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# Edinburgh Research Explorer

# Learning to use teaching for personal and social responsibility through action research

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1    RUNNING HEAD: TEACHING TPSR

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6    Learning to use Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility through action research
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9    **Shirley Gray**
10   University of Edinburgh
11
12   **Paul M. Wright**
13   Northern Illinois University
14
15   **Richard Sievwright**
16   City of Edinburgh Council
17
18   **Stuart Robertson**
19   City of Edinburgh Council
20
21

22    **Abstract**

23    *Purpose.* The purpose this investigation was to explore the learning experiences of two teachers

24    from different secondary schools in Scotland as they engaged in their respective action research

25    projects to learn to apply TPSR in physical education. *Method.* Both teachers worked within a

26    small community of practice and used qualitative methods to gather data to inform their inquiry.

27    The teachers shared their findings with their co-authors and engaged in further, more focused

28    analyses to explore and understand their learning experiences and the learning experiences of

29    their pupils. *Results.* Both teachers found that their learning in context was much slower and

30    more challenging than first expected. Over time, both teachers learned to set 'new' learning

31    objectives, applied 'new' teaching strategies, talked more to their pupils, and reflected with others

32    to evaluate their learning. *Discussion/Conclusion.* When teachers are committed to their own

33    learning and when the subject of their learning aligns with their core values, professional needs,

34    and the needs of their pupils, then pedagogical change is possible.

35    *Keywords:* Social and Emotional Learning, Experiential Learning, Critical Friends

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37 <mark>Learning to use Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility through action research</mark>

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39 The development of pupils' social and emotional skills in school contexts is a key priority

40 for many education systems world-wide (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural

41 Organization [UNESCO], 2017). Furthermore, in many curricula, physical education (PE) is

42 viewed as a logical site to promote, for example, positive and trusting relationships, coping skills,

43 impulse control, and peaceful conflict resolution. The development of such skills can lead to

44 improved behaviour, wellbeing, academic performance, and a positive school ethos (Durlak,

45 Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017).

46 It is in the interest of all teachers and their learners, therefore, to develop knowledge and

47 strategies that might nurture and promote social and emotional learning in schools, and

48 specifically in PE (Jacobs & Wright, 2014). Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR;

49 Hellison, 2011) is a pedagogical model that was developed to promote positive youth

50 development and social and emotional skills in PE and other physical activity contexts. The

51 model has been developed and researched extensively over the last 40 years, with researchers

52 uncovering a number of positive student outcomes including improved behaviour and attitudes

53 (Hellison & Martinek, 2006), as well as improved responsibility and life skills (Metzler, 2017;

54 Pozo, Grao-Cruces, & Perez-Ordas, 2016). However, researchers have also pointed out that we

55 still know very little about how PE teachers learn to apply it in their own professional (learning)

56 context (Beaudoin, 2012; Pozo et al., 2016). They call for further research to be carried out to

57 explore the unique ways in which TPSR is understood and enacted in schools. This type of

58 research will highlight the complexities and challenges that teachers face when learning in

59 context, and also exemplify how these challenges might be overcome.

60 **Teacher Learning**

61 Research and educational policy world-wide recognise the importance of teacher learning

62 and in doing so, emphasises the role of high quality Continued Professional Development (CPD)

63 provision (Caena, 2011). Effective CPD has the potential to raise teaching standards in schools,

64 and thus, improve pupil experience and attainment (Armour, Quennerstedt, Chambers, &

65 Makopoulou., 2017; Goodall, Day, Lindsay, Muijs, & Harris, 2005). However, there is little

66 empirical evidence to suggest that traditional forms of CPD have a positive impact on teacher

67 practice or educational outcomes for pupils (Goodall et al., 2005). Traditionally, CPD for

68 teachers has included one-off courses that are 'delivered' by external providers. Resultantly,

69 teachers' learning experiences are often fragmented and incoherent and far removed from their

70 day to day professional issues and challenges. Consequently, there has been a call for a change in

71 the way in which CPD is provided (Armour & Yelling, 2004). Even the term 'development' has

72 been identified as problematic as it suggests that the teacher is passive in the process (i.e.,

73 someone who can be developed to 'be' the expert teacher). Armour et al. (2017) instead argue

74 that teachers should view themselves as learners, and recognise the complexity that this involves.

75 Consequently, and inspired by the work of philosopher and social theorist John Dewey, Armour

76 et al. (2017) developed a framework for effective CPD that recognises the complexity of

77 learning. This framework positions teacher learning in context and focusses on the development

78 of teacher knowledge for action (bridging research/theory with practice). From this perspective,

79 learning is not conceived as knowledge to be 'acquired', but as personal growth with a nurturing

80 environment that guides and shapes learning. Consequently, this Deweyan framework presents

81 professional learning in terms of teacher engagement, where the teacher and their experiences

82 are central to what, why, and how learning takes place. Consistent with Dewey's (1938) theories

83 of education and learning, experience is fundamental to this approach. Not only do learners

84 bring their previous experiences to the current situation to create new experiences and

85 knowledge, but the act of 'doing' provides the learner with richer experiences with which to

86 create a deeper understanding. Thus, bodily experiences are part of the meaning making process

87 and teachers themselves can begin to define the types of learning opportunities that they need,

88 how they might foster their own learning, and who they might need to engage and interact with

89 to enhance their learning.

