconsistent pattern between survey years, with a significant decrease between 1998 and 2002, a significant increase between 2002 and 2006, and a significant decrease between 2006 and 2010 (Gavin *et al.*, 2013). A higher percentage of boys and younger children reported they exercise four or more times a week over the four surveys. Across all four surveys, the lowest percentage was among girls aged 15-17. There were no clear social class patterns (Gavin *et al.*, 2013).

2.1.8 PA Decreases with Age

Studies have consistently shown that the decrease in PA is evident with age (Riddoch *et al.*, 2004; Nader *et al.*, 2008; Troiano *et al.*, 2008; Kelly *et al.*, 2012). Riddoch *et al.*, (2004) found that boys were more active than girls at age 9 and 15yrs. Time engaged in moderate-intensity activity found gender differences were apparent at age 9, the great majority of boys and girls achieved current health-related physical activity recommendations (97.4% and 97.6%, respectively). At age 15, fewer children achieved the guidelines and gender differences were apparent (boys 81.9% vs girls 62.0%). Nader *et al.*, (2008) found at age 9 years, children engaged in MVPA approximately 3 hours per day on a weekly basis but by the age 15 years, adolescents were only engaging in MVPA for 49 minutes per weekday and 38 minutes per weekend day. The rate of decrease in MVPA was the same for boys and girls. The estimated age at which girls crossed below the recommended 60 minutes of MVPA per day was approximately 13.1 years compared with boys at 14.7 years. Troiano *et al.*, (2008) found that males are more physically active than females. Physical activity declines dramatically across age groups between childhood and adolescence and continues to decline with age. For example, 42% of children ages 6-11 years obtain the recommended 60 min per day of PA, whereas only 8% of adolescents achieve this goal. From an Irish perspective, younger children are significantly more likely to report exercising four or more times a week compared to older children (62% of 10-11; 54% of 12-14; 41% of 15-17) (Kelly *et al.*, 2012).

2.1.9 Boys/Girls – Vigorous PA

Sallis *et al.*, (2000) reviewed studies over a 28 year period and including 108 studies evaluated 40 variables of children and ages 3-12 years and found that in 81% of gender comparisons, boys were more active than girls and mirrors other findings thereafter (Klasson-Heggebo & Anderson, 2003; Riddoch *et al.*, 2004; Cardon & De Bourdeauhuij, 2004; Tudor-Locke *et al.*, 2006; De Bourdeauhuij *et al.*, 2011). Van Mechelen *et al.*, (2000) conducted a longitudinal study in the Netherlands of 13-27 year olds and proposed that the reason for the greatest decline in PA in males by age was due to their high level of PA at the start of the study compared to lower female levels and this left more opportunity for males to reduce the amount and level of PA. Studies have shown boys engage in PA more vigorously and score significantly higher than girls in self-efficacy and their ability to overcome time constraints, poor weather conditions, academic commitments and fatigue (Van Stralen *et al.*, 2014; Verloigne *et al.*, 2013). From an Irish perspective, overall, 60% of boys report exercising four or more times a week compared to 40% of girls (Gavin *et al.*, 2013).

2.1.10 Urban/Rural Divide

There is no clear urban-rural divide in relation to PA and children-youth and is evident from studies that conclude the difficulties in being definitive about PA levels from both urban and rural environments. Carrier & Herbert (2003) found that children from urban areas to be more physically active while Loucaides *et al.*, (2004) found similar results in the summer months but the reverse during winter months.

2.1.11 Social Determinants & Environment Variables of PA & PE

To promote PA effectively, there is a necessity to understand the factors that influence PA in children and adolescents (Cardon *et al.*, 2008). These determinants include; demographic, biological, psychological/emotional, social/cultural, socio-economic, and physical-environment determinants. These investigations are complicated by rapid physical, social, and psychological development during youth. To provide an extensive review of all determinants of physical activity in this section is unwarranted and therefore the determinants discussed in this section are most relevant to this study and will focus on social and environmental variables.

2.1.12 Social Determinants

It is not surprising that social determinants are documented in most studies on PA in youth because young people participate in a considerable amount of their PA with teams, classes and playgroups within the school context. PE remains the one subject in co-educational schools that is most likely to be delivered in gender-segregated sessions. Hills & Croston (2012) refers to the concept of doing gender as the process through which ‘schools sustain, re-produce and render legitimate the institutional arrangements that are based on sex categories’ (West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 33). Research on PE has demonstrated the way that doing gender privileges male experience, sustains gender hierarchies and reinforces narrow notions of sporting embodiment (Flintoff & Scraton, 2006; Hickey, 2008; Silva *et al.*, 2012; Hills & Croston, 2012; Lyu & Gill, 2011; 2012; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011).

These processes are underpinned by the association of ideal sporting embodiment with attributes consonant with hegemonic masculinity that can result in struggles to reconcile sportiness with the demands of femininity (Hickey, 2008; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011; Silva *et al.*, 2012). Offering different curricula to girls and boys, adopting different teaching

styles for boys and girls and making assumptions about preferences and ability based on gender stereotypes are some of the common processes that researchers have identified as reinforcing and sustaining gender difference and perpetuating inequity within PE (Hickey, 2008; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011).

From an Irish perspective, the dominance of the games strand, and in particular, soccer and GAA football during physical education classes in primary schools is well documented (Broderick & Shiel, 2000; Fahey *et al.*, 2005; Murphy, 2007; Cosgrave, 2006; Coulter, 2012). Studies have considered the role that football facilitates in the construction of masculinity and in effect excludes girls and marginalised non-footballing boys (Trost, 2004; Swain, 2006; Slingerland *et al.*, 2011). While football continues to be considered a masculine activity, women's participation has been steadily increasing. Since the 1970s, young girls and women in Ireland have been (relatively) enabled to participate in traditional, male-associated, sports such as Gaelic football, soccer and rugby (The Women's Football Association of Ireland, 1991). Liston (2006) states that from an Irish perspective, Gaelic football (GAA) receives the highest profile status with over 80,000 females currently playing Gaelic football, while the number of females participating in soccer and rugby are substantially lower (6,500 and 900 respectively). Current data show that there are 515 camogie clubs and 1,100 ladies football clubs around the country and abroad (GAA, 2013).

Cashmore & Parker (2003) state that a footballer is deemed a kind of iconic male figure and masculinity is often performed through playing football. Research shows that football is the dominant site for performing hegemonic masculinity and this status is maintained through the exclusion of girls and the marginalisation and feminisation of other boys (Swain, 2006; Hickey, 2008; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Co-educational PE was introduced in Ireland during the 1970s to challenge sex-based stereotyping; however, single sex lessons continue to be offered in many schools (Lyu & Gill, 2011). Single sex lessons are purported to help girls by creating a supportive classroom climate that increases opportunities for participation, learning, feedback and teacher interactions without the problems associated with the presence of male peers such as teasing, harassment (diminishing girls' abilities) playing rough, and exclusion (Van Daalen, 2005; Hannon & Ratliffe, 2007; Clarke & Paecher, 2007; Hickey, 2008; Lyu & Gill, 2011).

Issues of embarrassment and concerns about embodiment and self-presentation in front of male peers have been shown to be particularly salient for early adolescent girls (Slingerland *et al.*, 2014). Single sex lessons are also thought to alleviate differences in boys' and girls' experiences allowing girls to gain in confidence, particularly in the context of team games (McCaughy *et al.*, 2006). The problems with segregation have been explored less fully in relation to PE but they include the potential to reinforce gender stereotypes, legitimise discrimination, undermine principles of inclusion, and fail to prepare students to engage in an integrated society (Hills & Croston, 2012).

2.1.13 Environmental Variables

Studies show that time spent outdoors is the single best correlate of PA (Burdette *et al.*, 2005; Ginsburg, 2007). These findings suggest that most opportunities to be active are outdoors, and children are generally prevented from being active indoors at home. A number of studies show that parents are important mediators of children's PA and their safety concerns may restrict children's ability to play in places away from home or outdoors (Karsetn, 2005; Veitch *et al.*, 2006; Beets & Foley, 2008; Munoz, 2009; Brockman, *et al.*, 2011). The decreased opportunities for parents to spend time supervising and participating in their children's play because of increased work commitments have resulted in greatly reduced prospects for children's engagement in outdoor play (Louv, 2005; Munoz, 2009). This has been exacerbated by parental fears for their children's safety placing greater restrictions on children's independent activities and depicting the world as an inherently dangerous place from which children should be sheltered (Valentine & Mckendrick, 1997; Furedi, 1997; 2001; 2004; Munoz 2009; Brockman *et al.*, 2011). The following sections provide an insight and explanation as to the proliferation of a risk society.

2.1.14 Risk Society: Ulrich Beck & Anthony Giddens

The term risk-society is synonymous with the theorists Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991; 1999). Beck (1992) deems risk-society as a specific phase in the modernisation process in which society over constructs distinctive risks, at an objective level, that share a common feature; they are risks of the modernisation process itself and reflexive-modern societies and are preoccupied with risk. Similar to Beck (1992), Giddens's (1991; 1999) term risk-society refers as an advanced phase of the modernisation process characterised by unpredictability and rapid flux and is tantamount with vulnerability and risk.

Giddens (1999: p.3) advocates that in high-modernity, ‘a hyper-awareness of risk permeates the subjective consciousness of individuals and that thinking in terms of risk is an ever-present activity as individuals attempt to exercise autonomy in aspects of their life formerly governed by fate’.

Furedi (1997) states the world is far safer than at any time in history and yet, Lupton (1999) and Breivik (2007), having drawn on the theories of Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991; 1999) argue that the emphasis in contemporary societies is on the avoidance of risks and increasing support for the risk-aversion attitude (Lupton, 1999; Breivik, 2007). Risk and regulation have therefore become interwoven concepts and as the perception of risks has increased in society, so has their regulation. This process can take many forms from the internal regulation of the self to the constraints and impositions to which individuals are subjected from outside. Furedi (1997) states that the pervasive influence of discourses of risk and uncertainty – the risk-society outlined by Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991; 1999) has created a culture of fear, an environment in which moderated individuals learn to constrain themselves and their actions. In risk-societies, ‘the virtues held up to be followed are passivity rather than activism, safety rather than boldness’ (Furedi, 1997: p12). Lupton (1999) puts forward the suggestion that the emphasis on risk-avoidance in contemporary western society ‘is equivalent with concepts of the ‘civilised body’ and, in particular, individuals’ desire to exercise control over their lives, to regulate the self and body, and to avoid the changes of fate’ (p.148). To do otherwise is to take unnecessary risks, seen as careless, irresponsible, and even deviant and is evidence of an individual’s ignorance or lack of ability to regulate the self (Lupton, 1999).

Boyer (2006) highlights that definitions of risk often have a very narrow scope with often-negative connotations. Within the developmental psychology literature, risk taking is regularly defined as the engagement in behaviours associated with some probability of negative outcomes (Boyer, 2006; Munoz, 2009). Madge & Barker (2007) highlight the complexities of the concept of risk as it encompasses “an endless spectrum of behaviours and activities” (p. 8) that is socially constructed and vary in context both within and across cultures and could result in positive and negative outcomes. Little (2008) believes that risk taking can produce both negative and positive outcomes, as it is imperative to learn and develop new skills and behaviours, and discard the familiar and explore the less and unknown. When this perspective of risk taking is positioned within this context, it is argued that danger need not be avoided, but rather managed in a positive healthy manner and

therefore a distinction needs to be highlighted (Furedi, 2001; Ball *et al.*, 2008; Christensen & Mikkelsen, 2008; Munoz, 2009).

Petersen (1996) argues that health promotions, under the guise of scientific legitimacy, focus on 'at-risk' individuals and use subjects' agency in processes of self-regulation. However, risk is also regulated from outside. Hunt *et al.*, (2007) argue that once a group has been identified as at-risk as such, notwithstanding the randomness of this definition, 'it is subsequently subjected to significant forms of domination and restraint; expert advice, surveillance and control and one group that is particularly prone to these forms of control and regulation is youth' (p. 76). However, if one desired to witness the problematisation of youth, their definition as at-risk, and their subsequent subjugation under powerful forms of surveillance and regulation, one need look no further than the institution of the school in high modernity.

2.1.15 Schools: Safety & Risk

The concern of safety and risk exist on a number of levels, from increased traffic, stranger danger, and injuries sustained through sport, playground, and physical education. According to Lester & Russell (2008), the nature of play itself involves novelty, creativity, flexibility uncertainty, and unpredictability with a greater onus on its processes rather than its results and includes risk elements, which come with unpredictable and unstructured behaviour. Dwyer *et al.*, (2008) report that teachers are concerned about their pupils' reduced ability to play creatively due to their increased time spent with technology (home-entertainment devices) and overscheduling of time, resulting in a large decrease of playtime at home.

Little & Wyver (2008) view risk-taking as a crucial aspect of children's play and view risky play as activities that provide opportunities to challenge, test limits, explore boundaries and learn about different elements of risk. Characteristics of risky play have been identified as at risk, speed, excitement, thrills, uncertainty and challenge, attempting something never done before, feeling on the borderline of 'out of control' often because of height or speed, and overcoming fear (Greenfield, 2004; Stephenson, 2003; Sandseter, 2007a; Munoz, 2009).

Pellegrini & Holmes (2006) argue the increasing accountability in childhood educational settings has a negative impact on both the quality and quantity of play and PE available to children. In many western countries, accountability includes stringent safety measures that result in the removal of all risk, challenge and stimulation from children's playgrounds, outdoor play experiences and physical education experiences (Lester & Russell, 2008; Madge & Barker, 2007). Arguments have emerged that such risk minimisation measures are likely to have a detrimental impact on children's health and development as schools have a vital role in providing facilitative environments (Bundy *et al.*, 2009; Little & Wyver, 2008; Munoz 2009). Such environments will not allow children to take safely the types of risks that enable them to extend their current capabilities or give them the opportunity to learn about risk and how to manage it in a real world context of the communities in which they live (Shephard, 2004). Environments that support risk-taking allow children to demonstrate that they are capable and resourceful, empowering them to become constructors of their own learning (Little, 2008).

Tovey (2007) documents teachers' anxieties about culpability and subsequent litigation as a reason for curtailing what is deemed as risky. Australian studies also find accountability factors to impact on pedagogical decision-making (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; French *et al.*, 2006; Munoz, 2009). Teachers within these studies feel that they are operating within an environment of surveillance and discipline leading to unnecessary safety emphasis and greatly limiting teachers' capacity to use their knowledge to inform their practices. Consequently, these teachers feel that they are no longer able to provide children with rich and challenging activity environments (Bown & Sumsion, 2007; French *et al.*, 2004). Bundy *et al.*, (2009) state that despite acknowledging the benefits and lack of injuries sustained by pupils through the introduction of unstructured materials and resources, teachers continue to feel that there is an increased risk of injury and raised concerns and the duty of care, citing fear of litigation as a reason for their uneasiness.

A growing culture of litigation has resulted in the removal of playground equipment from public spaces and an increasing fear amongst non-parental carers and educators that they could be liable for any injury (even minor) suffered by a child in their care (Children's Play Council, 2004; Shepard, 2004; New *et al.*, 2005). Fear that children could actually come to harm or to avoid accusations of irresponsibility have resulted in educators maintaining constant supervision over children's activities even as they avoid potentially unsafe activities

(New *et al.*, 2005). Such concerns are seriously affecting early childhood educators' capacity to provide rich, worthwhile experiences that foster children's development and learning (Munoz, 2009). The issue with such responses to safety and fear of litigation are that play opportunities and PE classes become so sterile and unstimulating that children may actually place themselves at greater risk of injury as they seek to inject some excitement into activities (Department of Children, Media & Sport, 2004). From an Irish perspective, there are similar restrictions of children in school grounds, increased levels of supervision and decreased time for breaks (Casey, 2003).

Marron (2008) highlights a Guide to Insurance, Safety and Security available on-line from Allianz Insurance Company which quotes a judicial comment that states; 'if every teacher is to take precautions to see that there is never ragging horseplay among his pupils, his school would be an awful place to contemplate' (p.69). A report by Health Service Executive (HSE) (2005) shows that 40% of schools in the Cork and Kerry region have implemented 'no running' policies during break-time (Muarry & Millar, 2005). The Irish Primary Principals Network states that such measures are introduced due to inadequate space for pupils to run freely (Marron, 2008).

Conclusion

Quality early learning experiences and the acquisition of FMS are of crucial importance to continuing participation in physical activities for the majority of children and adolescents. According to Côté *et al.*, (2003; 2009), children should experience a sampling phase where there is exposure and participation in a wide range of activities through deliberate play. Quality early learning experiences develop not only physical competencies but, crucially, perceptions of competence that underlie the motivation that is imperative to continuing participation. Findings show these perceptions are well established at a key stage (11-14 years) when children undergo both biological and educational transitions. The literature states that access to a range of activities and specialist teaching at the beginning of secondary school for most children may come too late to impact their competencies, perceptions and motivation. Moreover, educationalists are critical of the content and forms of delivery of current primary and secondary school programmes as being ineffective in transferring knowledge useful in adult life. Resources need to be concentrated on those children at primary level if there is a realistic chance to improve participation levels that may form the foundation base for lifelong participation.

Recommendations have called for future studies to help explain why PA declines with age amongst young people and why girls are less active than boys. Research shows that social class, disability and indeed gender, are key barriers to the development of physical competence perceptions and are markedly underrepresented in community based sports clubs. Mixed gender PE has the potential to accentuate social and cultural practices and discourses relating to gender difference. The challenges of mixed gender PE remain, and physical educators seeking to transform mixed gender lessons face a range of institutional and social constraints (McCaughtry, 2006). The ongoing challenge of removing the forms of sporting embodiment privileged in PE from the stranglehold of masculinity and the difficulty of discussing these issues without re-inscribing binary categorisations continue (Hills & Croston, 2012). Discourses of gender are linked with discourses around competition, ability, physicality and hetero-normativity and unpacking these discourses are crucial to efforts to undo gender (Hills & Croston, 2012). There is a tendency to explain attitudes and behaviour in PE through the lens of gender and can conceal the ways that these other discourses have become embedded within PE and may inhibit participatory and inclusive values and practices. Practices that support inclusion, allowing girls and boys a chance to work together on equal terms minimise gender difference, encourage teamwork, and allows reflecting on and observing gendering inclusive behaviours that facilitate social change (Thorne, 1993).

Recent decades have witnessed changing social and environmental contexts that have both positively and negatively affected children's prospects for outdoor play and the subject of physical education in schools. The combination of decreased spaces for physical play and education in schools and changing attitudes towards the risk involved in certain physical activities have resulted in changes to the quality of children's outdoor play and physical education experiences. There is now recognition of the negative impact that this can have on children's optimal growth and development and a growing defence for the promotion of healthy-risk taking behaviours in educational settings (Karsten & van Vliet, 2006; Tranter & Malone, 2005) that are stimulating, explorative and challenging allowing children the possibilities to develop and master abilities and skills. While safety issues need to be addressed, the ultimate aim for parents and teachers is to provide creative, challenging, and exciting environments while simultaneously reducing the risk of serious injury.

Greenfield (2003) believes that schools are well positioned to provide children with positive risk taking opportunities that are not available to them in other contexts. An environment free from dangers is necessary to ensure that children can satisfy their natural curiosity, desire for challenge, novelty, and the ability to take risks without compromising their safety. This does not mean removing all risks but instead means while ensuring appropriate supervision, finding a balance between those activities that foster learning and those activities that can lead to injury (Little & Wyver, 2006; Munoz, 2009). Current safety requirements operating within school contexts rely on passive strategies aimed at making the environment safer, independent of the behaviour of those using it (Little, 2006; Munoz, 2009).

2.2 Physical Activity and School Interventions

According to Naylor & McKay (2009), investment in resources to encourage, develop, and maintain an interest in physical activity is imperative if there is any chance of positive behaviours tracking through various life stages. Shilton *et al.*, (2007) state a recent shift in addressing the issue of physical inactivity, termed ‘an ecological’ approach, one which acknowledges the environment in which an adult or child lives, learns, plays and works in having a significant influence on their behaviour (Kumanyika *et al.*, 2003). Advocates of physical education, health professionals, and researchers have identified the school as a key site for such action (St. Ledger *et al.*, 2007; Pate *et al.*, 2006). The rising number of school-based interventions maybe explained by three main reasons: easy accessibility to children and adolescents, the large amount of time students spend at school and the central role of health in the PE curriculum (Ribeiro *et al.*, 2010).

2.2.1 Schools: A Setting for Action on Physical Activity?

Health promotion is described as ‘a process indicating a means to an end rather than an outcome in its own right and is actively directed towards enabling people to take action’ (Nutbeam, 1998; p.28). As a result, health promotion is an action that is not imposed upon people but rather done with the assistance and involvement of people on an individual and/or group level (Nutbeam, 1998). According to Nutbeam (1998), the purpose of health promoting schools is to strengthen abilities and skills of individuals, groups and communities which will allow them to take action, have the capacity to act collectively and to exert control over the

determinants of their own health. By doing so, this leads to the empowerment of individuals and communities which are positive outcomes (Nutbeam, 1998).

In 1991, the European Network for Health Promoting Schools, (ENAPS) was established with its principles rooted in the Ottawa charter. *The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* (WHO, 1986) provides a framework whereby the emerging settings of schools, worksites and cities could become vehicles through which better health could be put into practice. Schools have moved closer to their communities, and strengthened the teaching of life skills through the taught curriculum (Kickbusch, 1989; Baric, 1993; Barnekow-Rasmussen & Rivett, 2000). An evaluation of the ENAPS was published in 1999 and carried out in the then 15 EU member countries providing compelling evidence that the ENAPS works at international, national and school levels. Data from this research also indicates that the concept of health promoting schools (HPS) is recognised as being the most effective way of planning, implementing and sustaining health education in the curriculum and keeping health on the agenda (Barnekow-Rasmussen & Rivett, 2000).

2.2.2 The Development of the Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools (INHPS)

Ireland joined the European Network of Health Promoting Schools in 1992 and the guiding principle for the INHPS is accepted as:

.....a health promoting school aims at achieving healthy lifestyles for the total school population by developing supportive environments conducive to the promotion of health. It offers opportunities for, and requires commitment to, the provision of a safe and health-enhancing social and physical environment. (Lahiff, 2000 p.1)

At this stage, the three main areas to be addressed were the school environment, health education programmes and the inclusion of parents and community in the life of the school. Better structured and resourced health education programmes were introduced which were within physical environments and focused on varying activities from painting and decorating to establishing and implementing anti-bullying policies and procedures (Lahiff, 2000). Parents have also become more integrated into school life through training and support programmes and ‘open door’ policies (Lahiff, 2000; Nic Gabhainn & Kelleher, 2000). According to Lahiff (2000) ‘it had become apparent that the process by which a school

became more health promoting was a complex one, while schools reported progress, they were also having difficulty with the bigger picture of the health promoting school concept' (p.122). In February 1999, a national conference, "*Learning from the Irish Network of Health Promoting Schools*" was organised to share the experiences of six years with a wider audience (WHO, 1993). The experience of the INHPS highlighted the importance of key people in implementing the health-promoting school concept. The key roles proved to be:

- The School Principal
- The HPS coordinator
- Parents
- Pupils.

In September 1999 the new Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999) developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was introduced by the Department of Education and Science (DES). This included curricular guidelines for social, personal and health education to be delivered cross-curricular and rooted in a stand-alone timetable slot (Lahiff, 2000).

2.2.3 Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

The Education Act (1998) states:

A recognised school shall promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

According to Lahiff (2000), the origins of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in Ireland can be traced back to the pastoral care system of the mid 1970's. This system became more structured with such programme initiatives, for example *Life Skills for Health* (1979), *On My Own Two Feet* (1991) and *Relationships and Sexuality Education*, (1995) (Lahiff, 2000). The introduction of the SPHE programme provides structure, coherence and formality to what was until then, an informal practice that is now part of the formal teaching curriculum

(Lahiff, 2000). The SPHE programme challenges more instructive methods of teaching, traditional classroom management and assessment and requires individual commitment by teachers to facilitate the process; indeed, “it challenges the traditional concept of the teacher as the ‘source of all knowledge’” (DES, 2004, p. 4; INTO, 2012). In September 2000, the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the Department of Health and Children (DoHC), together with regional health boards (now HSE) in partnership developed a support structure for the SPHE programme (Department of Health & Children, 2000).

The SPHE Support Services was set up to assist schools and teachers to implement the new curriculum (Department of Health and Children, 2000). SPHE aims to create a whole school approach to health and education. “A health promoting school; promotes the health and well-being of the whole community” (Health Promoting Schools Working Group, 2004, p.3). SPHE allows opportunities to foster the personal development, health, and well-being, to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society (SPHE, Primary School Curriculum, 1999). SPHE is a stand-alone subject and is required to be taught for 30 minutes per week. An INTO Education Committee survey found that the vast majority of respondents (96%) see SPHE as being very important or somewhat important. According to the NCCA in order for SPHE to be effective, it should be implemented in a combination of ways, through:

- the context of a positive school climate and atmosphere
- discrete time
- integrated learning

The NCCA SPHE curriculum online website states: The curriculum is structured in such a way as to treat the social, personal and health dimensions of the child's life in an integrated manner. It provides for the development of a broad range of values, attitudes, skills and understanding relevant to the child's health and wellbeing, to other people, and to the society in which he/she lives. This foundation will inform the child's actions, behaviour and decisions in the many situations that he/she may encounter and have to deal with as part of everyday

life and living. The SPHE curriculum is divided into three strands and some strand units or topic areas. These include: Myself, Myself and others, Myself and the wider world

The SPHE curriculum along with the ten other subjects is mandatory in all schools. Circular 0022/2010 issued by the DES exclusively refers to the SPHE curriculum and reiterates the importance of teaching the curriculum in its entirety. It states

School management, principals and teachers have a duty to provide the best quality and most appropriate social, personal and health education for their pupils. They also have a duty to protect pupils in their care at all times from any potentially harmful, inappropriate or misguided resources, interventions or programmes (Circular, 22/2010, p.1)

The SPHE curriculum is often referred to as the “hidden curriculum” as many aspects of it are addressed through the ethos of the school and through the day-to-day interactions between pupils and teachers. It is how we “walk the walk” rather than “talk the talk” (INTO, 2011). Pupils notice internal staff relationships in a school, they respond to the behaviour that is modelled to them by the adults they are exposed to each day. Teachers must be conscious of modelling the behaviour they are hoping to see the children use. Respecting each child’s opinion and valuing their contribution to class discussions send a message to children that they matter and that this is how they should treat others (INTO, 2011). A number of support programmes have been developed to support schools and assist teachers in implementing the SPHE curriculum. These have been prepared by local health boards, National Road Safety Authority, An Bord Bia etc. Such programmes deal with child safety physically or emotionally, or both include The Stay Safe Programme, Bí Folláin, Walk Tall (INTO, 2011).

Schools need to be pro-active in giving children the skills to prevent abuse happening in the first place. Both these programmes give children the language and skills to protect themselves in potentially dangerous situations. Some resources developed to aid teachers to implement the SPHE curriculum include:

- Be Safe Be Web wise- safety on the internet
- Aqua Attack – water safety resources and activities from IWS
- Sneeze Safe – online interactive games and activities on the correct usage of tissues to prevent the spread of germs
- Safety Centre – Personal safety worksheets – a series of printable worksheets based on safety in a number of different everyday situations
- Food Dudes – Healthy Eating Programme promoted by An Bord Bia
- Development Education Ireland – dealing with the topics of human rights justice, equality and inequality, race, poverty, exclusion, disadvantage, discrimination and many other issues; Kid’s Health; Cool Food Planet – healthy eating (INTO, 2011).

The principal learning and teaching approach recommended for SPHE is active learning. Some active learning strategies espoused in the SPHE curriculum include:

- drama activities
- co-operative games
- pictures, photographs and visual images
- discussion
- written activities
- the media and information and communication technologies
- looking at children’s work (INTO, 2011).

However, efforts to integrate SPHE more closely with the development of the health promoting school process have been hindered by a lack of clarity on the issues involved (Burtenshaw, 2003; Fullan, 2001). The term ‘healthy schools’ is frequently used interchangeably with health-promoting, nevertheless, the principles and processes involved in the health promoting school movement have substantially informed the development and operation of SPHE within Irish schools (Lahiff, 2000).

2.2.4 Are School-Based Interventions Effective?

Promotion of an active lifestyle from a young age is demonstrated in the attempts of government agencies, communities, and scientists to implement suitable physical activity programs (Demetriou & Höner, 2012). The school setting has received particular attention in the discipline of health promotion and numerous interventions have been implemented as a result (Naylor & McKay, 2009; Stratton *et al.*, 2008). The increased number of school-based interventions is due to easy accessibility to children and adolescents, the amount of time students spend at school, and the fundamental role of health in the PE curriculum (Ribeiro *et al.*, 2010; Yetter, 2009). School-based health interventions have varied promoting in ranging from programs that prevent smoking, alcohol consumption and excessive weight (Harris *et al.*, 2009; Nabors *et al.*, 2007; Lemstra *et al.*, 2010). Programs combating inactive lifestyles by promoting PA have consisted of a physical only component (e.g. increased PE/FMS); Bush *et al.*, 2010; McKenzie *et al.*, 2004; Slawta & DeNeui, 2010; Zask *et al.*, 2012) a cognitive only component (e.g. transfer of knowledge; Ezendam *et al.*, 2007) and programs incorporating both components (Hollar, Lombardo *et al.*, 2010; Slootmaker, Chinapaw, *et al.*, 2010).

There have been several meta-analyses and systematic reviews on selected outcome variables or specific populations (Standiford & Brown, 2009; De Meester, van Lenthe *et al.*, (2009). In relation to children, van Sluijjs *et al.*, (2007) reviewed evidence on the effectiveness of interventions designed to increase PA in children and found there was no overall effect on children's cognitive and school environment interventions and inclusive evidence in relation to multi-component interventions. In relation to adolescents, the same review found educational and environmental interventions had no overall effect and were inconclusive respectively while multi-component interventions showed strong evidence of effectiveness. Harris *et al.* (2009) conducted a systematic review of studies up to 2008, examining the effects of school-based physical activity interventions on children's BMI and found school-based physical activity interventions do not improve BMI, although they have other beneficial health effects. In conclusion, current population-based policies that mandate increased physical activity in schools are unlikely to have a significant effect on the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity. Doddins *et al.*, (2009) reviewed evidence of the effectiveness of school-based interventions in promoting physical activity and fitness in

children and adolescents (aged 6-18) and found some evidence of positive effects on lifestyle behaviours and physical health status measures and recommended ongoing PA promotion in schools.

Kriemler *et al.*,’s (2011) review show strong evidence for the positive effect of school-based interventions on PA in children and adolescents. These conclusions are based on four systematic reviews published after 2006 of studies focusing on PA promotion in school and other settings, and on a new systematic review of trials published between January 2007 and December 2010. The review of the more recent publications shows that PA promotion in the school setting not only leads to an increase in school-based PA, but is also associated with an increase in out-of-school, and even more importantly, in overall PA. There is some evidence that school-based interventions can have positive effects on aerobic fitness, although this evidence is weaker. Since efficacy of school-based PA promotion is globally evident, the time is ripe to look at long-term effects and to figure out effective implementation strategies.

Demetriou & Höner (2012) reviewed the effectiveness of school-based interventions with a physical activity component, measuring changes in psychological determinants, physical activity and health outcomes. The majority of the studies examining motor performance, physical activity, and knowledge of physical activity achieved significant results. Significant effects on self-concept and attitudes were also found but to a smaller extent. Intervention effects were influenced by students’ age, intervention type, and frequency of the interventions and self-efficacy was found to mediate the relationship between the program and the students’ physical activity. Further research is needed to clarify the mediator effects of psychological variables on physical activity and health and to increase our knowledge about the mechanisms that underlie behavioural change.

Systematic reviews/meta-analysis of the efficacy of interventions referring to organised physical activity, improving motor development in typical and non-typical developing children concluded that the majority of studies are successful in significantly improving motor skill development and are therefore an important means to promote lifelong PA (Logan *et al.*, 2012; Morgan *et al.*, 2013; Rietmuller *et al.*, 2009) However, it remains uncertain from these studies which intervention approach results in the most improvement in which

FMS, and at which point a critical amount of instruction is reached (Logan *et al.*, 2012; Morgan *et al.*, 2013; Rietmuller *et al.*, 2009). This might be due to the fact that many studies did not describe their intervention approach in adequate detail (Logan *et al.*, 2012; Morgan *et al.*, 2013; Rietmuller *et al.*, 2009).

Holfelder & Schott (2013) provide an overview of research elucidating the relationship between FMS and PA in children and adolescents and concluded that the results suggest that a cause/effect relationship between FMS and PA is alleged, but has not been demonstrated yet. The identification of a causal relationship appears imperative to ensure feasibility of practical implementation and could provide supports for decision making for coaches, teachers and therapists' decision guidance to create training, lessons and therapy adequate to the target group.

Lai *et al.*, (2014) systematic review set out to determine whether typically developing children and adolescents (aged 3-18) who have participated in school-based interventions and have sustained outcomes in PA, fitness and/or FMS. Conclusions draw on the likelihood that PA is a sustainable outcome for interventions in children and adolescents, and there is sufficient evidence that intervention of longer than one year and interventions that incorporate a theoretical model are effective in producing this sustained impact. It therefore seems probable that FMS are a sustainable outcome in children/adolescents; however, this finding should be used with caution given the lack of studies and the risk of bias assessment. Greater research is needed to assess the sustainability of fitness interventions as this review only included a few studies that addressed fitness and only one study found a sustained impact.

Conclusion

The results of these indicative reviews show that they are a valuable strategy to understanding the positive effects of an active lifestyle (Holfelder & Schott, 2014). However, these reviews highlight that other factors such as perceived skill-proficiency, gender, family, socio-economic status and the provision of motor affordances in the home should be considered in future studies because a cause and effect relationship has not been established as of yet

(Barnett *et al.*, 2011; Kambas *et al.*, 2012; Zack *et al.*, 2012). Nevertheless, the studies included in these reviews confirm that a high level of FMS competency is certainly related to an increase of PA and vice-versa.

While a number of studies reported positive findings for a sustained impact on PA, fitness, and FMS, a key challenge is ensuring the adoption of programs within the school setting for the long term, which is evidenced by the lack of follow-up studies assessing these outcomes (Lai *et al.*, 2014). Strategies to ensure promising interventions are translated and sustained without researcher support should be considered however, schools face considerable barriers to delivering quality PA programs (Morgan & Hansen, 2007; 2008). Many countries employ classroom teachers to deliver PE in primary schools, who lack the competence and confidence to deliver programs, despite believing in the benefits of PA and PE (Morgan & Hansen, 2008; Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). Given the primary school years are considered an optimal time to develop FMS are a critical period for PA behaviors and many studies do not conduct post-intervention follow-ups, training, support, and resources may need to be prioritised in the post-intervention phase so interventions are implemented as intended and benefits are consequently sustained and assessed (Gallahue & Ozmun, 2006; Pate *et al.*, 2002; Nader *et al.*, 2008).

Overall, it is important to understand whether PA, fitness, and FMS interventions can have sustained effects, not only on their respective attributes, but also in promoting sustained trajectories of these factors across childhood, adolescence, and even into adulthood. Stodden *et al.*, (2009) poses the question, what is it about interventions that may lead to these sustained effects? and suggests that FMS competence could be a key determinant of PA behavior across time and the proposed synergistic relationships among FMS, PA, and fitness may strengthen over time. Further investigation of the causal mechanisms relating to the development of these factors, their influence on maintenance effects across time and also how they may impact obesity which is a major health issue associated with each of these factors is required (Rodrigues *et al.*, 2013; D'Hondt *et al.*, 2013; Martins *et al.*, 2013).

2.3 Primary Education in Ireland

The Revised Primary Curriculum reaffirmed Physical Education as a subject in its own right.

The P.E. curriculum states:

Through a diverse range of experiences providing regular, challenging physical activity, the balanced and harmonious development and general well-being of the child is fostered (P.E. Curriculum, 1999, p.2).

State-funded education (primary & secondary) in Ireland is free to all pupils and attendance is compulsory between the ages of six to sixteen. Children are permitted to attend primary school after their fourth birthday but legally are not obliged to attend until they are six years old (Coulter, 2012). Primary school education is divided into eight year groups starting from junior infants to sixth class; catering for ages four to twelve years. Educational Administration of the Irish Education system was centralised in the Department of Education and Science (DES) until 2010 before being renamed the Department of Education and Skills (DES). In the Republic of Ireland, there are 3,286 national schools, 536,317 primary school pupils and 21,147 teachers, including special schools (academic year 2013-2014) (DES, 2014).

The current Primary School Curriculum was launched in 1999 built on previous curricula, specifically the 1971 *Curaclann na Bunscoile* (Curriculum of the Primary School). It encompasses the philosophical thirst and reflecting the goals and aspirations of the National Convention on Education (1994), the white paper on Education (1995) and the Education act (1998) as well as incorporating current educational thinking and pedagogical best-practices (Duffy, 1997; Coulter, 2012). The primary aims of the National school education system are:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his/her potential as a unique individual;
- To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and cooperating with others and so contribute to the good of society;
- To prepare the child for the continuum of learning (Government of Ireland, 1999a)

The responsibility of devising the primary school curriculum as well as its on-going development and publication of curricula, lies with National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA). To support the Primary School Curriculum a range of ‘Teacher Guidelines’ for each primary school subject were devised along with consultation with pivotal stakeholders in order to support the implementation of the Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland 1999a). The purpose of the Primary School Curriculum is to nurture children in all aspects of their education – spiritually, morally, cognitively, emotionally, imaginatively, aesthetically, socially and physically. The curriculum is divided into seven key disciplines; Language (Irish & English), Mathematics, Social, Environment and Scientific Education (History, Geography and Science), Arts Education (Visual Arts, Music and Drama), Physical Education, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and religion (depending on the denomination of the school).

2.3.1 Past and Present: Physical Education Reform in Ireland

The use of the adjective ‘piecemeal’ best describes the provision of PE in Irish primary schools. As a subject, it has developed and progressed slowly through the last century due to a plethora of issues, obstacles and justifications. Prior to the foundation of the Irish state, PE was being delivered in almost all primary schools to a satisfactory level (Coolahan, 1981). *The Dale Report* highlights the significant increase in popularity of the number of schools delivering some form of drill as part of the curriculum (Duffy, 1997). The PE syllabus at the time was delivered on a weekly basis and focused primarily on regimented instruction: exercises, marching and physical drill. However, after the foundation of the Irish state in 1921, its status changed, no longer making it a compulsory subject in primary schools. This was due to the recommendation for a reduction in the number of subjects taught in primary schools at the National Programme Conference in 1926 in favour of greater emphasis on Irish culture and language being taught in schools (Duffy, 1997). Physical education was relegated; no longer deemed a compulsory subject of the primary curriculum.

2.3.2 Curraclann na Bunscolie 1971

The publication of the 1971 *Primary Curriculum* saw a development away from more traditional forms of PE ‘drills’ or training in favour of a more child-centred subject. This was a critical aspect in the thinking behind the 1971 curriculum and underpinned learning in all

subject areas (Duffy, 1997). The 1971 *Primary School Curriculum* in relation to PE focused on areas of movement, games and athletics with movement sub-divided into educational gymnastics and dance sections (Duffy, 1997; INTO, 2007). The curriculum aims were ‘to develop a suitable range of motor skills, to help him to adapt himself to his immediate environment and to cultivate desirable social attitudes’ (Government of Ireland, 1971, p.289).

The publication of the 1971 Primary School Curriculum finally gave formal recognition to physical education as a subject within the primary school curriculum. What was imperative and significant about this curriculum was that it underlined ‘that to deny a pupil the opportunity of expressing himself in movement and general PA is to neglect an essential aspect of growth in his personality and character’ (Government of Ireland, 1971, p.298). Coulter (2012) believes that this curriculum is in some respects forward thinking and is further supported and elaborated in UNESCO’s International Charter of Physical Education and Sport,

Every human being has the fundamental right to access to Physical Education and Sport, which was essential for the full development of his personality. The freedom to develop physical, intellectual and moral powers through physical education and sport must be guaranteed both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life (1978, Article 1.1, p.8).