90 The role of 'others' in the teacher learning process is important, particularly in terms of

91 peer support and collaboration. Teachers do not learn in a vacuum; they require support,

92 dialogue, and resources. Oliver, Luguetti, Aranda, Nuñez Enriquez, and Rodrigue (2017) draw

93 attention to the importance of collaborative learning in their investigation that explored how

94 teachers in different contexts learned to use an activist approach in PE. They point to several

95 studies to demonstrate how teacher learning is more effective when learning communities are

96 created, enabling teachers to share, examine, and reflect on their experiences. In this context,

97 teachers are more willing to take risks and ultimately, learn and transform their practice (Oliver

98 et al., 2017). Similarly, in a study that investigated a school-based CPD programme, Goodyear

99 (2016) found that teachers worked together to sustain their learning. Goodyear also explains how

100 her role as a researcher, external to the school context, supported their learning. For example,

101 she was able to provide individualised advice and feedback that was specific to their needs and

102 practise, which in turn, enhanced the teachers' confidence in the learning process.

103 This collaborative approach to teacher learning forms part of what Garet, Porter,

104 DeSimone, Birman, and Kwang (2001) describe as 'Reform CPD'.  Consistent with the Deweyan

105 framework developed by Armour et al. (2017), Garet et al. (2001) suggest that 'reform' types of

106 professional learning take place in schools, where teachers work collectively with other teachers,

107 and where they are encouraged to make connections between existing knowledge and new

108 experiences. Teachers are active in this learning process; they observe, plan, teach, and review,

109 with colleagues (mentors or coaches) and with pupils. In doing so, their learning is in response to

110 the emerging events that unfold in their work. To observe, reflect, and question is to take an

111 'inquiry as stance' position, where teachers take control of their own professional learning in the

112 interest of their pupils. This resonates well with ideas around the reflective practitioner (Schön,

113 1983) and the teacher as the researcher (Stenhouse, 1975). Here, the teacher assumes the

114 position of a 'researcher' or professional inquirer, one who observes, reflects, and transforms,

115   supporting Stenhouse's assertion that for teachers to engage with research, they must engage in

116   it.

117         Action research is a form of research that aligns well with the conceptions of

118   professional learning espoused by Armour et al., (2017) and Garet et al. (2001), where the

119   teacher (and colleagues or external expert) is a central, deliberate, and contributing participant in

120   the research process (Berg, 2004). It is collaborative and democratic process where the teacher

121   identifies the problem in their local context and works out ways of solving it, increasing their

122   social consciousness, and creating positive social change (Berg, 2004). However, although action

123   research has been used widely as a means of raising social or political awareness in schools

124   (Tinning, MacDonald, Tregenza, & Boustead, 1996), there is little evidence to suggest that it has

125   been extensively adopted within the PE domain, even though researchers have highlighted the

126   need for PE teachers to be more reflective about their practice through action research (Casey,

127   Dyson, & Campbell, 2009). This may be especially important in the current climate of

128   curriculum change, which suggests a shifting role for PE teachers as they become more

129   accountable for the development of pupils' social and emotional skills and wellbeing (Gray,

130   MacIsaac, & Jess, 2015). Action research, and its capacity to encourage reflection, problem-

131   solving, and action therefore, may be a useful mechanism through which teachers can focus their

132   learning in relation to this contemporary challenge (Armour et al., 2017).

133   **Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility**

134         TPSR (Hellison, 2011) is a pedagogical model in the field of PE that has the potential to

135   promote social and emotional wellbeing through the development of personal and social skills

136   (Metzler, 2017). It is similar to restorative practice (McCluskey, 2017) which, rather than focusing

137   on the reduction of problematic behaviours among selected pupils, instead fosters positive

138   personal and social competencies. TPSR was developed with the intent of using sport and

139   physical activity as a vehicle to teach pupils life skills (e.g., self-management, goal-setting) that

140   they can apply in other settings to help them reach their potential in life. The model is framed

141    around helping pupils take responsibility for and develop skills related to the ways they conduct

142    themselves (personal responsibility) and interact with others (social responsibility). The core

143    program goals include respecting the rights and feelings of others, self-motivation, self-direction,

144    and caring. The final goal of TPSR is transfer, or the application of the values and behaviours

145    promoted in the model to other setting such as the classroom, home, or community. A format of

146    relational time (opportunities to connect positively with students on a one-to-one basis),

147    awareness talk (group discussion about student responsibilities), physical activity plan

148    (embedding student responsibilities into physical activity content), group meetings (opportunities

149    for students to express their views), and reflective time (time to self-evaluate) is offered to

150    provide some structure to each lesson (Beaudoin, 2012) and Hellison (2011), the founder of

151    TPSR, proposed several empowerment-based instructional strategies to support teachers'

152    implementation of the model. These include leadership roles, peer-coaching, self-reflection, and

153    group debriefing sessions to guide implementation.

154        Importantly, Hellison (2011) actively encourages teachers and coaches to adapt strategies

155    to fit their own context and teaching philosophy. Furthermore, it has been suggested that

156    the effective integration of TPSR strategies in PE requires a significant level of teacher reflection,

157    balanced with observation and input from others to support the process (Coulson, Irwin, &

158    Wright, 2012; Hemphill, Templin, & Wright, 2015). Like action research, this perspective on

159    teacher learning views the teacher as central to their own learning and capable of creating

160    knowledge and practice (with others) that has a direct impact on their learners (Armour et al.,

161    2017). Action research, therefore, may be a useful means by which teachers can develop their

162    understanding and application of TPSR in their own school-setting.

163        Consequently, guided by the Deweyan framework developed by Armour et al. (2017), the

164    purpose of this investigation was to explore the learning experiences of two teachers from

165    different secondary schools in Scotland as they engaged in their respective action research

166    projects. Both teachers used action research as a means to learn to apply TPSR in secondary level

167  PE to promote social and emotional learning and improve pupil behaviour. They worked with

168  researchers external to their school context to develop their research ideas and share their

169  experiences. Together they aimed to uncover the learning activities that the teachers engaged in,

170  and explore the impact that this engagement had on their learning, teaching, and the learning

171  experiences of their pupils. In doing so, we hope to illuminate the complexities of teacher

172  learning, and identify the factors that contribute to successful learning and pedagogical change.

173                                                **Methods**

174  **Research Design**

175        Action research projects were conducted by two PE teachers, Simon and Robert. Given

176  that the teachers in their own unique contexts were central to this process, we viewed their work

177  as parallel interpretive qualitative case studies (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, both teachers worked

178  within a small community of practice, with their pupils, within their PE department and with the

179  two researchers, Sarah and Peter. Sarah and Peter are both experienced researchers in the fields

180  of PE, pedagogy, and teacher learning. Peter is also an expert practitioner and academic in TPSR.

181  They worked with Simon and Robert to develop their research aims and to support them in the

182  role of critical friends, in other words, to scaffold, challenge, and bring alternative perspectives to

183  their learning (Kember et al., 1997). Sarah and Peter also brought both teachers together upon

184  completion of their respective inquiries to articulate, discuss (with the researchers and each

185  other), analyze and understand their learning experiences. Ethical permission to work with the

186  teachers was granted by the University ethics committee of their respective Institutes.

187  **Participants and Setting**

188        **Simon.**  Simon (age 38 years) is a PE teacher and the curriculum leader for health and

189  wellbeing in his school, which incorporates PE and Food and Health Technology. He held this

190  position for one year at the time of his action research project. Before this, he was the principal

191  teacher of PE at the same school for four years. He taught at this school for 11 years, with a

192  teaching career of 12 years in total. The school is located near the outskirts of a major Scottish

193    city, with a school roll of approximately 620 pupils and four full-time teachers of PE (2 male, 2

194    female). The area that the school is located scores below the national average for indicators of

195    socio-economic disadvantage.

196          The idea behind Simon's inquiry emerged from discussions with his Senior Leadership

197    Team (SLT). Together, they identified six S1 boys (aged 12-13 years) to be part of a PE

198    curriculum that was positioned outside of the main school curriculum. These were boys who had

199    previously and consistently exhibited disruptive behaviors during lessons and all had been

200    excluded from the school on at least one occasion. Simon taught this class for one period each

201    week (approx. one hour) for two academic terms (13 weeks in total). He did not have a

202    curriculum to follow; his aims were to develop his understanding and delivery of TPSR and

203    understand the impact that this might have on the boys' learning experiences and behavior in his

204    lessons, and in the school more widely.

205          **Robert.** At the time of his action research project, Robert (age 33 years) had been

206    teaching PE for seven years, six of which were in his current school. Robert was also

207    undertaking a Master's degree, and this action research project was aligned with one of the

208    course modules and assessment. Robert was also a pupil support teacher for one day each week.

209    In this post he was responsible for communicating with pupils, parents, colleagues, and outside

210    agencies on a range of topics relating to the happiness and success of individual pupils at a

211    school level and beyond. He was also responsible for teaching Personal and Social Education

212    which incorporates a broad subject area essential for the development of life skills. The school is

213    located in the center of the same Scottish city, with a school roll of around 1,200 pupils. The

214    pupil population is very diverse at this school, with the pupils from the least and the most

215    affluent areas of the city center.

216          Robert also worked with S1 pupils. This was a co-educational class of 25 pupils within

217    which he identified eight boys who consistently demonstrated low-level, but disruptive

218    behaviors. Robert taught the class twice each week and the curriculum activity was swimming.

219  Prior to this, Robert taught the same class for a term of football. He used these football lessons

220  (2 each week for 8 weeks) to begin to think about how TPSR might be applied in context and

221  began to 'test' some of the strategies that he had learned from the TPSR literature, as well as a

222  TPSR CPD session that he had recently attended, which was delivered by Peter. However, the

223  focus of his professional inquiry was swimming. There were eight swimming lessons in total,

224  each lasting one hour, although this was typically reduced to 40 minutes in the pool to allow time

225  to change. Robert's aims for his class were, to a large extent, dictated by the PE curriculum at

226  this school, namely to develop stroke technique. However, like Simon, he also aimed to address

227  other issues related to his practice, TPSR, and pupil behavior and wellbeing. More specifically, he

228  aimed to critically evaluate the impact that TPSR had on pupil behavior and social responsibility,

229  and to develop his application of TPSR with a focus on investigating teaching strategies that

230  might foster social wellbeing.