However, the 1971 *Primary School Curriculum* publication lacked long-term investment in teacher in-service training, and although curriculum recommendations stated the need for improvements in PE facilities in primary schools, they materialised in a rather piecemeal manner (INTO, 2007). This led to anxiety and confusion about how best to deliver the PE curriculum inevitably leading to teachers playing to their strengths, resulting in the games strand becoming the most popular strand delivered (Duffy, 1997). The Report of the Review Body on the Primary Curriculum (1990) stated that inspectors regarded the syllabus as ‘adequate’ while teachers regarded the PE curriculum ‘unrealistic’ and demanding excessive expertise (Duffy, 1997). The report recommended that the time allocation for physical education in third level institutions be-increased in order for newly qualified teachers to gain confidence in teaching PE. According to Coulter (2012), past-educational reforms were developed not with teachers in mind in relation to programme design, nor taking into consideration, teachers’ CPD in the implementation process. Moreover, CPD opportunities

had not become part of or embedded in curricular reform and therefore struggled to be successful (Coulter, 2012). Educational reforms were met with resentment by teachers as they felt that they were imposed upon by ‘top down initiatives’ feeling neither supported or ‘having a voice’ in relation to the implementation of curricular changes (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

2.3.3 The Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999) & Physical Education

With the introduction of a new Irish Primary Curriculum, PE was one of a number of subjects in which a new curriculum was devised. The previous PE curriculum had been in place since 1971 and included what was then termed health education. This term ‘Health Education’ had since become a subject in its own right within the curriculum and is known as Social, Personal and Health Promotion (SHPE). Primary school PE is deemed an integral part of the entire primary education machine or process and removal or absence of it would leave a child incomplete (Government of Ireland, 1999a). According to Curriculum for Physical Education (Government of Ireland, 1999b) ‘PE is a process which focuses on children learning through the medium of movement and contributes to the overall development by helping them lead full, active healthy lives’ (p.2). The Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b) further states that ‘play in PE contributes to the child learning to become an effective mover, to think, to interact socially with others and to express feelings’ (Government of Ireland, 1999b, p 2).

There have been major initiatives for individuals to establish physically active habits from a young age, as participation in exercise is associated with a reduced risk of a number of chronic diseases and improved psychological health (McGuinness & Shelly, 1995; Woods *et al.*, 2007; Woods *et al.*, 2010). By the time a child reaches the end of the primary education cycle, a significant proportion of a school pupil’s mental and physical potential has already been formed. For children that have not become proficient in a variety of physical skills, they could be at a disadvantage throughout their life therefore, schools has a pivotal role to play (Giblin *et al.*, 2014).

Physical education is a unique subject due to the focus on the body and physical experiences, providing opportunities to acquire skills such as developing initiative, tolerance, patience, safety, communication, planning, enjoyment of participation and satisfaction from success (Government of Ireland, 1999b). A number of social skills can be learnt and developed through PE including; team work, coping with success and failure, organisational skills, dealing with responsibility, co-operative play and competition (Government of Ireland, 1999b). The Primary Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b) aims ‘through a diverse range of experiences providing regular, challenging PA, the balanced and harmonious development and general well-being on the child is fostered’(p.2). The programme for the subject is outlined in the Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b). The subject content is divided into six individual strands:

- Athletics
- Aquatics
- Dance
- Games
- Gymnastics
- Outdoor and Adventure Activities

The revised 1999 PE curriculum provides a variety of suggestions in relation to teaching methodologies, approaches and guidelines on classroom organisation, planning, and subject assessment. It outlines and advises teachers on approaches to take in relation to gender, competition, extra-curricular activities; children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and sport. From an Irish perspective, the majority of children are taught PE through their class teacher. The curriculum is designed with the class teacher in mind and to the fore, stating ‘in order to implement the programme the teacher does not need to be a specialist in the teaching of PE’ (Government of Ireland, 1999c, p.24).

2.3.4 Primary Physical Education: Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

Initial Teacher Education ITE is the first stage of professional learning for prospective teachers and is regarded as the building blocks stage of a teacher’s career, where firm foundations of life-long development and learning are laid (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). It is surprising then, to find within the current ITE literature from an Irish perspective that this stage of teacher learning and development is at fault for primary school teachers’ perceived lack of knowledge and experience. From an Irish perspective, studies have shown

that initial teacher training ITE to be problematic, a source of difficulty for trainee teachers relating to perceived competency especially in teaching PE (McGuinness & Shelly, 1995; Fahey *et al.*, 2005; Cosgrave, 2006; Deenihan, 2007; Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2007).

The allocation of hours to PE in teacher training colleges has increased from on average over 25 hours over a three-year academic period (Deenihan, 1990) to 48 hours over a three-year academic period in 2000 (College of Physical Education Consortium, 2009; Coulter, 2012). On average and depending on the institution, students will have received between 30-50 hours of PE instruction as part of their initial teacher training education (ITE). This allocation of time to PE instruction seems scant when compared to on average, 1200 hours of tutoring devoted to physical education specialists at secondary level (Murphy, 2007).

Until recently, students studying a three-year undergraduate course in education also chose an academic subject such as music, mathematics or bio-science as part of their degree course but no provision or opportunity has been made for students to undertake PE as a specialised academic subject (Coulter, 2012). This has since changed with those students entering third level (teaching) institutions for the academic year 2013-2014 as PE has now been classified as an academic subject allowing a certain degree of specialisation in this subject (Murphy & O'leary, 2012). Siedentop (2002) and Tinning (2002) both make reference to the literature in teacher education, highlighting the strong emphasis on academic preparation with subject content being of most interest to PE teacher education. From a global perspective, time allocation provided for ITE-PE courses is a perceived barrier to acquiring and practicing adequate content knowledge.

2.3.5 Teaching Methodologies in Physical Education

Teaching methods and approaches to delivering PE have changed considerably not just from an Irish perspective but globally as well (Coulter, 2012). From its early beginnings, the purpose of PE was to instill obedience and discipline in children with instruction and drills deemed rigid, repetitive and highly structured (Coolahan, 1981; Duffy, 1997). According to

Lambirth & Bailey (2000), such strict, excessive teaching methodologies instill fear and therefore negative attitudes towards physical education.

With the introduction of the *Curaclann na Bunscolie* (Government of Ireland, 1971), physical drills for whole class instruction were deemed ineffective and outdated and eventually discarded in favour of an approach which allowed pupils the time and space to develop according to their own physical abilities. First introduced by Mosston (1966) and modified again (Mosston & Ashworth, 1994), a framework for an alternative to teaching PE including a broad range of teaching styles proved to increase student achievement (Garber, 2001). According to the *Physical Education Curriculum – Teacher Guidelines* (Government of Ireland, 1999c), one of the pivotal aspects of successful delivery of PE is through utilising a broad range of approaches and methodologies. The 1999 curriculum physical education acknowledges the importance of a variety of approaches and methodologies and indicates that the direct teaching approach and the guided-discovery approach best serve the delivery of PE. It further states that schools, teachers and classes are individualistic in nature with certain methods and approaches favouring others in order to suit the needs of the learner (Government of Ireland, 1999c)

This direct teaching model is one where the teacher makes the majority of the decisions concerning lesson content and the school pupils responding to instructions. MacFayden (2000) believes that this approach is effective as children are adept at mirroring what they see from their teacher and therefore is guaranteed that correct methods are used and are effective in controlling large classes (MacFayden, 2000; Pickup, 2005). This approach is also supported to ensure that safety measures are in place by providing clear instructions when pupils use apparatus and equipment (Government of Ireland, 1999c; MacFayden, 2000). However, this direct teaching model seems at odds with the nature of development in children and their need for exploration through physical activities. Siedentop & Tannehill (2000) are critical of this model because many PE teachers spend a significant amount of time instructing, which results in pupils listening and waiting rather than being active. This approach is dominated by instruction, one that is teacher centred with little room for teacher-pupil interaction; furthermore, pupils have little, if any, control and independence over their learning and cognitive development (Coulter, 2012).

The guided-discovery approach incorporates both the direct teaching approach and the exploratory approach which involves the teacher designing a series of questions that will lead to a number of possible and appropriate answers and will conclude with the discovery of a particular concept (Government of Ireland, 1999a). Wetton (1988) comments that with this approach, it appears that pupils discover and learn the skills independently; however, the teacher identifies the skills beforehand and guides the pupils through the activity. The role of the teacher is to mold, shape and facilitate experiences of movement resulting in greater versatility, increased skillfulness and clarity of content and outcome (Davies, 2003). The Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b) recommends this approach at primary level to encourage exploration of movement through informal play experiences and in doing so allows school pupils to be creative, fostering greater decision making and allowing them to work at their own level (Graham, 2008). Both approaches require teachers to be familiar with both the content and the pedagogical content knowledge to ensure learning experiences of the child are maximised (Coulter, 2012).

2.3.6 Implementation of the Physical Education Curriculum

The revised *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* emphasises the need for primary schools to introduce a broader-based curriculum allowing pupils to reflect their abilities, promote gender equity and provide an opportunity for pupils to participate in all strands of the curriculum. This is to be achieved through the availability of resources within the school environment (INTO, 2007). The revised curriculum continues to highlight that the class teacher is the most suitable person to teach the PE curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b; INTO, 2007). There have been a number of studies highlighting the barriers that teachers face in implementing the physical education curriculum to a professional high standard.

Coulter (2012) describes a number of studies on PE and PE-CPD provision that provide a valuable insight to the Irish primary school teachers and yet highlights that these studies are cross-sectional studies with few providing longitudinal or in-depth studies and lacking valid or reliable instruments for data collection. A study by Drewett (2006) indicates that few teachers are implementing the revised PE curriculum in one particular county although, it must be borne in mind that this survey was carried out before teachers received in-service training in relation to the revised curriculum. According to INTO (2008) Curriculum Survey,

93% of respondents stated that they teach PE to their classes (INTO, 2008). In 2005, the delivery of the six strands of the PE curriculum is available to pupils in varying degrees (INTO, 2008). All participants state that all strands are, to different degrees available to pupils in their school while 30% state that gymnastics and aquatics are seldom or never delivered (INTO, 2008). The following sections reveal particularly from an Irish context which strands are delivered to a greater or lesser extent and the rationale behind such trends.

2.3.7 Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching of Physical Education

2.3.8 Teaching Time

For effective teaching to be delivered, time devoted to planning and reflection is crucial to ensure that the class time is used efficiently. The 1971 curriculum published no guidelines on the recommended amount of time allocated to the teaching of PE. McGuinness & Shelly (1995) highlight the suggestions that the NCCA Committee for Physical Education and Health Education recommend that not less than 10% of formal teaching time be allocated to PE, which should make an important contribution towards promoting the physical well-being of the primary school pupils. The current curriculum guidelines recommend, but do not require, 60 minutes of PE per week (Government of Ireland, 1999a). A particular feature of the new primary school curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a) is a two-hour discretionary period weekly to allow the school and teacher flexibility to accommodate school and class needs. Fahey *et al.*, (2005) express concern that the reality of the delivery of PE in schools is less impressive and falling widely short of recommended standards.

The Cork based report *Our Children, their Future, Why Weight?* (2005) identifies that in many cases, pupils only receive 40 minutes of PE classes per week. This is compared to Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries where it is reported, children receive three and a half hours a week while in New Zealand, PE is given recognition where students receive five one hour classes per week (Murray & Millar, 2005). Cosgrave (2006) reports that 85% of infants receive PE twice a week and lasts 21-30 minutes and 68% of teachers deliver PE without assistance while 32% deliver one lesson a week while a coach or specialist teacher teach a second lesson. Murphy (2007) reports that 50% of teachers teach PE for more than 60 minutes per week, 42% report delivering PE between 46-60 mins, while 46% report teaching PE for 31-45 mins and 12% indicate teaching less than thirty minutes. The *Proceeding from*

the Third Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sports Forum (2008) find that almost a quarter of participants (23%) interviewed cite time constraints facing teachers in the delivery of PE in primary schools. Recent research from the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity (CSPPA) study show that on average, primary school children in Ireland receive 46 minutes of PE weekly (Woods *et al.*, 2010).

From a European perspective, the average weekly timetable allocated to PE in primary schools across the EU is 109 minutes (range of 30-240 min) with most primary schools providing between 60 and 90 minutes (Hardman, 2007). This study also indicates that there is a perception that the amount of time allocated to PE has been decreasing since 1999 and concludes a steady-erosion in time allocation given to PE in recent years (Hardman, 2007). In theory, over 90% of countries, PE has equal status as other subjects; however, in practice its actual status is perceived to be lower in 34% of countries including Ireland (Hardman, 2007; p. 9)

More recently, Ireland's *Report Card on Physical Activity and in Children & Youth* (2014) shows that recommended levels of PE continue to be lower than global and European averages and the prevalence of meeting those recommendations is even lower (Sport Northern Ireland, 2009; European Commission, 2013). Possible differences by type and size of school are evident with children in mixed sex schools reporting less PE than those in single sex schools and with PE time decreasing as enrollment numbers increase (Woods *et al.*, 2010).

2.3.9 Who Teaches Physical Education?

The content and delivery of PE programmes in schools varies, which can have implications for children's experience of this subject. Some teachers suggest that many children's primary PE experiences inadequately prepared them for PE in the later years (MacPhail & Halbert, 2005). A dilemma that some believe contributes to the shortcomings of primary school PE are that lessons are taught by the classroom teacher rather than a PE specialist (Hardman & Marshall, 2000; MacPhail & Halbert, 2005). The Council of Europe (1985) states that 'the quality of PE in primary schools depends upon the quality of the class teacher' (p.5) one that

is competent and imaginative in their delivery. *The Primary School Curriculum (1999)* states that the generalist primary school teacher is best placed to deliver PE in school, a view supported by Colleges of Education who maintain it would send the wrong message to children if a class teacher is unable to take a PE class and has to employ a specialist teacher, tutor or coach (INTO, 2007). This view is supported by Coulter *et al.* (2009), who believes the generalist teacher is best placed to teach the child-centred, integrated curriculum in primary schools, and hence, is best placed to teach PE as one element of that curriculum'. The separation of PE from the rest of the curriculum by the introduction of such specialist teachers etc. detracts and fragments the integrated curriculum (INTO, 2007). However, such beliefs stand in contrast to many in the PE community who make recommendations to policy-makers to increase the number of primary PE specialist teachers (e.g. Central Council for Physical Recreation, 2004; Government of Ireland, 2005).

According to Broderick & Shiel (2000), 55.3% of PE time is dominated by games and the delivery of this subject lies in teachers' own ability and confidence to deliver this strand with 70% of participants feeling competent teaching the games strand. When asked about their initial PE training, most teachers report that the most frequent strand taught in third level teaching institutions is the games strand (McGuinness & Shelly, 1995; Murphy, 2007). *The Proceedings from the Third Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sports Forum* (2008) report that the majority of teachers interviewed (97%) feel confident teaching games, over three quarters of teachers feel confident teaching the athletics, dance and outdoor and adventure activities strands. What is surprising is that 67% feel confident teaching gymnastics and 44% feel confident teaching aquatics, two strands which have been traditionally deemed problematic (INTO, 2007). These findings are positive compared to other Irish studies and would appear to validate the evidence by Holroyd & Harlen (1996), who relate confidence to contemporary issues in PE to knowledge and in-service training of that subject.

According to Drewett (2006), the majority of teachers teach PE to their classes but outside specialist tutors/coaches are also employed, mainly for aquatics, gymnastics and Gaelic football. The INTO survey (INTO, 2008) indicates that 49% of schools employed specialist

teachers for PE during school hours while 20% of schools employed specialist teachers outside school hours. Games coaches have become increasingly popular in recent years with coaching made available to primary schools from various bodies teaching GAA, rugby, soccer, and in some instances Basketball, Tennis, or Badminton skills (INTO, 2007). The success of the GAA coaching scheme is reflected by 71% of respondents in a recent INTO survey availing of the service (INTO, 2008).

At present, there are no specialist physical education teachers who are part of any teaching staff in the majority of primary schools in Ireland. Any PE teachers employed by primary schools on a fulltime basis are those teachers who are trained specifically for second level schools that have distinct developmental differences to the youth they were prepared to teach, and may lack the knowledge to teach a movement oriented, integrated curriculum (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). Another scenario is that primary classroom teachers with a background in sport may be asked to fill the role of specialist PE teacher. While such teachers may be enthusiastic about teaching PE, they often lack the necessary understanding of PE pedagogy needed to teach the subject (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). More recently, a preference for the general class teacher with a specialisation in PE to deliver the curriculum is recommended by a number of studies (Roche, ú Dhrisceoil & Weed, 2009; Coulter *et al.*, 2009; Carney & Howells, 2008; INTO, 2007; Government of Ireland, 1999c).

With little forthcoming in changes in resources allocated to primary PE in many contexts, the focus maybe on efforts to improve how classroom teachers go about teaching PE, and may provide a more feasible avenue for improving primary school PE (Fletcher & Mandigo, 2012). Talbot (2008) states that a ‘good’ teacher has the ability to overcome the lack of facilities in their schools whilst the provision of the state-of-the-art facilities and equipment will not compensate for a poor teacher. Wright (2002) raises the question as to whether PE as a subject is more difficult to teach than other subjects on the curriculum. He argues teachers could deliver the complete PE curriculum if [they] are given sufficient training and time allocation equal resulting in calls for specialist PE teachers becoming redundant (Hardman & Marshall, 2009; Talbot, 2008). Coulter (2012) points out that government policies and the current state of school finances would not allow for specialist teachers to be employed in primary schools. She advocates the importance and availability of CPD opportunities for

generalist primary teachers which would empower primary school teachers by equipping them with the content and pedagogical content knowledge to deliver PE effectively (Coulter, 2012).

2.3.10 Assessment of PE

Hardman (2007) charts the decline and relegation of PE within school curricula on a global scale; many variables are discussed including the issue of PE as a ‘true’ and ‘equal’ subject. According to Hardman (2007) and Ofstead (2002; 2005), PE is not deemed an academic subject due to the lack of formal assessment compared to other subjects. As outlined in the *Primary School Curriculum: Physical Education* (1999), assessment in physical education informs teaching and learning by providing information on what children have learned and how they learn. However, according to Drewett & O’Leary (2006), regarding attitudes and practices in relation to assessment in Irish primary school PE found an overwhelming majority of the participants (97%) in favour of subject assessment. In relation to PE, 63% consider assessment in PE *extremely important/important*, while 50% of participants claim to have read the section on assessment in the PE curriculum. However, 43% *rarely/never* assess physical education and only 7% claim to have a policy statement on what should be assessed in PE (Drewett & O’Leary, 2006).

When identifying reasons as to why teachers do or do not assess PE, *to ensure continuity and progression in PE programme* is the most popular reason given while *informing future teaching and learning, diagnosis of difficulties and determining levels of achievement* ranked relatively highly and *providing information to parents* is the least popular reason given (Drewett & O’Leary, 2006). Just over 25% of participants feel confident in assessing PE in general, in particular, teachers feel confident assessing *Games, Outdoor and Adventure Activities and Athletics* and least confident assessing *Dance, Gymnastics and Aquatics*. Only 25% of participants feel confident in knowing “what” to assess. Only 18% of participants claim to use curriculum profiles always/sometimes and (66%) of respondents use self-assessment strategies while 56% report using peer-assessment strategies (Drewett & O’Leary, 2002). About 20% of participants claim to have a permanent record of assessment in PE, 7% claim to be recording assessment outcomes on a continuous basis. A majority of 68% of

participants state the urgent need for training in assessment of PE (Drewett & O’Leary, 2006).

2.3.11 School Policies

The main purpose of schools is undoubtedly to achieve educational outcomes. Gittelshon *et al.*, (2003) define the school environment as;

“The characteristics that distinguish one school from another and can affect the behavior of people within the school”. The school climate is dynamic, based on the perceptions of its members, and is influenced by a school’s formal and informal organisation, staff, morale and the leadership of the school” (p.98).

The International Union of Health Promotion and Education (2000b; p.111 part 2) states that “schools have an obligation to address health as a foundation for achieving educational goals”. Sleaf *et al.*, (2012) highlight ‘the importance of a ‘valued’ active lifestyle by a school and stress the cooperation of parents, community and school as being imperative in achieving this goal’ (p.38). A “vibrant and inspirational” ethos in relation to PA can be incorporated into the whole school planning process. Transmitting positive “vibes” to children about PA from parents, teaching staff and children talk and act may be effective (Sleaf *et al.*, 2012, p.38). Broderick & Shiel (2000) report that almost 50% of children in their study are taught by teachers who are involved in sports and 30% of school children report their teacher’s involvement in coaching sport after school hours.

All schools follow the revised *Primary School Curriculum* (1999) and procedures set out by the Department of Education and Science (DES). However, this is in some parts theoretical, as schools can differ in their implementation of the curriculum which can have implications for children. School policies in relation to the delivery of PE can be described as ‘individualistic’ as schools within the same town or parish may vary widely on this issue (INTO, 2007). McGuinness & Shelly (1995) note that PE lessons could be cancelled for a number of reasons including; safety issues, the indoor hall being in use for other activities and unfavourable weather conditions. Murray & Millar (2005) report a third of schools (32%) occasionally cancelled PE for various reasons while the cancellation of PE as a deterrent against indiscipline is reported by 24% of respondents in this study. There is a growing

parental attitude that views PE as an optional subject rather than a core curricular subject and therefore allow children to opt out of certain strands (INTO, 2007). The *discussion paper on Physical Education in Primary Schools* by the INTO (2007) concludes that if schools are utilising outside agencies and personnel, some teachers will absent themselves from a formal role in PE instruction (INTO, 2007). There are also concerns that a percentage of teachers - however small - use excuses not to fully engage with the PE curriculum - wet weather, misbehaviour, lack of time, resources, initial and on-going training (INTO, 2008). Hogan *et al.*, (2007) note the decentralised autonomy of education, whereby boards of management and school principals have greater autonomy in the finance and management of schools leading to further challenges in schools in delivering physical education if leadership is wanting.

2.3.12 School Facilities, Equipment & Resources

Inadequate provision of school facilities and equipment for PE remains the main barriers in the delivery of the complete PE curriculum and continues to be the most difficult barriers to overcome especially gymnastics and dance (Coulter, 2012). The INTO contends: 'Action is needed to make sure that the status and profile of PE in schools is raised. The Department of Education and Skills needs to show a real commitment to developing PE as a core subject in primary schools' (INTO, 2011). McGuinness & Shelly (1995) report that there is a strong emphasis on the teaching of games as this is the easiest strand to deliver due to the lack of proper facilities. An INTO survey (2004) indicates that 80% of schools in Co. Donegal, 63% of schools in Co. Clare, 70% of schools in Kerry and 14% of schools in Co. Dublin do not have a PE hall, however, 60% of the 86% of schools in Dublin that have a PE hall report that these are deemed inadequate or unsatisfactory.

According to the INTO survey (2005), the situation in schools in relation to PE facilities remains unsatisfactory. While the vast majority (88%) of respondents indicate that their school has a suitable surfaced school yard for PE, 39% of respondents indicate that their schools have a General Purpose (GP) room, though a slight majority of respondents (68%) indicate that they have access to a hall for PE. Deenihan (2005) shows that 23% of school principals report that their schools have no facilities, 51% have a multipurpose GP room and 25% have a sports hall, though only 10% of these sport halls are greater than 170sq.metres.

Respondents (46%) report having a playing field that is less than full-size or simply an underdeveloped open area. Almost 30% do not have a suitable Outdoor Hard Surface.

Woods *et al.*, (2010) highlight that 81% (N=47) of primary school principals state that they do not have access to an indoor multi-purpose hall in order to teach PE in their schools while (45%) of those principals surveyed state that their sports facilities and delivery of physical education 'are not at all adequate' (p.43). Darmody *et al.*, (2010) find in their study examining school environments and design that many schools have access to outdoor space for the teaching of PE but are restricted within their programmes due to the lack of access to indoor space. In relation to teaching aquatics, the INTO (2005) survey reports a small majority (53%) of respondents have the use of a pool within a five mile radius of the school, and only 1% travel more than 26 miles. According to Deenihan (2005), only 0.3% of schools have a swimming pool and 29% have access to a swimming pool. Hardman & Marshall (2009) show, on a global scale, that 37% of countries report dissatisfaction with the quality of facilities and 50% indicate that the quality of physical education provision is 'limited or insufficient'.

The ESRI (2005) has recommended a more integrated approach to children's sport, to include PE, extra-curricular activities and participation outside of school and called for an improvement in sports facilities in primary schools. The *Joint Oireachtas Report on the Status of Physical Education* (2005) states that there has never been a period of adequate funding of PE and moreover, there has never been serious investment and concentration either in terms of planning and resources. This is especially evident within the primary education sector more so than the secondary school sector with many schools not having a gym, a general purpose room being used in place of a gym or neither of the above. The ESRI also comments that primary schools are worse off than second level schools regarding the availability of sports facilities (Fahey *et al.*, 2005). The (CSPPA) states that in many primary schools, the provision of PE remains totally weather permitting with 81% of primary principals reporting not having access to an indoor multi-purpose hall on-site for the purpose of teaching physical education (Murphy, 2010).

In 2002, a PE nominal grant from the Department of Education and Science (DES) available to primary schools in order to purchase equipment was discontinued due to government cutbacks. This grant enabled schools to replenish their PE resources. According to Coulter (2012), this is evidence of the then Government's continued disinterest in supporting PE. More recently, a grant scheme for playground and PE equipment in primary schools providing 'a once off allowance' in 2010, where primary schools availed of €1,000 per school and €10 per capita to meet requirements arising in respect of playground and PE equipment (Department of Education and Skills School Building Unit, 2010). There is now an acceptable practice or trend of schools having to depend on parents' and pupils' fundraising efforts, token collections from local supermarket initiatives to replenish and supply materials and resources required to implement the PE curriculum (Coulter, 2012). The National Taskforce on Obesity (2005) recommendations include the Department of Education and Science prioritising the provision and maintenance of physical education and physical activity facilities to address the issue of equity and access in all schools.

2.3.13 Special Education Needs (SEN)

For the purpose of this study, the International Federation of Adapted Physical Activity (IFAPA) definition has been adopted. The IFAPA identifies Adapted Physical Activity (APA) includes, but is not limited to, PE, sport, recreation, dance and creative arts, nutrition, medicine, and rehabilitation (Hutzler & Sherrill, 2007). To understand the provision and practice of APA in Ireland it is first necessary to consider a definition of special education in the Irish context. The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004: 5) defines SEN as those students having a restriction in their capacity to participate in and benefit from education on- account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability, or any other condition, which results in a student learning differently from people who do not have the condition

One of the principles of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a) is to make due allowance for individual difference, celebrating the uniqueness of the child and to strive to ensure the achievement of their full potential. With the implementation of the 1999 Primary School curriculum, children with Special Education Needs (SEN) became more widely represented. While there is greater awareness of the value of PA and fitness, many

people with physical and intellectual disabilities are not as physically active as their non-disabled peers (Seamam *et al.*, 2003; Government of Ireland, 2002; 2004). The participation of all-primary school pupils, (whether able-bodied or disabled), in a broad range of activities can promote lifelong involvement in exercise and thus enhance quality of life (Kretchmar, 2006; Fahy, Delaney & Gannon, 2005).

Children with disabilities participate in physical activities for the same reasons as their non-disabled peers and share the same interests, needs, concerns, enjoyment and benefits from physically active lifestyles (Garrett & Wrench, 2006). Vickerman (2007) identifies the class teacher as the main agent of change. According to the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA), – Sport, the opportunities for participation in physical education / school sport by the pupil with a disability are poor to non-existent. The barriers include a lack of facilities, reluctance by PE teachers to accept responsibility for a pupil with a disability, transport difficulties, and most of all, attitudes.

Avramidis & Norwich (2002) state that without a coherent plan for teacher training in the educational needs of children with SEN the ability to include these children in the mainstream is difficult. Much of the APA literature asserts the centrality of the teacher's role and the necessity for their positive attitude and commitment to the process (Vickerman, 2007; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Sato *et al.*, 2009; Visser *et al.*, 2002). Facilitating PE in primary schools presents the class teacher with particular challenges. The demands of the physical nature of the activities, the use of specialised equipment and the varied content and methodologies involved in different strands of the PE curriculum are unique amongst subjects. Fitzgerald (2006) and Smith & Green (2004) observe that many teachers are focused on integration rather than inclusion, tending to focus on how the pupil can be made fit into the PE lesson rather than the other way around.

Research conducted for the *Oireachtas Joint Committee Report on the Status of Physical Education* (2005) reports that only 9% of teaching and professional development staff surveyed feel they have sufficient training at undergraduate level to work with pupils with special needs. Greater training therefore needs to be in place to cater for students with special

needs. In their submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee, the IWA – Sport also recommended that additional resources be allocated to schools with a high incidence of special needs students, and they called for the development of a resource package for schools to address issues such as inclusion, facilities, terminology and adaptation techniques. The Colleges of Education address special needs in PE in the context of inclusion.

The National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGB) provide coaches to support schools to coach in their own specific sports. However, Disability Sports Officers of NGBs (such as the Irish Wheelchair Association, Cerebral Palsy Sport and the Football Association of Ireland) have indicated that schools rarely contact them, despite their readiness and training to help teachers accommodate students with SEN participate in their specific sports (National Disability Authority, 2005). In November 2007, the CARA Adapted Physical Activity (APA) Centre was established and supported by the ISC and the Institute of Technology Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland. The main aim of the CARA-APA Centre is to facilitate an increase in the number of people with disabilities participating in sport and physical activity and to this end; it became the national coordinator of the National Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) programme (Crawford, 2011).

In 2008, a national network of LSPs was launched throughout the country with a local SIDO within 20 of these LSPs. This emulates the established model of good practice promoted in Wales by the Federation of Disability Sports Wales in 2003 (Crawford, 2011). The stated objectives of the SIDO role include: (a) to increase numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport and physical activity on a regular basis; (b) to support current work of disability sports and physical activity clubs and disability organisations; (c) to encourage and support mainstream sports and physical activity clubs including people with disabilities (Crawford, 2011). Research is needed to establish how this support is developing and being utilised in educational settings.

Conclusion

The current research would suggest that the experience of PE can help form positive opinions of PA and sport in later life (Giblin *et al.*, 2014). Further, there appears to be some agreement

that the underlying purpose of PE is to facilitate and promote life-long participation in PA (Green, 2008). Consequently it would appear imperative that primary school pupils are given exposure to high quality PE and school sport in order to influence their opinions in sport and exercise in adulthood which would potentially have a positive impact on the health and well-being of the general population (Li & Hooker, 2010; Slentz *et al.*, 2009).

The PE curriculum content design and supportive documentation for primary teachers has evolved considerably over the decades and with the implementation of the revised Primary School Curriculum (1999), this subject was bestowed the privileged position of a statutory subject in primary schools. PE is currently, however, a foundation as opposed to a core subject and could be argued, has developed without the necessary input from physical educationalists (Green, 2008). This has resulted in primary schools not giving PE the same recognition as other academic subjects resulting in its position as a low priority subject (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). The literature on PE provision in Irish primary schools reflects the European perspective that highlights the deficiencies in provision specifically in curriculum time allocation, subject status, financial, material (inadequacies in facility and equipment supply) and human resources, the quality and delivery of the PE curriculum as well as the extent of efficacy beyond school contexts (Hardman, 2008). The crux of the situation is that there is a gap between promise and reality, meaning a serious persistent lack of investment in PE by successive governments on various fronts (Hardman, 2008).

The current research indicates there is a large variation in the quality of children's experiences of PE between and within primary schools (Kirk *et al.*, 2009). Primary school PE continues to be delivered in a traditional, multi-layered approach involving short blocks of often unrelated physical activities with the result that learning experiences are often compartmentalised (Jess *et al.*, 2007). A systematic weakness in the delivery of this subject in primary schools is that the curriculum mirrors the secondary school version with an over emphasis on activities (and in particular games) and not on the learning experience (Talbot, 2007). PE educationalists and providers believe that school principals are key to advocating the values (physical, social, psychological & cognitive) of this subject. Yet there is recognition that principals and teachers are increasingly under more pressure and closer scrutiny to ensure children are developed appropriately in core subjects, such as numeracy

and literacy (Green, 2008). With such pressures on schools and generalists teachers, it seems unlikely that primary schools can offer the kind of quality experiences that young people require that can significantly impact-on lifelong participation.

A solution to the apparent inadequate delivery of this subject is to employ specialist PE teachers, one that has polarised the teaching profession with some believing that it would lead to fragmentation and the beginning-of-the-end of an integrated curriculum. Recommendations have called for partnership development in providing support and advice for teachers from external coaches and sports organisations that facilitate and empower teachers to be actively involved in improving their own delivery of PE. In the past, there were very few links between schools and the wider community in facilitating the delivery of this subject. While this has since changed with greater involvement of organisations (e.g. GAA, FAI & Irish Sports Council) in schools, they primarily focus on the delivery of games and this recent trend is presented and discussed in the next section.

2.4 The Games Strand

2.4.1 Defining Games

Games have a long tradition within PE and yet, defining what games is problematic (Ward & Griggs, 2011). The seminal work by Mauldon & Redfern (1969) suggest that, what is labelled a game might be best defined as “an activity in which a minimum of two people, themselves on the move, engage in competitive play with a moving object within the framework of certain rules” (p.4).

Kirk & MacPhail (2009) state that to play games competently, participants require declarative knowledge, meaning familiarity with rules, aims and terminology and procedural knowledge, which is the ability to perform the correct techniques and strategic knowledge. Unlike other activities on the PE curriculum, games presents problems of ‘what to do,’ ‘when to do it’ in addition to ‘how to do it’ and the unique aspect of games is the decision-making process, which precedes the technique employed (Bunker and Thorpe, 1982, 1986b). The cognitive engagement appears to increase dependent on the number of players in the game and the

degree of variability in the playing environment (Lauder, 2001). Common sense would suggest the need for sound practical application of skills underpinned by appropriate pupil decision-making in games to be evident in PE policy requirements.

2.4.2 Direct Teaching Styles for Games

Direct instruction dominates how the acquisition of techniques are to be achieved (Tinning, 1991; Curtner-Smith *et al.*, 2001; Browne *et al.*, 2004; Macfadyen & Campbell, 2005; Fernandez-Balboa, 2009). Metzler (2005) states that teachers often use reproductive teaching styles requiring the pupil to replicate what s/he has heard and/or observed regardless of their age, experience, the activity itself or the intended learning outcomes. This is in contrast to productive styles, where pupil(s) are encouraged to think in order to solve problems (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002). At this stage, it is worth noting that productive styles are not necessarily preferable to direct instruction. Rather, it is about ensuring the appropriate approach is used to ensure pupils learn effectively (O'Leary, 2012). Direct instruction, despite its educational limitations can be an effective method of instruction, however; the teaching styles employed have a significant impact on the process of learning (Metzler, 2005).

2.4.3 Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU)

Bunker & Thorpe (1982, 1986b) conclude that the technique-orientated, teacher-led approach to games led to a large percentage of children achieving little success in games. They believe an emphasis on 'perfecting' techniques rather than acquiring flexible games skills result in pupils leaving school knowing little about games. Concerns relating to games teaching and learning led to the seminal Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) paper in (1982; 1986) entitled '*The Curriculum Model*', TGfU's aim was to assist pupils to demonstrate skillfulness during game play, defined as tactical and strategic understanding as well as effective technical execution (Turner *et al.*, 2001). Like the traditional games model, emphasis was still placed on the how to execute techniques, but in the TGfU model, this was preceded by an emphasis upon what techniques to use and when and where to use them.

Resembling the traditional games model, TGfU also follows instructional stages. However, in contrast to the traditional model, the TGfU model commences with a game setting the scene for the development of tactical awareness and decision-making, which, in their turn, always precede skill execution and performance (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982, 1986b). In explaining their model, Bunker & Thorpe (1982, 1986b) examined each of the instructional stages in turn. The game referred to those adaptations required to ensure that the content was developmentally appropriate for the pupils. Adaptations could include the equipment used, the number of participants involved and the size of the playing area. Bunker & Thorpe (1982, 1986b) believe that game appreciation should include children understanding the rules of the game irrespective of how simple they might be. Rules give the game its shape and changes to the rules have implications for the tactics to be employed. Tactical awareness causes children to think about what they need to do to be successful in the modified game. Tactics are the principles of play which are common to all games.

Such tactical awareness should also lead to an awareness of opposition, strengths and weaknesses. The ‘what to do’ identifies intent such as recognising the need to attack a space near the goal and when this opportunity might be taken (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; 1986b). The ‘how to do it’ indicates the best way to do and the model skill execution is the actual production of required technique as envisaged by the teacher and seen in the context of the child and their limitations (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; 1986b). The final instruction stage of performance is the observed outcome of the previous processes measured against criteria that are independent of the child (Bunker & Thorpe, 1982; 1986b).

2.4.4 *The Games Strand Curriculum*

Traditionally, there has been an emphasis on playing the game or practising skills in isolation from the game within PE curricula (O’Connor *et al.*, 2012). The Irish Primary School Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b) focuses on the development and understanding of skills and the playing of games. It attempts to connect the practice of skills with the playing of mini – (small-sided) games. These mini games are modified to suit the developmental stages of the children and the PE curriculum states that rules should be adapted and the size of the playing area and equipment adjusted to meet their needs

(Government of Ireland, 1999b). In addition, emphasis is placed on skills such as the effective use of space and decision-making, thus encouraging the development of a greater understanding of how games are played (Government of Ireland, 1999b). The games programme should provide opportunities for children to develop skills and understanding through enjoyable individual, small-group and team activities (Government of Ireland, 1999b). Throughout the games programme, primary school teachers should deliver games with appropriate tasks for developing pupil understanding of games. As pupils become more skilful, they gain a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Opportunities to improve personal performance and to guide others to improve should be provided (Government of Ireland, 1999b).

Developing an understanding of games should enable children to appreciate and enjoy games as both a participant and spectator. Children should experience a balance of skills and games in a number of categories (Government of Ireland, 1999b). Playground games facilitating the child to move effectively and interact with others are included in the strand unit 'Creating and playing games' as well as a selection of invasion games, net games, striking and fielding games, target games and shared court games. Invasion games are suitable for modification for children at primary level that include hockey, hurling, soccer, Gaelic football, rugby, basketball, netball, and Olympic handball (Government of Ireland, 1999b). Net games include tennis, volleyball, and badminton. Striking and fielding games most suitable for this age group recommend rounders or cricket; target games include bowling, and shared court games include handball. The class programme should include a balanced selection from the above categories (Curriculum of Ireland, 1999b).

2.4.5 Games: *The Dominant Strand*

From an Irish perspective, studies report the dominance of team sports and activities during PE classes (Broderick & Shiel, 2000; Fahey *et al.*, 2005; Murphy, 2007; Collier *et al.*, 2007). Gaelic football, soccer and basketball are the most prevalent activities in Irish primary schools. Cosgrave (2006) highlights the dominance of games beginning at the junior enfant cycle. Only GAA sports (Gaelic football, hurling, camogie and handball) and swimming show consistent participation levels in inter-school competitions at both primary and post-

primary level (Woods *et al.*, 2010). In the UK, studies highlight a similar situation where the games strand is enshrined in the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE) as a priority area (Waring *et al.*, 2007). Globally, there is a sustained orientation towards sports-dominated competitive performance related activity programme which collectively account for over 70% of PE curriculum content in both primary and secondary schools (Hardman & Marshall, 2009; p.53). Doherty & Bailey (2003) show that school pupils place greater importance and respect on the games strand and are critical of this prominent position within the physical education landscape. Hardman & Marshall (2005) view the UK curriculum in relation to physical education as one that emphasise the games strand over other strands, where teachers show bias towards games ensuring a competitive nature, placing a high status on the competitive teams in PE.