231  **Teacher Data Collection**

232      Both teachers primarily adopted qualitative methods to gather data about their learning

233  experiences and the learning experiences of their pupils. Methods for both teachers included

234  structured and collaborative reflections, peer observations, and pupil interviews. Simon, for

235  example, was observed for eight out of the 13 lessons by Sarah, his critical friend. After each

236  lesson, a discussion took place to reflect on Simon's teaching, the boys' behavioral and social

237  responses, and any critical incidents. Notes from these meetings were typed up by Sarah and sent

238  to Simon for review. Sarah also completed a TPSR implementation checklist (Wright & Walsh,

239  2018). This checklist addressed a range of indicators associated with quality TPSR

240  implementation including lesson format (e.g., reflection time), goals (e.g., self-direction), teaching

241  strategies (e.g., fostering social interaction), and pupil behaviors (e.g., helping others; Escartí,

242  Wright, Pascual, & Gutiérrez, 2015; Hellison, 2011). This checklist acted as a fidelity guide for

243  Simon and Sarah to ensure that the TPSR model was adhered to as much as possible. It also

244  served as a post-teaching refection tool for Simon and helped him to plan future lessons. Robert

245    was observed by a critical friend, a female PE teacher in the school with two years teaching

246    experience. She had no previous knowledge of the TSPR model and she also used the

247    implementation checklist to focus her observations and guide their post-lesson discussions. In

248    addition to this, after each lesson, Robert rated and commented on his own teaching using the

249    Tool for Assessing Responsibility-based Education (TARE; Wright, 2016). He did not use the

250    TARE to objectively measure his teaching behaviors. Similar to Simon, he used it to identify,

251    reflect and self-evaluate his teaching practices that promoted personal and social responsibility

252    (Wright, 2016).

253          In their dual role of teacher-researcher, both teachers also carried out interviews with

254    their pupils to explore their perceptions of their learning experiences during the TPSR sessions,

255    specifically in relation to their understanding of the aims of each lesson, their learning, their

256    behavior, and the impact that these experiences had on their learning and behavior in different

257    contexts (transfer).While this has some limitations in terms of the power-relationship between

258    the interviewer and the interviewee (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009), the teachers viewed

259    it as natural and logical component of their professional practice, as they frequently initiated

260    dialogue with their pupils to evaluate their lessons. This represents what Wall and Hall (2017)

261    describe as the principle of autonomy, where teachers have control over their research to make

262    decisions about the best ways to answer their research questions.

263          Simon carried out paired interviews with all six boys (Wilson, Onwuegbuzie, & Manning,

264    2016). To encourage the boys to express themselves freely, Simon adopted a conversational

265    interview style and did not use a voice recorder. Instead, immediately after each interview, Simon

266    took notes to summarize the key issues raised. Each interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes.

267    Robert carried out a focus group interview at the end of his study with five pupils randomly

268    selected from the eight pupils he previously identified as exhibiting more challenging behaviors.

269    The interview lasted 30 minutes, was recorded using a digital voice recorder, and transcribed

270    verbatim.   Simon and Robert received informed consent from the pupils and their parents and

271     had permission to engage in their action research project from the head teacher of their

272     respective schools.

273     **Data Analysis**

274          A practical iterative analysis (Srivasta & Hopwood, 2009) was adopted, where multiple

275     stages of analysis took place from which further ideas emerged, new connections were made, and

276     a deeper understanding was generated (Berkowitz, 1997). This approach is based on the premise

277     that qualitative data analysis is highly reflexive, fundamentally iterative, and progressively

278     focusing (Srivasta & Hopwood, 2009). Firstly, both Simon and Robert examined their data to

279     explore and understand ideas related to their learning activities, their learning, teaching, and pupil

280     experience. Both teachers were then invited to discuss their findings individually with Sarah,

281     which generated further understandings of their learning experiences.  After these meetings, both

282     teachers were invited by Sarah to share their experiences and findings with each other. This

283     provided them with another opportunity to develop and focus their ideas, but also encouraged

284     them to uncover previously unconsidered experiences a result of ideas triggered by the 'other'

285     teacher (Wilson et al., 2016).

286          To develop a more refined and focused understanding of the teachers' learning

287     experiences (Srivasta & Hopwood, 2009), the individual discussions and the paired discussions

288     were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by Sarah. This analysis involved considering the texts as

289     units of meanings and assigning phrases that reflected these meanings. A constant comparative

290     method of analysis (Glaser, 1965) was then used to identify common themes within the text.

291     These common themes were then shared with Simon and Robert and a 'follow-up' meeting was

292     arranged with each teacher individually. This was to pose further questions to explore any

293     underdeveloped themes and acted as a form of member checking to ensure a shared and

294     accurate understanding of the key themes. A final meeting was held with three co-authors (Sarah,

295     Simon, and Robert) to review the key themes. This also provided a useful opportunity to

296     highlight the similarities and differences in experiences and learning between the teachers,

297　further establishing key themes, but also emphasizing those that were unique to each context. It

298　is important to note that the relationship between Sarah, Peter, Simon, and Robert was one that

299　was already established prior to embarking upon their inquiry. Sarah had previously been

300　involved with Simon in another research project and met Robert at a CPD event led by Peter.