2.4.6 Discourses within Physical Education

The literature on teaching provision and delivery of PE has witnessed a dichotomy of unremitting criticism due to the dominant performative sporting discourses in PE (Penny & Evans, 1997; Tinning, 1997; Penny & Chandler, 2000; Penny & Jess, 2004; Penny & Lisahunter, 2006), and the growing criticism of recent public health agendas associated with hypokinetic diseases (Tinning & Glasby, 2002; Gard & Wright, 2005; Culpan & Bruce, 2007; Griggs & Ward, 2013). Both issues continue to bring uncertainty if not displacement of PE as a subject from its original aims and objectives. Kirk (2005; 2006) states that the teaching of PE in the USA, UK and Australia has consistently been of little, if nothing other than competitive sports since the 1950s. Despite a curriculum open to non-performative movements, sports and competitive team games continue to dominate both curricular and extra-curricular activities both internationally and from an Irish perspective (Alfrey *et al.*, 2012; Woods *et al.*, 2010; Griggs & Ward, 2013). The perpetuation of an activity based-structure within PE with a distinct focus on performative games is a global occurrence and one that is historically rooted in cultural practices (Hardman, 2008; O'Connor *et al.*, 2012). These privileging trends and practices of competitive team games within PE have consistently been raised and the concerns that such privileging is often at the expense of providing a more inclusive, educational, and balanced subject (Penny & Evans, 1997; Tinning, 1997; Penny & Chandler, 2000; Fairclough *et al.*, 2002; Penny & Jess, 2004; Garret, 2004; DeCorby *et al.*, 2005; Penny & Lisahunter, 2006).

Kirk (2006) acknowledges that there is no agenda or challenge to the inclusion of competitive games and sports within a PE curriculum as these have a legitimate position; however, concern lies with the purpose of such inclusion and their subsequent ability to exclude girls and un-athletic boys. The concern within the literature is that the delivery of a limited and performative-based-agenda has the ability to overwhelm broader educational experiences connected to the yet-to-be realised full potential of many PE programmes (Kirk, 2006; Penny & Evans, 1997; Tinning, 1997; Penny & Chandler, 2000; Penny & Jess, 2004; Penny & Lisahunter, 2006). With the dominant position of sports within (PE) curricula, there is a tendency to concentrate on the subordinate components (fitness, agility, technique, tactics) at the expense of developing and supporting meaning through movement (Kirk, 2006; Penny & Evans, 1997; Tinning, 1997; Penny & Chandler, 2000; Penny & Jess, 2004; Penny & Lisahunter, 2006; Brown, 2008).

This form of PE focuses on performativity resulting in an over-emphasis on a limited number of performative-based-games. It constitutes a reduction in the possibility of pupils to connect to different contexts of play, movement and PA within different curricula, environments and connected social-ecologies in which the physically educated habitate (O'Connor *et al.*, 2012). There are possibilities for PE to move beyond the transmission of culturally relevant sports, games, and experiences to a subject that develops life-long commitment to the challenge and joy of physical activity both collectively and individually. Kirk (2006) believes that games and sports have a place in PE but only as part of a more, balanced, and broader curriculum with an educative focus.

2.4.7 TOPs - Programme

In an attempt to address the long-standing concern of the quality and provision of (PE) in England, (Warburton, 2000; Wright, 2002; Caldecott *et al.*, 2006; Waring *et al.*, 2007) a PE-specific continuing professional development programme (PE-CPD) known as the TOPs was devised for primary school teachers by the Youth Sports Trust (YST). The YST's mission is to develop and implement, in close partnership with other organisations, quality PE games programmes for young people. The TOPs programme was established in 1996 with the introduction of the TOP play and TOP sport. The TOP play supports 4-7 year olds as they require and develop core skills, whilst the TOP sport provides 7-11 year olds with

opportunities to develop skills in a range of sports. The programme comprises of resource cards, child friendly equipment, and training for teachers. The TOPs cards have been designed to provide detailed information for pupils and staff to use within a lesson. As well as providing illustrations of activities, they include ideas from progression through challenges and changes and highlight links to the National Curriculum. The overall programme and its associated resources are designed to complement the National Curriculum for Physical Education (UK) and offer linked activities to the programme of study. The intention of the programme is to form a sporting pathway along which young people can progress according to age and ability (YST, 2003).

Shenton (1996) suggests that the TOPs programme is an additional, adaptable, and flexible resource for teachers that will help ensure the provision of a coherent experience in games education for children within the total school and community context. To access the TOPs programme, teachers must complete a recognised training programme. This training is in the form of a generic package that introduces the TOP play programme, followed by sport specific training that enables access to the TOP Sport resources. Further training is required to access the TOP: gymnastics, Athletics, Outdoor & Adventure, and Dance programmes. Hunt (1998) investigated the effectiveness of the programme on teaching and suggests that the provision of training empowered the deliverers of the programme by enhancing their levels of confidence and competence. Spode (1997) in his evaluation found that the most valuable aspect of the programme to be the four-hour in-service training. However, the number of courses that staff need to attend to use all the programmes is a limitation of the programme. Time available in schools is limited and academic priorities have a tendency to be focused on government initiatives. Consequently, this may limit the opportunities for teaching staff to attend the TOPs programmes, unless it is identified as a priority within the school's development plan.

Since the introduction of the TOPs programme, a few studies have highlighted its success and cited examples of good practice (Hunt, 1998; Roberts, 1998; Spode, 1997). The consensus about the programme tends to be favourable. Graves (1998) claims that the TOPs programme is the most impressive product and catalyst that he has been involved with in physical education. About implementation, teachers favourably discuss how adaptable the resource

cards are in delivering (PE) (Sabin, 1997; MacPhail & Kirk, 2001). Newton (1998) describes her experiences of how the TOPs has been implemented within her own school and how valuable the supplementary material was in her delivery of PE. To date, the research has tended to focus on the implementation of the TOPs programme and its impact on teaching (Philips, 1998; Spode, 1997; Roberts, 1998) while research concerning the impact on pupils is less evident (Hooper, 1998; Lawrence, 2003).

A number of studies are critical of such resource-led programmes, as they do not appear to have been informed by new research-based developments in PE teaching, assessment and curriculum, such as model-based teaching & learning (Lauder, 2001; Metzler, 2000). Armour & Yelling (2003) question the possibility that such programmes can bring about reforms in primary schools due to the adherence to traditional out-of-school, short-course in-service training. More recently, Harris & Cale's (2010) impact evaluation of this programme found that it positively affects teachers' perceptions of physical education in terms of confidence, knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject and in turn improves their practice in terms of content ideas and inclusion. The key limitations of this CPD programme identify insufficient attention given to specific pedagogical issues such as medium-to-long-term planning and assessment, lack of coherence and duration (Harris & Cale, 2010). Recommendations have been made for improving teachers' practice focusing on professional development that is school-based and continuous (Armour & Yelling, 2003)

2.4.8 The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Programme

The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme was developed and implemented by the participation unit of the Irish Sports Council (ISC). This programme is closely adapted from the Youth Sports Trust (YST) TOPs (Play-Sport) programmes with minor amendments made for the Irish primary PE curriculum. The delivery of the Buntús (Play & Multi-sport) programme's aim is to support teachers and other adults in introducing, developing and maintaining young people in sport. As with the TOPs programmes, this programme is delivered in support of the Physical Education Curriculum (Games Strand) in primary schools (Government of Ireland, 1999a). Through the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme, children are given access to a wide variety of sports so that they can develop their interest and

skills in an essentially fun and non-competitive environment. This is a skills-based programme which focuses on *(i)* rolling *(ii)* receiving *(iii)* running, jumping & hopping *(iv)* travelling with the ball *(v)* throwing and catching *(vi)* striking a ball *(vii)* kicking. The three key components of the programme – training, resource cards, and equipment – are designed to provide an easy-to-understand, high-quality introduction to sport (See Appendix A).

Each participating school receives a Buntús sports equipment bag and four hours training for the whole school staff in how to use the equipment. This training can be followed at a later stage by specific training provided by such organisations as the FAI, Badminton Ireland, or Golf Ireland. The delivery of the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme includes opportunities for all young people to take part, regardless of their ability, gender, ethnicity or background. The ISC's responsibility is to ensure that opportunities are accessible, that publicity/promotion reflects open access and those teachers are supported to implement this. Therefore, it is only schools and teachers who have undergone a programme of Buntús training that can access the equipment and resource cards, as the training is critical to the programme. There are different strands to the Buntús programme:

- Buntús Start: Pre-school children
- Buntús Play: caters for children aged between 4-9 years old involving development of fundamental motor skills.
- Multi-Sport: caters for 7-11 year old children and focuses on invasion games and net/wall games.
- Buntús Sport: caters for individual sports (Buntús Soccer) and caters for 7-11 year olds, which have the involvement of the RFU. FAI. GAA.

The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme does not aim to replace physical education; instead, it assists in the delivery of the games strand and one that slightly overlaps with the athletics strand. It is recognised by the Department of Education and the Physical Education syllabus refers to the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme as a resource that teachers can use in delivering physical education. The programme is delivered to schools through the

Local Sports Partnership (LSP) in a three-pronged approach using resource cards, teacher training and equipment.

2.5 Continuous Professional Development

Professional development of teachers is now recognised as continuous professional development CPD rather than in-service training and incorporates a number of definitions including in-service education/provision, staff-development, teacher-development, career-development, continuous professional development CPD and life-long learning (Murphy & O’Leary, 2012; Hempill *et al*, 2013). In relation to teachers, CPD is viewed as any activity, which enables enhancement of their knowledge and skills allowing them to consider their approaches, delivery and attitudes towards their teaching (Murphy & O’Leary, 2012; OECD, 2010). A key characteristic of many professions is to learn and develop throughout one’s career. For teachers, professional development commences with initial teacher education ITE viewed as the foundation for ongoing teaching development; one that is hoped, will progress throughout their teaching life span, until retirement (Conway *et al.*, 2009; Murphy & O’Leary, 2012; Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Research provides growing recognition that CPD is in empowering tool; equipping teachers with the skills to meet the daily challenges experienced in schools. The current trend and interest in CPD does not necessary highlight the deficiencies in the teaching profession and the delivery of curricula (Murphy & O’Leary, 2012). There is the prominent issue in relation to the constant flux of change while educators are required to remain motivated and informed (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). A critical examination and/or evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD practices are imperative to ensure success.

2.5.1 Features of Continuous Professional Development

There is recognition and agreement that no-one single approach to CPD is consistently effective for all teachers and an established belief is now evident that a variety of experiences are required (Flint *et al.*, 2011). CPD for teachers is important and yet much of the provision is inadequate and unable to cope with the scale and complexity of the task (Surgue, 2002). There are five imperative features which should be incorporated or included into professional development programmes and tested to allow us their importance and effectiveness (Wayne *et al.*, 2008; Desimone, 2009). These include;

- Content Focus (Content focus activities that have proven to increase teacher knowledge)
- Active Learning (Observing experts on being observed, feedback and discussion)
- Coherence (Learning is consistent with teacher’s beliefs and school policies)
- Duration (Sufficient time spent on activity and the activity spread over time is required)
- Collective Participation (Colleagues from the same school, social group or area allow to interact and discourse) (Desimone, 2009: p.184)

2.5.2 Content Focus

Improving teachers’ pedagogical and content knowledge is a pivotal aspect of effective professional development (Fisherman *et al.*, 2003b; Guskey, 2003; Betchel & Sullivan, 2006; Coulter & Murphy, 2012). The definition of knowledge and its subordinates is an intricate task, one that is dependent on individual and context interpretations. The literature identifies seven aspects of essential knowledge for teachers (Knight, 2002; Shulman, 2004; Lund *et al.*, 2008).

- Content Knowledge
- General pedagogical knowledge
- Curriculum Knowledge
- Pedagogical content knowledge
- Knowledge of learners and their characteristics
- Knowledge of educational contexts
- Knowledge of educational purposes, values and conclusions and their philosophical and historical basis.

The pedagogical content knowledge category is given most attention in research studies and the literature. Teachers require a rich and flexible knowledge of the subjects and must have the ability to understand and integrate four components: pedagogy, subject matter content, student characteristics and the environmental context of teaching (Borko, 2004; Fullan, 2006; Wayne *et al.*, 2008; Desimone, 2009). Faucette *et al.*, (2002) show that the (Project SPARK) a prescriptive CPD programme delivered over a two year period, focusing on content

knowledge to improve teachers' delivery of PA, fitness and sports skills development has positive outcomes. Petrie (2009) shows through an evaluation of a primary school in-service programme that teachers' motivation and confidence in delivering PE are enhanced from new PE pedagogical knowledge. The findings also highlight a need for a measured approach between these in-service opportunities and opportunities for teachers to develop their content knowledge.

Keay & Spence (2010) found that resource-led CPD programmes have the potential to extend the learning of teachers and significantly impact on improving the children's learning. If resources are to be included in the CPD design stage, it is imperative that their applicability and usefulness are justified and if so, will allow teachers the opportunity to experiment with these resources in their classrooms, adapt and change them to meet their pupils' needs (Coulter, 2012; Coulter & Woods, 2012). CPD providers have been challenged to provide expert advice in how to use the resources that support teachers in becoming autonomous independent teachers rather than allowing teachers to become dependent on them. Petrie (2009) argues that CPD providers need to explore innovative ways of incorporating resources that support teachers in order to meet the needs for their pupils. Consideration must be given to ensure that teachers do not become de-skilled through using such prescribed materials, resources and subsequent delivery during the design and facilitation of the CPD programme. (Coulter & Woods, 2012; Petrie & McGee, 2012).

2.5.3 Active Learning Approach

Major developments in CPD have moved from a school-focused professional development model to a more sophisticated approach taking into account school cultures, work based learning and professional learning communities (Swars *et al.*, 2009; Avalos, 2011). Desimone (2009) sees these changes as moving from courses, workshops and conferences to conceptualising CPD as situated and cognitive opinions of learning through social and interactive means positioned in discourse and community practices. Desimone (2009) believes this is an entrenched type of CPD directly connected to teaching that includes various forms including reflecting on lessons, co-teaching, mentoring, provision for materials, self-examination and designing new curricula. There is now an onus and obligation on CPD to provide teachers opportunities to engage actively in relevant activities (Armour *et*

al., 2008; Flint *et al.*, 2010; Darling-Hammond & McLoughlin, 2011). These opportunities have the potential to instil greater self-efficacy and self-esteem that could positively impact on their teaching (Doolittle *et al.*, 2008; Flint *et al.*, 2010, 2011; Avalos, 2011).

2.5.4 Coherence

Educators and educational researchers have for years, criticised the majority of CPD provision taking the approach of teachers participating through in-service workshops (Coulter, 2012). Such workshops are delivered on a one-to-three day basis by content specialists (Guskey, 2000; Conway *et al.*, 2009) and criticism focuses on their failing to have long lasting effects, leaving teachers unprepared for the classroom (Knight, 2002; Surgue, 2001; Surgue *et al.*, 2004; Petrie & Hunter, 2011). Coulter (2012) states that CPD programmes are flawed because the content is externally imposed and neglect teachers' real needs and concerns, which are not considered in the programme design. Moreover, these workshops are typically distanced conceptually and physically from what occurs in the classroom, delivered off-site, away from schools and without pupils present (Ward & Doutis, 1999; Betchel & O'Sullivan, 2006). They are unable to be integrated into the everyday life of schools, that is aligned with the conditions of each school, school contexts and teachers' daily experiences (Coherence), all of which, are more likely to produce greater knowledge and skills (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Fullan, 2006; Penuel, 2007; Timperley, 2008; Desimone, 2009; Coulter & Murphy, 2012).

2.5.5 Duration

A regular criticism of CPD programme provision for teachers is that, all too often, they are too short and offer limited, if any, follow-up, for teachers' CPD activities (Wayne *et al.*, 2008; Murphy & O'Leary, 2008; Webster & Wright, 2009; Flint *et al.*, 2010). It is believed that effective CPD activities should be sustained and intensive as this is more likely to contain learning opportunities necessary for teachers to integrate new knowledge into practice (Wayne *et al.*, 2008; Swars *et al.*, 2009). Such on-going support, sustained over time, should include continual-follow up and support for future learning (Parker *et al.*, 2012). Desimone (2009) highlights that the literature does not indicate a precise saturation level for CPD. However, recommendations have been made for activities to be spread over an academic term and include at least 20 hours of contact time. Timperley *et al.*, (2007) warn

that greater time allocation should be approached with caution, as it might not always translate into improved learner outcomes.

2.5.6 Collective Participation

Collective participation refers to teachers participating alongside their school colleagues during CPD programmes. Research shows that if continuous use of collaboration is sustained, it is successful in promoting implementation as teachers have more authority when embraced by peers (Bryk, 2002; Hipp *et al.*, 2008; Swars *et al.*, 2009). When these interactions are socially constructed through contextualised learning, it is deemed as a resource to support teachers to implement their new knowledge (Pedder *et al.*, 2006; Flint *et al.*, 2011; Blair & Capel, 2011). While this is welcomed by teachers and viewed as an opportunity to converse and discuss their own teaching, such discussions never focus on a critical examination of teaching (Penuel, 2007). Swars *et al.*, (2009) state that when entire schools engage in a practice of collective participation, it can bring many benefits and opportunities to relate to individual teachers and adapt any support to specific concerns, questions and needs they might acquire. Desimone (2009) states that collective participation can build support and trust in relationships and aid teachers through motivation and help colleagues that they encounter. The concept of partnerships as an effective learning strategy has been well documented and discussed in the PE-CPD literature to promote the development of quality PE (Ha *et al.*, 2004). It is necessary for external providers and teachers and their schools to collaborate and acknowledge that each can bring separate but supportive bodies of knowledge to the partnership (Shroyer *et al.*, 2007). External providers regularly modelling new techniques and supporting teachers through continuous mentoring and tutoring can facilitate embedded CPD provision in teachers' teaching contexts (Cordingley *et al.*, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2007; Parker, 2010; Flint *et al.*, 2011; Blair & Capel, 2011).

2.5.7 Continuous Professional Development in Ireland

Continuous professional development (CPD) that spans teachers' professional life-cycle has become of paramount importance in many countries as is stated in a report from the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) entitled '*Teachers Matter*' (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, 2005). From the Irish

perspective, the importance of developing teachers took prominent place as far back as the late 1960s.

It is now recognised that the training of all categories of teachers cannot be regarded as concluded at the end of the initial training period - refresher courses must be regarded as an essential feature of the general provision for teacher training. Coolahan (2007) writes that professional development in Ireland was first given priority in the seventies with the establishment of the regional Teacher Centres. The Primary School Sports Initiative (PSSI) argues that in-service programmes should allay teachers' fears and persuade teachers that large sections of the curriculum are 'doable' and do not require specialist knowledge (INTO, 2007). The early momentum that had been generated was curtailed due to persistent economic down turns and policy decisions (Coolahan, 2004). Broderick & Shiel (2000) report that teachers who have not attended any in-service development in PE in the previous three years teach over 70% of children.

There are no annual minimum professional development requirements for teachers in Ireland (Coolahan, 2007) and by its own admission, the Teaching Council of Ireland states that when professional development courses are taken, the focus is often on system reform rather than the needs of the teachers or schools (Teaching Council, 2010b). According to Coolahan (2003), there has been an increase in the amount of in-school professional development provision although most of this has taken place outside of school hours. The Teaching Council of Ireland believes that in order for best practice to be achieved, time should be built into the normal work scheme of the teacher without compromise or erosion of the school academic calendar. Pressures and concerns by school management and principals state that professional development 'shouldn't erode the teaching learning year for pupils (Coolahan, 2003, p.39).

According to Collison *et al.*, (2009), for far too long, ITE appears to be 'the end rather than the beginning' (p.10) of a teacher's learning process. Conway *et al.*, (2009) state that from an international perspective that training teachers for a knowledge society requires a number of years extending far beyond ITE and initial PE phase. Surgue *et al.*, (2001) believe that policy

lags behind provision and this opinion is supported by Hardman (2008) who states ‘the crux of the issue is that there is too much of a gap between the promise and the reality’ (p.15). The Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO) (2004a) stresses that the enhancement of physical education will not succeed if policies and legislation are not supported by commitments to allocate resources to the sector. This issue is of central importance to physical education as it is seen as the main barrier in the implementation of the physical education. Hogan *et al.*, (2007) further note that even with the provision of resources and infrastructures in place, the decentralised autonomy of education, whereby boards of management and school principals have greater autonomy in the finance and management of schools leads to further challenges in schools if leadership is wanting.

The Teaching Council (2010b) recognises that teachers’ values and practices are circumscribed by the dominant culture and insists that there is a prevalence of professional insulation and isolation. Hogan *et al.*, (2007) recognise that there is a powerful reluctance to sharing positive innovations with colleagues. This is due to fear of giving the impression that they are showing-off or setting standards that highlight colleagues’ inadequacies or advancing their own careers at the expense of others. Clancy *et al.*, (1994) advocate a variety of forms of in-service teacher education with an emphasis on school-based in-service provision and such courses should include the personal as well as the professional needs of the teacher.

2.5.8 Physical Education Professional Development Provision in Ireland

With the *Revised* Primary School Curriculum 1999, there is an expectation that all schools have a PE plan related to their whole school plan (MacPhail *et al.*, 2008). There are a number of organisations, initiatives and resources available under the remit of the Department of Education and Science (DES) as well as national sporting agencies. The Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) was established in 1998 prior to the launch of the curriculum to support the PE implementation. The purpose of this organisation was to mediate the Primary School Curriculum for teachers towards enabling them to implement it in their schools (Murchan *et al.*, 2005). In general, in-career development seminars are organised for all teachers and provide opportunities to plan as a whole staff in relation to the implementation of the PE curriculum (PCSP, 1999).

To support planning for PE in schools on a continuous basis, the PCSP in collaboration with School Development Planning (SDPS) have drawn up planning schedules and templates in consultation with the Department of Education and Science (DES) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (PSCP, 1999). As part of the PCSP service the Regional Curriculum Support Service (RCSS) have appointed *Cuiditheoirí* to support all subjects, including PE. They are available to visit schools to work with the teaching staffs, to work with individual teachers or groups of teachers or they can model lessons, approaches, useful sources of information in relation to resources and teaching materials. They provide teachers with useful sources of information in relation to resources and support for the whole school and classroom planning and organize additional in-service courses for teachers through the Education Network Centre.

Murphy (2007) highlights that although the support service models best practice, the number of trained personnel has been reduced (N=14) and provision of support for approximately 26,000 teachers in PE is worrying in terms of supporting authentic change in the teaching practice of teachers at a national level. Since the revised *Primary School Curriculum 1999* a number of initiatives such as the *Primary School Initiative* and *The Active School Awards* and organisations and research forums such as the Irish Primary PE Association (IPPEA) and PE PAYS have being established to aid primary school teachers in the delivery of the physical PE. Such initiatives include providing support, teaching resources, guidelines and promoting physical education within the educational context. The Irish Sports Council (ISC) established the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) as a mechanism for delivering recreational sport to local communities. The key aims for the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) are to increase club development, volunteer training, increasing local sport participation and enhancing school, club, community and national governing body (NGB) links.

Murphy (2007) identifies an increased level of competence in teaching PE as reported by teachers (n=85) following in-service seminars despite earlier less favourable outcomes reported by McGuinness & Shelly (1995), INTO (2006a) and Deenihan (2005). This increased competence in teaching PE is again evident from *The Proceeding from the Third Physical Education, Physical Activity and Youth Sports Forum* (2008) which states that 98% agreed that they had a better understanding of the Physical Education Curriculum having engaged with the in-service seminars. A majority of respondents (90%) agreed that the

seminars increased their competence in delivering PE, 92% believed that in-service training enabled them to teach a better PE programme. Hustler *et al.*,’s (2003) showed that teachers expressed satisfaction with CPD provision and yet were critical of the ‘one-size-fits-all nature’ of such provision. This ‘one-size-fits-all’ type of professional development was used during the roll out of national in-service of The Primary Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a) and the courses and rarely related to the context to which teachers were returning in their schools (Coulter, 2012).

The Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS) was established in 2008 when the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP) and the School Development Planning Support (SDPS) amalgamated, thus commencing the creation of a single support service for the primary school sector. The PPDS operates under the Teacher Education Section of the Department of Education and Science (DES) and its core work is to deliver CPD for primary school teachers. Its main function is to provide support for schools and establish professional learning communities in which the professional development of teachers is connected to the school development and improvement in pupil progress. During the academic year 2009-2010, a total of 1,835 primary schools obtained support by the PPDS with only 145 primary schools requesting support for PE and 34 primary schools stated that was a priority (Primary Professional Development Service, 2010). Coulter (2012) states that since 2004/2005, there have been four organisational changes in relation to PE and with each change there has been a reduction in the number of physical education advisors with their role in PE support diminishing. Teachers are being left with little time to reflect on any new acquired knowledge, gained through nationally provided in-service or follow-up support, or to consolidate learning through teaching, reflection and discussion with their colleagues and pupils (Coulter, 2012).

The aim of national and local initiatives at primary school level is to promote children’s PA within the school environment by delivering programmes that support physical education, promoting extra-curricular activities and community links. Such programmes provide training resources, equipment, physical education packs and teaching courses. National Governing Bodies such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) are all active in promoting PA through the

delivery of programmes in primary schools with coaches and tutors employed by local clubs. According to McGuinness & Shelly (1995), prior to the introduction and delivery of these programmes, many schools with inadequate facilities negotiated access to the facilities of clubs for PE with little or no contact with the organisations and stake-holders themselves. The main concern with the involvement of such sporting organisations and programmes in schools has been and continues to be, a trend for these programmes replacing and therefore constituting physical education in schools and in doing so, eradicating a broad and balanced physical education curriculum. McArdle (2007) highlights the dominance of competitive team sports like GAA and the consequent marginalisation of other sports which do not acquire equal financial resources. An ESRI report explains that by providing additional resources to the physical education curriculum, sports clubs had greater opportunity to recruit and develop new players and possible future club members (Fahey *et al.*, 2005).

2.5.9 Local Sports Partnerships

The establishment of the Local Sports Partnership (LSP) lies at the heart of the Irish Sports Councils (ISC) participation initiative to develop and create a national structure to co-ordinate and promote the development of sport and PA at community level. It aims to increase participation in sport by breaking down barriers and increasing both numbers of people participating and continued participation throughout the life cycle ensuring that local resources are used to best effects (Irish Sports Council, 2011).

The (ISC) set the following outcomes for the LSPs:

- Enhanced planning of sport at local level
- Enhanced local coach deployment
- Club development
- Volunteer training
- Local directories of sports bodies and facilities
- Better use of existing facilities
- School/club/community & National Governing Body (NGB) links
- Organising local sports events

(Irish Sports Council, 2006)

Within the context of this overall remit, the three primary functions of the LSPs, as defined by the ISC, are:

1. **Information** – establish consultative fora; undertake research; identify local needs
2. **Education** – provide sports training and education at local level
3. **Implementation** – preparation of strategy; establish administrative structures; deliver programmes; market and promote sport (Irish Sports Council, 2006)

The ISC Buntús programmes have formed a central element of LSP activities to date. Three different programmes have been rolled out to date in primary schools. The first two programmes follow a non-competitive model and include the Buntús Play for (junior cycle) primary school pupils, Buntús Multi-Sport for (senior cycle) primary school pupils and the FAI delivered Buntús Soccer that is a competitive-based programme. In supporting delivery of the National Curriculum the Buntús programmes seek to raise the profile of physical education and sport in schools, provide training opportunities for teachers and assist the NGBs in supporting teacher-coaching skills. The programmes involve the delivery of training to teachers by either LSP co-ordinators or other accredited tutors (typically over a half-day period) and the provision of resource cards for on-going teacher use and bags of sports equipment.

The Buntús Start and Buntús Generic programmes provide an important opportunity for LSPs to engage with pre-school and primary school children and their teachers. Since their introduction, almost 404,000 children have been beneficiaries of both programmes. During 2012, nearly 14,000 children in 93 primary schools benefited from receiving the Buntús Generic programme. Nearly 8,000 pre-school children in 300 childcare centres were introduced to active play with the Buntús Start. The Buntús Generic programme is in its tenth year and has been offered to all primary schools across the country and its roll-out was complete in 2013. The Buntús Start programme continues to be available to pre-schools across Ireland (ISC, 2011).

Table 2: Buntús Generic/Start Programme

	Buntús Generic	Buntús Start
Total number of schools/centres that received training (since introduction of Buntús Generic/Start)	2,663	2,156
Total number of teachers/practitioners trained	18,524	9,055
Total number of children in trained schools/centres (since introduction of Buntús Generic/Start)	347,948	56,039

Source: (Irish Sports Council; (LSP) SPEAK Report (2012)

2.5.10 Models of Professional Development

The delivery of a programme or intervention through various methods of instruction is crucial when developing and designing professional development programmes in order to broaden the knowledge base of participants. A review by the Teaching Council of Ireland (2006) states that no one professional development model is deemed the most effective in achieving its goals. It highlights that professional development of teachers should mirror the discipline of medicine and become workplace based and delivered by practicing members of the same profession. There have been a plethora of models proposed by researchers for professional development and best practice including partnerships, apprenticeships, technocratic, competence based, collegiate/community of learners, train the trainers and interactive/interconnects (Ling & McKenzie, 2001; Flint *et al.*, 2011).

A review of successful professional development programmes identified a number of effective models:

- The training model places the teacher in the role of the student/pupil
- Providers/Trainers model effective teaching for teachers
- Assessment/observer model allows opportunities to be observed and receive feedback on observations

- An individually guided model, placing teachers/learners in control of their learning experiences (Maldonado, 2002)

Rose (1997) reports a trend towards the adoption of a contextualised approach to research and planning. Mills *et al.*, (1995) highlight that while acknowledging context is a key aspect; they make the point that the actual context may dictate how decisions are made during the design and development stages. Research on the creation of professional development models advocate for a three-stage approach (a) a needs analysis (b) planning and delivery (c) evaluation (Murphy, 2007).

Although developed over twenty years ago, The INSET model advocated by Joyce & Showers (1988) is applicable in the context of this research. They claim in order to bring about teacher change a combination of pedagogical practices are required;

- Presentation: formal communication of information and theory
- Modelling: watching demonstrations
- Simulated Practice: trying out new skills in controlled conditions
- Feedback: discussion and reflection on outcomes of the above
- Coaching of the application: support while practicing the new skill

As a stand-alone model, it has a number of aspects that are deemed problematic as it violates the active learning and contextualised criteria. Moreover, it is a very direct style of delivery with the assumption that the introduction and demonstration is facilitated away from the school settings leaving teachers having to adopt the new pedagogical content knowledge to their own environment at a later stage (Coulter, 2012).

Caferella (2002) highlights the importance of context in the creation of a model for professional development programmes. Caferell's model (2002) is based on four assumptions:

- The PD programme should concentrate on participants learning requirements and the change this learning might bring about
- Recognition that professional development is a complex interaction of tasks, priorities, people, events
- The participants involved may require some or all of the components of the model
- Programme designers need to be ethical

Coulter (2012) believes that it is a valuable resource, one that is aligned with the literature on effective professional development in the creation of a planning framework as it concentrates primarily on participants and how their learning could result in change in their practice, flexibility and organisation.

Both the INSET (Joyce & Showers, 1988) and Caferella's model are significantly aligned with the theory of cognitive apprenticeship (Coulter, 2012). Constructivist theories of learning have provided evidence that learners/participants actively construct their understanding of the world by contrasting new with established knowledge and refute the notion that learners are mere passive slates on which information is written (Driscoll, 1991). Such constructivist theories of human learning have led to the development of a theory of a cognitive apprenticeship (Collins, 1987) which first-of-all highlights that professionals often fail to consider the implicit processes involved in completing complex tasks when teaching learners. To combat this tendency, cognitive apprenticeships are designed to bring these tacit processes in the fore, giving opportunities for learners to observe enact and practice them assisted by the teacher (Collins, 1987). This model is supported by Bandura's (1997) theory of modelling which states that in order for modelling to be achieved, the participant/learner must be attentive, have access to and retain the information presented, be motivated to learn and be able to accurately reproduce the desired skill.

Cognitive apprenticeship can be used when performing a task to be learned by others with the aim that it can be modelled in the real world. Learners can be assisted to attempt what has been modelled with coaching (LeGrand, 1993). This is similar to the traditional

apprenticeship approach, where the apprentice learns the trade by working under the supervision of a professional, allowing the professional to model behaviours in context by means of cognitive modelling (Bandura, 1997). This apprenticeship model is effective due to the fact, that the learning processes is contextualised and at this stage teachers are practicing independently and request the aid of the provider if necessary. This is supported by Armour & Duncombe (2004) who state that those responsible for delivering continuous professional development programmes are required to be able to adapt their activities to teachers' very specific needs and the pressures of individuals and school contexts.

2.5.11 Evaluation of Professional Development Programmes

There is a requirement for professional development to be evidence based and consequently a need for research to explore and evaluate its impact on both teachers and students for legislative and practical reasons (Coulter, 2012). A crucial factor in safeguarding effective professional development is connecting the particular needs requirements and activities for teachers to a professional development programme to guarantee positive outcomes in the classroom. The aim of this study is to evaluate the implementation of the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme and the most appropriate methods need to be reputable. The literature on professional development programmes reiterate that many programmes conclude with the evaluation/feedback sheet for the providers. The feedback mainly focuses on the delivery of the CPD programme; were the objectives met and the possible impact on teaching and yet there is rarely evidence of providing learning or teaching opportunities (Muijs *et al.*, 2004). It is imperative when creating or designing effective CPD programmes to build an empirical knowledge foundation that connects forms of professional development to both teachers and student learning outcomes (Fisherman *et al.*, 2003b).

Caffarella (2002) defines CPD evaluation as a process utilised to determine the extent to which the design and delivery of a programme is effective and to examine if the proposed outcomes are met. Effective evaluation of a CPD programme serves two key purposes; *(i)* summative evaluation (evaluation of the outcomes) which examines if the outcomes are improved and is additional professional development necessary) and *(ii)* formative (evaluation of the process – can the programme be improved) (Coulter, 2012). When

discussing key aspects of evaluation of in-service education and training Craft (2000; p.86) identifies the following areas of evaluation:

- Teacher satisfaction
- Impact on teachers' knowledge, attitudes and skills
- Impact on teachers' professional growth
- Impact on teachers' careers
- Impact on school culture
- Impact on pupils' learning
- Impact on school management and organisation

Surveys on completion of CPD programmes were originally centred on how programmes' effectiveness was measured. However, more recently, research has progressed on how we interpret professional development and how its effectiveness is measured. Desimone (2009) states that measuring the quality of CPD programmes comprises of the quality of teachers' learning experiences, the type of teacher change, and the extent to which it affects student learning. The measurement of teacher and student outcomes in physical education involves issues such as assessment and how to assess and yet, at present, there are no standardised testing procedures for physical education (Coulter, 2012). Desimone (2008) advocates that approaches such as mixed methods, combining the quantitative methods of questionnaires and qualitative methods of observations and interviews are viewed as the best choice when researching into this area.

Conclusion

From an Irish perspective, many primary school teachers have experienced a paucity of appropriate PE-CPD throughout the education learning continuum. The lack of exposure to and lack of PE-CPD has resulted in a games-driven PE programme within primary schools that privilege performative sporting discourses with little educational focus (O'Connor *et al.*, 2012). Murphy & Coulter (2012) highlight the importance of quality PE-CPD provision that promotes and encourages teachers to view their own delivery of PE as a means to achieving quality PE for the children they teach. There is a need for PE-CPD provision to focus on depth rather than breadth, allowing teachers time to cover content, pedagogical content, to

understand and apply what they are learning during the PE-CPD programme. Murphy & Coulter (2012) suggests that this could be achieved through PE-CPD programmes and school principals' support by encouraging and facilitating opportunities for teachers to get together during the school day to prompt communication and collaboration and to nurture a community of learning. Future PE-CPD programmes must consider the school context, the extent of previous teacher PE-CPD participation and understand teachers' current PE practices. With these aspects in mind; the development of a realistic programme that includes the participation of both teachers and pupils may bare beneficial outcomes (Murphy & Coulter, 2012; Coulter, 2012).

While this approach has drawn attention due to issues of cost effectiveness, implementing this approach would mean the Department of Education & Skills (DES) and schools having to focus PE-CPD provision on fewer teachers in order to provide the type of high quality activities that are effective in changing current practices. Within the current economic climate, there are aspects of PE-CPD programmes that could be facilitated nationally on a reduced budget, such as provision of resources adaptable to school contexts (Murphy & Coulter, 2012). Some of the learning experiences of these teachers could be facilitated through contextualised workshops (e.g. learning how to organise activities, examining resources, experiencing resources). This may not solve all issues surrounding PE-CPD provision since participation remains primarily with the decisions of the individual teachers. Policy makers must have PE-CPD opportunities a priority to ensure that children's learning experiences are addressed at every level of decision making so that they come to fruition.

2.6 Evaluation

Evaluation concerns the assessment of the extent to which action achieves a valued outcome and the value placed on the process by which outcomes are achieved (Nutbeam, 1998). The Ottawa Charter's definition of health promotion defines both valued outcomes and processes as central to health-promotion practices (WHO, 1986). Evaluation has become an integral component of health-promotion programmes and interventions due to the current emphasis on evidence-based practice in healthcare (Ryan *et al.*, 2006). Evaluation in health- promotion is performed for a variety of reasons:

- To establish the effectiveness of different health-promotion models, methods and strategies in order to inform future decisions, plans or policy
- To provide an evidence base for an intervention so that individuals and communities are offered programmes that can achieve the best possible outcomes
- To prevent reinvention of the wheel by informing other health-promoters of the effectiveness or indeed problems associated with different methods and strategies (Ryan *et al.*, 2006)

Information on effectiveness and efficiency on health intervention programmes have usually been based on gathering ‘hard’ scientific evidence which has led to an established research-evidence hierarchy (Lee *et al.*, 2005). Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) are considered as the ‘gold standard’ for quantitative evaluative research followed by quasi-experimental designs, observational studies such as cohort and case control studies, with descriptive studies (surveys & reports) at the bottom (Guyatt & Rennie, 2002). However, this hierarchy is often inappropriate in choosing evaluation approaches, which seek to understand and explain HPS interventions (Lee *et al.*, 2005). Evaluation research in health promotion and education must gain insights into the processes involved in programme implementation and the social and environmental context in which they take place (Tones & Tilford, 2001).

The health promotion actions include three main domains: education, facilitation and advocacy. Education consists primarily of the creation of opportunities for learning, which are intended to improve health skills. Facilitation is action taken in partnership or groups to mobilise human and material resources for health while advocacy in action is taken on behalf of individuals and/or communities to overcome structural barriers to achieve positive health (Nutbeam, 1996).

Many researchers have argued that health promotion must be concerned with issues to do with equity, public health policy, community involvement, accessibility of health services and social well-being (Tones & Tilford, 2001). However, one should not limit effectiveness studies on health promotion to interventions solely concerned with changes in population health status, as studies should also look into the relative effectiveness of the means used to

achieve these changes (MacDonald *et al.*, 1996). Researchers should gain insight into the processes by which the effects of health promotion and education are achieved in assessing the effectiveness (Mullen *et al.*, 1992). Evidence of success in health promotion and education is comprehensive when derived from several different sources making use of qualitative as well as quantitative information (Baum, 1995). Different types of triangulation are used to ensure the validity of data collection and the associated interpretation made. For example:

- Data source triangulation involves using different kinds of information to investigate given research questions.
- Research triangulation: This involves more than one researcher in data collection and analysis.
- Methods of triangulation: involves various different methods, such as focus-group discussions, individual interviews, participant observations and self-administered questionnaires (Lee *et al.*, 2005).

Measuring the success of school health promotion and education interventions solely based on changes in health and social outcomes as indicators is inappropriate and unrealistic. It is more relevant to judge the effectiveness by measuring the health promotion outcomes, which recognises the educational dynamics of the school (Lee *et al.*, 2005).

2.6.1 Process Evaluation

Considerable emphasis is placed on outcome evaluation to determine whether a health promotion programme is successful. Process evaluation examines the extent to which the programme is delivered according to plan, is an essential component of any health promotion programme, and is a prerequisite of impact and outcome evaluation (Steckler & Linnan, 2002a). One cannot assess the effectiveness of any programme unless the programme has been implemented as desired. A programme's lack of success could be attributed to a myriad of programme related reasons including poor programme design, poor or incomplete programme implementation and/or failure to reach sufficient numbers of a target audience. Process evaluation looks inside the so-called black box to see what happened in the program

and how that could affect program impacts or outcomes (Bouffard *et al.*, 2003). In recent years, an increasing emphasis has been placed on measuring programme implementation because of great variability in programme implementation and policy adoption in school and community settings (Dusenbury *et al.*, 2003). Ideally, process evaluation is conducted with a collaborative planning team that includes key stakeholders with a multi-disciplinary professional perspective and an understanding of the iterative nature of process evaluation planning. The importance of client participation was brought to the fore by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1978) claiming that people have the right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care. Therefore, it is imperative to get feedback from participants.

Broadly speaking, process evaluation data can be used for both formative and summative purposes. Formative uses of process evaluation involve using process evaluation data to fine tune the programme (Helitzer *et al.*, 2000). Summative uses of process evaluation involve making a judgment about the extent to which the intervention is implemented as planned and reached intended participants (Helitzer *et al.*, 2000). Process evaluation should be able to address the following questions:

- How well was the programme implemented?
- Did the intervention reach the intended target recipients?
- What proportion of the target recipients actually received the intervention?
- Was the intervention acceptable to the recipients?
- What was the satisfaction level of the recipients? (Ryan *et al.*, 2006)

A process-evaluation plan will also have specific purposes that are unique to the program for which it is being designed. Health behaviour change is made in on-going social systems that usually involve participating agencies (schools) programme implementers, a proximal target person (student) (Baranowski & Stables, 2000). Assessment of programme information requires taking into account:

- The surrounding social systems including the characteristics of the organisation in which the programme is being implemented
- Characteristics of the people delivering the programme and existing structures of the organisation and groups
- Organisational social system characteristics
- Factors in external environment (Zapka *et al.*, 2004).

The characteristics of the program are also an important influence on program implementation, including the program's age (new or old), size (large or small), coverage (single- or multisite, local, state, or national) and complexity (standardized or tailored intervention, single or multiple treatments (Viadro *et al.*, 1997). Programme characteristics and context affect process evaluation in at least two ways. First, important contextual factors should be identified and measured in process evaluation. Second, as programme size and complexity increases, the resources required to monitor and measure the implementation will increase (Saunders *et al.*, 2005).

Chapter 3:

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a clear and precise description of how this study was conducted and the rationale behind specific methodological procedures chosen. This chapter discusses the methodological approaches and issues encountered during the course of this study.

3.1 Paradigm

Research is rooted in underlying assumptions that have clustered together at a philosophical level to form the basic paradigms of positivist, post-positivist, constructivist and critical theory. Denzin & Lincoln (1998) define a paradigm ‘as a basic set of beliefs that guide action’ (p.185) and its triumvirate of epistemology, ontology and methodology (Labonte & Roberson, 1996). These paradigms form the basis of a study with certain disciplines so that a consistent philosophical foundation forms the basis of research. Decisions surrounding research design extend beyond the customary methodological debate of using a qualitative/quantitative approach or both (Schwandt, 2000). In considering what paradigm suits best, a researcher’s focus should not be on this one decision alone and should consider and locate themselves in the paradigm that suits best their purpose (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Research methods within an interpretative paradigm share beliefs about the nature of knowing and reality. Relativist ontology assumes that reality, as we know it, is constructed inter-subjectively through meanings, understandings developed socially, and experientially (Ryan *et al.*, 2006). Subjectivist epistemology assumes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. The researcher and the object/subject of investigation are linked, such that who we are and how we understand the world is a central part of how we understand ourselves, others and the world (Ryan *et al.*, 2006). By positing a reality that cannot be separate from our knowledge of it (no separation of subject and object), the interpretivist paradigm posits that researchers’ values are inherent in all phases of the research process and truth is negotiated through dialogue (Angen, 2000).

Findings are created as the investigation proceeds, which mean that they emerge through dialogue in which conflicting interpretations are negotiated among members of a community.

Pragmatic and moral concerns are important considerations when evaluating interpretive science and fostering a dialogue between researchers and respondents is critical (Angen, 2000). It is through this dialectical process that a more informed and sophisticated understanding of the social world can be created. All interpretations are based in a particular moment that are located in a particular context/situation and time and are open to re-interpretation and negotiation through conversation (Angen, 2000).

In attempting to explore stakeholders' perceptions of PE, whether it be through their facilitation, delivery or participation of this subject, and the facilitation and implementation of this PE-CPD programme, the decision was made to use an interpretative paradigm. All stakeholders' were likely going to construct multiple realities (ontology) while the findings would be socially constructed between the participants and the researcher (epistemology). The researcher would be gaining first-hand experience of the participants under investigation (methodology). To conclude, the interpretive aim was to see and understand the participants' subjective experiences and viewpoints (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Markula & Silk, 2011).

3.2 Methodology

Interpretive approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods (e.g. interviewing) and these methods ensure an adequate dialog between the researchers and those with whom they interact with in order to construct collaboratively a meaningful reality. Generally, meanings are emergent from the research process and typically qualitative methods are employed

3.3 Criteria for Interpretative Research Studies

Angen (2000) offers criteria for evaluating research from an interpretivist perspective:

- Careful consideration and articulation of the research question
- Carry out inquiry in a respectful manner
- Awareness and articulation of the choices and interpretations the researcher makes during the inquiry process and evidence of taking responsibility for those choices
- A written account that develops persuasive arguments

- Evaluation of how widely results are disseminated
- Validity becomes a moral question and must be located in the 'discourse of the research community'
- Ethical validity - recognition that the choice made through the research process have political and ethical considerations.
 - Researchers need to ask if research is helpful to the target population
 - Seek out alternative explanations than those the researcher constructs
 - Ask if something has been learnt from the research
- Substantive validity - evaluating the substance or content of an interpretive work
 - Need to see evidence of the interpretive choices the researcher made
 - An assessment of the biases inherent in the work over the lifespan of a research project
 - Self-reflection: to understand the researcher's own transformation in the research process

3.4 Research Design

Denzin & Lincoln (2005) state that the aim of research utilising a qualitative methodology is the understanding of social happenings in their natural setting, attempting to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings brought to them. Quantitative methods are effective in answering how much and how many questions; however, it fails to tell very much about the how-and-why in real world contexts and exclude meaning and purpose attached by participants to their activities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Ryan *et al.*, 2006; Creswell, 2007). Qualitative methods are particularly useful in process evaluation for answering these questions and in identifying the users' involvement, organisational pitfalls and problems with the implementation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Nutbeam, 1998; Anderson & Arsenault, 1998). This study sets out to evaluate PE related CPD provision in primary schools using the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) as a test case. This was most appropriately examined using qualitative methods (Ryan *et al.*, 2006; Creswell, 2007).

3.5 The Setting

The initial intention was to conduct this entire research project in one county (county A). However, due to an insufficient number of LSP tutors in this county, it meant expanding the research project to include nine LSPs throughout Ireland. Two LSPs expressed interest and subsequently offered to assist the researcher through liaising with schools in order to provide access and conduct interviews. Ensuing meetings with both LSPs finalised the data collection schedule and number of schools required. However, again, issues of access to schools resulted in extending this research beyond county A. Contact and subsequent liaising with the LSP in county B proved to be a successful endeavour in gaining access to primary schools during 2010 and 2011. To conclude, nine counties were involved in this research project.

3.6 Participants

Participants who can provide information about an investigated area can be categorised into four groupings: survivors, disbelievers, cautious analysers and candid analysers (Laurila, 1997). The latter category was the most appropriate for this study as they had the ability to discuss the investigated area in a very open manner and provide detailed information (Okumus *et al.*, 2007). The study population consisted of three key stakeholders all involved in the Buntús programme. These three groups consisted of Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors, who deliver the Buntús training day in primary schools. Primary school teachers who in turn, incorporate this programme into their PE classes in order to facilitate their delivery of the games strand of the PE Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a). Finally, for whom this programme was developed school pupils, who participate in their PE classes. The complete world population of this study is as follows: (See Tables 6-7-8).

- 14 Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors
- 17 group interviews with primary school teachers
- 15 group interviews with primary school pupils

3.7 A Problem of Accessing the Research Field

One of the paramount pitfalls of conducting research successfully is the inability to obtain access to the research field. Researchers spend a considerable amount of time on this task especially when the research requires an in-depth study of their respective research interest (Johl & Renganathan, 2010; Okumus *et al.*, 2007; Patton, 2002; Shenton & Hayter, 2004). However, many researchers neglect to describe in detail their fieldwork practice and the obstacles encountered, which have been deemed mere tactical issues (Gummesson, 2000; Johl & Renganathan, 2010). The importance of gaining access has been acknowledged, but very little has been written on issues and problems of gaining access to the research field (Johl, 2006; Renganathan, 2005). With this study, the researcher addresses this oversight by sharing his experiences of conducting this doctoral study in the hope that it would benefit other qualitative researchers, who are undertaking similar research endeavours on a part-time basis and/or accessing educational settings.

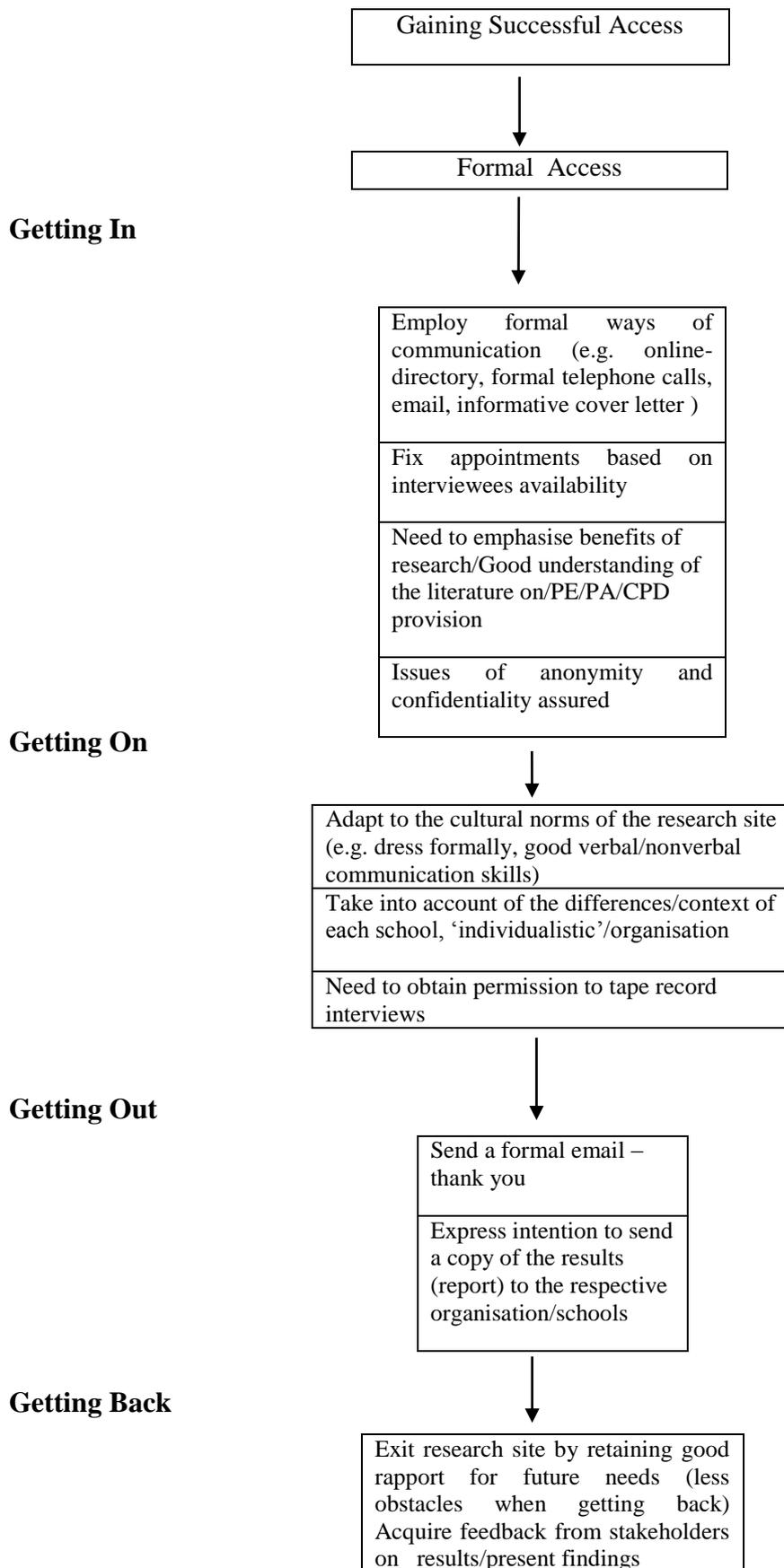
3.7.1 A Framework for Gaining Access to the Fieldwork

Gaining access to the research field is crucial and should not be taken lightly by the researcher (Van Maanen & Knolb, 1985). There is an awareness of negotiating environments that are foreign to the researcher, who is seen as an outsider and could be treated with suspicion if asked sensitive/awkward questions (Okumus *et al.*, 2007; Wasserman & Jeffery, 2007). In addition, access maybe denied due to a researcher's failure to provide answers about the what, how and why they are carrying out a study. This issue potentially could be exacerbated by a fact that in the case of schools, PE is deemed of lesser importance compared to core subjects and principals/teachers may question whether the study will provide value to the institution itself (Coleman, 1996; Laurila, 1997). Therefore, the need for good communication skills is required as it is important for the researcher to gain the trust and acceptance of gatekeepers and stakeholders in order to conduct research and this involves a combination of strategic planning, hard work and opportunities.

With this study, the researcher categorised and organised access through adapting Buchanan *et al.*'s (1988) four stage access model: getting in, getting on, getting out & getting back which is summarised in figure 1. The getting in stage refers to the expectation that the

researcher is clear of their objectives, time & resources. Getting on refers to renegotiating entry into the actual lives of people in the organisation/educational setting, whereby having good interpersonal skills and procedures such as good appearance, verbal and non-verbal communication plays an important role (Burgess, 1984). The getting out stage refers to the best strategy on agreeing on a deadline for the closure of the data collection process. Finally, getting back refers to dissemination of the findings to the participants through an executive summary document or a presentation of the findings.

Figure 1: A framework for gaining successful access



3.7.2 Gaining Access: Getting In

In order to gain access to all stakeholders in this study, it was necessary to develop a reputation for consistency and integrity. It was important for the researcher to establish relationships with gatekeepers in order to gain access to multiple informants and at the same time, to be aware of gatekeepers' own hidden agendas, ideologies and cultures (Gummesson, 2000; Feldman *et al.*, 2003). It was felt that the research topic had to be sold to the potential participants and the researcher had to be prepared to answer questions from gatekeepers. The following questions were the most frequently asked by sports development officers/LSP tutors and school principals:

1. ***What are you trying to do with your study?*** This question was logical as the gatekeepers and participants wanted to know what the researcher was planning to do and find out. In describing the research topic, educational jargon was avoided and in anticipating possible questions, the researcher prepared a two-three sentence description of the aims and objectives of the study, to identify what was important about the study and why it required further examination.
2. ***How much will the researcher's presence disrupt the school?*** Participants have rhythms and routines to their activities and it was imperative to minimise disruption (Johl & Renganathan, 2010). It was important to be honest in answering questions in relation to the length of the research process and it was felt that by being 'economical' and watering down what was expected from teachers and pupils would have led to principals/teachers becoming resentful and un-cooperative.
3. ***Why did the researcher select the setting?*** It was imperative that the researcher was positive and empathetic about the setting as the basis for its selection. For example, the researcher discussed the subject of PE positively, listing its benefits across various domains and also expressed an understanding of both the institutional and attitudinal barriers that teachers faced in delivering this subject
4. ***What will you do with the findings?*** All gatekeepers (sports coordinators, school principals) and participants in this study to varying degrees had concerns about the how the results of the study were going to be reported and to whom. For example, there was concern about negative publicity, agendas, or political use of the findings against the participants. It was imperative to be honest and reiterate throughout the

entire data collection process that no participant's name or title would be published and the site would be disguised for publication.

5. *What do participants get out of it?* This was a valid and reasonable question and was one that the researcher was quite aware of in gaining access to the field. This was a qualitative study, which meant spending a considerable amount of time and asking a lot from participants. The researcher offered to provide information about the results, to meet with stakeholders, principals and teachers to summarise and answer questions about the results, and/or provide a written summary of the results.

LSP tutors were employed in nine LSPs throughout Ireland. Contact was initially made with sports development coordinators by accessing each county's Local Sports Partnership website and was followed up by cold calling, meeting with them in person, stating who the researcher was, his intentions, and the study to be undertaken. The researcher requested their support by supplying contact details of current LSP tutors delivering the Buntús programme in primary schools. An informative letter was also emailed to all sports development coordinators reiterating the researcher's background and aims/objectives of the study to be undertaken (Appendix: B-i). All coordinators expressed interest and cooperated by supplying the requested contact details. A copy of the letter of ethical approval from the Ethical Approval Committee from the National University of Ireland (NUI) Galway was assured, if requested. The same fieldwork procedure was followed for all LSP tutors (cold calling, informative letter Appendix: B-ii.) and for all those who were contacted, all subsequently agreed to participate in this study.

Table 5 indicates the data collection timetable which was completed over a three year period 21/1/2009 – 4/3/2011 and underlines the getting in stage as the most challenging endeavour to complete due to a myriad of issues related to gaining access to educational settings. It was no coincidence that the majority of group interviews with teachers and pupils from both counties were conducted in the second academic term (Jan-March/April) of primary school year. Initial feedback from primary schools stated that the first term was inconvenient as they wanted to settle back into the routines and rhythms of school life with as little or interruption as possible. In addition, the majority of schools from both counties felt that the last term

(April-June) was not suitable as teachers were preparing pupils for holy-communion and confirmation. Therefore, the decision was made to plan for, and gain access to schools in the second term of the primary school year. Having made contact with LSPs involved in the facilitating this PE-CPD programme, two county councils in county A acted as gatekeepers and facilitated access to ten schools by liaising with principals' on the researcher's behalf and arranged specific dates for conducting interviews. Initially, agreements were made with these schools to interview both pupils and teachers on the same day. However, this became a challenging exercise as it meant schools going to great lengths to provide teacher substitution and class supervision in order for both types of interviews to be conducted. On three occasions, management/staffing issues arose on the day of the interview, which either meant only one of the interviews could be conducted or both having to be cancelled and rescheduled. An additional issue arose with half of schools initially contacted in county A (30 schools) not being able to accommodate/facilitate this research study due to being inundated with requests from undergraduate/postgraduate students and third level institutions to participate in various research projects. In total, 16 group interviews in county A (10-teacher/6-pupil) took three months to organise and six weeks to complete and therefore, the decision was made to extend this research project beyond county A.

From May-August 2009, efforts were made to research LSP websites and look at counties without third level institutions as it was felt that it would be easier to gain access to primary schools as they would not be inundated with research requests. It was also decided to focus on conducting group interviews with teachers first, and return to the field at a later stage to complete group interviews with pupils as this would require Garda vetting clearance, a process that took three months to complete (September 2010 – January 2011). The LSP in county B assisted the researcher in gaining access by providing contact details of those schools that had participated in the Buntús training day. During the months of November and December 2009, schools were contacted by phone, all personal and research information were explained and an informative letter was emailed to each school principal/school-sports coordinator explaining the researcher's background, aims and objectives of the study to be undertaken and the rationale for this study (Appendix: B-iii).

Having taken into the consideration the obstacles faced whilst conducting interviews in county A and especially the sense on infringing on school time, rhythm, and routine, this led the researcher to emphasise the duration of the two types of interviews (30 minutes each). Response to this request was very positive with many schools expressing an interest and willingness to facilitate this research study. A preliminary date was arranged with each school and this arrangement was confirmed a week before arrival. This approach was successful in gaining access to schools in county B to conduct group interviews with teachers throughout 2010 and one that was repeated in order to conduct group interviews with school pupils in 2011. For these interviews, it was clarified that if parental/pupil consent forms, ethical approval and Garda clearance documentation forms were requested in advance, they could be faxed/posted to each school (Appendix: B-iv).

Table 3: Getting In: Access of Research Study

LSP Tutors	Primary Schools: Teachers	Primary Schools: Pupils
<p>Formal Access:</p> <p>Stage 1 Obtain Ethical Approval</p> <p>Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-line Directory, telephone calls to (County sports development Officers), e- mail (study cover letter) <p>Stage 3</p> <p>Upon obtaining contact details telephone calls & email (study cover letter) to LSP tutors.</p> <p>Fix appointments based on interviewees availability</p> <p>Felt obligation because of infringement on interviewees' time</p> <p>Need to emphasise benefits of research to the organisation/ Good understanding of the literature/PE/PA/CPD provision</p> <p>Issues of anonymity assured.</p>	<p>Formal Access:</p> <p>Stage 1 Obtain Ethical Approval</p> <p>Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-line Directory, telephone calls to (County sports development Officers), e- mail (study cover letter) <p>Stage 3</p> <p>Upon obtaining contact details: telephone calls & email (study cover letter) to School Principals</p> <p>Fix appointments based on interviewees availability</p> <p>Felt obligation because of infringement on interviewees' time</p> <p>Need to emphasise benefits of research to the organisation/Good understanding of the literature/PE/PA/CPD provision</p> <p>Issues of anonymity assured</p>	<p>Formal Access:</p> <p>Stage 1 Obtain Ethical Approval & Garda vetting clearance.</p> <p>Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-line Directory, telephone calls to (county sports development officers), e- mail (study cover letter) <p>Stage 3</p> <p>Upon obtaining contact details: telephone calls & email (study cover letter) to school principals – Gain informed consent from parents</p> <p>Fix appointments based on interviewees availability</p> <p>Felt obligation because of infringement on interviewees' time</p> <p>Need to emphasise benefits of research to the organisation/ Good understanding of the literature/PE/PA/CPD provision</p> <p>Issues of anonymity assured</p>

3.7.3 Gaining Access: Getting On & Out

Gaining access to conduct interviews with LSP tutors was unproblematic; however, there was a sense of infringement on participants' time and therefore the researcher felt obligated to offer to travel to their workplace or a place that was of most convenience to them. This process took between 2-4 hours travelling using public transport. Semi-structured interviews with tutors took a year to complete and were conducted in hotel foyers, county council buildings and cafes (See Table 4). Before each interview began, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed and interviewees were made aware that they were under no obligation to answer any question(s) asked and could stop the interview at any stage. Assurances were given that nowhere would their name or the site appear in the transcriptions or in the final report. On completion of each interview, guarantees were given that contact would be made again once the study had been completed through emailing the transcript of each interviewee, allowing them time to read, highlight issues, and make comparisons about the programme at the time of the interview and upon receipt of the transcript.

Group interviews with teachers took two years to complete and took place in various surroundings depending on the arrangements made with each school to facilitate the interview process (See Table 4). Many group interviews took place in classrooms, staffrooms, or school offices. Each interview commenced with a brief introduction by the researcher, his academic background and the aims, objectives and rationale of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed and participants were made aware that they were under no obligation to answer any question(s) asked and could stop the interview at any stage. Assurances were given that nowhere would their name appear in the transcriptions or in the final report.

In four schools, interviews with teachers could only take place in the staffroom during the their lunch break, which further heightened the sense of infringement of the school/teachers time and affected the interview process by collecting qualitative data 'against the clock'. Depending on the size of each school and the arrangements made to facilitate this research project, it was not uncommon for school principals to participate in the group interviews. The researcher felt that this created a self-monitoring, tentative dynamic amongst teachers leading them to become cautious analysers. It was felt that they [teachers] were careful of expressing

their feelings and opinions about their own delivery of this subject and the institutional barriers that existed in their school. As a result, the researcher believed that this had a limiting effect (to a certain degree) on the data collected and felt it prevented genuine insights into teachers' contexts and daily experiences of delivering PE in school.

Group interviews with pupils took just under two years to complete (See Table 4). Before starting each interview, permission was asked of the six pupils to allow the interview to be recorded for accuracy purposes. It was emphasised that they did not have to answer any question(s) that they did not want to, and could stop or discontinue the interview process at any time. For this study, audiotaping was the preferred method of recording all interviews and was transcribed shortly after each interview. When transcribing some group interviews with teachers and pupils, there was some difficulty identifying individual speakers especially those of teachers if there was a large number present. There was only one interviewer present throughout this study so there was a reasonable compromise to supplement the audiotaping with contact summaries, which were written up immediately after each interview.

Upon completion of group interviews with teachers and pupils, a point of call was made to meet with the principal before leaving each school to reiterate the researcher's appreciation for their cooperation and outlined the intention to email a summary of the findings once the study had been completed and submitted. Upon completion of the entire data collection phase, a generic email was sent to all sports development officers, LSP tutors and schools principals, thanking them for their cooperation and a timeline for when they could receive the findings of this study. Having completed the last group interview with pupils on the 12/3/2011, and having revised the descriptive analysis of all three sets of interviews, it was felt, after consultation with the researcher's supervisor, that the data collection process had plateaued with no new themes emerging from the data.

3.7.4 Gaining Access: Getting Back

Due to the part-time nature of this study and the period-of-time between gaining access to the fieldwork and the write up phase of this study (five years), it was imperative to contact the various stakeholders about the findings of the study and to see what developments or changes

had occurred with this PE-CPD programme during this time. Although a transcript of each interview and a summary of the findings were emailed to each LSP tutor for the purpose of comparing and contrasting the programme as the time of the interview and the current state of the programme, this proved unsuccessful with no feedback. As a result, it was decided to present the findings of this study to five LSP sports development officers, the Irish Sports Council (ISC) and to the PE department in St Patricks College Dublin in order to gain an insight into the current state of this programme and PE provision in primary schools. In relation to primary schools, a summary of findings of this study was emailed to all schools and the researcher offered to answer any questions they had in relation to the outcomes.

Table 4: Data Collection Timetable

	Semi-Structured Interviews: LSP Tutors	Group Interviews: Teachers	Group Interviews: Pupils
Pilot Interview	14 th January 2009	15 th March 2009	15 th March 2009
	Interview 1 21/1/2009	Interview 1 31/3/2009	Interview 1 31/3/2009
	Interview 2 23/1/2009	Interview 2 1/4/2009	Interview 2 1/4/2009
	Interview 3 21/2/2009	Interview 3 2/4/2009	Interview 3 11/5/2009
	Interview 4 26/2/2009	Interview 4 11/5/2009	Interview 4 12/5/2009
	Interview 5 28/2/2009	Interview 5 20/5/2009	Interview 5 20/5/2009
	Interview 6 29/4/2009	Interview 6 21/5/2009	Interview 6 28/2/2011
	Interview 7 15/5/2009	Interview 7 2/2/2010	Interview 7 1/3/2011
	Interview 8 17/6/2009	Interview 8 3/2/2010	Interview 8 2/3/2011
	Interview 9 24/6/2009	Interview 9 4/2/2010	Interview 9 3/3/2011
	Interview 10 27/6/2009	Interview 10 1/3/2010	Interview 10 7/3/2011
	Interview 11 17/7/2009	Interview 11 15/3/2010	Interview 11 8/3/2011
	Interview 12 23/9/2009	Interview 12 16/3/2010	Interview 12 9/3/2011
	Interview 13 15/1/2009	Interview 13 18/3/2010	Interview 13 10/3/2011
	Interview 14 26/1/2010	Interview 14 22/3/2010	Interview 14 11/3/2011
		Interview 15 23/3/2010	Interview 15 12/3/2011
		Interview 16 27/4/2010	
		Interview 17 04/3/2011	

3.8 Data Collection

In an attempt to produce a reconstructing understanding of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000), the researcher utilised two qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews and group interviews. It was imperative that these types of interviews had a reliable system of recording information. Audio-recording information was vital, as it would have proven impossible to record the comments of all participants accurately. The transcribing process was beneficial as it enabled familiarity with the interview text as all interview data were transcribed verbatim.

3.8.1 Interviews

The purpose of the interview is to gain an understanding of the perspective of the individual on a given topic and/or life experience (e.g. decision-making, tutors' perspectives on their teaching, daily lessons (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The emphasis of an interview is (the constructive work and practices involved in producing order in everyday life) as well as the traditional what's (the activities of the everyday life) (Silverman, 2005). Epistemologically, the use of semi-structured interviews was seen as a legitimate and meaningful way to collect data on LSP tutors perceptions and experiences of delivering this PE-CPD programme in primary schools. Semi-structured interviews were used given that the researcher was aware of the issues to be addressed but wanted to ask supplementary questions based on previous answers to gain a more in-depth response (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In sacrificing the uniformity of the structured interview, the participants had time and the opportunity to recreate their experiences. However, sufficient structure was maintained to ensure that tutors provided data that addressed the aim and research questions of the study (Merriam, 1998; Denscombe, 2003).

Fourteen interviews with tutors were conducted, as these tutors' opinions were best sought using this method, permitting the interviewer to elucidate possible explanations relating to issues and experiences in their duties in rolling out this PE-CPD programme in primary schools. Educators/programme providers' experiences and opinions have been omitted or excluded from similar evaluations of PE-CPD programmes in primary schools and their

inclusion was imperative as they provided an informed current discourse and a framework for future recommendations to improve the overall delivery of the programme (Hunt, 1998).

The main purpose of using group interviews with teachers in this study was to concentrate on their words and observations in order for them to express their everyday realities and to describe their experiences in their natural situations. Glesne & Pushkin (1992) suggest that interviewing more than one person at a time proves very useful as participants may need the company of others to be emboldened to talk and some topics are better discussed by a small group of people, who are familiar to one another. Group interviews are very effective within educational settings as teachers operate on a daily basis within a private if not isolating, existence with little daily communication with each other, an existence described as 'possessing legendary autonomy' (OECD, 2005).

The key element here is the involvement of people where their discussions are encouraged in a nurturing and secure environment i.e. the school/classroom environment. By creating such an environment, teachers had the possibility to discuss issues and concerns that they would not normally discuss especially related to their own limitations and difficulties in delivering the PE curriculum (Amos-Hatch, 2002). On a practical level, it would have been impossible to interview teachers individually from each school using semi-structured or in-depth interviews due to time and financial constraints of the interviewer. Moreover, it would have put undue pressure on primary schools to accommodate such an undertaking. In relation to group interviews, it is recommended that they should consist of 6-8 people (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1990). However, the researcher did acknowledge the organisation that each school had to undertake in order to facilitate these group interviews resulting in the number of participants varying on a school-by-school basis, fluctuating between 1-10 participants.

The focus of research in relation to children's health, psychology and social care has traditionally been on those responsible for children, based on assumptions regarding adults' greater knowledge of what is best (Abell *et al.*, 2006). School pupils in this study were unaware of what the Buntús programme was, its position and facilitation in the delivery of the games strand of the PE curriculum, and yet, their inclusion in this study was imperative in

order to give voice to their own thoughts and perceptions. Gubrium & Holstein (2001) emphasise the importance of the power imbalance when interviewing school pupils. This study used traditional research methods (group interviews) and school pupils were treated in the same manner as adults, as equals, providing them with an opportunity to display their competencies without the process being deemed as patronising by using only ‘child-friendly’ techniques (Abell *et al.*, 2006). However, since pupils tend to lack the experience of communicating directly with unfamiliar adults and the expectation of insightful, reflective and immediate responses to open-ended questions, a more innovative approach, using task-based methods (draw & write technique) was incorporated into group interviews with pupils.

The rationale for including this process within group interviews concurs with Punch (2002), in that, it should be fun, creative and encourage pupils to be more active in the research process. In this study, drawings were used in an exploratory manner to discover what children liked/disliked about PE and the recommendations they would make in order to improve the delivery of PE in primary schools. In addition, drawings were used as an appropriate warm-up to subsequent challenging activities as well as being effective as an initial task to enable the school pupils to become more familiar with the adult researcher. Considering the literature on group interviews with children and especially pupils in a school context, the researcher concurred with Borra *et al.*, (2003) that a maximum of six in each group was ideal; otherwise, the group interview process was more likely to fragment. Ideally, it would have been preferred to have had three girls and three boys from either/or fifth and sixth class. Many schools in this study facilitated this request by providing an equal number; however, in some group interviews cases, there was an imbalance in the gender ratio.

3.8.2 Interview Guide

The researcher commenced and maintained a neutral position throughout this research process. This position was beneficial in that the researcher entered the research setting as a stranger/outsider, who was quite new to a social setting, allowing him to be objective and distant that may have allowed him have to view things with a clearer lens. Therefore, it was felt, that a broader, clear-cut, pluralistic approach was more desirable. This allowed the researcher to formulate questions in constructing an interview guide with an overarching goal to keep questions as open and flexible as possible.

The focus of the questions in this interview guide was essentially on the experiences of tutors in delivering the Buntús training day in primary schools. The rationale behind the interview guide was to get a complete picture of who the tutors were and so it was decided that a linear form of questions would be applied that would produce a narrative representation of the tutors' professional career. The questions were divided into three sections; the first three questions chartered their *(i)* sporting background *(ii)* how they got involved in Local Sports Partnership *(iii)* the initial training received to become a Buntús tutor. This was followed by the main essence of the interview guide concentrating on *(i)* describing, evaluating and analysing the delivery of their last induction day in schools. The focus on their last induction day was imperative because the tutors involved would have a lucid recollection of what happened on the day in question. This was followed by two much broader questions in relation to *(ii)* other experiences of induction days in primary schools and *(iii)* the extent to which the Buntús programme was inclusive of those with Special Education Needs (SEN). The interview guide concluded with two questions focusing on *(i)* recommendations to improve the overall delivery of the programme and *(ii)* issues surrounding the delivery of the complete PE curriculum by teachers (See Appendix C- i).

The initial intention in creating an interview guide for teachers was to use academic journals and textbooks related to PE, teachers' attitudes towards this subject and the present issues that persist in primary schools. However, it was felt that what mattered most were the opinions of the teachers. The issue of time was a concern when formulating the interview guide and in conclusion, it was decided that nine broad open-ended questions would be used. This interview guide was again divided into three sections, the first section concentrated on *(i)* teachers' own feelings about teaching PE *(ii)* the perceived benefits of PE for pupils. The second section concentrated on the Buntús programme *(i)* how teachers evaluated the induction day, *(ii)* their understanding of the programme, *(iii)* how inclusive the programme was in relation to those children with Special Education Needs (SEN) *(iv)* recommendations to improve the overall delivery of the Buntús programme. The interview guided concluded with two general questions in relation to *(i)* issues surrounding PE in primary schools and given the choice, *(ii)* would they prefer a specialised PE teacher deliver PE? (See Appendix C-ii).

Unlike the previous interview guides, compiling an interview guide for primary pupils was straightforward. Due to primary pupils not knowing what the Buntús programme entailed, and how it positioned itself within their weekly PE classes, three straightforward questions were compiled. These included; what did pupils *(i)* like *(ii)* dislike *(iii)* the recommendations to improve the delivery of PE in their school. Although these questions were not directly related to the Buntús programme, it was imperative that pupils were included in the study. It was felt that their findings could have a direct bearing on the overall process evaluation of this programme as this programme was primarily developed with them in mind (See Appendix C-iii).

3.8.3 Pilot Interviews

Baker (1994) views piloting studies as the pre-testing or ‘trying out’ of a particular research instrument and is important as it might give ‘advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated’ (p182-183). In relation to this study, a number of pilot interviews were conducted with all three stakeholders. The researcher was explicit in deciding to pilot all three phases of this study in order to refine and develop research instruments, assess degrees of observer bias, to (re)-frame or omit certain questions that would prove unnecessary.

By conducting a semi-structured pilot interview, it allowed the researcher to accomplish a number of objectives. Firstly, it enabled familiarity with the questions, to evaluate if they were worded clearly and simply see if the participants had understood and interpreted the questions correctly. Secondly, it was important that the questions were open-ended and were of relevance in practice and that the participant was able to give in-depth, extensive responses to each question asked. Finally, it allowed the researcher the possibility to practice eliciting probing questions and the technique of ‘pausing and waiting’ between questions without feeling uncomfortable or feeling the need to move on to the next set of questions. This technique allowed the participant to be more analytical, to evaluate and provide additional information to his/her initial replies. One question was deemed problematic during the pilot interview and referred to *the extent to which the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme was*

inclusive for those with special education needs (SEN)? The tutor in question had no experience of delivering this programme to teachers and education providers with specific requirements or children with SEN. However, it was decided that this question would remain in the interview guide, as tutors' experiences of delivering the Buntús programme were unique and individualistic. The reasons for conducting group interviews with both primary school teachers and pupils were to become familiar with the questions, to ensure questions were straightforward, clear and relevant. However, unlike the semi-structured interviews with tutors, there was a different dynamic at play with both teachers and pupils. Because the researcher was conducting interviews during school hours and that teachers (in some cases) and pupils were taken out of class to participate in this study, it was imperative that the interviews were conducted within a specific time limit.

It was decided that both interviews in schools would take no longer than 30 minutes each and the researcher was very aware of this while interviewing teachers especially making sure that all questions on the interview guide were asked within this time. The (pilot) group interview was very useful in that it made the researcher realise and take into account the fact that if conducting interviews with teachers during their lunch break, that they did not all have lunch at the same time and would arrive into the staffroom at different stages. This would mean that the group interview would commence as a small group and then get larger. This occurred on occasions, so it was imperative that the researcher remain focused and continued questioning in an orderly fashion. As with the LSP interview guide, one question, was deemed problematic during this the pilot interview and referred to *the extent to which the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme was inclusive for those with SEN?*

Primary teachers had no experience of delivering the PE curriculum or implementing the Buntús programme to those with SEN. However, it was decided that this question would remain in the interview guide, as it was felt that each school's context was unique and individualistic. Although time was an issue for the group interview with school pupils, the main focus of this pilot interview was ensuring that pupils understood and executed the draw and write exercise correctly, emphasising the importance of expressing their own ideas followed by comparing their answers in groups and finally, expressing their opinions as a group.

3.8.4 Field Notes

Field notes or contact summaries are records maintained by the researcher of the specific events of each interview being observed and may be referred to as interpretative journal (Spradley, 1979). Field notes were taken for three sets of interviews with key stakeholders, noting the key themes, personal experiences, ideas, issues, concerns, perceptions and fears. While the majority of interpretations and thoughts came from the researcher, it proved to be a useful secondary source or voice of the data and was instrumental in supporting, explaining and verifying the primary data collected. Other aspects of the interview process were documented including, reception upon entering and leaving the school, school facilities, resources, class sizes, context features, school photographs, physical diagrams and post interview conversations that took place in order to capture information that was not stated during the interview itself, all of which were required for assurance at a later date. The contact summaries also proved particularly useful in terms of adapting the interview guide if necessary and particularly in terms of summarising findings and developing concepts, which facilitated coding procedures when it came to analysing the whole bank of data. There were a few technical difficulties throughout this study, using Dictaphones. On one occasion, the researcher encountered technical difficulties when conducting group interviews (teachers & pupils) where the Dictaphone failed to function properly. Immediately after leaving the school, the contact summaries were written up in order to capture what were the key aspects of both interviews.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Lee (2003) characterises sensitive research as the study that poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved and defines threat as an intrusive threat into private, stressful or private place. The structure and routine of school life can be conceptualised as a private or sacrosanct space. The essential reason for the adherence to ethical standards is, of course, protection. Protection by definition relates to the individual or group under investigation, protection of the individual researcher and of research as an area of practice. Lobionda *et al.*, (1998) argue ‘that human subjects have the right not to be harmed physically, psychologically or emotionally’ (p.277). As a protection, it is now commonplace in academic, health and social services agencies that all research projects involving adults and children must achieve the approval of the ethics committee before access to populations is agreed. This study consisted of three sample groups and investigating ethical considerations were sought and

ethical approval for this study was obtained from the NUIG Research Ethical Committee. In comparison to requirements in research with adult research participants, this research project with pupils faced additional ethical challenges. These challenges were related especially to pupils' informed consent and protection, their decision-making capacity, issues of competency, vulnerability, confidentiality and the particular role of parents or guardians in the research process (Lee, 2003).