301　Peter had previously met both Simon and Robert, visited their schools, observed their typical

302　teaching practice, and conducted interviews with them. This facilitated numerous open and

303　honest discussions over time, the establishment of shared goals and expectations, thus enhancing

304　the trustworthiness of the reflective and data analysis processes, particularly in relation to their

305　dependability and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

306　**Discussion of Results**

307　　　Teacher learning is complex (Armour et al., 2017) and influenced by many interacting

308　components within and between the individual and their environment (Jess, Keay & Carse,

309　2016). The pathways that teachers take in their learning, therefore, can be unique, messy, and

310　non-linear. The following discussion explores the key themes that have shaped the teachers'

311　learning journeys, journeys that they have come to understand by sharing their experiences and

312　learning with each other. Specifically, it examines how their values and contexts, experiences and

313　collaborations, the perspectives of the pupils, and the challenges they faced influenced how they

314　learned to apply TPSR.

315　**Same Values, Different Contexts**

316　　　**Shared personal and professional values.** Both teachers were situated in different

317　contexts, but shared similar values around teaching and learning. Simon and Robert expressed

318　their desire to learn, to improve and to provide their pupils with more positive learning

319　experiences. In highlighting why he was drawn to TPSR, Robert said:

320　　　I knew that I taught the physical skills explicitly and knew that I was only ever

321　　　reactive to anything in my class for behavior or how they were communicating to

322          each other.  And I needed, I needed something to understand how to teach that, the

323           social aspect.

324    Both Robert and Simon aimed to impact upon the personal and social development of their

325    pupils in the PE context, but also in the wider school community. For example, in justifying his

326    reasons for engaging with his project, Simon said during his initial data-analysis meeting with

327    Sarah:

328          It's a thing that I've long had on my radar, you know, it's something I've always felt.

329          That sport had a, a hook really to get a lot of the pupils that we do struggle with

330          behavior round the school, get them involved and get them engaged wi' school a bit

331          better.

332          Previous research has shown that PE teachers will sustain their efforts in professional

333    learning activities when they understand the direct benefits for their pupils (Gray, Treacy & Hall,

334    2017). In addition, research has demonstrated that teachers are more likely to engage in

335    professional learning when the focus of that learning builds upon their own beliefs and current

336    practices (Armour et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001). In the present study, both Simon and Robert

337    described the ways that their past experiences of restorative practices (McCluskey, 2017), and the

338    importance that they both placed on the development of social and emotional skills in PE acted

339    as a powerful incentive for them to learn about TPSR. They described TPSR as a good 'fit' with

340    their beliefs and previous experiences, or in Deweyan terms it offered 'continuity of experience'

341    (Dewey, 1938). For example, during his initial data analysis meeting, Robert stated, "we have a

342    restorative behaviour system in the school so I felt like I did marry in with it quite well."

343    However, although both initiated and sustained their learning because of these shared goals,

344    beliefs and values, there were features of their unique contexts that created very different

345    environments for their learning.

346          **Simon's context: Active support.** Simon's context and his role within his context were

347    quite different from Robert. Simon was a senior teacher who began his learning journey in

348      consultation with, and with the full support of his SLT. In the first individual follow-up meeting

349      with Sarah, he explained that he worked closely with his SLT to develop a strategy that might

350      enable the boys to lead a successful life in the school and, ultimately, lead a successful life after

351      school. Simon intimated that this collaboration, trust, and shared vision enabled the SLT to offer

352      Simon the freedom to develop his understanding and application of TPSR with this group of

353      boys, with no pressure, no fear of failure, and no top-down, prescribed curriculum to follow.

354      This is a highly unusual situation and in stark contrast to the working conditions of many

355      teachers who are bound by curricular demands and other forms of output regulation of their

356      work (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015). Simon appeared to be in a context that allowed him

357      to be more agentic, where he could build upon his past experiences to create opportunities in the

358      present and shape a more optimistic vision for the future. Importantly, this was facilitated by the

359      support and resources offered by his SLT and his work with Sarah. This reflects a form of

360      'ecological agency' proposed by Biesta et al. (2015) who suggest that achieving such agency is

361      critical if teachers are to engage with policy and change in more meaningful ways. Further

362      dimensions of Simon's 'ecology' were the staff in his department. They supported, facilitated,

363      and enhanced his learning by sharing their own experiences of developing social and emotional

364      skills. This was a reciprocal process where they actively sought ideas from Simon about his

365      learning so that they might also learn.

366           **Robert's context: Passive support.** Rather than co-developing his ideas with his SLT or

367      his PE department, Robert developed his ideas for learning from his professional reflections, in

368      combination with his engagement in a Master's degree and meeting Peter and Sarah. He worked

369      with 'external experts' who were able to focus on his needs, helping to develop his knowledge,

370      and increase his confidence (Goodyear, 2016). In this sense, like Simon, his learning was

371      collaborative and influenced by context, but this was a different context. Robert did share his

372      ideas with his PE department, and in doing so, they encouraged him to pursue his studies,

373      offered their time to observe his lessons, and supported him with his reflective practice.