3.10 Informed Consent

Generally, debate surrounding research ethics are focused around two key preoccupations. Firstly, informed consent and secondly, protection of research participants both become problematic in research with children (Hill, 2005). The issue of informed consent dominates discussions on research with children on an international level. In the UK and Ireland, consent is deemed consent from parents or those 'in loco parentis' and in this respect, children are largely seen as their parents' property, devoid of the right to say no to research (Hill, 2005). However, in practice, researchers usually obtain consent from a wide range of adult gatekeepers such as schoolteachers, school sports liaison officers, head teachers, school governors and local educational authority officers before they are allowed to interview children and may feel unwilling to jeopardise their research by asking children explicitly for their 'informed consent'.

In relation to this study, informed consent was given through parents. Consent forms with the 'opt out' clause were posted/faxed out to all schools and were then sent home with pupils in fifth and sixth classes to be completed by their parents. The rationale for using the 'opt out' consent forms was that it was a more convenient way for parents to agree to allow their children to take part in the study. If the 'opt in' clause was chosen, it would mean that parents would have to sign the consent form in order to allow their children to participate. From previous research experience, this led to delays, postponements and cancellations because parents had forgotten to sign the forms or pupils forgotten to show the consent forms to their parents (See Appendix B-iv).

3.11 Confidentiality

Interviewees were guaranteed that nowhere would their name appear in the transcriptions or in the final report. One of the main concerns that has emerged from conducting research with children from published studies are those relating to confidentiality and disclosure in relation to parents and gatekeepers and in relation to child protection authorities if a child is deemed at risk (Kvale, 1996; 2008). There appears to be an emerging consensus amongst researchers that complete confidentiality can never be guaranteed to child research subjects. According to Mahon *et al.*, (1996) The National Children's Bureau, for example, takes the view that confidentiality can never be guaranteed to children because the researcher has a duty to pass on information to the appropriate professionals.

In relation to this study, it was decided provisionally to guarantee 'conditional' confidentiality to all pupils interviewed. It was recognised that if issues relating to child protection emerged during the course of the interview, then a pragmatic decision would be taken to renegotiate guarantees of confidentiality, should the responses given by children raise concern. Again, it was felt that this situation would not come to fruition as the questioning relating to the school pupils centred on broad questions relating to PE provision.

3.12 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis is deemed problematic due to the multiple options available in analysing the data collected and the decision of which type of analysis to use depends on the researcher's paradigm and the study itself (Hatch, 2002). Analytic induction (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) is one popular method of data analysis and has been utilised in numerous studies in this area (Curtner-Smith, Hastie & Kinchin, 2008; Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009; Zmudy *et al.*, 2009). However, this inductive approach is used to examine hypothetical problems (Bryman, 2002) and given this study was exploratory in nature and had no hypothetical explanation of a problem to examine, it was felt a general inductive approach was more appropriate (Thomas, 2006). This approach could simply be described as a process of 'making sense of the data' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.202). Data are analysed inductively from units of information to subsuming categories and themes in order to define local hypothesis or questions that can be further explored (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Following an initial read through all data sources, all stakeholders experiences and issues from

participating, delivering and facilitating in PE. All three data sets were divided into units and subsequently organised into categories as shown in table 5 below:

Table 5: The coding process in inductive analysis

Initial read through text data	Identify specific units of information	Label the units of information to create initial categories/themes	Reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories/themes	core categories/themes
Many pages of text	Many units of text	76 categories	39 categories	14 categories

Adapted from Creswell (2002, Figure 9.4, p.266) & Lincoln & Guba (1985, pp.202 204).

Units were deemed as single pieces of information that were interpretable in the absence of any other information. They consisted of individual sentences, a collection of sentences, or a paragraph. Units were identified noting the source from which the unit was drawn, such as, an initial interview and the name of the respondent. The large number of units were then organised into initial categories that provided descriptive information about the context or setting from which the units were derived, a process known as ‘constant comparison method’ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

To complete this process, the units were organised into comparable characteristics. A rule was written that served as a basis for inclusion/exclusion decisions. The rules were often changed as further units were considered but every unit had to be admissible under the final form of the rule (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These initial categories were subsumed into other categories until the most important remained. These summary categories provide the themes for the discussion chapter that follows.

3.13 Memoing

Throughout the data collection, coding and category development, a key tool was that of memoing. This process includes a record of reflections and comments as the analysis continues which can inform all levels of analysis (Glaser, 1978; Miles & Huberman, 1994;

Charmaz, 2006). This method was a way of following and attaining the researcher's ideas about possible connections between aspects of the data and more generally the researcher's thought processes as the study developed and could be equated to 'workings out' (Creswell, 2007). Memos permitted the recording of perceptions on the data and processes, which could be revisited and labelled so that they were easily retrievable to aid the analysis process. Initially, a notebook was maintained through shorthand notes and diagrammatic representations of the research process, recording potential links in the data, within data and connections between data. This was facilitated by various functions using the software package (QSR, NVivo. Version.10) at a later stage of the analysis.

3.14 Data Display

A variety of diagrammatic representations were used to display ideas and concepts. These ideas contributed to data collection and were used to order data prior to and during meaning generation. Various forms of diagrammatic representation of data were used including matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and logic diagrams (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

3.15 Credibility of Data

Acceptance of multiple truths within the interpretive paradigm means that truth should be represented by credibility (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hammersley, 1992). Unlike absolute truth, credibility is challenging the researcher and the reader by asking the question, are the findings of the inquiry worth paying attention to? Seale (1999) states that credibility has two central concepts – validity and reliability. Interpretive research regards validity as the accuracy of the findings that allows the researcher and participants to feel safe enough to act upon them (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Reliability within the interpretive paradigm examines how effectively the research was carried out.

In ascertaining the validity of the study, three threats to validity were identified:

- The impact of the researcher on the setting – the halo or Hawthorne effect. This is likely to be seen in changing the behaviour of the people involved in the setting.

- The respondent withholding information or giving information they judge the researcher wants to hear
- The researchers' assumptions, pre-conceptions and biases may influence the validity of the study. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Silverman, 2006)

3.15.1 Researcher Reactivity

Padgett (1998) states that the impact of the researcher or researcher reactivity can be minimised by prolonged involvement with the group being studied. This chapter has highlighted how problematic it was to gain access to schools in particular, and therefore it is evident that the researcher did not spend a great deal of time with any of the stakeholders. Nevertheless, the completion of field notes following all interviews indicated a positive relationship was established overall and this was likely to reduce the threat of reactivity (Padgett, 1998). This was likely to be further reduced by the fact that very little research had been conducted on this PE-CPD programme and participants (LSP tutors) saw this study as an opportunity to provide an insight into their experiences of delivering this PE-CPD programme in primary schools. Teachers viewed it as an opportunity to discuss their teaching of PE collectively, allowing them to share experiences and voice the challenges faced with teaching this subject. Finally, pupils regarded this subject as their favourite of all subjects and saw it as an opportunity to add their voice to the type of PE taught in schools.

However, there were some isolated cases, for example; it was felt that teachers were cautious in answering certain questions freely due to the presence of the school principal during the interview, while one teacher did admit that the researcher's presence had encouraged him to pay more attention to the learning outcomes of PE lessons. Despite these isolated examples, the researcher concurred with Mulhall (2003) that the researcher reactivity was somewhat overemphasised. Nevertheless, the relationship with the teachers was likely to have had an influence on the findings during the interviews. In relation to interviewing pupils, the researcher was an unfamiliar adult and it could have encouraged pupils to provide answers they thought the researcher wanted to hear during the interview process, also known as the deference effect (Russell, 1994). Field notes indicated that on a number of occasions, pupils checked with the researcher in relation '*Are you looking for our own opinions about PE?*'

However, the quality of the interview questions, the obtaining of 'rich' data and the rapport established with all stakeholders helped overcome such potential power issues.

3.15.2 Peer Debriefing

A further technique employed was the use of peer debriefing. Lincoln & Guba (1985) state a highly competent qualitative researcher should be asked to review the data and analysis of it. The purpose of using this technique was to confirm that the researcher's interpretations of the three sets of data were conducted accurately. It was agreed that this was the case.

3.15.3 Triangulation of Data

Tashakkori & Teddie (2003) define the triangulation of data as the combination and comparisons of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, and/or interferences that occur at the end of the study. A variety of methods of data collection provided different perspectives and produced data that had the potential to possess inherent weaknesses regarding the overall aims of a particular and/or practical obstacles the researcher experienced (Denscombe, 2003). Cohen *et al.*, (2000) believe that if researchers exclusively depend on one particular method of data collection, their interpretation of what they are exploring may influence or miscomprehend their interpretation of what is being explored. When different methods of data collection are implemented, each method has the potential to present different viewpoints, which can be compared and contrasted by the researcher. Different perspectives can corroborate findings and improve validity of the data. The development of the categories from the coding process included the tutors' interview data combined and compared to those that emerged from the analysis of teachers' and then, from pupils' interview data.

3.15.4 Theoretical Stance

To improve the reliability of a study, it is necessary for the researcher to make the research process transparent and make explicit the theoretical stance from which the interpretation took place (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The purpose of the study, the choice of topic and

rationale for the theoretical underpinning of the research were made clear to all gatekeepers and participants. It was also hoped that the LSP tutors and teachers would find the research useful in developing/changing their delivery/teaching of games. Collins (1992) states that forthrightness is paramount since it is impossible to complete research without being guided by values. However, the reader may find it difficult to determine the value of data provided by quotes from interviews and pieces of information from discarded field notes and documents. The use of edited quotes was used to tell it as it was or say something meaningful. This self-reflexive process was used to suggest that the views put forward are those of the participants and not the researcher's. These quotations were utilised to support the analytical categories (coding). There is a danger that it may only provide one view if the culling that took place during analysis supports that view. Padgett (1998) advocates the use of negative case analysis can reduce researcher bias. Instances that contradicted initial beliefs were searched for and included in the analysis and discussion that followed. Moreover, all data was kept to allow me to refer back to the sources for analysis purposes.

3.15.5 Respondent Validation

Both Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Patton (1990) support respondent validation or taking the data back to the participants. Interview transcripts were sent to LSP tutors asking them to verify the accuracy of the data. While this proved to be an unsuccessful endeavour, the decision to present the findings of this study to various stakeholders and interested parties (LSPs, Academics, ISC) made the researcher aware of descriptive rather than reflective errors. This process confirmed that the data reflected the on-going issues and challenges in relation to PE-CPD provision in schools and highlighted aspects of the implementation for the ISC to consider, revise or examine.

3.16.6 Audit Trail

Altheide & Johnson (1994) advocate that it is obligatory for researchers to have logic for assessing and communicating the process through which information was acquired. A final mechanism to improve validity and reliability is to describe the research strategy in detail. An audit trail can provide a vehicle through which this can be achieved. This involves detailed documentation of the research process, to the extent that it can be reconstructed (Morse,

2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994). A clear and precise audit trail of the data collection and analytical procedure, which comprised of maintaining a complete record of all activities while conducting the research, through the methodical recording of the contact summaries, the secure storage of all raw data (recording and transcriptions) and details of all the coding was logged in a coding journal. Robson (2002) states that the main threat to providing a valid description rests with incompleteness of data, so that tape recording of interviews and their transcription verbatim can assuage this threat. Altheide & Johnson (1994) consider the validity of a study is enhanced by this '*reflective accounting*' a process that is necessary for the accountability of the study (Holliday, 2007). There is a necessity for clear explanation of the analysis procedure and especially meaning generation is recognised as particularly important (Mason, 2002). The analysis procedures should be clearly outlined so that a person not involved in the research process would be able to follow them. In the case of this study, all procedures are described in detail, including the planned approach to analysis. The development of the analysis process in this qualitative study is discussed further in the results chapter and considered in the discussion chapter. The aim of this approach is to make explicit the process by which the data were interpreted.

Conclusion

Using the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme as a test case, the aim of this study was to evaluate the implementation of this PE-CPD programme in primary schools and its perceived success. To fulfil this aim, it was necessary to address the objectives of this study. The research methodology adopted is located within the interpretive research paradigm. Qualitative data collection took place over a three year period between 21/1/2009 – 4/3/2011. Semi-structured interviews and group interviews were chosen as the research tools and the resultant data were analysed inductively. The ethical issues of consent, privacy, disclosure and accuracy were addressed by the adoption and completion of the necessary National University of Ireland Galway, NUIG ethical paperwork. To address the two concepts of validity and reliability in order to improve the credibility of the data collected, the researcher made the research process transparent and made explicit the theoretical stance from which the interpretation took place; utilised respondent validation/member checks, triangulation, peer debriefing and completed an audit trail. It is to the presentation of the findings that we now turn our attention.

Table 6: Local Sports Partnership (LSP) Tutors

LSP Tutors	Gender	County
LSP 1	Male	County C
LSP 2	Female	County C
LSP 3	Male	County C
LSP 4	Female	County C
LSP 5	Male	County A
LSP 6	Female	County A
LSP 7	Female	County D
LSP 8	Female	County A
LSP 9	Female	County E
LSP 10	Female	County F
LSP 11	Female	County B
LSP12	Female	County G/H
LSP 13	Female	County I
LSP 14	Male	County J

Table 7: Primary School Teachers

Primary School	County	Group Interview
School A	County A	Two Female Teachers
School B	County A	Four Female Teachers
School C	County A	Seven Female Teachers/Three Male Teachers
School D	County A	Three Female Teachers/One Male Teacher
School E	County A	Two Female Teachers
School F	County A	Three Female Teachers
School G	County A	Eight Female Teachers/One Male Teacher
School H	County A	One Female Teacher/One Male Teacher
School I	County A	One Female Teacher
School J	County A	Three Female Teachers
School K	County B	Principal (Male) Teacher
School L	County B	Three Female Teachers
School M	County B	Three Female Teachers
School N	County B	Two Female Teachers
School O	County B	Two Female Teachers
School P	County B	Three Female Teachers
School Q	County B	One Female Teacher

Table 8: Primary School Pupils

School	Location	Group Interview
School A	County A	3 boys/3 girls
School B	County A	6 girls
School C	County A	3 boys/3 girls
School D	County A	3 boys/3 girls
School E	County A	3 boys/3 girls
School F	County A	3 boys/3 girls
School G	County B	3 boys/3 girls
School H	County B	6 girls
School I	County B	3 boys/3 girls
School J	County B	3 boys/3 girls
School K	County B	3 boys/3 girls
School L	County B	6 boys
School M	County B	3 boys/3 girls
School N	County B	3 boys/3 girls
School O	County B	3 boys/3 girls

Chapter 4:

The Findings

4.0 Introduction

The findings presented in this chapter stem from the study in the order of themes. They are based upon inductive analysis of the data relating to the purpose of this study, which is to investigate the implementation of a PE-CPD programme in primary schools and its perceived success. The themes that emerged from the analysis function as a guide or structure to this findings chapter and make explicit the interconnections between stakeholders and the interconnections between the categories. The themes offer an explanation and insight into PE-CPD provision in Irish primary schools and the educational structures, processes and priorities that have influenced this provision.

4.1 A Narrowed Curriculum

This chapter commences with pupils' perceptions of PE in primary schools, as they are the key recipients of this PE-CPD programme. The group interviews with pupils focus on three key questions; what do pupils like about PE, what do pupils dislike about PE and their recommendations to improve the delivery of this subject. Teachers and tutors to varying degrees through discussing issues and concerns about the delivery of this subject support these perceptions of PE. The findings show that the structures, processes and priorities in place within primary schools have resulted in what has been defined as a narrowed curriculum.

This narrowed curriculum consists on the following institutional and attitudinal themes: **(4.1.1) PE: No Cognitive – Educational Value (4.1.2) Domination of the Games Strand, (4.1.3) Girl/Boy Dynamic (4.1.4) Health & Safety Concerns (4.1.5) Environmental School Barriers (4.1.6) External Coaches & Specialised PE-Teachers.** These themes provide an insight into the stakeholders' relationship with each other through their participation in, delivery of, or facilitation of this subject. It provides a number of explanations or contributing factors as to why this PE-CPD programme has made no lasting influence as a key supplementary resource in providing effective PE-CPD provision in primary schools.

4.1.1 PE: No Cognitive – Educational Value

An overwhelming majority of pupils from both counties in this study spoke positively of PE, their participation in the subject and deemed it their favourite because they had fun. Yet, pupils' descriptions of this subject reflected not so much PE classes but mere extensions of break time activities, one that was devoid of cognitive and educational value. This issue did not deter pupils' connection and affinity to and participation in PE, in fact, it maybe the lack of cognitive/educational value that may have been the catalyst for the conflictive relationship between pupils and their class teachers.

Pupils used a number of expressions like '*I like to run around*' (GP-3:p.1) '*mess with your friends*' (GP-2:p.1) '*gets you out of work*' (GP-6:p.1) '*taking a break*' (GP-2:p.1) '*having a laugh*' (GP-7:p.1) '*a break from doing work*' (GP-4:p.1) '*it breaks up the day*' (GP-10:p.1) '*I like getting out in the fresh air*' (GP-11:p.1) '*you have fun with friends, you do it for an hour and you feel happy when you are doing it*' (GP-9:p.1). PE for these pupils was viewed as a break from academic work because this subject was delivered outside the classroom. Perspectives of PE by school pupils were based on contrast between academic subjects and that of PE because '*you get to do no homework from it*' (GP-14:p.1).

There was a clear disconnect of the body and mind with no cognitive/educational value attached to classes. '*It is fun, you get a lot of exercise, and you don't have to use your brain*' (GP-10:p.2). Teachers also discussed PE as being a break or detachment from the routine of the classroom and teaching. The focus of PE classes was to get pupils moving, an opportunity for both teachers and pupils to show themselves in a different guise of the pupil/teacher dynamic, away from the classroom. '*I love teaching PE, It's different from sitting in a classroom, it's different for a teacher, get them outside running, I think it is nice for the children to see me getting involved, they are not looking at you as a teacher when doing PE, it is a slightly different way of teaching*' (GT-10:p10).

One recurring theme throughout many of the interviews conducted with pupils was that their descriptions and feelings concerning this subject became somewhat blurred or over-lapped with those of break time activities. Many pupils talked in general, rather than in the specific

regarding this subject and saw it as an opportunity to express their disapproval over issues concerning their school's health and safety policies. *'If you bring in your own football or skipping rope, you are not allowed to play with it, you have to put it in your bag and put it away, it is dangerous'* (GP-6:p.5). Many pupils discussed this subject and break time activities as if they were the same thing, which prompted the interviewer to rein the subject back towards the focused topic during the interview process.

(Pupil: 1) I like Gladiator

I: Interviewer: What is Gladiator?

(Pupil: 1) it's like a game where you can run around, you have to have fifteen people and you just literally kill each other, take each other down

I: Now is that PE?

(Pupils: 2-3-4-5-6) NO!

(Pupil: 1) Some schools do it (GP-12:p1)

A number of pupils made an association between PE and health because it was an opportunity to be healthy (GP-2:p.1) *'getting out in the fresh air'* (GP-4:p.1) *'to be active'* (GP-7:p.2) and believed PE *'gave them energy'* (GP-10:p.1). PE classes tended to focus on, or were discussed purely from a physical and physiological context that mirrored physical fitness sessions *'I like it because you get fit and you run around'* (GP-3:p.1). The theme of health and exercise was prevalent throughout all primary school teachers' interviews and viewed the school to be the principal societal institution for the development of PE, PA skills and the only opportunity for children, particularly from urban areas to partake in exercise. Increasing sedentary lifestyles and the proliferation of home entertainment devices exacerbated children's' perceived lack of creative play in non-educational settings.

(Teacher: 2-3-4) it keeps them active

(Teacher: 4) they are so used to sitting down in front of a computer, none of them go out and play anymore, they have no imagination, they can't talk about anything outside of the house cos it is all about I play Wii teacher! and you are going yeah! but do you not go out and play games? the likes of, we would have played, when we were younger and it is like.....no teacher!

(Teacher: 5) I play the DS

(Teacher: 4) at least when you do PE, you are getting them active; it wears them out for a while. (GT-6:p4)

A number of teachers from county A made the comparison between their own, and the younger generation in relation to health, obesity and fundamental movement skills *'I don't know what the statistics are, but an awful lot of them are obese and an awful lot of their hand-eye coordination, they just don't seem to have the same coordination. Some of them are so clumsy and simple tasks that I would have done as child without thinking, they do not seem to do it anymore, catching balls, they can't'* (GT-4: p.3). The importance of PE was expressed by many teachers in all schools but was most pronounced in schools in county B, who believed that delivering this subject was an important opportunity for pupils to be introduced and exposed to a number of different sports. *'I think it gives them a taster of sports, different types of sports, it encourages them to try and see what skills they are good at. I noticed from doing athletics, some children are really good at throwing things, very good at jumping, very good at hurdles, some children are very good at dance, so it gives them an outlook'* (GT-8:p6).

The majority of the curriculum in primary schools is delivered with an onus on the development of the mind, which is predominately teacher-led, class-based activities that are academic in nature. A number of teachers and tutors discussed PE as having affective qualities especially for those pupils who were not academically inclined, giving them a chance to show their talents in sport, gain confidence and to feel included and part of their class. *'You see children that don't shine in other areas, don't really fit in, they can really shine, that is very useful, I think for the teacher to use PE as an incentive, the inclusion of a child that wouldn't perhaps be good in other areas'* (GT-10:p.10).

It was interesting to note that out of the fifteen group interviews; only three pupils made reference PE from an educational perspective. *'I like the way you get to learn new skills, play Gaelic and Hurling, I didn't really know that'* (GP-13:p.1). Moreover, only one pupil discussed the presence of their teacher in a teaching capacity to facilitate and assist pupils with this subject *'If you are not that good at it, the principal will help us, tell us, he will show*

us an easier way to do it' (GP-13:p.1). Many pupils portrayed this subject as being akin to supervised unorganised play, exacerbated by the absence of their class teacher, which was much more pronounced in schools in county B. 'We'd be out, our teacher doesn't, she sits and watches us a lot of the time, she is cold and likes the heat' (GP-12:p.6).

This sense of distinct detachment of PE as a subject from the rest of the curriculum was also present in teachers' feelings and perceptions of delivering this subject. The majority of teachers interviewed spoke positively about teaching PE and yet, beneath these initial spontaneous responses, the manner in which they discussed their delivery was one that was viewed as facilitating 'core' subjects rather than delivering PE as a subject in its own right. Teachers were adamant that PE facilitated learning or had positive cognitive related outcomes, by '*letting off steam' (GT-17:p.4) 'pupils are more composed when they come in, settled, and get more work done' (GT-7:p.2).*

With little cognitive value attached to PE classes, this subject differed from core subjects and had become relegated. This was most evident when PE was delivered on a conditional basis of good behaviour and completion of schoolwork to a certain level.

(Pupil: 5) he (teacher) says that we have too much work, we will get out when we have finished our work, and then like we do loads of work, then we don't get it finished

(Pupil: 1) he says we are going to do PE except when someone does like doesn't do something right, that all affect us, and we don't get outside if someone does something wrong (GP-6:p.3)

A number of tutors were aware that PE had not been delivered or was withheld in schools in their county due to issues of behaviour. '*There was a woman from X, whose daughter hadn't done PE in six weeks, because they were naughty, so it was depending on behaviour' (LSP-10:p.21).* Teachers from two schools in county A talked candidly about using PE as an effective disciplining mechanism. '*I would like to point out it is great for discipline in the school, if they want to play in school teams, they need to behave well' (GT-9:p.4).* In one school in county B, a teacher had implemented a conditional strategy in order to achieve

academic attainment and maintain discipline by introducing a points system whereby all pupils had to achieve a certain amount of points on a weekly basis in order for PE to be delivered.

(Pupils 1-2-3-4-5-6) you have to get over twenty points but no one gets over it

(Pupil: 5) you have to get five groups over twenty points and they play the longest

(Pupil: 5) school was opened from September, it was the first time we ever got outside, with X (coach)

I: What do the points refer to?

(Pupils: 1-2-3-4-5-6) work that you get done in class

(Pupil: 6) as a reward

(Pupil: 5) you get two points for spellings, one point for being good

(Pupil: 3) last year we barely ever got PE if you did not get over twenty points, you would have to sit out and watch and it is so boring (GP-11:p10)

The justification for such informal policies in schools towards this subject was rationalised by one teacher as simply ‘not an academic subject’ (GT-6:p.4). A number of teachers from county A discussed openly, their belief that core subjects took priority. ‘English and Maths take precedence above everything else, we spend our day doing English and Maths, and squish the rest of the curriculum where we can, I spend very long hours doing that’ (GT-11:p.5-6). Such precedence of certain subjects was due to the non-practice of PE being formally graded in state examinations. ‘PE doesn’t rank very highly, teachers aren’t graded on it, they don’t feel it is of high importance’ (LSP-6:p.12). Parents were also complicit in this subject relegation of PE with one teacher discussing how a trend was occurring within her school. ‘We have a wee issue with a lot of children dropping out of sports, we have parents signing this is to exempt X not participate in PE, even though we make it clear that it is part of the curriculum, as any other subject is’ (GT-10:p.35).

This subject relegation did not go unnoticed by pupils from both counties and viewed this subject as different from the rest of the curriculum. Pupils felt that PE as a subject was undemocratic and when making recommendations, believed that they should have more input

and choice in what was actually delivered. There was a sense of entitlement running through a number of interviews with pupils, who would have preferred if there was agreement as a class, as to what activities were delivered. *'I'd like if he (Teacher) actually asked us what we would like to do, we'd like more games that everyone agrees on'* (GP-4:p.8). Pupils felt that in some cases, they had a better understanding of the rules and regulations of activities compared to their class teacher. *'I hate the way the teachers always make up the rules and I think it is a different way, they do not know the rules properly and you get really mad at them'* (GP-4:p.5).

This sense of entitlement manifested in pupils' right to challenge their class teacher's knowledge of the subject and selection of activities, as they were perceived as repetitive. *'I don't like the way our teacher makes us do things we don't like to play, he just picks the sport he just does all the time, he has to scream to get us to force to do anything'* (GP-1:p.2). In one school in county B, pupils discussed PE favourably because their class teacher allowed them to have input or even dictate what was delivered during their classes and believed that being included in this process led to all pupils enjoying their PE classes. *'I like doing PE cos it's fun and you get to decide what to play, soccer, football and all those games, we get to decide what we want to play, we tell him (teacher) what we want to play and we have options and then we pick one'* (GP-2:P.5).

4.1.2 PE: The Dominance of Games

This study aimed to investigate the extent to which this PE-CPD programme provided fun, high quality, inclusive, non-competitive aspects to school pupils' participation in the games strand. PE by definition incorporates six strands (Athletics, Aquatics, Dance, Games, Gymnastics, Outdoor-Adventure & Activities); however, what was revealing from pupils' perspectives in both counties, was that the vast majority equated and defined PE as that of the games strand and discussed this strand at length. While pupils were aware of other strands, these remained peripheral as the games strand was their primary focus for discussion. There was a stark contrast in the definition of games between both counties with schools from county A adopting a much broader definition compared to schools from county B, delivering a more 'traditional' limited form (Gaelic football and Hurling). Pupils from county A

welcomed these activities. *'I like the way you get to have fun, you get to learn different games and stuff' (GP-13:p.2).*

When asked to suggest what recommendations would improve the delivery of their PE classes, the majority of boys and a significant number of girls from both counties wanted to see more traditional sports (e.g. Gaelic & soccer) delivered. Other traditional sports like Hurling, Rugby and Rounders were favoured by boys while girls, would prefer to see more established sports and activities such as Basketball, Tennis and Volleyball. The main reason for such popularity was because these games were enjoyable, fun and they felt confident doing them. There was a clear association between perceived competency and favouring certain sports and activities because pupils stated that they played these games and sports for their school team or were involved in their local clubs. *'Football and Gaelic cos I like it and I am better at them, we have a school team' (GP-3:p.4).*

A number of pupils (particularly boys) from both counties had very set ideas or narrowed perspectives of what constituted the games strand and PE. Anything new or different that was outside of this fixed homogenous mould of two teams playing one particular ball game was unwelcomed. The issue of competency and feeling confident, doing specific games was threatened by these new activities that focused on group work in ways that promoted pupil learning.

(Pupil: 1) I do not like when you are going out for PE and everybody is not doing the same. I don't think this is PE cos it should be everybody doing the same cos it is PE and it is a bit boring,

(Pupil: 2) last week we had to create our own obstacle course and it wasn't really that fun. (GP-11:p.3-4)

In a number of schools, a multi-games PE approach was delivered where pupils participated in a variety of different games simultaneously through structuring the PE hall into stations, allowing pupils to move from station to station in order to develop and practice new skills. This approach was disliked by boys, who believed only one activity should be played at a time in order to become proficient *'I don't like stations cos I think you should just focus on*

just one thing instead of stations and get it right and then go on to the next thing' (GP-12:p.7).

This limited view of the games strand extended to include the entire PE curriculum as other strands were not welcomed and categorised as *'not much of a sport' (GP-3:p.3)* with particular reference to the dance strand. Pupils from county A discussed how their PE classes were divided into two 30-minute sessions and felt that they were losing one of their half hour sessions to participate in this strand rather than viewing it as an integral part of their PE curriculum. *'We get a half an hour inside and a half an hour outside, but if we do a different thing, we are doing Hip-Hop at the moment, we lose one of those half-hours' (GP-2:p.3).* Almost all schools in this study delivered the dance strand and to a lesser extent, the gymnastics strand with the assistance of external instructors. Teachers discussed particularly how boys' disapproval of such strands were met with resistance, refusal and repeated requests to play football. For teachers, these strands in particular, were challenging to deliver. *'They would sulk, I teach sixth class boys, if you tell them, we are doing dancing today, you hear the groans and they will be Sir! Can we not just play football, and that is all that they want to do, they will complain' (GT-6:p.3).*

Pupils from county A (mainly boys) expressed their frustration about having to play games they did not like and never got the chance to play Gaelic games (football) because their teacher believed that such pupils received many opportunities to play football. *'We have a school team but we don't do a lot of it during PE' (GP-3:P.3)* and boys in particular, viewed PE as an opportunity to practice their GAA skills during their PE classes but were left disgruntled by their teacher's refusal to accommodate them.

I: What you would like to see more of in PE?

(Pupil: 1-2-3) Football Football!

(Pupil: 1) we never play football, cos teacher thinks that we always play football and they think it is really boring and she would say that other people don't like football and then she goes ahead and plays another subject we don't like (GP-1:p.2)

Aspects of a more traditional sports-based form of PE were evident in schools in county B driven by competitive, performative practices leading to feelings of unfairness, exclusion and unwillingness to participate.

(Pupil: 5) Sometimes the games are unfair, when you are playing games, if they are like picking teams and they pick all the good people and the other team is not as good

(Pupil: 2) I don't really like when we are losing

(Pupil: 6) when teams get unfair and you play a game too much, it gets boring (GP-13:p.3)

There was a general acceptance by both teachers and tutors of the popularity of football and in particular, Gaelic games. *'Most schools have a GAA team in this country, it is the biggest sport, largest number of clubs, people participating in it from young all the way up to adult, so it is understandable, I have no issue with that at all' (LSP-11:p.27)*. However, tutors expressed concern over the privileged position of GAA school teams and the fostering of an accepted culture based on competition, performance and winning over participation leading to possible exclusion and dis-interest of other pupils. *'I feel strongly about the other kids who aren't on the team, what do the rest do? What do the other kids get? It is going to be quite badly affected' (LSP-11.p.27)*.

Teachers from rural schools in both counties stated that the dominance of the games strand was due to the fact that it was the most convenient of all strands to deliver. They believed the current PE curriculum did not take into account school contexts, financial and logistical difficulties of getting to and from local amenities in order to deliver certain strands. *'The curriculum is aspirational in its attitude to PE. Swimming, we took on board this year, there is expense attached, we have to bus kids up beyond the airport and a substantial amount of money involved in collecting the children, a lot of disruption to the day, it is half a day' (GT-9:p.3)*.

Pupils' discussions and preferences surrounding PE uncovered a dichotomy of opinion. Although a large number of pupils expressed their preferences for various ball games, activities and sports, there was also an awareness and recognition that their PE classes lacked variety and choice. In some cases, pupils expressed the repetitive nature of their PE classes, focusing on Gaelic football. *'We did at the last break, we are going to do it this break, and then if we are going to do PE today, we would do it again, (stressed) which can get boring, we do the same activities all the time'* (GP-6:p.2). Pupils from county B in particular, felt that they were not progressing or learning new skills. *'It is the same drills every week (stressed) we are just like, Ah! we've already done these so we are all so bored!'*(GP-6:p.3). A significant number of pupils called for a greater variety of games and activities, which were less traditional e.g. No Man's Land, Fireball, Softball, Handball and Cricket.

(Pupil: 5) I would like to keep on changing the subject, I would like more unusual sports cos we just play like games

(Pupil: 3) I totally agree with her, and like we can just try any sports, like you are not used to it in our school, you are not used to playing badminton or tennis in our school at all, but I would like to have more basketball, as she said, cos those sports are quite rare (GP-3:p.4)

Teachers believed that, although the Buntús programme provided greater variety to their PE classes, it was still focused on the games strand, the most popular of all the PE strands. *'It was still ball skills, which we do a lot of anyway'* (GT-11: p16). One group of teachers discussed the dominance of the games strand believing that provision for this strand was more than adequate and proposed this PE-CPD programme should be replicated for the other five strands of the PE curriculum. *'you are dealing with one of six, so what is going to happen is most days when you are doing PE, they are going to be doing games, fair enough, but what you also need to look out for is other activities within PE, that is just not games all day every day'* (GT-11:p.14-16).

4.1.3 Girl/Boy Dynamic

Group interviews with pupils in both counties revealed the presence of a 'boy/girl dynamic' with a particular reference to the games strand. This dynamic referred to the relationship

between boys and girls and in particular, girls' participation in Gaelic football and soccer matches during PE classes, which led to conflict between them. Girls from county B especially, felt that boys would not pass the ball to them because it was felt that they were not as proficient as boys, lacked the necessary skills, competency, athleticism, and placed a greater focus on participation rather than winning. Therefore, football during PE classes was the exclusive domain of boys and dismissed girls through exclusionary tactics, e.g. being rough, competitive, and only passing to other boys on the same team.

(Pupil: 1) I hate the way boys never pass to the girls! They think they are better than girls they are just keeping it amongst themselves

(Pupil: 3) if you go to catch a ball, a boy will go in and catch it before you because he thinks you won't catch it and they would get really competitive

(Pupil: 2) if you are on the same team, they are packed together (GP-8:p4).

Due to these exclusionary tactics, many girls felt marginalised.

(Pupil: 1) It makes us feel small, you are not doing anything

(Pupil: 3) it makes you feel bored and boys never put you up against marking boys, they always put you on girls cos they think you are not fit for boys

(Pupil: 2) you just have to stand there and wait until it is over (GP-8:p4).

A number of teachers stated that fourth, fifth and sixth class boys were very competitive, aggressive, obstinate, and at times, tried to dictate what was played during their PE lessons, which made it detrimental to the delivery of the overall PE curriculum. *'They are so competitive, I end up abandoning games half the time, they are constantly fighting. It is mostly boys, they slag each other, half of them end up sitting out cos they get into a strop, they don't see the fun side of it at all, girls are more easy going, it is hard doing PE' (GT-3:p.5)*. Teachers stated that boys were more involved in organised sports and believed that PE was an opportunity to practice such sports that were structured and competitive in nature and did not see the relevancy of learning new skills and participating in different strands. *'Older children are involved in organised sports, the tendency is when they go out for PE, it is their*

opportunity to play sport and feel they are playing games rather than being active and mildly competitive, they want to play something that's has rules, strict structure, they feel they are getting involved, otherwise, they think, why do we do this? When we can play football? we enjoy football' (GT-3p.5-6).

One group of girls from county B, proposed the possibility of boys and girls being separated so that they can both play football. *'I would like if girls could have bigger grass to play on, then girls could play on one bit and the boys could play on the other cos then the boys could get their football session and then the girls would get theirs'(GP-12:p.8).* The practice of gender appropriate PE classes was standard practice in schools in county B with girls feeling constantly under surveillance and were only permitted to do simplistic Gaelic football skills compared to boys. *'We'd be split up into boys' and girls' teams, the girls have to play one match and the boys get the harder stuff, some of the stuff is quite easy. I don't really like it cos all the boys get the more interesting games, we get the easy games, if we were playing Gaelic, the boys would be able to do more stuff and there always has to be someone watching us but there is no one watching the boys, there wouldn't be as many rules' (GP-14:p.5-6).*

Girls believed that they were not given the same opportunities as boys to learn and participate in full contact sports due to fear of injuries. *'We never get to play Rugby matches, we are not allowed to do full contact, sometimes people get hurt, it's the boys have to play against each other, the girls have to play against each other' (GP-14:p.4).* Three girls from one school played football for GAA teams outside of school and expressed their frustration at not being allowed to play football with boys. They felt frustrated that they had to participate in the dance strand due to the majority of girls favouring dance over football and therefore having to fall into line.

(Pupil: 5) Last Friday, the girls were dancing and we (boys) were playing football

(Pupil: 1) cos you have a choice whether you want to do football or something else (Girl)

I: and what do the girls usually prefer?

(Pupil: 1) football! Some girls in the school hate football they usually keep the girls together who don't like football which means that all the girls have to do something else

(Pupil: 3) you are not concentrating, you are thinking how much fun you would have outside playing rather than dancing (GP-8:p4)

Within this same interview, two boys were of the opinion that they had no problem with these three girls playing football because they were very competent football players. They proposed that these three girls should be allowed to play football, thus reinforcing the status quo that football was exclusively for boys with exceptions given to girls of similar ability and competency.

I: why wouldn't you pass it to the girls?

(Pupil: 4) well I would pass it to X, X & X cos they do play football, but the rest of the girls wouldn't be more experienced

(Pupil: 2) there would be girls that would drop it (GP-8:p.9)

This 'girl/boy dynamic' recurred in relation to what activities were actually chosen by the class teacher in both counties. Pupils expressed strong feelings of unfairness due to apparent favouritism shown to girls over boys and vice versa. Boys felt that their teacher did not allow them to play football during PE due to a minority of girls in their class. Their teacher's awareness of this, over the majority of pupils' popularity for certain sports was interpreted as showing favouritism.

(Pupil: 4) I don't like when the girls get to pick because most boys want to play football, girls want to play catching games and we'd rather play football, it is really boring

(Pupils: 1-2-3-4-5-6) No! No! (girls) Yes, it is (boys)

(Pupil: 5) the girls usually get the upper hand

(Pupil: 3-4) No....No

(Pupils: 1-2-5-6) yeah it is

(Pupil: 5) we don't choose, the teacher does, we want to play football, if some people don't like football, teacher will go ah some of the people don't like

football, then we have to do different things, it is boring for us boys to do that, so why should we have to do that? (GP-12:p.4).

This issue was further highlighted in one rural school where girls felt disgruntled that the boys got preferential treatment due to the school receiving assistance from GAA coaches in preparation for a school cup final. The girls felt that it was unjust that they did not get to avail of this opportunity as well. In response, the boys from this school argued that their team wanted to win and therefore it was felt unwarranted to have girls engaged in such training.

(Pupil: 4) when the boys got to the final, some of the ex-players came out and taught them and the girls didn't get out

(Pupil: 5) we got into the final, there is not enough room, we wanted to get it done good, we wanted to win it, we wanted to do well, There is not enough space for playing football

(Pupil: 4) well I wish we could have as well (GP-12:p.7).