374 However, they did not engage with, and did not seem to be influenced by his learning in the

375 same way that Simon's PE department was. Furthermore, Robert was bound by a pre-

376 determined curriculum, with specific learning outcomes that he had to achieve and for which he

377 remained accountable. Thus, the 'ecology' within which his 'agency' was afforded, was very

378 different to that of Simon.  Yet despite this, Robert's individual efforts and search for resources

379 beyond the contextual and structural confines of the school resulted in his continued learning

380 and commitment to TPSR. In his efforts to become a better, more knowledgeable teacher, he

381 initiated professional and regular dialogue with 'external experts' who helped him to develop his

382 knowledge of TPSR, understand the research process, and offer advice about planning for the

383 future (Timperley, Parr, & Bertanees, 2009).

384 **Experiential and Collaborative Learning**

385 **Applying the model 'on the job.'** For Dewey (1938), experience is a process through

386 which we learn. It is an on-going process of interaction between past, present, self and context

387 that allows us to learn from our day to day encounters. An important feature of the teachers'

388 learning in the present study was the way they experienced TPSR, actively engaging with it in the

389 busy, complex, and dynamic context of the school environment. Thus, their learning experiences

390 were shaped by the 'new' ways in which they interacted with this environment. These 'new' ways

391 included being much more explicit before, during, and after their lessons about the social and

392 emotional skills that they aimed to teach. This type of learning 'on the job' can be very

393 challenging for teachers, but particularly in a context where performance or academic outcomes

394 are typically prioritized over social and emotional outcomes (Jacobs & Wright, 2014). Indeed,

395 both teachers did find this challenging, yet they remained committed to the model and their

396 learning, making explicit, consistent, regular, and clear connections between the pupils' PE

397 experiences, their personal and social learning, and their lives in other contexts. For example,

398 there was evidence from the TPSR implementation checklist and post-lesson reflections to

399 indicate that they began each lesson by stating their social and emotional learning intentions, they

400  developed learning from previous weeks, they praised positive behaviors (for example, listening,

401  taking turns, not talking out of turn, showing empathy and sympathy), modelled respectful

402  behavior and created numerous opportunities for their pupils to related to the teacher and to

403  each other (relational time and reflective time). For example, in her post-lesson reflections notes

404  after Simon's 5th lesson (volleyball), Sarah wrote:

405      None of the boys got shouted at today (I can't imagine that they do not get shouted at

406      or excluded from other lessons).  Instead, Simon calmly asked them to sit out for a

407      while, spoke to them, asked them if they were ready to take part again and what they

408      needed to do to stay on court.

409  While both teachers remained committed to the model, their engagement in the research

410  process, their on-going learning and reflection and their deep understanding of their pupils in

411  context also allowed them to apply the model in a more flexible way. This exemplifies Hellison's

412  (2011) vision that teachers should make TPSR their own, rather than viewing it as a prescribed

413  curriculum. For example, both teachers began to understand and embrace what they described as

414  'teachable' moments. In other words, they began to see social and emotional behaviors (both

415  positive and negative) as opportunities for pupil learning, rather than as moments to be ignored,

416  or moments where pupils had to be punished. Simon and Robert both explained that when

417  pupils exhibited negative behaviors (for example, not listening, arguing, and being disrespectful

418  to peers) they did not shout at them, they were not punished nor were they excluded from the

419  classroom. Instead, the teachers described how they would use this as an opportunity to discuss

420  the behavior with the pupil so that they might understand the cause of the problem, the impact

421  of the problem and work out ways of learning from the situation. For example, in the final data

422  analysis meeting with Sarah, Robert, and Simon, Robert said:

423      But actually with TPSR, you can let some behaviors go if it's not dangerous or

424      anything.  If they're not putting in all their effort, they definitely aren't, they're off task,

425      they've just hit another tennis ball across there, I'll remember that at the end. But then

426    you draw them in at the end and it's, 'right here's, here's what I saw' and then we can

427    discuss.

428 In these instances, the teachers were able to draw from their knowledge and past experiences of

429 'restorative practice' where those involved in the 'incident' are encouraged to discuss and

430 understand their behaviors and, at the same time, build more positive relationships with their

431 peers and their teachers (McCluskey, 2017).

432    **Critical friends.** The role of the 'critical friend' within the action research process is

433 commonly used as a means of "developing the reflective and learning capacity of the teacher in a

434 supportive and cooperative manner" (Kember et al., 1997, p. 464). This is interesting because,

435 although both Robert and Simon invited a critical friend to observe their teaching and support

436 their reflections, their critical friends came from different contexts, which resulted in quite

437 different learning experiences.  Sarah acted as Simon's critical friend. They had worked together

438 previously on research projects related to the development of PE pedagogy and had thus

439 developed a good working relationship which was underpinned by trust and a shared desire to

440 learn. While Sarah had engaged in the TPSR literature, she had limited knowledge about how

441 TPSR was implemented in schools and was keen to observe Simon's teaching so that they could

442 support each other's learning. This became a shared learning experience, one that both Sarah and