4.1.4 Health & Safety Concerns

One of the most prevalent themes or issues throughout all the schools focused on the issue of health and safety. Many teachers were overly aware, hesitant, if not fearful of children becoming injured during PE and the extended school day. It was felt that the sole responsibility for any potential incident lay with teachers and could potentially result in their school facing legal action. *'We were obsessed by health and safety, the need to supervise kids at all times, our kids have to be left to the gate', I've rushed around trying to make sure, nobody got hurt, the awareness that parents have around health and safety'(GT-16:p.16).* For teachers, such issues have had a lasting impact on the ability to teach a varied PE curriculum, resulting in them becoming risk averse to certain contact sports. *'I wouldn't dream of coaching rugby' (GT-16:p.16).* Other teachers discussed the heightened tensions surrounding the delivery of certain strands e.g. (Aquatics) and the need to self-monitor their behaviour. *'The whole safety element has just escalated altogether with regards to swimming, I wouldn't go near any of the children, it's terrible to think that you can't help them getting changed, child protection and your own looking after yourself' (GT-14:p.29-30).*

One of the sports liaison officers from IWA was of the opinion that insurance was a major issue in the delivery of PE for those with disabilities, an issue that was felt as unwarranted and believed teachers were inadequately informed in relation to safety and insurance policy regulations. *'Insurance pops up a lot, will the child fall out of the wheelchair? they say that such a one can't be included because they have a disability, I think they have a big perception, they haven't actually checked it out, the insurance policy will say, not including X Y in a PE class, they are not covered, all students are covered by insurance'* (LSP-13:p10-II). Gymnastics was the main strand that caused most anxiety, as teachers were afraid of using the equipment and felt they were not qualified or had the appropriate expertise. *'Gymnastics, I think the facilities in all schools generally are very poor, they don't have proper PE mats, I don't think the training is sufficient to teach children correctly, how to vault, do forward rolls, backward rolls, be able to correct those, so as a teacher, you leave yourself very open to very simple injuries happening'* (GT-9:p.1-2).

4.1.5 Environmental/Policy School Barriers

Environmental school barriers are defined in this chapter as environmental and policy approaches that affect or prohibit change in the structure of physical and organisational school environments to provide safe, attractive and convenient places for PA. The main barriers discussed by all stakeholders in this study focused on curriculum time allocation and the provision of facilities and resources.

Time allocation and scheduling of PE in both counties differed on both accounts. In the majority of county A primary schools, PE was divided into two thirty minute intervals delivered over two days on a weekly basis. This was due mainly to much greater pupil numbers. In county B, the majority of schools delivered their PE classes over one 45 minute to 1 hour interval. Pupils in a number of schools in county B felt there was little or no provision given for PE on a weekly basis and was delivered more so on an ad-hoc monthly basis. *'Half an hour a week, actually playing PE, this week we got none, last week we got none'* (GP-12: p9). PE classes were often cancelled due to field trips, excursions and whole school activities therefore, reinforcing the relegated status of PE.

(Pupil: 1) On Friday, we were all away and she said that we were not allowed to do it on Wednesday,

(Pupil: 2) teacher said we weren't allowed it because we had to go to a show in X on Friday

(Pupil: 3) that means we missed our PE last week (GP-9:p.10).

Current guidelines for primary school PE recommend, but do not require, 60 minutes of physical education per week (Government of Ireland, 1999b). The allocation of time for the delivery of the PE curriculum from this study, suggested that there was concern that the reality of the delivery of PE in schools fell well short of recommended standards. Many teachers felt the allocation of time was insufficient and should be extended to an hour and a half in order for adequate delivery of this subject. *'Time, you have an hour a week for PE, I feel that is not enough, there should be more time available for PE that is one difficulty' (GT-1:p1-2).*

It is not surprising that, given the popularity of PE in this study and the issues surrounding the delivery of PE in both counties, pupils called for greater time allocation for this subject. Pupils felt that inadequate time allocation and the lack of provision given to the subject was unfounded. Table 9 illustrates how much time pupils' would they like to see allocated for this subject. Taking into consideration the fact that they had a number of different subjects to cover within a week, the majority of pupils from both counties stated that they would like to see an increase of 45 minutes to an hour in some schools and between three and five hours a week in other schools allocated out over the school week.

Table 9: Time Allocation – Pupils’ Recommended Time Allocation.

Schools (School Pupils)	Time Allocated	Recommended Time – Allocation
School A (County A)	1 Hour: Two Half Hour periods	-----
School B (County A)	1 Hour: Two half hour periods	-----
School C (County A)	1 hour: Two half hour periods	-----
School D (County A)	1 Hour: Two half hour periods	-----
School E (County A)	1 Hour: Two half hour periods	-----
School F (County A)	1 Hour: Two half hour periods	-----
School G (County A)	Ad-Hoc: twice a Month	45 mins-1 hour per week
School H (County B)	1 Hour	1 hour thirty minutes - two hours
School I (County B)	1 Hour	2-3 hours per week
School J (County B)	1 Hour	4-5 hours per week
School K (County B)	45 Minutes	1.15 minutes per week
School L (County B)	Ad-hoc: Twice a Month	1 hour per week
School M (County B)	1 Hour	2.30-5 hours per week
School N (County B)	45 Minutes	3 hours per week
School O (County B)	-----	1 hour per week

The need to be well organised with lessons planned, coupled with the logistical challenge of moving from the classroom to the hall and subsequent delivery, resulted in defining the teaching of PE problematic to such an extent that the subject was not delivered in some cases. *‘Time wise is why we skip PE, cos, we have more important things to do, it is a hassle to bring them down to the hall and the amount of time to get them back with twenty minutes of play time’ (GT-2:p.2)*

Many pupils from both counties stated a preference for doing PE outside rather than indoors. *'I like it when we go outside, it is more fun than inside' (GP-9:p.1)* However, due to the nature of the Irish climate, many classes were delivered indoors, which were inadequate for playing certain activities. *'There should be more outside when you are playing a game, there are three teams and one team has to sit out, it is really boring because the PE hall isn't big enough' (GP-10:p.4)*. The lack of indoor facilities was much more pronounced in smaller rural schools, which meant PE was regularly cancelled or postponed. *'I don't like wet days, cos I don't feel like going out, doing PE so we reschedule if it is PE time. I would always try and give them their PE time in the week, cos we have no facility here for indoor, so deferred till the Thursday or Friday, or whatever day the sun shines' (GT-16:p.4)*.

The growing intake of pupils was a new concern in a number of schools in both counties; however, this was most acute in urban schools in county A and one that was interlinked and further highlighted school inadequacies in relation to facilities for PE. Many of the schools were situated in large residential areas and had expanded rapidly over the previous ten years. Teachers who had initially experienced a decline in pupil numbers for a number of years were faced with a significant increase in the subsequent years and were now concerned about how best to accommodate this situation. *'I started ten years ago, we had two classes, a senior infants and a first together, now there is a split level, we have two infant classes, possibly three infant classes. Years ago, the numbers dwindled, now we are going to have to get three new porta-cabins, on top of the ones out there we are running out of space big time' (GT-4:p.17-18)*.

Teachers in urban areas in both counties felt overwhelmed when delivering PE due to the organisational skills needed for such large numbers of pupils and felt that they could not give enough time and support to those pupils who were having difficulties mastering certain activities while monitoring the entire class. *'With 28-30 children, one person is not sufficient, you can't do all their needs, you are trying to pick out the child that is not grasping it, once you start focusing on that child, the rest of them are gone, these three can't do it, the rest of them can, so now I have to help these guys, there is nothing I can actually give to these guys without having to stop to show them, as a result these guys haven't caught up it just gets messy' (GT-5:p.2-3)*.

A number of teachers discussed primary school guidelines in relation to the supervision of children in stating that there should be one teacher per fifteen pupils and yet, there was little or no support or supervision available to them when delivering PE. Teachers discussed or proposed a second person facilitating the delivery of this subject by helping to set up equipment and activities, looking out for accidents and dealing with injuries. By having a second person present, PE classes could continue and would relieve the stress of dealing with different incidents and allow teachers the opportunity to focus on teaching.

(Teacher 5) I would love help, somebody to set up the equipment, an adult; it would be great if somebody did get a knock or a hit that they could deal with a child

(Teacher: 4) if someone gets injured or a row breaks out, or you have to deal with a child on their own and you are trying to keep your eye on the game, it is very difficult to manage both (GT-3:p.8-9).

In many rural schools in county B, the size of the schools were small, which meant that one teacher delivered the complete primary school curriculum to three different school levels in one classroom also known as a multi-class situation. One principal teacher felt pressurised by the varied abilities within his class. *'The multi class situation has wide range of ability; I have fourth, fifth and sixth. I have pretty good athletes, I have kids with pretty bad coordination, you can't do a blanket lesson for all of those together, but I try to accommodate everybody'* (GT-11:p.22).

The school intake of one of the smaller rural schools was only 20 pupils and all pupils from infants through to sixth class participated in PE together in a multi-level PE class setting. This was problematic for pupils in fifth and sixth class who expressed their frustration whilst doing the gymnastics strand and felt that doing gymnastics was too simplistic and unchallenging. *'It is boring, we do crappy gymnastics, I would like to handstands and when the wee ones have to do it with us, they run all over the place, they are always not listening'* (GP-9:p.3). This was also a recurring theme when the entire school was participating in the dance strand. Again, pupils felt frustrated that they had to wait for the younger pupils to learn and perfect simplistic dance moves. *'I hate when the small ones do it with us, they don't do properly, we have to sit there waiting until they learn it, it takes ages, we don't do anything*

when they do it, it is slow, the wee ones have to do the dancing with us and that is annoying, they don't listen' (GP-9:p.4)

Inadequate provision of facilities in schools was evident in both counties. However, sufficient provision of indoor facilities (in the main) was more evident in schools in county B, providing a distinctive urban/rural divide. Teachers in urban areas of county A discussed at length inadequate facilities and subsequent time allocation affecting the delivery of this subject. *'The issue is it doubles as a church hall, there are now implications. There won't be PE for some considerations, the hall is laid for services and timetabling of the hall would mean it does affect the amount of time you can get on the time table' (GT-5:p.3.)* A second primary school in an urban area of county A welcomed the building of the new school on the existing site, as the school was old and inadequate for the delivery of the PE curriculum. *'It's not a purpose built PE hall, it is more of a general corridor hall display' (GT-12:p.2-3).* Two schools in county A in particular had a small hall or multi-purpose hall surrounded by classrooms that were in use during the day and teachers were anxious to keep noise to a minimum during their PE lessons so as not to disturb other classes. *'I find it very hard to control the children in their PE classes especially the noise, there are classrooms around us, I am under pressure to keep them quiet, the echo in the walls I get worried about when I am doing PE, without annoying others' classrooms' (GT-5:p.2).*

When asked how teachers felt about teaching PE, many were generally positive towards delivering this subject because they were sports orientated; however, it did depend on a number of factors. Teachers in a number of schools believed that the successful delivery of the curriculum came down to facilities, equipment and resources available to them. If there was ample equipment and resources, PE lessons were more enjoyable; however, this was not universal and did depend on individual schools' circumstances. *'We are very lucky, we have the astro-turf, the sports hall, whereas, I was in other schools, you only have the yard, if you have good facilities, it is an excellent subject to teach, if not, it is very very difficult' (GT-6:p.1)*

A number of teachers felt empowered and enjoyed PE because they were fortunate enough to have good facilities and resources, which resulted in their pupils being enthusiastic,

motivated, and interested during PE. It should be noted that those most positive towards delivering PE came from town and rural schools in county B who had received state funding to build new purpose-built schools containing modern facilities and equipment.

(Teacher: 1) I enjoy doing PE, I think having a good range of resources, the children are enthusiastic, interested, and motivated by it, we would have a good standard of resources

(Teacher: 2) the building of the general purpose hall really changed PE here we got that five years ago, you can plan your year, buy resources to suit strands and support them in that way (GT-8:1)

Teachers reminisced about starting out as teachers and feeling somewhat daunted at the prospect of teaching this subject and the lack of on-going support available to them. They believed that this situation has since changed with support coming in the form of a range of resource materials available from curriculum support programmes, providing clear guidelines on how best to teach each PE strand. On-going support for the delivery of this subject has been strengthened by different sporting organisations such as the GAA and the Irish Sports Council (ISC) providing training, equipment and support for the delivery of this subject. It was felt that such changes in provision of this subject had changed attitudes towards the delivery of PE in schools. *'I like it better now because we are equipped with more programmes, more literature and material, it is easier, we have the Buntús sports programme, there is GAA lesson plans, Gaelic cards, busy break, the website... BBC.co.uk/schools. There is a host of things for PE, Scoil Net, there are lots! your SPARKS box' (GT-13:p.14).*

Two schools from county B discussed the under-utilisation of equipment and felt frustrated that they were not allowed to use a greater variety of equipment during their PE classes. *'We have loads of equipment, we don't use any of it, it is just sitting there doing nothing those climbing frames, hurlies, hockeys' (GP-9: p.4).* Pupils stated that they had plenty of new equipment in their storeroom but this equipment was never used. They witnessed when such equipment was used, broken or damaged that it would not be used again during PE classes.

(Pupil: 5) the stuff is in bags getting all dusty, one thing got broken, that's it, it was all put away in, we wouldn't be allowed to touch anything

(Pupil: 2) we have loads of equipment, the master is always no! yis can't use it, because that is new stuff,

(Pupil: 1) we are not allowed with them in case we break them but what is the point in having them, if we are not allowed to use them (GP-6:p.5)

Pupils believed that the equipment was only 'for show'. By this, pupils felt that having ample equipment gave a positive veneer to a visiting education inspector or a Minister of Education as was the case in one school with the arrival of then Minister of Education to their school a week prior to their interview.

(Pupil: 2) if someone comes down, it is looking good for the school that we do PE all the time but we don't.

(Pupil: 6) we have loads of equipment and we never use it and it is probably the way the government knows

(Pupil: 3) it was the Minister, oh good! You do loads of PE and the master is like we do loads and we were just sitting there! (GP-6:p5-6)

Tutors deemed the provision and procurement of PE in schools as being quite individualistic. 'Non-existent, like for variation, some schools have everything hula hoops, skittles, different equipment where some schools you go inside the PE hall, they have a few say skipping ropes, tennis rackets and volleyballs, badminton'(LSP-2:p.14). According to some tutors, schools had ample equipment and were actively involved in acquiring new equipment through collecting voucher and coupon schemes through local supermarkets, businesses and local initiatives.

(Teacher: 2) we get a lot of support from parents, we are lucky

(Teacher: 1) we have a lot of equipment, hurling equipment, hockey, lots of balls and skipping ropes, and all that play area

(Interviewer) How did you acquire all that equipment?

(Teacher: 2) vouchers that the children brought in from Supervalu (GT-7:p.31-32).

Two rural schools in county B, through the assistance of their parent/teacher association, saw the development of a number of sporting amenities for their local school. *'That was a big hill, they couldn't play in it, they (parent's association) flattened that, and now it is the playing field and the parents association painted our playground'* (GT-8:p.8). A number of tutors emphasised, that it was the school principals' attitude and leadership towards PE that was key to PE being taught in schools. *'The principal, all the teachers are mad, getting the children fit, it depends on the principal, the principals are very pro-active, getting equipment and it comes from the principal, whoever is leading them'* (LSP-1:p.16).

4.1.6 External Coaches & Specialised PE Teachers

All interviews with teachers commenced with their personal opinions and beliefs about teaching PE, uncovering a marked difference between teachers from rural schools in county B, expressing positive feelings towards this subject. *'I like, love and enjoy PE'* (GT-8:p.1-2), in contrast to teachers from county A, who described their aversion to teaching this subject. *'It wouldn't be the subject that I would choose to do, it is not my strong point Music or Art would be easier for me, the thought of doing it doesn't grab me, I would have to do a lot of preparation, Art or Music, I could do at the drop of a hat'* (GT-1.p1). Many tutors concurred with such opinions, believing teachers did not feel confident, were not equipped with the knowledge or interest to deliver the PE curriculum adequately compared to other strands. For them, this lack of confidence was found mainly amongst female teachers and believed that such feelings originated with their own previous experiences of participating in this subject. *'A lot of girls (teachers) have seen PE and gone no! I don't want to do PE, I was really bad at PE, are afraid of PE, it is their experiences, not liking a subject, two teachers said they don't like doing PE, not confident enough to do PE in school, it is that lack of confidence'*. (LSP-2:p.15).

A contributing factor to this issue may have been the amount of time allocated to PE in teacher training colleges and were deemed inadequate by tutors, stating that teachers had to be proficient in many subjects and that when it came to PE, this simply was not the case. *'I feel that we are still being told that the amount of training being given to teachers in teacher training college is limited. I would say that any primary school teacher, if they are delivering your Maths and your English and your Irish, and your Science and all of the subjects, that*

put, that there is a lot of emphasis on them'. (LSP-11:p.26).

This study highlights and reinforces that the subject of PE continues to be a problematic subject for teachers to deliver and as a result, outside agencies are now commonplace in facilitating the delivery of the curriculum in schools (See Table 10). This study shows a significant variation and duration of engagement of external agencies in the delivery of PE. All schools either employed external coaches on a full-time basis, as was the case in (School, O). *'The master always hires coaches and stuff, so he doesn't have to go out'* (GP-15:p.9) on a six-week basis in (Schools, B, C, D, E, H, I, J) or on a term basis as was the case in (Schools G, L & M) e.g. from September to December to deliver their PE classes.

In recent years, there has been an increasing involvement or employment of external coaches in primary schools from different organisations i.e. the Irish Rugby Football Union, (IRFU) the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the GAA. This was particularly the case in rural schools in county B *'GAA coaches have come in which has been a good help for the senior classes. There would be hurling Camogie, Football, Gaelic as well, then we would have had soccer for a little bit as well there was a term of it so there is everything is coming into the schools now'* (GT-13:p.2-3).

Table 10: Involvement of External Coaches in Primary Schools

<i>Primary Schools</i>	<i>Involvement of External Coaches</i>
School A	<i>Class Teacher</i>
School B	<i>External Coach: (Seasonal: Dance)</i>
School C	<i>Class Teacher (Seasonal: Dance)</i>
School D	<i>Class Teacher (Seasonal: Dance)</i>
<i>School E</i>	<i>External Coach: (Seasonal: Dance)</i>
<i>School F</i>	<i>Class Teacher</i>
<i>School G</i>	<i>External Coach: (Seasonal : PE, GAA)</i>
<i>School H</i>	<i>External Coach: (Dance)</i>
<i>School I</i>	<i>External Coach: (Dance)</i>
<i>School J</i>	<i>External Coach: (Dance)</i>
<i>School K</i>	<i>Class Teacher</i>
<i>School L</i>	<i>External Coach (Seasonal: GAA)</i>
<i>School M</i>	<i>External Coach (Seasonal: GAA)</i>
<i>School N</i>	<i>Class Teacher (only)</i>
<i>School O</i>	<i>External Coach (Full Time: PE)</i>

Teachers in one school in county B felt frustrated that they could not deliver a greater part of the PE curriculum and were critical of their school's policy of employing external coaches, who they believed had their own competitive sporting agendas. These teachers believed that this had a limiting impact on pupils' introduction to a variety of sports and felt pressurised to deliver the other strands of the PE curriculum in the last term of school. *'We have an awful lot of outside coaches. I would love to teach more PE but we have Hockey, Gaelic football, swimming, and a dancing teacher, that leaves teaching athletics, gymnastics and outdoor pursuits and games, again very much focused on ball games. You only really get to play*

Gaelic football, as supposed to maybe basketball, other ball sports, they don't get introduced to them' (GT-10:p.1).

The PE primary curriculum states that PE is designed with the class teacher in mind and they did not need to be specialists in the teaching of PE. However, a number of pupils believed that their class teachers were *'not really interested in doing PE' (GP-14:p.9)* or accused their class teacher of *'being lazy' (GP-6:p.4)*. Pupils' frustrations at the lack of quality in the delivery of this subject, their continued requests for greater variety and choice going unheeded, inevitably led for calls by pupils for specialised PE teachers to deliver PE classes. By definition, a specialised PE teacher is one who has the ability, expertise and professionalism to deliver the majority, if not all, of the PE strands. In both counties, the majority of pupils stated emphatically that they would prefer to see a specialised teacher delivering PE on a weekly basis. Pupils focused on the fact that in comparison to their class teacher, specialised teachers would be more professional, would know the rules of different games, and would be more proficient and able to bring a greater variety of games to their PE lessons. *'A specialised teacher because teachers do not know what they are doing, they (Teachers) don't know the rules, you are trying to tell them, and it just wastes time' (GP-7:p.7).*

Teachers in a small number of urban schools in county A, who had negative experiences of teaching PE, were in favour of a specialised teacher as they believed that they were better trained and were more proficient at teaching PE properly. *'Obviously, they have been trained from the point of view of games, for everybody to get the best out of it, what the rules are, it would be a lot easier. I would much prefer a specialised teacher, I do think a specialised teacher is necessary, It is one of the most difficult to keep everybody involved and interested' (LSP-4:p13).* However, a number of pupils disagreed with this overriding opinion, believing external coaches were too professional, strict and delivered classes that were too advanced for their level of ability. *'I wouldn't like a specialised teacher cos some of them would be very strict, we would be given out to if we did something wrong' (GP-11:p.6).* A small number of pupils did not want to see a specialised PE teacher delivering PE in their school and would prefer to see their own teacher having greater commitment and involvement in their PE lessons. One group of pupils made the interesting recommendation that included a combination of a specialised teacher and their class teacher delivering PE on an alternate

weekly basis. Pupils believed that this would give their own teacher more encouragement to participate in PE lessons.

(Pupil: 3) I'd like to get a specialised teacher but not to play with us, I'd like her to encourage her (teacher) to go out and play the games

(Pupil: 1) I'd like the teacher to do a week, and the next week get the specialised teacher in, then get used to playing all the games, and they could tell teacher all the games and she could do them all with us (GP-12:p.13-14)

The need for teachers to be proficient in a number of subjects combined with teachers' attitudes, inadequate facilities, time and space available, resulted in the recommendation made by many tutors that specialised teachers should be made mandatory in schools. The rationale for this was that it would take pressure off teachers to deliver PE and would therefore, be taught and delivered to a professional level. This was not to undermine teachers' ability and efforts in delivering PE; however, tutors did believe that teachers needed to have an interest in PE in order for them to be confident and comfortable delivering this subject. *'If we were doing this right, we would have a PE teacher to deliver PE as a core subject, I am not blaming teachers, they are delivering your Maths, English, Irish, Science, can we expect them to be sport leaders? Am not sure, you need to have an inherent interest before you can be very confident and comfortable delivering it, the teachers themselves don't have a keen interest in sport, in the development of the kids in physical activity' (LSP-11:p.26).*

A significant number of teachers did not want to see the delivery of PE in primary schools follow the same route or delivery as secondary schools in becoming specialised and feared that this would lead to teachers opting out of subjects, leading to the fragmentation of an integrated curriculum. *'I prefer teaching PE, it is important we don't go down that road of secondary schools, it is important for children to go through all aspects of the curriculum with their teacher. They share and go through the year as a class, if we go down the road of bringing in outside PE teachers, a few years down the line is the teacher going to say I am weak at maths bring in an outside maths teacher?, I'd be completely against that' (GT-6:p.16-17).* However, such fragmentation was already evident through one tutor's attempt to recruit the remaining schools in one county to commit to a PE-CPD programme. *'We have ten schools left to teach the Buntús training, and one school said, no we are not interested,*

we have enough sports equipment, we don't do PE in this school, and when I kind of questioned, really! Do you not do PE? Is it not part of the curriculum? The answer was we do PE, an external coach comes in and does it for us' (LSP-11:p.26).

The specialisation of PE would send out the wrong message to pupils that PE was not an authentic subject because the teacher would not be present during the class. *'The tendency where there is a specialised PE teacher is that the classroom teacher disappears and doesn't get the opportunity to see what their class is capable of, that is a huge danger. Not seeing the child who is tripping over their feet, who is excellent, it gives the message to children, this subject is not part of the normal curriculum. I think it can give the wrong message' (LSP-6:p11).*

4.2 Implementation: Supportive Apprenticeship

The perceptions of PE by pupils provide very little evidence that this PE-CPD programme has permeated or influenced the type of games strand delivered in schools. This subject in many schools has been reduced to a narrowed form, comprising of exclusive elements with an onus on competitiveness, performance and winning, rather than inclusive aspects of fun, enjoyment and participation. The second section of this findings chapter provides an insight into the implementation process of this PE-CPD programme and the relationship between both tutors and teachers. What emerges from the data are stakeholders' perceptions of this programme and a polemic that consists of tutors (valued) perspective versus teachers (undervalued) perspective, thus unravelling and possibly explaining the reasons why this PE-CPD programme did not become an effective supplementary resource in the delivery of the games strand in schools.

4.2.1 Implementation Background

The prominent aspect of this study was to evaluate the implementation of this programme in schools. This section of the findings chapter focuses primarily on teachers' perceptions of the Buntús training day, its implementation and their subsequent incorporation of the programme into their delivery of the games strand. However, it is evenly imperative that this process evaluation also focuses on the perceptions and opinions of the tutors on their delivery of the

programme in schools and its ongoing development. The PE-CPD training day was a four-hour course rolled out during in-service training days or after school hours for teachers in their own schools. Training days in county B schools were organised through an amalgamation or clustering of much smaller rural schools. Arrangements were made between the LSP and schools whereby, one school with adequate facilities accommodated a number of smaller schools in their area.

4.2.2 Supportive Apprenticeship

The term supportive apprenticeship was devised to describe the approach incorporated into the training day where teachers observed, enacted and practiced new skills with the help of a tutor in a supporting environment. By listening to the tutor explain exactly what they were doing and thinking as they modelled the skill, teachers identified relevant behaviours and developed a conceptual model of the processes involved. Three key teaching models were incorporated into the training day delivered by tutors. (i) A guided model-putting teachers in control of their learning experiences (ii) an observer/assessment model providing teachers with the opportunity to be observed and to receive feedback based on these observations, all of which were delivered through a (iii) training model placing teachers in the role of pupils. Twelve of the fourteen tutors delivered this PE-CPD programme and described in detail, the various stages of the training day. What was significant about the tutors' descriptions of their delivery of this programme was that all used very similar, generic approaches, strategies and methodologies. The training day itself was divided into two parts, the first, was theoretical and consisted of teachers learning about the ethos of the programme, safety awareness and allowing teachers the opportunity to discover and examine the equipment and cards in order to show how they complemented each other. *'You would discuss the two sets of cards, the bags, I would let them go in, dig out the gear, have a look and feel through it, see what they think'* (LSP-1:p.6)

LSP tutors discussed and explained the cards allowing teachers time to read, interpret and understand them and subsequently showed teachers how these activities could be adapted for various levels of ability (basic-advanced). During the modelling of the lesson, teachers were engaged in these activities and learned the associated skills, rules and strategies. *'I would pick out one set and show them, how they can advance from basic rolling on your own, to rolling*

on a partner, progressing into the games, I showed them how to advance it, how they can make the activity easier, make it harder' (LSP-5:p.6).

The second part of the day focused on the practical aspects, allowing teachers to use both the cards and equipment in setting up and delivering an activity. Teachers were divided into allocated groups, where they had to devise or set up and interpret the cards and equipment to create a game with an onus on adaptation, to make it more difficult or easier according to the athletic abilities of pupils and those with physical disabilities. *'I pair teachers up, let them work in pairs, give them an activity card, let them plan it out, I take a step back, they interpret the game' (LSP-11:p.24)*

These activities were undertaken in a supportive environment by means of peer observation/analysis and feedback. Each pair/group of teachers demonstrated their activity in turn to the other groups and this was followed by a debriefing session. This allowed both the tutor and teachers the opportunity to provide feedback as to what was achieved during the demonstration and what interpretations or changes they would have added to the delivery of the activity making it easier or challenging for pupils at different levels. *'We have a debriefing session at the end of each pair. Can anyone suggest how to do it differently? How to make it easier for second class kids? How do you make it difficult for sixth class kids? How would you put in a challenge? How would you make it easier? (LSP-11:p.19).*

Through a willingness to participate in this supportive apprenticeship, teachers were able to discuss and highlight a number of key aspects of this PE-CPD programme and were collectively viewed and deemed positive by both teachers and tutors. Such aspects and features included **(4.2.3) Active-Teacher-Approach (4.2.4) Special Educational Needs (4.2.5) Content Focus: Equipment & Cards (4.2.6) One-size-fits-all model.**

4.2.3 Active Teacher Approach

PE-CPD provision has changed in recent years and now focuses on approaches that take into account school culture, work-based learning and professional learning communities. This was

evident in tutors' delivery of this training day in schools, which moved from an expert-centred workshop to conceptualising cognitive views of learning through interactive and social means. For a number of teachers, their participation during the training day was the first opportunity to participate in a PE-CPD training programme since graduating. Some viewed the training day and the programme as an opportunity to *'be re-resourced, reminded how we can teach the different aspects of games, we were refreshed with enthusiasm, new ideas, re-trained'* (GT-6:p.7-8)

An active teacher approach placed the teachers on the training day at its centre, in an active role rather than the traditional passive, receptive one. Teachers referred to the training day as practical and hands on and viewed it as participant-centred rather than 'teacher or tutor' centred', practical rather than focused solely on the theoretical side of PE. Teachers highlighted the fact that they were actually doing the activities and believed that they retained more information and skills because they were involved physically undertaking the activities and understood the relevancy of these approaches.

(Teacher: 1) we actually got involved and we did them ourselves

(Teacher: 2) so that we could remember them and you could see a point to it (GT-7:p8).

A number of teachers discussed how the approach to the training delivered was novel, highlighting the reversal of roles, placing teachers in the role of the pupil and tutors in the role of the teacher. *'We were the children, so you were getting to feel this is how the children are feeling'* (GT-4:p.21). Some tutors believed this approach was challenging teachers to put themselves in the position of a pupil doing these activities but in some cases, teachers were more focused on their own delivery of this subject. *'Some of them struggled to come down to the eight year old, they weren't thinking. I am eight and totally uncoordinated, this is going to be a challenge for me, they were thinking, I am 25, I am trying to do this, it's completely easy'* (LSP-9:p.9). Despite this issue, this approach allowed tutors to challenge and encourage teachers to adapt the games using the cards and equipment. *'How can you change it? What do you think? How could we make it easier? Harder? It wasn't teacher-centred'* (LSP-1:p.4)

With the aid of the cards and equipment, teachers successfully adapted games for different abilities as tutors encouraged them to develop different ideas and possibilities for delivering various games with the focus on their own interpretation of a game. *'They will come up with loads of different ideas, I make them aware that you are coming up with these ideas, this is only one thing on the card, asking them questions how you think we could make it easier, just to increase it, not have them doing the basics'* (LSP-5:p.8-9). A number of tutors made the point that on many occasions, teachers would interpret a particular activity in a completely different and unique way than had occurred on previous training days and therefore believed that teachers had the ability to use this programme to their advantage. *'I think it is the variation, you see teachers using their imagination, they know how to use the cards, the equipment, it shows that you don't have to use it the same way as someone else. Teachers will think of games completely different, I think that those groups always come out with better games'* (LSP-2:p.7)

Teachers were hesitant and nervous about the practical side of the training day and having to present and deliver an activity in front of their colleagues. *'I didn't really enjoy doing it too much, we were in a little group at the end, given a card and told to set up a game'* (GT-5:p8). The majority of tutors came from competitive sporting backgrounds and discussed their own training in order to become Buntús trainers as being challenging. *'Personally I found that being a tutor more than a coach hard, I was acting more like a coach compared to a tutor, I was struggling'* (LSP-4:p8). They believed that teachers should not have any problems in using the entire programme because they were teachers, who knew how to teach, how to deliver various subjects and did not see the delivery of PE as being any different. *'They are teachers, unlike us, when we did practicals and we were not used to teaching, it took us a while to get our heads around it, but because they are all teachers, it's a natural thing for them to be able to stand up in front of a class, less time needs to be done to practicals, because they can do it, absolutely'* (GT-1:p9).

Collective participation refers to teachers' participation alongside their colleagues and through adopting an active teacher approach with teachers' participation in adapting games; they were listening, thinking and participating collectively. Many teachers discussed this as a

positive aspect of the training day especially those schools from county B. *'I think that it was great that we were all involved together, joined with different schools'* (GT-8:p.5). Teachers referred to participating together and viewed it in part, as a staff development. *'Maximum participation, it was good, everyone seemed to enjoy it, it was as good as staff development, as a kind of bonding'* (GT-4:p21). This sense of collective participation was reinforced by the fact that compared to other training days, they were delivered in schools and tutors made a concerted effort to ensure that every teacher participated on the day *'I thought it was great that there was an expectation that every single person participated, no opting out. Every other course I have been on, you have had a row of teachers I can't do it, I have sprained my ankle, or bad back, there was none of that, right you have a sore back, you can sit on the chair, you can bounce the ball, everyone ended up then participating'* (GT-10:p.18-19). The benefit of collective participation with tutors modelling new techniques and supporting teachers through tutoring and mentoring provided a positive impact on teachers' confidence and ability to incorporate this programme into their PE classes. *'It was to give teachers confidence teaching that subject, to make them realise they can teach any strand, you need confidence'* (GT-10:p25).

4.2.4 Special Education Needs (SEN)

In recent years, more pupils with both physical & learning disabilities are attending mainstream primary schools with various organisations like the IWA increasingly assisting teachers' requests and advising them on how to include all pupils in PE lessons during and after schools hours. Special Education Needs (SEN) is a term that has become popular within educational circles for those pupils and students that have physical and learning disabilities or impairments. Certain aspects and activities can be included from the three strands of the Buntús programme: *Start, Play, and Sport* and are used as part of an *Inclusion Initiative* resource pack from which practical advice can be obtained. It was therefore imperative that the opinions and perceptions of sports liaison officers from the IWA were included in this study to evaluate to what extent this programme was inclusive to those with physical disabilities within an educational context. *'If I was visiting a school and child-needed sports for a PE, do you use the Buntús programme? and they {Teacher} say no I will say look Buntús have games, an inclusion card, I would give them it, you basically assist with those with special needs if the teacher needs support'* (LSP-13:p.7)

Neither sports liaison officer delivered any of the PE-CPD training days in primary schools. However, they did attend training days for prospective tutors and were present in a supervisory role to advise and support the training process of prospective tutors with particular attention given to the inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities through adapting the cards and equipment. *'I'd come in, see tutors being trained up and did the programme with them, I didn't go out and deliver, whatever games we were doing, I would show the tutors how to include children with disabilities, so we tried to be open, include as many disabilities as we could'* (LSP-13:p.6)

Tutors were asked to share their experiences of working with pupils with SEN in connection with this PE-CPD programme in schools and to assess just how inclusive this programme was. For tutors who had delivered the training day in various voluntary organisations and charities, they referred to the different textures and colours of the equipment, providing greater subject content knowledge to teachers with particular needs. *'There are bright colours, different textures, spongy balls, hard balls, they felt that they could use them for a lot of different games, it made things a lot broader for them, they were going to be able to teach, they felt that there was stuff that was very specific towards their kids' problems'*. (LSP-1:p.12)

The majority of tutors and teachers had little, if any, first-hand experience of working with specific organisations, charities or pupils with particular physical disabilities in schools. Many tutors and teachers referred to the cards and the awareness of how the cards could be adapted for various athletic abilities including those with physical disabilities. Tutors stated that during teacher's training, there was a focus and awareness for adaptability and inclusiveness for all (See Appendix A). *'There is a specific card that gives ideas, there is also a lot of cards there is pictures of children in a wheelchair, it is very attractive, a bit of effort has gone into it, the programme is adaptable'* (LSP-3:p.9).

One tutor recommended a follow up or refresher course of tutors with special focus given to those with disabilities. This tutor questioned tutors' knowledge and experience of including

those with disabilities through using this programme and stated that experience of delivering the programme and knowledge of all the cards was insufficient. *‘I think there could be more training with special needs, I am training, dealing with teachers, I think it could be a weekend to give trainers more ideas. I don’t think they know an awful lot, we know what is on the cards, we have ideas, we have our own experiences at working in schools, it would be no harm to have a follow up’ (LSP-8:p.13).*

4.2.5 Content Focus: Equipment - Cards

Teachers believed that this PE-CPD programme had changed or improved their overall delivery of the games strand. The equipment and the cards had brought new perspectives and greater variety, allowing all pupils to be active during their PE classes.

(Teacher: 1) it is down to the equipment, the cards, there is a wonderful variety, all laid out there, with so many of them

(Teacher: 2) it makes it easier, you are not wrecking your head, going what will I do

(Teacher: 3) all even for the infants, it is just the fact that everybody can be working at the same time you know that is the big improve really with it (GT-16:p11)

The equipment and cards enabled teachers to be more creative, have greater accessibility to the cards, easy to utilise and understand and were ‘visual’ and ‘user friendly’. As a result, teachers now felt that their PE classes were more enjoyable and had more fun.

(Teacher: 1) more ideas, more variety, I like the games side of it, it’s definitely very visual, even if you look at the cards how exactly does that work, you can see the card, you can see how it is laid out with relays and that which is quite handy you know....

(Teacher: 2) it is extremely user friendly, it has increased our fun with games, it doesn’t take a lot to set up (GT-5:p.22)

A number of teachers in their evaluation of the training day used terms such as ‘adaptable’ with particular reference to the inclusiveness of activities. One teacher discussed her perceptions of the training day, believing tutors placed particular attention on participation and awareness of different needs within a class. *‘There was an awful great focus on participation and changing the needs of different groups’ (GT-10:p.21)*. Teachers found that the cards and equipment allowed them to encourage and challenge athletically stronger and weaker pupils to be more involved in whole class activities and therefore provided greater inclusion and longer periods, where pupils were constantly active. *‘One of things for me would be the differentiation and adaptable, I would always be quite aware of the children that would be quieter, you need to up the game for them, and push them on a little bit and make it more challenging, that would be one of the things. I took out of it, keeping them moving all the time, keep everyone occupied’ (GT-10:p.29)*.

On evaluating the training by the Local Sports Partnership (LSP), a small number of teachers from county A schools were positive in their evaluation with particular reference to acquiring the equipment. *‘The equipment, nowadays schools are on their knees for funding, so anyway you can get extra equipment, and it is always beneficial’ (GT-4:p.12)*. One teacher compared a similar PE-CPD training course to that of (the Buntús programme) and stated that it was problematic in that teachers did not receive any of the equipment or resource cards upon completion of their training, which meant that note taking was an imperative practice. Moreover, the period between the initial training and delivering the games strand in school, led to an unsuccessful retention of information and skills acquired and the teacher believed that having the equipment and resource cards could have prevented this. *‘I was at one last summer it was good, at the end you were thinking oh! great ideas, I am going to do that in class, I can’t wait to start, but when you get down to it six months later because you didn’t have the resources in front of you, it is very hard to think back. It would lead to taking a lot more notes during that in-service to make it beneficial, we didn’t really get an awful lot at the end of it, it took away from what we were able to retain’ (GT-10:p22)*.