443 Simon highly valued because they both brought different, but complimentary perspectives to the

444 learning environment. Simon experienced TPSR first hand, interacting directly with the content

445 and his learners. However, Sarah observed things that Simon did not, and encouraged him to

446 create the time and the space to reflect upon his teaching and the boys' learning in a way that he

447 had not previously experienced. During the first data analysis meeting with Sarah, Simon

448 highlighted:

449    I think having yourself there to observe from the outside and then reflect back what

450    you'd witnessed in the lesson.  And then also being able to then put forward my own

451    reflections and then kinda batter that out a bit, directly after each lesson, I think was

452        hugely valuable because quite often my personal reflections as I finished the lesson

453        were different seven or eight minutes later after we had a discussion about it.  You

454        know, very much, it very much changed because, because you gave an alternative

455        viewpoint.  And then I was able to reflect slightly differently on it.

456   These processes enabled Simon to explore his teaching in more depth, enhancing his knowledge

457   of TPSR, but also giving him more confidence in himself and this approach (Goodyear, 2016).

458        Robert worked with several external critical friends, including Sarah and Peter, engaging

459   in critical discussions about his teaching, pupil learning and his research beyond the school gates.

460   However, he also had a critical friend from within the school who he invited to observe and

461   discuss his lessons. This critical friend was one of his work colleagues who volunteered her time

462   to support him in his investigation. Thus, she brought her day to day experiences of working

463   with similar pupils in a busy and complex workspace to her observations. Consequently, her

464   feedback was very practical in nature and, at times, intimated some resistance to the model. For

465   example, she would often advise on how she would do things differently, especially in relation to

466   managing pupil behavior. For example, after one of the lessons she suggested:

467        You would say to the class your actions are having an impact on our ability to

468        proceed. Otherwise we're not going to get games or something like that. I

469        thought that happened a bit towards the end but like with the restorative

470        approach that we have some kids just take advantage of it. So, some kids realised

471        that they weren't really going to get a row off you. Sometimes three-strikes is

472        clearer for pupils.

473   Furthermore, because she had taught the class previously and knew them well, there were times

474   when she 'stepped in' to stop low-level disruptive behaviors. Baskerville and Goldblatt (2009)

475   suggest that a precursor to developing any critical friendship should be reflection and discussion

476   around the values, beliefs, and goals of the teacher. Robert's critical friend at times challenged

477   and contradicted his beliefs, values, and goals. However, while he was initially rather frustrated

478    by her perspective and comments, it resulted in an emotional and embodied response, and thus a

479    richer learning experience and a deeper understanding of his teaching, pupil learning, and TPSR

480    (Armour et al., 2017; Dewey, 1938).

481    **Understanding the Pupils' Perspectives**

482        **A more democratic and positive learning environment.** In line with previous studies

483    that have explored the impact of TPSR on pupil learning (Pozo et al., 2016) both teachers

484    believed that one of the main benefits of using TPRS (and carrying out their action research) was

485    that it encouraged them to talk to their pupils more. This then helped them to develop more

486    positive and respectful relationships that involve listening and responding. Simon never shouted

487    at his pupils. They did at times demonstrate some inappropriate behaviors, but Simon dealt with

488    this during his relational time, or he invited the boys themselves to solve the problem. For

489    example, during the volleyball sessions, most of the boys wanted to play football with the

490    volleyball. To stop them from kicking the balls, Simon asked the pupils to think about how they

491    might be encouraged to stop kicking the ball so that they would not be damaged. They came up

492    with a '3-*strikes and you are out'* rule which they applied successfully and complicity. This example

493    is typical of the lessons Simon taught, where he engaged the boys in discussions, listened to their

494    views, responded to their suggestions, and helped them to evaluate their outcomes. This

495    provided them with opportunities to make decisions and take on board leadership roles,

496    opportunities that they usually responded very well to.

497        Creating as many opportunities for leadership and decision-making was more difficult for

498    Robert, especially in the context of swimming. However, he did manage to do this during the

499    football session and, even in swimming, the pupils were offered choices about their learning. For

500    example, while the school curriculum dictated that the pupils had to develop stroke technique,

501    the pupils were also offered choices and opportunities to engage in alternative water-based

502    activities, such as water polo or volleyball. This involved discussion, negotiation, and

503    compromise. It gave Robert an opportunity to build his relationship with the pupils and allowed

504 him to model respectful behaviors. Given the difficulties that Robert had in the swimming pool

505 with TPSR, modelling respect became one of the main ways in which he attempted to promote

506 personal and social responsibility. He frequently highlighted to the pupils the positive ways in

507 which they interacted with him on a one to one basis and challenged them to do the same when

508 communicating with each other. If pupil interaction was positive, he would question the group

509 on the effect this had on classroom atmosphere and challenged them to continue to interact

510 positively with one another beyond the PE context.

511 **Pupils' understanding of TPSR.** Although Robert had a larger class compared to Simon,

512 which sometimes made it more challenging to communicate effectively with all pupils, many of

513 the pupils in his class were highly aware of his learning intentions and he did observe changes in

514 levels of self-control and respect for some pupils, although not always consistently. During one

515 of the post-lesson discussions with his critical friend, she stated, "I thought that a group of the

516 lads who would be kind of your messers, I saw them taking a leadership role, telling their mates

517 to be quiet."