Overall, tutors believed that teachers were very receptive to the bags of equipment, cards and the ideas from the programme. However, some tutors felt that once equipment was damaged or had worn out, that such equipment would not be replaced. *‘With the equipment that is*

given out to schools, a lot of the equipment is gone, and there doesn't seem to be any facility to get any more equipment' (LSP-7:p.19). A number of teachers called for individual packs of cards for each individual teacher or/and for the cards to be divided into junior and senior cycles. A number of teachers stated that a DVD to accompany the training, cards and equipment would be beneficial, as they believed that this would act as a revision tool for them and would be an aid in explaining the instructions of games to their pupils. *'If they had more cards, a junior and a senior infant, you could have a whole base of junior work and then senior class work. You would go along the lines of producing those activities on a DVD, which would be handy for teachers to have the DVD, it is handy for their planning, take it into school throw it up on an interactive wide board, and display the games to the kids, before you start' (GT-16:p.12).*

Direct feedback from teachers to tutors was sparse; however, tutors spoke positively of the inclusive aspect, in particular, the fact that teachers were now being taught how to keep all pupils active for the duration of their PE class without having to resort to using more traditional PE practices. *'The one thing they liked is the idea, when you run a game, that there is no other way than the elimination process. If they are playing a game of tag, people get knocked out, it is easier to manage with 28 kids in a restricted space, when you start knocking and eliminating people from the game, you have less people, more people sitting down and it's easier to supervise. A non-elimination game, they hadn't thought of, was one positive thing, the inclusive side, how all kids could be part of it, adapting games to keep stronger kids involved and still a challenge for them' (LSP-11:p.21).*

4.2.6 One-Size-Fits-All Programme

Criticism of PE-CPD programmes failing to have lasting effects and leaving teachers feeling unprepared for the classroom have centred on the content of the session being externally imposed, with teachers' real needs not being taken into consideration in the programme design. Tutors were very aware especially of those small rural schools from county B of the fact that they were distanced physically and conceptually from what happened in the classroom because the training day occurred away from their own schools and without their own pupils present. *'The Buntús tutor is giving people a range of games, suggestions, ideas, how to work with groups of kids, twenty-thirty in a class, restricted space, time and equipment, how to do all that in a simple way that teachers feel they can deliver on that'*

(LSP-11:p.12). School contexts are deemed uniquely distinctive and teachers did raise questions during the training day about how to adapt this programme to accommodate their own school's particular conditions. *'There is often problems in terms of space schools have, the hall would be very small, very tight, and one of the main questions that comes back is, what if you have a class of thirty five, how do you physically fit them into the hall to do this? (LSP-3:p.12)*

Two groups of teachers, although very positive in their assessment, believed that the first part of the induction day was too theoretical, overly long, and simplistic. Such feelings centred on the fact that many of the staff were at the beginning of their teaching careers or were involved in extra-curricular schools clubs and believed it unnecessary to go through very basic ball movements and passes. They preferred the second part of the induction day that was much more practical and beneficial. *'It was too basic, we all had this training in our college years, we would like to do activities that are new to us that we will actually be able to use in PE. We had all the activities about how do you teach, to bounce the ball, the initial part of the day was basic, people felt they had had that training already' (GT-12:p.16).*

Issues surrounding this one size-fits-all programme design were also highlighted by tutors using the programme in working with children with SEN. One tutor explained that tutors needed to move beyond making reference to specific cards and the inclusion aspects of each activity. This tutor recommended that there should be greater awareness and understanding of different physical disabilities in order to properly tutor and advise teachers on what exactly such pupils can achieve and what their limitations are. *'If you pick out children with different disabilities, you want to know what they can do, can't do, children have no fear, but you have to be aware of their boundaries, their ability, and how far you would include them, or how you would adjust a programme, I think you would really need to know more about different disabilities, I don't think we know enough about that' (LSP-8:p.14)*

4.3 Implementation: Issues & Challenges

The majority of tutors participating in this study had sporting backgrounds and therefore advocated this programme had the potential to provide greater confidence, variety, inclusiveness, and fun to teachers' delivery of the games strand and pupils participation in this subject. Yet, their delivery of this programme in schools was fraught with varying degrees of contention. The source of such conflict came from a valued/devalued polemic with tutors valuing PE and this PE-CPD programme, while teachers holding a devalued or undervalued perspective, attaching low subject status to this subject and indeed this programme. The implementation process and induction day experiences by both tutors and teachers highlighted a number of issues and concerns which included: **(4.3.1) Teacher Feedback (4.3.2) Induction day dynamics (4.3.3) In-Service Provision (4.3.4) Refresher Courses**

4.3.1 Teacher Feedback

The training day experiences of the tutors chiefly focused on their most recent day in schools or community centres. Tutors stated that feedback from teachers was very positive. *'All the feedbacks were very positive, very happy with the equipment, the cards, with the training' (LSP-3:p.6)*. It was customary for an official feedback/evaluation form to be supplied to all teachers at the end of the training day in order for them to complete, expressing their thoughts, ideas and opinions about the content and overall delivery of the programme. The feedback form used, was a scaled or ranking format from negative to positive (See Appendix D) and was completed by teachers at the end of the session. A number of tutors felt that teachers simply filled in the feedback forms quickly without much thought or taking the opportunity to make any recommendations in order to improve the overall delivery of the programme. *'I don't know how that can be changed to get better feedback, it needs to be done at the end of it, but if I leave it to the end, it's a scribble, so that they can get out, they would all fill it out, I would say 80% would just tick good, excellent, sign it' (LSP-1:p.11)*

Many tutors did not refer to the feedback forms when discussing their induction day experiences and stated that *'They had to go on their own intuition' (LSP-1:p.14)* in order to evaluate how successful or otherwise the training day went and if teachers were going to

incorporate the programme into the delivery of their PE classes. Tutors resorted to using their own subjectivity, meaning a sense *'of whether they are going to use them or not (LSP-4:p.16)*. Tutors used words like *'competitiveness'* *'enthusiastic'* *'receptive'* *'interested'* and *'mad into it'* (LSP:4.p16) to quantify if an induction day was successful. One tutor evaluated how teachers received her training day by referring to how they reacted at the end of the session. *'They didn't make excuses or weren't rushing out the door, they were going around, tidying up, talking to one another it is a feeling that I get'* (LSP-4:p.12). Other tutors quantified how successful a training day went by gauging teachers' intention to organise photocopies, to *'divide the cards out in a way that if you had first and second class, one school had the cards divided out and who were going to laminate them'* (LSP-9:p.11).

However, even with such positive reactions and active participation throughout the day, tutors left schools uncertain as to whether the programme would be used. Some tutors did state uncertainty even towards those teachers who were initially very receptive to the day and whether or not they were going to incorporate the programme into their PE lessons. *'I don't know, we leave it, we walk away, we haven't had any feedback there, I would imagine that there is a surge, of oh yeah! tomorrow we are going to do and then a couple of weeks or months or whatever, I will go back to the old you knows'* (LSP-3:p.14). A small number of tutors were much more cynical *'post-training day'* *'I am sure, if you went round to the schools, you would find some bags in perfect condition, never used'* (LSP-10:p.20).

4.3.2 Induction day dynamics

Tutors' subjectivity and intuition were not necessary in order to assess if teachers were not receptive to this programme, stating there were many overt displays of disinterest, non-commitment, dissatisfaction about this PE-CPD programme and that such perceived contempt and behaviour were commonplace. These overt negative displays varied from *'One took the opportunity to answer a phone, people had high heel shoes on, others were wearing skirts, weren't suitably dressed to take part'* (LSP-4:p.8)

One tutor, who had just completed his training and was delivering his first training day, experienced aggressive resistance from teachers, who did not view the day as an opportunity to rejuvenate, learn and up-skill their delivery of the games strand. This tutor felt from teachers' reactions and behaviour that this programme was being imposed upon them and

were being told how to teach. *'I had a teacher arguing with me, you are not an inspector!' you can't tell me how to do my job, I (Tutor) am just giving you a piece of advice. I left her to one corner, she sat down, didn't even listen, so that was my first group' (LSP-2:p.8)*. Tutors discussed their experiences of delivering the programme in schools and focused on teachers' outright refusal and unwillingness to participate in any of the activities. *'They would not do anything, you had six or seven of them sitting down, wouldn't take part, (Teachers: ah, we are tired!) Or (Teachers: I don't need it,) why are you not taking part? you don't have any obvious excuse for doing that, but they always come up with a reason' (LSP-8:p7-8)*. One IWA disability liaison officer recounted delivering an inclusion workshop using this programme in a school and was dismayed at the lack of interest and complete non-commitment of teachers. *'Teachers sat at the side, correcting, its' a pity, because they work with the children during the day and can help with their social skills and learning skills' (LSP-13:p.9)*.

Another tutor, who had only started delivering this programme in schools a few months prior to the interview was shocked by teachers' lack of interest and receptiveness to the programme. Considering each school would be in receipt of the cards and equipment at no expense, upon completion of the training day, this tutor believed that teachers were unappreciative of what [they] the LSPs were trying to do in facilitating the games strand in schools. *'They are getting it free, they are getting it from X County Council, like they are turning around and going, throwing it in your face, going I don't want this, I am a teacher, I know this already' (LSP-2:p.6)*.

Tutors inferred that such behaviour centred on issues of gender and age amongst teachers and their participation in PE and physical activity. Tutors stated that although teachers, by-and-large were enthusiastic, male teachers, it was felt, seemed to be more involved in the activities on the day compared to their female colleagues. *'If it is an all-female compared to a mixed, they tend to lose concentration and focus a lot quicker' (LSP-5:p.16)*. Tutors further indicated that age was a main factor and negative feedback came from senior teachers who refused to participate. Tutors stated that older teachers, who were close to retirement were *'stuck in their ways' (LSP-9:p.9)* not open to new ideas or improvisation compared to younger teachers and as a result, sat out for the entire induction day. *'Younger teachers have more new ideas and there was one teacher, she couldn't care less, didn't want to be there, just making up the numbers, she was retiring this year' (LSP-9:p.6-7)*.

A number of tutors felt that their own training to become instructors was quite intensive and believed that replicating such training for teachers was too rigorous, an issue that was evident in relation to teachers' fitness levels during the training session. *'I do an hour and a half, it is quite intense, that is the maximum I would get out of anybody. There is no way we are going to keep going at the same intensity, they would not be fit for four hours, we did it in the Buntús training, we all hurt the next day, we would have been fit active people, a lot of teachers aren't, you can see that towards the end of the practical session'* (LSP-3:p.7).

A key condition stipulated by Local Sports Partnerships was that in order for schools to receive the two bags of equipment and cards, participation in the training day by all teaching staff including the principal was compulsory. *'The principal is supposed to be there, every teacher in the school has to, it is compulsory, and otherwise they don't get the bags that are the rule'* (LSP-5:p.17-18). Although strict conditions were in place regarding participation of all teaching staff, this binding agreement was not held by all schools. *'That was a complete eye opener, the principal wouldn't even come to watch, to participate, didn't put her head in for the whole four hours'* (LSP-1:p.6)

A number of tutors did emphasise that in order for PE-CPD programmes such as the Buntús programme to have a lasting effect in schools, it needed to come from *'the top down'* (LSP-1:p.6) referring to school principals' involvement on the day. Tutors believed that each school principal's attitude, leadership and participation could facilitate greater participation and engagement by teachers in this subject. *'I think it comes from the top though, if you have a principal, who is sporty, enthusiastic and embraces these new ideas, it feeds through them and I think it is great, and someone doesn't even turn up, that says it all, does that would give me a message, I think I firmly believe that it comes from the top'* (LSP-1:p.6). When asked to describe their feelings about such behaviour and attitudes, tutors felt that *'It can be disheartening, it is hard, but if they are really not interested, it is the pupils that are going to suffer at the end of the day for them'* (LSP-5:p11). Tutors expressed a teacher's obligation to be involved as much as possible and to regard teaching PE as an imperative aspect of their school experience. *'I think it is very wrong for a teacher not to want to improve and not to want to have exercise, that attitude is wrong, I had a twenty two year old teacher who after five minutes said that she was too tired'* (LSP-2:p.8-9).

A minority of tutors were of a different opinion regarding teachers' behaviour towards the induction days that did not centre on issues of gender and age. Such tutors believed that attitudes differed according to whether teachers were doing the **Buntús Start** programme; designed for infants, **Buntús Play** designed for infants to first class pupils or the **Buntús Generic** programme designed for pupils from second to sixth class. They stated that teachers and care providers doing the **Buntús Start** were much more enthusiastic towards the programme and were more grateful for the training, cards and equipment that each school, crèche, or organisation received upon completion of the training day. Feedback from these teachers and care providers was positive and stated that the amount of activities was limited for younger children and that the **Start** programme provided a variety of different activities and games. Tutors believed that primary teachers were over-worked, had to adapt to an ever-increasing curriculum and were overwhelmed with in-service days. *'Primary school teachers are over worked, have a huge curriculum, they have courses coming out their ears, so they are used to going on courses, it wouldn't be such a big thing, whereas with the pre-school Montessori, they have never had anything like this offered to them, they are hugely excited and enthusiastic, it is unbelievable the difference between a Buntús Start and the Buntús Generic course'* (LSP-7:p.12).

The three strands of the Buntús programme: **Start, Play & Sport** have been incorporated into an inclusion initiative programme by LSPs in each county and tutors delivered this PE-CPD programme to various organisations with the assistance of a disability liaison officer. This initiative's main aim was to provide active, educational opportunities for children with various physical, sensory and learning disabilities. One tutor made a similar comparison between delivering the training days in schools and various educational charitable organisations. She found greater enthusiasm, engagement and receptivity from these organisations and surmised that this was mainly due to the scant funding, training, facilities and resources available to these organisations. *'The autistic school were absolutely brilliant, they get no funding, have to fight for everything, they don't have a school, they have an old Georgian building, no PE hall, they use a classroom, from start to finish, for the four hours, we didn't finish a minute early, so receptive, thoroughly enjoyed it'* (LSP-1:p.12).

4.3.3 *In-Service Provision*

Although there has been an increase in the volume of in-school professional development, most CPD programmes have taken place outside of school hours. According to best practice, the Teaching Council (2010b) states that time should be built into the normal work schedule of the teacher without compromising the school calendar and should not erode the teaching learning year for pupils. The training day for teachers consisted of a one four hour training day that took place during or after a school day, or in some schools, at weekends. In all cases, the training was deemed a half-day in-service day and pupils in some schools received a half day off school in order for the entire teaching staff to avail of the programme. Many of the teachers from county A stated that they found the scheduling and length of the induction day problematic. *'It went on a long time after school and if I was to organise it again, I would definitely do it within school hours within the guidelines, and we probably gave have up two and half-hours of our own time'* (GT-4:p.11).

Other induction days were delivered at weekends or took place after the school day, which was challenging for both teachers and tutors. *'That went from three o'clock to seven o'clock, so I can't imagine what that was like, after doing a full day of teaching'* (LSP-1:p.11). A number of teachers felt overwhelmed by the amount of information and activities that were completed within a four-hour period and would have preferred to have had the training day allocated over three one-hour days as this would have allowed teachers to properly benefit from the programme and training. *'It was a one day operation, an awful lot crammed into three hours, it would have been better to do some smaller bursts, three by one hours, it was after school so people's concentration wouldn't have been all that it could have been. If everybody had the opportunity to be fresh and take in all that was being delivered on that day, it was asking a lot of them'* (GT-5:p.15).

Many teachers had specific recommendations or amendments that they would like to see implemented in the future to suit the needs of the teachers. Two groups focused on the timing and scheduling of the proposed refresher course, believing that such programmes would be more beneficial if delivered more regularly, but did realise that this was problematic due to issues of time allocation for CPD provision.

(Teacher: 1) a follow up, shorter version, just to refresh us, I have forgotten some things, a short kind of refresher would be brilliant

(Teacher: 2) if it was arranged more frequent, to come in, it would have to be within school hours, so I don't know how that would work, it would have to see how would it work. You don't know if you can send the children home if the teachers were to do it, then we don't find the time for everything to slot it in (GT-4:p.20).

One tutor expressed his difficulty in delivering the four-hour induction day in schools due to issues of scheduling and teachers' unwillingness to complete the induction day in one session. This particular tutor discussed that teachers from one school only agreed to participate in the programme if it was divided into two sessions over a month. This was problematic for the tutor, as the length of time between the first and second session would result in teachers forgetting much of what was taught. *'It is only a two hour slot, I have to go back in a month's time and do the other two hours, the problem is that it will be forgotten what I did in the first two, but I wouldn't have got his teachers to stay for four hours, that is why we had to split' (LSP-1.p.5).* A key stipulation or condition in order for schools to acquire the cards and equipment was that the full four hours of training had to be completed and signed off. This was not the case with this particular school, resulting in the tutor having to take the equipment and cards away after the first two-hour session, which inevitably meant that teachers did not get the opportunity to use the equipment and the cards until the training day was completed. *'The school I have delivered, I had to take away the play bags and the cards, they haven't had the four hours training so I couldn't have left that with them so they are not even familiar with the equipment or cards, I have to go back through that again'. (LSP-5:p.17-18).*

Seven tutors believed that a four-hour training day was too long and intensive and could be reduced to three hours. One tutor recanted how she negotiated with teachers on a regular basis, the length of the induction day and believed it acted as an incentive for teachers to be more engaged and to participate during the training day. *'I let the teachers know that it is only three hours, four hours is intimidating and stressful. It's probably an incentive to get the teachers to do it, because teachers are staying of their own free time, the school finishes at half twelve, and they start at one, and they are not going to finish until four thirty, it is a battle to stay until four thirty' (LSP-6:p.14).*

Another tutor commented in detail about the induction days in schools and the departmental issue of in-service provision. In some schools, there was a sense of resentment and obligation from teachers having to take part in the induction day. Teachers expressed how they had so few curricula planning days and would have preferred to use the training day as an opportunity to plan for the academic year. *'A couple of teachers came up to me and said while it was excellent, they would have loved to have had the time that day to do planning. It is more a Departmental issue, that we don't have the time to have days like this, their days of planning are so few and now the danger of maybe a little bit of resentment of doing the Buntús programme' (GT-4: p9).*

One tutor felt that prospective tutors should be vetted properly because this PE-CPD programme was in fact a service or product that needed to be conducted and delivered professionally. Primary schools were allocating one of their few in-service days in order to participate in this programme or were staying back after school hours of their own accord. This tutor expressed concerns that if the programme was not delivered professionally i.e. (coaching instead of tutoring), teachers would be disappointed and deem the training day unbeneficial. *'Schools are under a lot of pressure, they are giving up one of their half days, they want to stay for a half day and somebody turns up and pushes them too hard and think that they are coaches instead of tutors. I think that is how the schools can be let down and feel I didn't really learn anything, the way it was presented semi- professional, un – professional' (LSP-6:p.6).*

There was a lack of clarity and awareness of the complexities surrounding in-service provision in primary schools by a number of tutors. One tutor was under the impression that when she first commenced contacting schools in order to generate interest in this programme in her county, that schools would be able to accommodate without any issue. However, what subsequently became apparent was that in-service provision for schools had become problematic due to CPD provision cuts and with that, little or no opportunities for tutors gaining access to schools in order to deliver the programme. *'I thought when I started contacting schools; they would have some flexibility to do in service training. I found my job was to do was to convince them to make the Buntús one of their in-service training days. It is totally different, it seems to be tightened up, the Department are saying you have so many days of in-service training. LSP are just getting a blank wall from the schools saying we have no dates available, we don't have the teachers willing to do extra-curricular things, not*

willing to stay till 5 o'clock, I am not sure the programme as a whole is endorsed by the Department of Education as a whole' (LSP-11:p.29)

4.3.4 Refresher Courses

A common criticism of PE-CPD programmes is that they are too short and offer limited follow up, if any, for teachers. New games and activities are more likely to be effective when they are sustained and intensive and contain learning opportunities necessary for teachers to integrate new knowledge into practice. This ongoing support, sustained over time, should include continual follow up and support for future learning. The lack of refresher courses was particularly evident in this study with limited or no follow up provision in county A. The Buntús programme was introduced and rolled out in primary schools in county A in 2001 and was one of the first counties to do so in Ireland. None of the schools in county A had participated in a fresher course since the initial training day, and as a result, when it came to teachers evaluating the training day, many had a poor recollection and were unable to evaluate it in part or in its entirety. None of the schools in both counties in this study had requested or registered with their LSP requesting a refresher or follow up course.

(Teacher: 1) I am not sure, we did another one

(Teacher: 2) I think it was seven years ago

(Teacher: 3) did you do another one?, I don't know, I do remember doing one, I think it was very well organised, a lot of information, there were drills (GT-3:p.6)

Teachers from county A in particular, felt they had been bombarded with so many different induction days for different subjects that they were unable to recollect accurately, to give a clear assessment or were unable to evaluate the day in question. *'It came at a time when we were getting a lot of in-service, so we were bombarded, there was various agendas and targets, there was things fired at us, it is buried under so it went to the back of my memory' (GT-4:p.14)*. A continuous high turnover of teaching staff was typical of primary school employment practices and therefore, affected the interview process in relation to evaluating this programme. In many cases, teachers were not employed in particular schools at the time to avail of the induction day and were unable to evaluate any aspect of the programme. As a

result, a significant number of interviews conducted in county A, focused solely on general issues concerning PE in schools. *'There is such a lot of new people on the staff, the rest of us, have possibly forgotten half the stuff that was done, just wondering, hands up those who have actually done the Buntus? (Referring to all teaching staff in the room) I am looking at about thirty percent of the staff who have not been trained' (GT-9:p.10).*

When asked what aspects of the programme that tutors and teachers would like to see amended, or changed in order to improve the overall delivery of the programme, the vast majority of teachers from both counties recommended a refresher course to take place every one to three years. Teachers believed that it would be a great support, as it would refresh, reinforce and rejuvenate their classes because teachers do become stale and forget what they have learnt and retain from only one induction day.

(Teacher: 1) it was one day

(Teacher: 2) there should be one every year....

(Teacher: 3) to rejuvenate ideas again, when you have done the course, you feel good then you sort of forget, if you did it once a year and then new ideas, something different every year (GT-7:p.18)

Interviews with teachers in county B were conducted between the months 2010-2011 and issues surrounding the provision of follow up courses and teachers' recollection about the training day were not as pronounced. The main reason for this was that the delivery of this programme had only been completed in the majority of schools in county B by 2010. This meant that teachers' recollections were still quite fresh and accurate and were able to recall in some detail, aspects of the delivery of the programme, their own perceptions and interpretations and how it had improved or otherwise their delivery of the games strand. At the time of the fieldwork process in county B, none of the schools in this county had completed a follow up or refresher course by their LSP.

4.3.5 Conclusion

The perceptions of all stakeholders and in particular, school pupils provide a viewpoint of a PE curriculum and subject that had become 'squeezed out' by a number of institutional and

attitudinal factors resulting in PE as a subject remaining broad, varied, but inevitably idealistic and aspirational in nature. The overwhelming majority of pupils in this study stated that PE was their favourite subject and yet their perceptions and opinions uncovered a PE curriculum that had become ‘narrowed’, dominated by a type of games strand that was sports based rather than games base. Instead of advocating participation, inclusiveness, collaboration, variety and fun, the curriculum and therefore PE classes became dictated by competition, winning and performance - related goals that inevitably advocated the exclusion of girls and led to criticism by many pupils in relation to the delivery of this subject.

While affective qualities may have been discussed in relation to the subject of PE, it was not viewed as a subject in its own right, with its own set of cognitive & educational values and such qualities were only discussed in context of facilitating core subjects. This absence of educational values were reiterated by those teachers who deemed their PE class, as the only opportunity for their pupils to be active due to their sedentary lifestyles, the proliferation of home-entertainment devices and an increasing risk-averse society. As a result, PE classes mirrored physical fitness sessions focusing on physiological aspects or mere extensions of break-time activities. This narrowing of the PE curriculum led to a fraught relationship between teachers’ delivery and pupils’ participation in this subject resulting in calls for external tutors to deliver this subject. Such narrowed definitions and practices left little room or scope for change and a challenge for PE-CPD programmes like the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme to make any real impression, difference, or even presence within primary schools, as was the case in this study. This form of CPD provision was unsuccessful due to the continuation of traditional practices of CPD providers, inhospitable schools and departmental structures.

Chapter 5:

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of a PE-CPD programme and its perceived success. The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme sets out to facilitate teachers delivery of the games strand by offering pupils a broad, skills-based, meaningful, and inclusive introduction to PA and sport. It also recognises PA as being imperative in children's physical, psychological and social-development aiming to promote lifelong participation of regular exercise. PE focuses on the development of the body and mind and approaches this through the body, through movement, play, sport and dance (Government of Ireland, 1999b). Differences in the social organisation of the classroom due to the ecology of gymnasiums and schoolyards as opposed to secure classrooms create diverse PE-CPD requirements for teacher's delivery of PE (Coulter, 2012). Hardman (2008) views the teaching and context methodologies as being very specific for teaching PE compared to core subjects and combined with an ever-expanding curriculum and adverse shortcomings, all culminate in classifying teachers requiring very specific PE-CPD needs and supports.

The findings from all stakeholders in this study provide an understanding of the current state and delivery of PE in primary schools and one that shows and reinforces long standing issues concerning this subject (Broderick & Shiel, 2000; Fahey *et al.*, 2005; Cosgrove, 2006; Deenihan, 2005; Deenihan, 2007; Murphy, 2007; Woods *et al.*, 2010). Institutional factors such as time allocation, space, facilities, resources and attitudinal factors such as no cognitive value of PE, the domination of games and lack of teacher-confidence, all culminate in, and reflect a well-established global trend of this subject becoming relegated to near irrelevance (Hardman, 2000; Hardman, 2008). Therefore, what does this process evaluation of the Buntús programme say about PE and CPD provision in primary schools that has not been already disseminated, and what does it bring to the CPD research continuum from an Irish perspective?

This process evaluation examined the extent to which this national CPD programme was implemented according to plan, a key component of health promotion programmes and one that is a prerequisite of impact and outcome evaluation (Steckler & Linnan, 2002a). From the outset, the title of this study alone signifies or at least suggests the challenges in providing

effective PE-CPD programmes in primary schools. In fact, this study's inability to pursue and conduct an impact evaluation, assessing teachers delivery of the games strand and subsequent enhancement of learner outcomes for pupils, highlights the sheer scale and complexity of the task. It also reiterates the call for significant investment in CPD research design to discover the effective features of CPD in order to impact on teachers' and pupils' knowledge and learning (Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Coulter, 2012).

Primarily, what is stemming from the findings of this process evaluation purports that the implementation of the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme has been unsuccessful in its aims and objectives to facilitate teachers' delivery of the games strand and in offering pupils a skills-based, meaningful introduction to PA and sport. This programme is failing to move beyond the teachers training day to permeate, influence and become part of teachers' knowledge, pupils learning and daily school contexts. This evaluation suggests that this programme was developed, designed and implemented through a hypothetical lens, one that does not take into consideration the reality of what is happening 'on the ground' in educational settings. It is proposed here, that this programme would only be successful in achieving its aims and objectives if PE was delivered as set out in the 1999 PE curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999b), given the same subject status as core subjects with equal deference applied to the educational value of learning, in, through and about movement. The reality is, as the findings suggest, that PE has become relegated, devoid of cognitive value and the perpetuation of a form of PE delivered in schools that leaves little room or scope for change through the ethos of the Buntús programme and further questions the role of schools as a site for action on PA.

This proposed hypothetical lens through which this programme was designed suggests that in order for this PE-CPD programme to succeed, all primary schools would have to be bereft of individual contexts, conditions and daily experiences. Furthermore, this would suggest that all teachers and pupils require the same educational requirements and supports. Coulter (2012) views schools as being so varied, the nuances of the varying contexts alone make it difficult to take into account the confines of a one-size-fits-all programme. This process evaluation highlights the design and subsequent implementation of this programme as failing to recognise the specific teaching and context methodologies for teaching this subject,

leaving teachers requiring very specific professional CPD supports. The context is a key aspect of CPD development and Collinson *et al.*, (2009) concur, stating that it is imperative to examine the professional development that already exists in that context and teachers' previous experiences of PE-CPD programmes prior to designing any programme. The findings show that prior contexts and teachers' experiences of CPD provision for PE in many cases are non-existent, highlighting one of many challenges and complexities surrounding this subject. The issues of PE and CPD provision stemming from the findings are explored further in this chapter.

What is imperative about this study is that pupils' perspectives and voices were included and heard as the Buntús programme was developed with them in mind. As the findings show, it is their perspectives of PE that are free from bias, agenda and dynamics that reveal the suggested failings of this programme and bring forth prominent social determinants and environmental variables that are absent from previous research from an Irish perspective. The position or stance of the researcher also needs to be considered and discussed here. The researcher commenced and maintained a neutral position throughout this research process, having come to this study from neither a PE-CPD nor teaching background. This position was beneficial in that the researcher entered the research setting as an outsider who was new to the social setting. This allowed him to be objective and distant which may have facilitated interpretation with a clearer lens - while arguably and concurrently, understanding things in less depth in the beginning.

This chapter commences by exploring the themes that emerged from the data that are based entirely on the data collected. These themes are verbal statements offered to contextualise the findings of all stakeholders in this chapter. It demonstrates the evolving nature of the stakeholders' experiences and perceptions; describing how certain conditions lead to actions, interactions, events and entrenched beliefs, carefully laid out to be followed by someone other than the researcher. The themes may be representative of what is occurring in primary schools in relation to the delivery of PE and the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme is unsuccessful in achieving its aims and objectives. The themes

reiterate the calls for a national framework to facilitate primary teachers' CPD throughout their careers.

5.1 The Themes

The emergence of themes from the data analysis stage of this study suggest the complex task of facilitating effective PE-CPD programmes in primary schools and are interwoven between all stakeholders of those that participate in, teach, or facilitate the delivery of this subject. The perceptions of PE and its delivery reflect a subject that is far removed from what it set out to achieve in the revised 1999 Physical Education Curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a). It proposes to be an integral part of the entire primary education system through a diverse range of experiences (six strands) providing regular, challenging, balanced and harmonious PA, development and well-being. However, what has emerged from the findings is a curriculum which has contracted and has become *Narrowed*, bereft of fun, structure, quality, variety, inclusiveness and cognitive value, one that is exacerbated by institutional and attitudinal barriers, leaving it relegated; of *Low-Subject-Status*. This status does not pertain to PE as a subject in and of itself and is delivered to facilitate academic learning and classroom behaviour rather than learning in, through and of movement. As a result, pupils do not perceive PE as an authentic subject and believe that they should have greater input to what is actually delivered and consider themselves to have greater knowledge and understanding of this subject.

This subject status permeates the PE-CPD training days in this study and is a catalyst between tutors valued perspective of this programme in contrast to teachers under-valued perspective. As a result, the implementation of this programme as a resource may be deemed unsuccessful and ineffective as it fails to impact on teachers' knowledge, pupil learning and in becoming an integral part of the games strand. The themes present and/or question the possible role of primary schools as a setting for action on PA that could encourage, develop, and maintain pupils' interest, one that is imperative if there is any chance of positive behaviours tracking through various life-stages

5.1.1 PE: Low - Subject Status

The perceptions of all three stakeholders provide an insight into the facilitation, delivery and participation of this subject, one that is categorised as of *Low-Subject-Status* and one that concurs with Hardman (2001), who believes PE is facing a comprehensive threat to its existence. Primary teachers do not refer to the assessment of PE as a subject due to its categorisation as a non-examinable subject. This reinforces the scant regard for the cognitive/educational value attached to this subject, its subsequent relegation and continuous shortcomings in relation to adequate provision of PE-CPD programmes, facilities and equipment (Hardman, 2001).

By providing an insight into teachers' and pupils' perceptions of PE, what is gained is an understanding of the nature of PE lessons presented; stakeholders' commitment to participating in this subject, delivering PE, and programme effectiveness. The findings of this study support the view that both teachers and pupils strongly believe that PE leads to a number of benefits (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). The perceived benefits arising from the current study are summarised into three categories:

- (i) Physical Benefits – Provides pupils with opportunities to improve fitness, to combat societal trends (obesity, sedentary behaviours).
- (ii) Improved Learning – PE impacts positively on classroom learning through a range of mechanisms: improved behaviour, greater pupil capacity to concentrate and greater retention of learned material.
- (iii) Social & Affective benefits – PE improves pupils' social skills. Those who may be less gifted academically have the opportunity to experience success '*to shine*' in a different learning environment in PE lessons.

The frequency of lessons delivered is positively related to teachers' perceived success in, and attitude to, teaching this subject. In addition, those teachers who hold positive attitudes to this subject are more likely to believe their classes are successful. Furthermore, the adequate provision of facilities, equipment and resources are positively related to perceived success and attitude to teaching this subject. Causality cannot be determined from these findings as it

is uncertain whether the successful delivery of PE classes leads to more positive attitudes or whether teachers develop positive attitudes due to delivering successful lessons (Morgan & Hansen, 2008). However, it is probable that teachers with more positive attitudes teach PE more frequently and experience more success as they become more experienced and effective teachers of this subject.

Both teachers and pupils believe that PE is the main setting for PA. The health benefits of PA represented a major factor provided by teachers and pupils for delivery and participation in PE lessons and their benefits are well established in the literature (Strong *et al.*, 2005; De-Corby *et al.*, 2005). Bailey (2006) describes schools as one of the main contexts and if not the only context, for the provision of regular, structured PA and parental concerns and economic pressures have contributed to lower levels of PA outside of school (Furedi, 2000). Teachers who teach in urban areas in this study feel that children no longer have a desire to play outside and this is a key issue as it adds to other concerns about children's play. Dwyer *et al.*, (2008) supports this finding by stating that teachers are concerned about their pupils' reduced ability to play creatively due to their increased time spent with technology (home-entertainment devices) and overscheduling of time, resulting in a large reduction of playtime at home.

Although debate continues as to the benefits of PE and academic performance (Bailey, 2005a), teachers in this study are adamant that this relationship exists and is a key motivating factor in delivering this subject. The literature has established an association between academic achievement and PE lessons, exercise and fitness, albeit because of self-esteem, mood and emotional wellbeing (Bailey, 2005a). In an extensive review of the literature concerning the impact of daily PE lessons upon the academic performance of school pupils, Shephard (1997) concludes that pupils' ability to learn and improve academic skills could be enhanced by receiving extra PE lessons.

It is quite evident from the findings that primary school pupils are not receiving the recommended PE levels and fall very short of our EU counterparts at primary level as reported by Hardman, (2008). The decline in PE time allocation since the revised PE curriculum 1999 has been blamed on an ever increasing curriculum that highlights

Hardman's (2008) finding that PE is being squeezed out by more compulsory academic courses. Despite a national policy in place, at grassroots level within this study, the actual control of curriculum time allocation remains 'individualistic' with significant variation between schools. This finding reflects Hogan *et al.*'s (2007) view that a de-centralised autonomy of education, whereby boards of management and school principals have greater autonomy, leads to further challenges in schools in delivering PE, if leadership is wanting. While both primary teachers and pupils recommend greater time allocation for PE in this study, such a recommendation is misguided, if not dated. It is not the quantity of PA delivered that is likely to influence pupils' later affinity to PA and sport so much as the range and number of different activities and experiences participated in (Bailey, 2005a; O'Connor, 2012). At the very least, Shephard (1997) notes, that pupils can be involved in daily PE without jeopardising the more academic curriculum growth.

The finding that many primary teachers and pupils rationalise PE as a 'break from academic work' to facilitate greater concentration upon returning to class is important and one that is in line with the literature (Barney & Deutsch, 2008; Morgan & Burke, 2008). Kirk (2005) has continuously informed of the dangers of rationalising PE based on academic benefits. He claims that by contrasting PA with educational or cognitive work and justifying its position based on this contrast, the mind and the body are separated and the cognitive benefits of PA and PE may not be recognised. Furthermore, Kirk (2005) explains that by also rationalising PE on the singular basis of physiological and health purposes, there is an implicit or even explicit acceptance that PE has no educational purpose or benefits other than getting children moving.

The description of PE lessons provided by both teachers and pupils in this study suggests that many PE classes have little or no educational focus. Pupil's perceptions of their PE classes reflect mere extensions of break-time activities and the findings show that no reference is made to teachers' planned/structured lessons with syllabus aims or appropriate PE pedagogies implemented. Teachers describe PE lessons where the main aim is to get children outside and moving and PE lessons that resemble physical fitness sessions may actually turn pupils off PA in the long term. As Kirk (2005) has previously suggested, PE activities with no clear learning focus may inhibit the promotion of positive attitudes towards PA and should

not focus on the physical effect of fitness exercises, but teach pupils about fitness in terms of how it is defined, attained and maintained outside the confines of a school hall or yard.

It appears that teacher's perceptions of various benefits of PE do not necessarily mean that syllabus outcomes are a priority of PE classes or that quality classes are being delivered. DeCorby *et al.*, (2005) find that teachers perceive PE as important to the development of the complete pupil, particularly in terms of physical and social development. However, the belief in the value of PE does not translate to the delivery of quality PE classes, nor that pupils will develop the knowledge and skills to be considered physically educated (O'Connor *et al.*, 2012).

This form of PE delivered in schools is defined as a narrowed curriculum in the findings and brings forth a conflicting dynamic between pupils' participation and teachers' delivery of this subject and manifested itself through the challenging of teachers' knowledge, abilities and confidence to deliver quality PE classes by pupils. The recommendations for greater variety of games, pupil input into what is delivered and recommendations for the employment of specialist PE teachers are recurring issues in the literature (INTO, 2007; Hardman, 2007). Teachers' feelings of inadequacy in delivering certain strands like gymnastics due to issues of confidence and the ability to deliver a varied curriculum (INTO, 2007) are intensified by risk-averse practices and safety measures for fear of injuries and litigation (Tovey, 2007). Such stringent safety measures are prominent throughout teachers' delivery of PE in this study, an issue that is absent from previous research from an Irish perspective. These measures legitimise the removal of challenge and stimulation from this subject that could have a detrimental effect on children's health and development, further eroding school's vital role in providing facilitative environments (Bundy *et al.*, 2009; Little & Wyver, 2008).

Maynard (2007) states that PE has become over-shadowed by issues of accountability and constraints placed on teachers' decision-making by the inflexible, over-emphasis on safety, inherent in school regulations and fear of litigation. A regulatory environment of primary schools is common, as fear of injury and subsequent litigation is a major concern for teachers in this study. Teachers' perceptions of delivering PE indicate the probability of risk has little

to do with actual risk, but rather how teachers perceive, manage and regulate it. Despite the findings showing evidence to suggest that injury rates in primary schools are actually very low and mainly minor (Little & Wyver, 2008), the view that any risk of injury or other negative outcome, no matter how minor or remote, is seen as unacceptable by teachers.

The devalued status attached to PE is further reflected by school policies regarding the entire PE curriculum. The following issues are summarised under four categories conveying a message that PE is of less importance compared to core subjects.

- (i) The cancelling of PE classes for various reasons
- (ii) The acquiring and under-utilisation of equipment
- (iii) The proliferation of Games
- (iv) The use of external coaches to deliver certain strands of the PE curriculum

The devalued nature of this subject is seen through PE lessons being cancelled for various reasons including; safety issues, indoor halls being in use for other activities, unfavourable weather conditions or is used as a deterrent against indiscipline (McGuinness & Shelly, 1995; INTO, 2007). The issue of equipment and resources has long been cited as one of the contributing factors to an inadequate delivery of the entire PE curriculum in primary schools (Coolahan, 1981; Deenihan, 1990; Duffy, 1997). This study in comparison, finds external organisations (GAA), resource-led programmes and supermarket vouchers for school sports equipment are acquired to facilitate in theory, the delivery of the PE curriculum. This finding suggests that this issue is no longer the over-riding concern it once was and yet, such provision is not being used to its full potential, if at all, according to tutors and pupils who refer to ample equipment in storage, not allowed to be used for fear of damage.

With the subject of PE obtaining no apparent cognitive value within primary schools, what is clear from pupils' perceptions of PE in particular, is the legitimisation and persistence of a particular form of games strand, prevailing and reinforcing what the literature acknowledges both nationally and internationally (Broderick & Sheil, 2000; Hardman & Marshall, 2005).

Performative sporting discourses take centre stage within PE classes at the expense of providing a more inclusive, broader and balanced subject for all pupils (Penny & Evans, 1997; Fairclough *et al.*, 2002).

Garret (2004) states that such discourses reinforce the privileging of boys' sporting experiences and knowledge, which permits the adoption of different teaching styles for both boys and girls, which is evident in this study. This finding underpins the beliefs concerning differences in boys' and girls' abilities, behaviours; attitudes that reinforce traditional gender power relationships and limit opportunities for learning and participation (Hills & Croston, 2011). What is concerning is that some of the values and attributes (performance, competition, winning, hardiness, solidarity and stoicism) of this form of PE now appear to circulate and have become accepted norms especially within the games strand of PE curriculum (Hickey, 2008). The form of games strand presented in the findings concurs with the literature in that it constructs masculinity in a certain way that excludes and marginalises girls through discouraging and diminishing their abilities in order to maintain masculine connections to sport (Hills & Croston, 2012).

A number of teachers welcome the involvement of external organisations like the GAA, IFRU and FAI in facilitating the delivery of the games strand, a practice that is not surprising as these performative games are historically rooted in cultural practices. However, such organisations have their own goals and agendas and view primary schools as recruitment and development opportunities for their own ends. The concern that persists is the purpose of their inclusion, (one that extends to include resource-led programmes like the Buntús programme) in the delivery of the PE curriculum and their subsequent ability to exclude. This is achieved through their performative objectives that overwhelm broader educational experiences connected to the yet to be realised full potential of PE curricula (McArdle, 2007; Penny & Jess, 2004).

The employment of external coaches contributing to the delivery of PE classes further conveys the issue that PE is deemed 'as other' and projects a negative image that it is not a core subject, if a class teacher is unable or not motivated to deliver it (INTO, 2007). This

finding reflects an issue that has been constantly present in the literature and remains wholly divisive and polarising. Some teachers recognised the potential positive benefits of knowledgeable specialists (Oireachtas, 2005) while others continue to be opposed, maintaining the opinion held within the PE curriculum (Government of Ireland, 1999a) that the best teacher of PE is the class teacher (INTO, 2007). PE is part of an integrated curriculum and the involvement of outside groups may reduce opportunities for teachers to deliver PE and avail of CPD programmes which could lead to a greater fragmentation of the complete integrated primary school curriculum (INTO, 2007). Due to the status of PE in primary schools in this study, it remains a challenge for PE-CPD programmes like the Buntús programme to make any real impression, difference, or even presence within primary schools. However, there are key aspects in the programme design that are problematic and may be pivotal contributing factors in the unsuccessful implementation of this PE-CPD programme.

5.1.2 Supportive Apprenticeship: Issues and Challenges

The findings suggest the cognitive/educational value of PE appears to be poorly understood amongst classroom teachers. Harris *et al.*, (2010) state that pre-service education and CPD programmes need to focus on the key aims of PE and on strategies to improve programme success. The findings show a narrow viewpoint of the purpose of PE in this study and may be a key factor in the implementation of poor quality PE-CPD programmes. The value of PE needs to be promoted in terms of its contribution to education and if de-valued, as this study suggests, it may be rationalised in terms of how it enhances pupils' achievements in academic subjects (Tinning, 1997). This could adversely affect the status of PE, its educational outcomes and the ability to be educated in, through and about movement (Hardman & Marshall, 2005). This low subject or devalued status towards PE is evident and manifests itself through both tutors' experiences of delivering the Buntús training day in schools, and teachers' perceptions of the training day. These training day experiences in schools highlight the 'polar' perspectives (valued versus under-valued) between tutors and teachers in relation to the training day, the Buntús programme and PE overall. Again, as with pupils, a fraught dynamic came to the surface by both tutors and teachers arising from these training days. Such perspectives leave this chapter questioning the effectiveness of this PE-CPD programme. The following section revisits and discusses key features of the *Supportive*

Apprenticeship Approach by tutors in their delivery of this programme and broader issues concerning the overall implementation of this PE-CPD programme. Problematic aspects of the programme design are categorised as follows:

- (i) Time Allocation: CPD programme
- (ii) Supportive CPD school policies
- (iii) One size fits all programme

Issues related to the nature and format of this programme are identified by the researcher in effectively evaluating this programme and by a number of teachers, who recognised the inadequacy of a one-day PE-CPD course in terms of raising standards in PE. Teachers' ability to evaluate critically this programme was much more problematic for those schools in county A due to the length of time between the initial induction day and this evaluation, which spanned a 3-8 year period. The results were vague recollections of the training day or a complete inability to acquire their perspectives due to the revolving door nature of primary school employment practices. The overall recommendation expressed from teachers is the need for follow-up or refresher courses and the finding reflects the growing criticism within the literature of short-term, transmission models of CPD that pay limited attention to the individual needs of teachers, their pupils or the specific school context (Armour & Yelling, 2004; Borko, 2004). Moreover, it highlights that meaningful teacher learning is often a slow, difficult, and gradual and an uncertain process that requires sufficient time to ensure the consolidation and implementation of newly acquired knowledge, understanding and sharing with colleagues (Ofsted, 2002b; Borko, 2004). Effective provision needs to be sustained over time and the inadequacy of this one-day programme may reinforce that the collaborative approach to PE-CPD may not be working effectively for primary PE due to teachers' low baseline knowledge and understanding (Duncombe & Armour, 2004).

Tutors identify a number of factors influencing and affecting the PE-CPD training day. One finding in particular, focuses on the level of support within some schools and reveals that in order for these programmes to be effective, to influence teachers' engagement and commitment; the support of school principals is required. Tutors view principals as the

driving force, to take up PE-CPD opportunities and lead by example by participating in the training days. This is in sharp contrast to international studies where low levels of principal support for such programmes are recorded (Hardman & Marshall, 2009; Kirk, 2006). The relationship between tutors and teachers during the training day reflects a valued/devalued dynamic and the finding reflecting tutors' experiences of delivering this programme is aligned with the literature and are described by Armour (2010), as 'inhospitable' in relation to CPD and viewed by Duncombe & Armour (2004) as in need of radical change to their structures, processes and priorities.

Another finding affecting and influencing the implementation of this programme is that teachers make only minimal use of their learning of the programme due to the employment of specialist coaches to help deliver PE in their schools. The involvement of outside interest groups clearly reduces opportunities for some of these teachers to deliver PE and is unfortunate as it could be used to increase PE-CPD opportunities for teachers and PE/sport specialists to work together and learn from each other (Murphy & O'Leary, 2012). If appropriately managed, teachers could develop their subject knowledge, confidence and competence and coaches could enhance their understanding of child development and pedagogy within the curriculum (Murphy & O'Leary, 2012). It remains to be seen whether the concerns expressed about this practice threatening high quality provision of primary PE will be realised (Ofsted, 2005).

In contrast to a context specific whole school PE-CPD programme designed to meet the unique needs of each school, a key theme arising from this study, is the lack of opportunities for teachers to extend their knowledge and as a result, their PE content remains limited. This programme reflects a one size fits all design, one that is lacking context as referred to in the literature (Surgue, 2004). Context is both imperative and very specific for the teaching of PE compared to core subjects and makes the task of facilitating effective PE-CPD for this subject a challenging endeavour (Caferella, 2002).

The findings show that there is no difference in tutors' delivery of content because of a standardised delivery of this PE-CPD programme across all schools and community centres,

regardless of regional and local variations in terms of locality (urban/rural), socio-economic and ethnic make-up, or enrolments. In addition, there seems to be little recognition of and accommodation made for, the assorted prior experiences, practices, and knowledge and career stage of the teachers involved in this study. This finding concurs with Coulter (2012), who views this one size fits all programme design as a major criticism of PE-CPD provision as the content of the training day is externally imposed, with little consideration and modification to meet the diverse needs of teachers. Ward & Doutis, (1999) highlight that such uniformity in design reinforces how physically and conceptually detached it is from what transpires in the classroom, as it occurs either away from schools as is the case of those teachers in county B, and without pupils present as is the case in both counties. As a result, this programme cannot be immediately integrated with classroom contexts or enhance teachers' knowledge and skills (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Sullivan & Deglau, 2006)

The delivery of this programme is well received overall by teachers in this study, an aspect that McPhail & Kirk, (2001) have also reported in similar resource led PE-CPD programmes in the UK. Teachers report varying experiences and levels of satisfaction with the programme. The findings show that the programme focuses primarily on participating in practical activities and/or does not effectively cover the breadth of the PE curriculum. A number of teachers refer to the programme being too basic or limited by focusing on the games strand, therefore questioning the effect on their teaching. Such questioning may imply that by failing to differentiate the individual needs of teachers, this programme prevents them from having a sense of ownership and the ability to build on previous knowledge (Armour & Yelling, 2007; Cordingley *et al.*, 2003).

Tutors' descriptions of their standardised delivery of this programme highlight key contradictions inherent in this programme. Teachers are encouraged to use pupil centred approaches and plan in order to meet the diverse learning needs of their pupils and yet as learners, they are not exposed to these same pedagogical understandings or approaches and hence, are treated homogeneously. This reiterates the lack of recognition of the diverse learning needs of the teachers, their experiences in terms of PA and career stage. The findings suggest tutors' approach to learning in PE tend to take teacher learning for granted or assume that teachers will learn and when they have learnt, they can then transfer this knowledge to

their pupils. Thus, when it comes to learning, the focus is not on teachers learning and expanding their content knowledge but rather, developing their pupils' learning (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Armour & Yelling, 2004a; Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2006). This assumption is apparent through the way teachers are engaged with the learning activities and the resources that are provided to support the learning process.

The practical nature of the training day allows tutors to present and model lessons and games providing opportunities for teachers to practice games and learn activities followed by feedback and coaching from tutors if required. This type of delivery reflects the INSET model advocated by Joyce & Showers, (1988), which according to the literature violates the active learning and contextualised criteria (Coulter, 2012). The findings show that the majority of the PE-CPD training days occur at the end of the school day or during in-service days and as a result, there is a sense of urgency to keep teachers stimulated and engaged, by involving them in 'doing' as opposed to simply 'talking at them'. Due to the restriction of a three to four-hour timeframe and the limited opportunities provided for tutors to extend their knowledge base, the training day is tutor-centred to a certain degree. Its direct style of delivery conveys the assumption that the introduction and demonstration are facilitated away from the school settings, leaving teachers having to adopt the new pedagogical content knowledge to their own environment at a later stage (Coulter, 2012). However, this direct style of delivery is deemed beneficial by teachers as they state that it develops a better understanding of how to teach PE, particularly when the modelled material and activities are drawn from the exemplar lessons that the tutors provide (Guskey, 2003; Maldonado, 2002).

The key strategy in these demonstration activities is that the tutor assumes the role of the teacher and the teachers plays the role of pupil. Teachers' opportunities to learn to be teachers of PE appear to be enhanced when their learning opportunities centre on them playing the role of the school-aged learners (Armour, 2010; Byrk & Schneider, 2002; Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Paradoxically, this enhancement is to the detriment of teachers. It means that teachers are inflexible in the way they use these same activities with their pupils and make little or no modification to make them developmentally appropriate. While teachers role-playing 'as pupil' is an established and recommend teaching model in both pre and in-service PE-CPD (Ha *et al.*, 2004; Murphy & O'leary, 2012), the findings

raise the question of how teachers, when they are playing the role of the learner, learn to also be the teacher. The developers and deliverers of this programme appear to position the pupil as the learner and convey to the teachers that their own learning is not imperative in the process, resulting in them becoming mere conduits for change (Petrie & McGee, 2012). This programme simply provides teachers with another apprenticeship of observation experience as both participant and observer. Teachers have opportunities to become skilled participants in the games, learning activities, replicators of sample and modelled lessons, but their opportunities to develop as independent, flexible and innovative teachers of PE are limited (Coulter, 2012; Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Armour & Yelling, 2004a; Bechtel & O'Sullivan, 2006).

In addition to playing games, tutors provide teachers with resource cards to help inform their learning. Designed to enhance and shape pupil learning in PE, the resource cards appear to provide teachers with opportunities to trial alternative activities and interact with new material, approaches and contexts in this subject. The finding that this programme instils greater confidence in those primary teachers, who have limited subject knowledge is a positive one. However, Coulter (2012) is tentative of the potential of resource-led PE-CPD programmes to extend teachers' and pupils' knowledge and learning, as it is imperative that their applicability and usefulness are justified.

The concern surrounding resource-led programmes is evident in the finding, which shows that this programme might allow teachers to rely too heavily on the content of the resource cards and the activities, resulting in an inability to plan for, and respond to the particular needs of their pupils. Indeed, this concern is reinforced in the findings by the fact that teachers rely on the Buntús cards to plan and structure their PE lessons. It appears that in many ways the resources provided, act as scripts for teachers to follow and, in so doing, unintentionally deskill the teachers and allow surface as opposed to deep learning to occur. The resource cards, designed to provide guidance for teaching to enhance pupil learning, do not appear to be utilised to provide an educative focus for teacher learning. Furthermore, the findings stemming from teachers are devoid of sufficient attention to planning, continuity and progression and no reference is made or specific examples given, of how teachers integrate their learning into their medium and long-term planning. This concern is echoed by Lawrence

(2003), who similarly finds limited evidence of the TOPs programme becoming an integral part of PE curricular design.

A further specific weakness of this programme is teachers' complete lack of attention to assessment, given that planning and assessment are identified as limitations in Hunt's (1988) study of the TOPs programme. This has since been reported by Ofsted (2002a, 2005) as particular weaknesses of the subject and has to be considered a missed opportunity by the Irish Sports Council (ISC) in their development of this programme. This finding may reflect Duncombe & Armour's (2004) study, that most primary teachers simply do not feel knowledgeable enough about PE to clearly express changes and associated outcomes. It may also reflect the inadequacy of a very short PE-CPD programme that, whilst capable of helping teachers to feel good about the programme, may have imparted scant pedagogical learning (Harris *et al.*, 2010).

5.2 PE: Inclusiveness & Participation

Within mainstream primary schools, the role of PE and Adapted Physical Activity (APA) in promoting PA, self-confidence and self-worth for people with Special Education Needs (SEN) has also been clearly established in the literature (Crawford, 2011). Such activities provide the opportunity for children with disabilities or SEN to be included in PE classes and their broader communities, benefiting those with and without disabilities. Those with disabilities or SEN learn important social skills while their typically developed peers learn sensitivity to others who are different.

The delivery of the PE curriculum and its associated issues culminate in classifying primary teachers requiring very specific professional PE-CPD needs and supports and this is exacerbated by concerns related to appropriate training for teachers involved in the delivery of APA. The findings show the majority of teachers in this study have little or no experience of delivering PE to pupils with SEN. Organisations such as the National Governing Bodies of Sport and programmes like the Buntús programme may be signs of progress in relation to the adequate provision to support mainstream schools in the delivery of APA programmes to children with SEN. The support and expertise of Sports Inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs)

need to be actively encouraged in Irish schools and yet the findings concur with the literature that schools rarely contact SIDOs despite their readiness to help teachers accommodate pupils in participating in PE (NDA, 2005). Awareness of SIDOs and programmes like the Buntús programme should be addressed at undergraduate level within third-level institutions, at in-service training and additional postgraduate training (Smith & Green, 2004; Vickerman, 2007). Additional and appropriate resource materials need to be developed and made available for all primary teachers.

5.3 PE: A National Framework

The findings concur and reinforce what is evident in the literature that little has changed in relation to traditional practices of PE-CPD providers, inhospitable schools and departmental structures (Duncombe & Armour, 2004). There continues to be a lack of desire or urgency if not, reluctance to alter structures, processes and priorities to enable CPD for PE to happen effectively in primary schools (Duncombe & Armour, 2006). The literature supports CPD for schools but very little research has been published on variation within schools or contextualisation in classes with teachers and pupils or even where and when the lessons are scheduled (Coulter, 2012). In many of the reviews on effective PE-CPD, there are references to organisational support and change as being critical to the success of PE-CPD interventions; however, the precise definition of organisational change remains uncertain (Coulter, 2012). Organisational change is multifaceted, though necessary, for teacher change to occur. In order for it to be effective, future PE-CPD models should examine organisational change from the perspective of physical change (resources, equipment and facilities) and policy change (time-tabling, school ethos, physical education programme planning, and teacher induction) (Coulter, 2012). The implementation of organisational change requires a collective participation of principals, staff, parents, children and the schools' boards of management (Blair & Capel, 2011).

Most importantly, it requires the development of a comprehensive and high quality in-service training programme that is broad enough to cover all aspects of change and entrenched enough to cover them accurately (INTO, 2004a). The lobbying for a national framework for CPD for primary school teachers should continue in order to bring about, meet teachers', and school systems' requirements that would address funding, time allocation and accreditation issues. A variety of approaches need to be facilitated in the form of in-school days, off-site

seminars, summer courses, certificate to Master courses, online courses as well as sabbatical and study leave (INTO, 2006).

A new cohort of teachers is emerging within the Irish primary school system with recent graduates of Colleges of Education having undergone study related to the Primary Physical Education Curriculum and are now, well positioned to undertake support of colleagues within their own schools. Murphy & O’Leary (2012) state that the future shape of support for classroom teachers to teach PE merits serious consideration given the positive findings related to teachers working within CoPs or learning communities (O’Sullivan, 2007; Parker *et al.*, 2010).

Studies have shown that non-specialist primary teachers have only a ‘moderate level’ of confidence to teach PE and would rather not, teach PE lessons; and yet, at the same time, value the importance of the subject within the curriculum (Morgan, 2008; Morgan & Burke, 2008). The results of this study and in particular, the recommendations made may help inform further debate and investigation regarding how PE is delivered in primary schools. Teachers and coaches could coexist in a professional capacity, working in unison with a common purpose of providing high quality educational experiences that motivates, inspires and provides access and opportunities for children to take part in PA (Blair & Capel, 2011). Teachers and coaches could work together; with part of the teacher’s role to support coaches in the construction of knowledge relating to pedagogy and child development. Coaches in return, could be brought into the school community and provided with a legitimate identity as a member of the school’s staff. This could have implications for how primary school teachers are supported both in ITE and CPD.

Consideration needs to be given to whether there are alternative approaches and models to the education of teachers that would support them in seeing the meaning and value of PE, but without the pressure of feeling, they are the sole providers. Instead, they could be supported to view themselves as part of a more connected, team approach to delivering high quality PE. Such an approach would, in part, support Talbot’s (2008b) view regarding the longer-term future of PE in primary schools. Theoretically, working with coaches in such a way could support the confidence of teachers to deliver PE. The model would provide a complementary synergy of content and pedagogical knowledge working together to ultimately provide a high

quality PE experience for all children. It would further support the underpinning theoretical position of this PE-CPD programme and encourage teachers and coaches to engage in the social construction of knowledge and understanding (Blair & Capel, 2011). The work of the Irish Primary Physical Education Association (www.ippea.ie) and the Professional Development Service for Teachers supported by the DES could form a very important pillar of any new supports for teachers. One of the aims of learning communities that they have established is to form a network of primary teachers in a particular region with an interest in the teaching of PE who might share best practice.

A public service pay agreement (the Croke Park Agreement) introduced in 2010 has made it compulsory for primary teachers to spend one additional hour per week to facilitate school activities such as planning and continuous professional development (www.per.gov.ie). Some schools have already provided 'space' where the focus is PE (Murphy & O'Leary, 2012). Affirmation for such communities is necessary and consideration by the DES of online support (e.g. engaging in video conference with dedicated personnel, provision of online video materials as sources for tutor CPD) to enhance the efforts of schools should be explored (Murphy & O'Leary, 2012). A support system put in place by the DES using 'cuiditheoirí' to facilitate the support in schools has reported that teachers valued this support in the context of PE (McHugh, 2008). Acknowledging the pressures on schools to focus on enhancing numeracy and literacy levels of children it would seem that a regional support service could ensure that links are made between areas so that models of support embracing aspects of numeracy and literacy through PE can be provided.

In an international context, Petrie & Hunter (2011) argue that it is the 'PE profession's responsibility to support primary teachers through coherent CPD' (p. 335). This would seem to point to the importance of subject associations, the DES (including the Inspectorate), PE tutors and third level providers of PE collaborating to support primary teachers as they endeavour to teach PE, a subject that presents 'complex challenges' (Jess, 2011). Such supports can ensure that meaningful support can be provided to classroom teachers so that PE earns its place at the forefront of provision to meet the needs of children.

5.4 Implications

The evidence informed principles for effective PE-CPD emerging from evaluating PE related CPD provision in primary schools, using the case of the Buntús (Play & Multi Sport) programme are as follows;

Professional development programmes:

- Promote the significance of quality PE provision and encourage teachers to view their own CPD as a means to achieving quality PE for their pupils.
- Are contextualised and centred in school contexts, rather than teachers role-playing as children ‘off site’ for the purposes of CPD.
- Assess the necessity for contextual/structural changes prior to any CPD programme to ensure the success of the programme.
- Take a whole school approach, where there is a motivated leader/Principal, creating a supportive environment and a shared vision. Involve teachers at all stages of the programme in order for them to become responsible for their own learning. This provides teachers with a voice, their natural right in their own class, where they are best positioned to decide what is appropriate for their own teaching and their pupils.
- Are individualised to each learner’s needs and engage learners with the key skills and processes, ways of thinking and practicing relative to the content being mediated.
- Consider the provision of appropriate resources that support teacher learning and enhance content knowledge.
- Encourage and facilitate opportunities for teachers to meet during the school day to stimulate communication and collaboration and to encourage and foster a community of learning.

5.5 Limitations of this Study

The key issues and limitations in relation to this study focus mainly on conducting qualitative research within educational settings. The major issues focus on (i) conducting an impact evaluation (ii) gaining access to primary schools (iii) time allocation towards the interview process

- A major limitation of this study was its inability to pursue and conduct an impact evaluation. This study was unable to assess teachers' delivery of the games strand and subsequent enhancement of learner outcomes for pupils through pursuing data such as analysing schemes of work, lesson plans and lesson observations to support teachers self-reported effects of the PE-CPD programme on their practices and on pupil learning.
- Gaining access to primary schools to conduct group interviews with stakeholders was problematic throughout this study resulting in the first group interviews being conducted in 2009 and completed until March 2011.
- Due to school management and time allocation issues, group interviews with teachers lasted between 30-40 minutes in total. This resulted in the interview process becoming on occasions, pressurised, and therefore curtailing the natural flow of the interview, the ability of the researcher to probe and explore participants' answers and re-actions at length.
- The researcher's neutral position throughout this research process, having come to this study from neither a PE-CPD nor teaching background meant that understanding things in less depth in the beginning was a lengthy, uncertain process. This may have prolonged the completion of this study.

5.6 Recommendations

- A national framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for primary school teachers is required to bring about, meet teachers' and school systems' requirements that would address the funding, time allocation and accreditation issues. A variety of approaches need to be facilitated in the form of in-school days, off-site

seminars, summer courses, certificate to Master courses, online courses as well as sabbatical and study leave.

- Further investigation to determine the level of on-going support required by primary teachers in order to provide quality games programmes is needed to consolidate the professional development provision in this area.
- As the primary school teacher in the Irish context is a generalist teacher, other models of professional development need to be investigated to try to improve teachers' teaching and children's learning across subjects rather than through subjects to ensure maximum use of teachers' time
- Learning is a key component in physical education lessons as opposed to recreation/free play facilitated inclusion and enjoyment for pupils. Further research is required to explore whether exposure to quality teaching could maintain children's interest and enjoyment in PE through their secondary education and onwards to enjoy a healthy lifestyle into adult life.
- Further research is necessary to establish the professional development requirements of teachers at various stages of their career and in different contexts.
- A study on facilitators of professional development and the impact of providing individualised, contextualised programmes of professional development, whereby the facilitators are unfamiliar with the context they might be working in, merits investigation
- Awareness of Sports Inclusion Disability Officers and the Buntús programme should be addressed at third-level institutions, in-service training and additional postgraduate training to facilitate teachers' delivery of physical education to those pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN).

5.7 Conclusion

What is noteworthy about this research is that it provides a broader and complete insight of both PE and CPD provision in tandem. Previous research has examined PE and CPD from a positivist perspective, in isolation, focusing on one stakeholder. This study attempts to examine the perceptions of those that facilitate, deliver and participate in PE, thus presenting both similar and varying standpoints of this subject. Furthermore, this study is evaluative in nature, a key aspect in both health promotion and education in gaining insights into the processes involved in programme implementation and the social and environmental contexts in which they operate to achieve its effectiveness (Tones & Tilford, 2001).

The complexities and challenges of delivering PE and providing a CPD programme in primary schools are evident in this study. The belief that PE is beneficial as a vehicle for PA and one that positively influences learning and behaviour in the classroom is encouraging; however, the reasons provided for including PE in teachers' weekly classes reflect a subject of little cognitive/educational value. Teachers do not value the approach to learning through movement; it is undervalued and is therefore of low subject status relative to core subjects. This is predicated by institutional and attitudinal barriers leading to a narrowed PE curriculum being delivered.

The findings from teachers are relatively supportive of this CPD programme with particular attention given to the perceived positive effects towards PE and their subject knowledge, both of which are at a low baseline due to limitations of ITE and CPD. The perceived success of this programme is restricted by its inability to address key pedagogical issues such as medium-and-long term planning. In addition, the absence of follow-up support for teachers, the problematic nature of collaborative professional learning within primary schools and the introduction of external coaches in the delivery of PE in some schools further reduces teachers' involvement.

The one size fits all programme design highlights a key pedagogical issue expressed in the findings that demonstrates that there is a learning dichotomy in relation to teachers in PE. Firstly, there is the aim of designing and implementing CPD programmes that enhance

teacher learning and understanding how teachers best learn. Secondly, there is the goal of simultaneously meeting outcomes associated with pupil learning and accomplishment in specific classroom contexts. This study demonstrates an underlying difficulty in designing PE-CPD that is responsive to each school's and individual teachers' needs in a programme where timeframes and access to external support are limited.

In contrast to the advocates (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005) of the centrality of teachers-as-learners in this CPD programme, the findings suggest both at the policy and implementation levels, pupils are positioned and discussed as the learner while teachers are, in effect, placed in a neutral position, as educational mediators through which improvements to pupil learning outcomes can be achieved. Teachers are treated by tutors as unproblematic; who know how to teach, and will therefore learn what is taught on the CPD training day and apply it in the classroom in a similar way to pupils. This assumption oversimplifies the considerable differences that are seen to exist amongst teachers in this study: differences in confidence in teaching PE, in their content knowledge in PE, in their actual teaching approaches in PE, and their lack of assessment and planning capabilities.

Strategies need to be devised to ensure appropriate PE-CPD programmes are implemented where key educational outcomes in PE are the focus. It is unreasonable to expect the Buntús programme to be a panacea for the long-standing, ongoing and inherent problems within primary PE (Shepard & Trudeau, 2008). Future CPD programmes in primary PE and research on its impact clearly needs to address the climate and framework within which primary PE takes place in order to more effectively support teacher development and in turn, enhance pupil learning (Harris *et al.*, 2010; Petrie, 2010).

The IOC have highlighted the fundamental importance of PA and sport for a healthy lifestyle and have called for parents and schools to be part of a strategy to counter the rising inactivity in youth. However, legacy rhetoric claiming to inspire a generation of young people has pervaded the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics from the initial bidding processes, through to post events discourses (Griggs & Ward, 2013). On the eve of the closing ceremony, David Cameron stated a desire to put competitive sport at the heart of a new

curriculum for primary PE. This desire hails an all too familiar picture and a continuation of the contested terrain of a distinct conservative and traditional vision of education and PE.

PE curricula continue to fluctuate between an emphasis upon breadth and balance and a prescribed diet of narrow sporting activities. Within this context, performativity discourses within education reinforce the position of nationally tested subjects and continues to force PE to the periphery of primary school curricula (Griggs & Ward, 2013). On these margins, policy demands a focus upon competitive sport as a means to develop future sporting champions, in addition to alleviating contemporary concerns with increasing sedentary behaviour by training pupils to adopt lifelong participation in PA (Griggs & Ward, 2013).

Teachers tasked with navigating this policy space are insufficiently prepared to meet these conflicting demands and as-a-consequence have subcontracted delivery to agents who offer an inexpensive, if superficial solution. The rhetoric of the statement continues to demonstrate little acknowledgement of these challenges and presents an opportunistic, oversimplified solution to complex and wider social and environmental issues (Griggs & Ward, 2013). Instead of being based upon substantive evidence, Cameron's statement appears to be 'policy by the way' attached to the rhetoric of public health concerns and Olympic legacy (Griggs & Ward, 2013).

Advocates of PE, health professionals and researchers have identified the school as a key site to encourage, develop and maintain PA (St. Ledger *et al.*, 2007; Pate *et al.*, 2006). In order to produce sustainable effects, it may be necessary to widen the scope of school-based interventions to include the community to promote multiple environments that support active living as children move from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. There is also a sustained argument that primary schools are taking on once expected, traditional parental responsibilities and societal issues in relation to health and well-being. There may well need to be an acknowledgement of the limitations as to what can be reasonably expected from primary schools; their teachers, and the PE curriculum in terms of health promotion. Furthermore, justifying this subject's existence through claiming a seemingly infinite number of primary objectives has resulted in it becoming exceedingly difficult to attain any objective standards at all. There requires some concession in relation to PE that there are strong determining influences relating to the involvement in sport and physical recreation that go

well beyond and lie outside the scope of PE classes and CPD programmes (Evans & Davis, 2010).

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Appendices

Appendix A. The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Programme Cards (A Selection)

Appendix B.

- (i) Informative Letter (Sports Coordinators)
- (ii) Informative Letter (Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors)
- (iii) Informative Letter (Principals)
- (iv) Informed Consent Forms (opt-out)

Appendix C. Interview Guides

- (i) Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors
- (ii) Primary School Teachers
- (iii) Primary School Pupils

Appendix D.

- (i) The Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Evaluation Form

Appendix A.

Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) Programme Cards (A Selection)

- List of Cards & Equipment
- Rolling Card
- Receiving Card
- Running, Jumping & Hopping card
- Travelling with the ball card
- Throwing & Catching card
- Striking a ball card
- Kicking Card
- Inclusive Card (Disability)
- Multi-Sport (Invasion Games)
- Multi-Sport (Rugby Rounders)
- Multi-Sport (Find a Space)
- Multi-Sport (Dribble & Knock Out)
- Multi – Sport (3 Hoop Ball)

Appendix B.

- (i)** Informative Letter (Sports Coordinators)
- (ii)** Informative Letter (Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors)
- (iii)** Informative Letter (Principals)
- (iv)** Informed Consent Forms (opt-out)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a first year PhD candidate with the Discipline of Health Promotion, School of Health Sciences, National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway. My research is qualitative in nature and is entitled *Fun Games & Health: A Process Evaluation of the Buntús (Play & Multi Sport) Programme*. This study involves conducting semi-structured interviews with Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors and group interviews with primary school teachers and pupils. My reason for contacting you is to see if you would assist with this study by providing contact details of LSP tutors who are currently delivering the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme in this county. The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of this programme and its perceived success.

The Thesis Objectives are:

- *To evaluate the extent to which primary school structures, processes and priorities facilitated the successful or otherwise implementation of this PE- CPD programme*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme was integrated into the daily life of the school, aligned with classroom conditions, school contexts, teachers' career stages and daily experiences*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme provided teachers with opportunities to become independent, flexible and innovative teachers of PE in order to cater for the individual needs of their pupils*
- *To examine school pupils' experiences and attitudes towards physical education as a possible determiner or vehicle for future participation in physical activity*

This research is imperative and relevant to both LSP tutors and primary school teachers as it concerns the issue of continuous professional development (CPD) provision of physical education in primary schools. Investigating ethical considerations were sought, submitting the necessary documentation to the (NUIG) Ethics Committee and was approved in October 2008. Any assistance with the above request would be greatly appreciated and if you have any further queries or require any additional documentation, I would be happy to assist.

Yours Faithfully,

Declan Flanagan

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a first year PhD candidate with the Discipline of Health Promotion, School of Health Sciences, National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway. My research is qualitative in nature and is entitled *Fun Games & Health: A Process Evaluation of the Buntús (Play & Multi Sport) Programme*. It involves conducting semi-structured interviews with Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors and group interviews with primary school teachers and pupils. The LSP in this county is providing assistance by providing contact details of LSP tutors, who are currently employed and deliver the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) programme in primary schools. The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of this programme and its perceived success.

The Thesis Objectives are:

- *To evaluate the extent to which primary school structures, processes and priorities facilitated the successful or otherwise implementation of this PE- CPD programme*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme was integrated into the daily life of the school, aligned with classroom conditions, school contexts, teachers' career stages and daily experiences*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme provided teachers with opportunities to become independent, flexible and innovative teachers of PE in order to cater for the individual needs of their pupils*
- *To examine school pupils' experiences and attitudes towards physical education as a possible determiner or vehicle for future participation in physical activity*

My reason for contacting you is to see if you would assist with the data collection phase of this study by participating in this study through a semi-structured interview. This research is imperative and relevant to both LSP tutors and primary school teachers as it concerns the issue of continuous professional development (CPD) provision of physical education in primary schools. Investigating ethical considerations were sought, submitting the necessary documentation to the (NUIG) Ethics Committee and was approved in October 2008. Any assistance with the above request would be greatly appreciated and if you have any further queries or require any additional documentation, I would be happy to assist.

Yours Faithfully,

Declan Flanagan

Dear Principal,

I am a first year PhD candidate with the Discipline of Health Promotion, School of Health Sciences, National University of Ireland (NUI), Galway. My research is qualitative in nature and is entitled *Fun Games & Health: A Process Evaluation of the Buntús (Play & Multi Sport) Programme*. This study involves conducting semi-structured interviews with Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors and group interviews with primary school teachers and pupils. The LSP in this county is assisting with this study by providing contact details of all those primary schools, who have participated in the Buntús (Play & Multi-Sport) training day. The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of this programme and its perceived success.

The Thesis Objectives are:

- *To evaluate the extent to which primary school structures, processes and priorities facilitated the successful or otherwise implementation of this PE- CPD programme*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme was integrated into the daily life of the school, aligned with classroom conditions, school contexts, teachers' career stages and daily experiences*
- *To evaluate the extent to which the implementation of this PE-CPD programme provided teachers with opportunities to become independent, flexible and innovative teachers of PE in order to cater for the individual needs of their pupils*
- *To examine school pupils' experiences and attitudes towards physical education as a possible determiner or vehicle for future participation in physical activity*

My reason for contacting you is to see if you would assist with the data collection phase of this study by granting access and the opportunity to conduct group interviews with primary school teachers and/or primary school pupils in your school. This research is relevant as it explores issues surrounding continuous professional development (CPD) provision of physical education in primary schools. Investigating ethical considerations were sought, submitting the necessary documentation to the (NUIG) Ethics Committee and was approved in October 2008. I also acquired Garda Clearance in January 2009. Any assistance with the above request would be greatly appreciated and if you have any further queries or require any additional documentation (pupil consent forms etc.) I would be happy to assist.

Yours Faithfully,

Declan Flanagan

PUPIL'S CONSENT FORM

I have read the information sheet, understand what is involved and have had time to think about whether I (the participant) will take part in this survey. I understand that taking part is voluntary (it is my own choice) and that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time without disadvantage.

Name of Pupil:.....

Class:.....

Signature of Pupil.....

Date:.....

Or

I have read the information sheet, understand what is involved and have had time to think about whether I (the participant) will take part in this survey. I understand that **NOT** taking part is voluntary (it is my own choice) and will do so disadvantage.

Name of Pupil:.....

Class:.....

Signature of Pupil.....

Date:.....

Appendix C. Interview Guides

- (i)** Local Sports Partnership (LSP) tutors
- (ii)** Primary School Teachers
- (iii)** Primary School Pupils

In-depth-Interviews: Local Sports Partnership Tutor: (60 minutes)

Hello X before I begin this interview process, I would just like to draw your attention to a few matters. Firstly, this interview is confidential: meaning everything that is said within this interview process will remain confidential. Secondly your anonymity is assured, meaning, your name will not appear on any of the interview scripts or in the final draft of this study. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to and you can stop the interview at any-time. The reason why this interview is recorded is purely for accuracy purposes

- 1. To what extent did you come from a sporting background?**

- 2. Could you tell me how you got involved in the Local Sports Partnership?**

- 3. Could you tell me about the training you received in order to become an LSP tutor?**

- 4. Could tell me in detail about your last induction day with teachers in a primary school?**

- 5. What initial feedback did you received from teachers/principals in relation to that Buntús programme induction day?**

- 6. Can you tell me about your other experiences of working with primary school teachers during the induction day?**

- 7. To what extent do you feel this programme is inclusive for those with SEN?**

- 8. What recommendations would you make in order to improve the overall delivery of the Buntús programme for tutors/teachers?**

- 9. What are the main concerns/issues that face primary school teachers in the delivery of the PE curriculum in schools today in your opinion?**

- 10. To what extent would you like to see (full-time) PE teachers delivering the PE curriculum?**

Teacher: Interview Schedule: Group Interviews

Scripted introduction: Hello X before I begin this group interview, I would just like to draw your attention to a few matters. Firstly, this group interview is confidential: meaning everything that is said within this interview process will remain confidential. Secondly your anonymity is assured, meaning, your name will not appear on any of the interview scripts or in the final draft of this study. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to and you can stop and leave the group interview at anytime. The reason why this interview is recorded is purely for accuracy purposes.

- 1. How do you feel about teaching PE?**
- 2. What are the perceived benefits of PE for pupils?**

The Buntús Programme

- 1. How would you evaluate the teaching/tutoring given by the LSP tutors as part of the induction programme?**
- 2. To what extent has the Buntús programme improved your overall delivery of the games strand?**
- 3. In what way has the Buntús programme improved pupils' participation in PE?**
- 4. How inclusive is the Buntús programme in relation to pupils with SEN/lower athletic abilities in your opinion?**
- 5. What recommendations would you make in order to improve the delivery of the Buntús programme?**
- 6. What are the main issues and concerns in delivery of the PE curriculum in primary schools?**
- 7. To what extent would you prefer to see a (full-time) specialist PE teacher deliver the entire PE curriculum?**

Group Interviews: Pupils: (20 minutes)

Write and Draw Technique:

The researcher reads the scenario to the pupils, as the actual technique is supposed to be as similar to a normal teaching session as possible. However, it is important to emphasise especially to the pupils that it is their opinions about the Buntús programme rather than giving the researcher the ‘right answer’ that is imperative. Each pupil is given an A3 size sheet of paper divided into Boxes 1 and 2 on the front side, and boxes 3, 4, & 5 on the reverse side. The scenario invites the pupils to draw their ideas about the Buntús programme in **Box 1** and to write their thoughts in **Boxes 2-4. Completion of the investigation should take about 20 mins.**

Ice Breaker

Bring a tennis ball into class and get the children to throw the ball to a different member of the group. Once each pupil catches the ball they have to say their name and one other piece of information about themselves. This helps the researcher remember the pupils’ names and helps the entire group relax.

Or

Get the pupils to put themselves in order of eldest to youngest and state their name. The researcher must then remember and call out all the names in order.

PE Likes & Dislikes

1. First of all, on the paper, instruct pupils to draw a picture of an activity/activities they do during PE in (**Box 1**).
2. Instruct pupils to look at their picture and write in (**Box 2**) two or three sentences about what they like about PE.
3. Next, instruct pupils to write down two or three sentences in (**Box 3**) about what they do not like about PE.
4. In (**Box 4**) get the pupils to write down two or three sentences making recommendations to improve PE in their school.
5. In (**Box 5**) instruct pupils to write B for Boy and G for girl and their age.
6. Pupils then compare and contrast their answers in pairs/groups.
7. Group discussion: Feedback

Appendix D (LSP) The Buntús (Play & Multi - Sport) Evaluation Form.

X Sports Partnership
 Buntús Primary School Programme
 Evaluation of Teacher Training Module

Name of School _____
 (i)

Date _____

	Very Poor	Poor	Reasonable	Good	Excellent
How would you rate the concept of the Buntús Programme? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
How would you rate the sports equipment supplied? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
How would you rate the resource cards as additional support? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
How would you rate the quality of the training received? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
Having completed the training, how is your understanding of Buntús? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
How would you rate the Buntús training as an assistance to your P.E. delivery? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
How would you rate the Buntús programme as appropriate to your class? Comment _____	<input type="text"/>				
Would you be willing to undertake further training in the future in relation to P.E.? If yes what would you suggest? _____		Yes	<input type="text"/>	No	<input type="text"/>