518 However, Robert also learned from his pupils that some of his learning intentions were not well

519 understood. For example, the focus group interview with his pupils Robert learned that the

520 pupils did not understand what he meant when he said: '*set yourself a behavioral goal for the lesson'*.

521 One of the boys explained, "I did some behaviour goals but they are quite hard to come up with

522 so I think you should give some suggestions before you do it because it's quite hard." Another

523 said, "I never really remember them because you think about them in your mind at the start and

524 then you just forget about it."

525 This was an important learning opportunity for Robert and had a direct impact on his practice.

526 During his final data analysis meeting with Sarah, he explained that he continues to be more

527 explicit with his pupils about what respectful, cooperative, and supportive behaviors look like,

528 using both his and his pupils' behaviors as examples. In addition, he is now more aware about

529  how he communicates with his pupils and understands that they might interpret him in ways that

530  he did not intend.

531  Interestingly, while the boys from Simon's class did not raise the issue of language or not

532  understanding his instructions or questions, it was discussed frequently by Sarah and Simon.

533  There were several comments made in the post lesson discussions and reflective notes where

534  Sarah and Simon both had a concern about the language that was used in the TPSR literature,

535  and how it may not be a language form that the pupils were familiar with. Consequently, each

536  week, Simon made slight changes to the ways in which he presented the lesson objectives,

537  gradually moving away from some of the terms used in the literature towards a language that the

538  boys could relate to. This is exemplified in Sarah's post-lesson notes from the third lesson:

539  Simon started off by looking at the learning intentions and the success criteria.

540  Interestingly, they were not presented in the same way as before. They were not

541  presented as the 5 levels. They were really clear and simple statements about how they

542  should behave and to consider how their behaviors might impact on others. This made

543  more sense to me and I think more sense to the boys.

544  This on-going reflection and change may have been why the boys that Simon spoke to all

545  seemed to have a very good grasp of the things that Simon was trying to achieve in each lesson.

546  Indeed, Simon was surprised at how articulate they were in recalling the ideas that they were

547  presented with. They recognized that this was a different experience from their 'usual' PE

548  lessons, one that aimed to improve their behavior in PE and the wider school context. During

549  the paired interviews, they appeared to understand how to behave well in PE, and indeed they

550  did behave well in PE. However, they also discussed that they found this very difficult to do in

551  other contexts. In other areas of the school they described how they felt targeted by some

552  teachers and that they saw little relevance in the topics they had to study, both factors

553  contributing towards their disruptive behaviors in class.

554     It appears, therefore that the smaller class size that Simon was afforded allowed him to connect

555     more frequently with this small group of boys in this PE context. Hellison (2011), who did much

556     of his work in alternative schools and after school programs with smaller class sizes (e.g., 10-12

557     pupils), has noted that it is easier to individualize instruction, build pedagogical relationships, and

558     create a more democratic environment when teaching smaller groups. Despite some challenges

559     associated with class size, several reports indicate TPSR can be implemented with larger classes

560     (e.g., 25 to 35 pupils) in more typical PE programs (Pozo et al., 2016).   In the current study,

561     despite the different contexts in which Simon and Robert operated, both teachers faced similar

562     challenges with their learning and teaching.

563     **Overcoming the Challenges of Teacher Learning**

564        **Challenges, doubts, and discomfort.** Pedagogical change can be extremely challenging

565     for teachers (Casey & Dyson, 2009). It can be a slow process, with many barriers to overcome,

566     accompanied by enduring feelings of doubt and uncertainty. Both Simon and Robert noted times

567     during their inquiry where they had doubts about the project and their teaching. During the

568     initial data analysis meeting with Sarah, Robert said:

569        So I'm trying not to judge, so I feel like with learning TPSR, my teaching's also almost

570        sometimes taken a step backwards because it's not an automatic process of teaching.

571        I've gotten into a way of teaching that's comfortable to me.  And so learning TPSR and

572        implementing it, there's a lot going on in your head.  It's like being a probationer and

573        being in front of you class and learning the curriculum.

574     Simon found it difficult to move from a teaching approach that focused on the development of

575     movement skills.  He found it a challenge not to slip back to focusing more on the technical

576     development of skills, rather than remaining explicitly focused on the development of social and

577     emotional skills. Class size and activity type were identified by Robert as major challenges. He

578     felt that swimming was a difficult activity to apply TPSR effectively because of his concerns

579     around pupil safety. He felt that he had to be able to observe the class at all times, which made it

580 difficult for him to have one-to-one time with the pupils, a problem that was intensified by the

581 poor acoustics in the swimming pool.

582     While there were some differences between the teachers in terms of their challenges, they

583 both explained the difficulties they had in moving away from an approach that they were

584 comfortable with.  They highlighted the discomfort they felt initially when 'let certain behaviors

585 go' to create teachable moments to deal with behaviors in a more positive and democratic way.

586 This discomfort was especially intense for Robert, who also had his colleague observing his

587 practice, a colleague who perhaps did not understand TPSR in the same way. As a result, he

588 became highly sensitive and even critical towards his own practice and felt the need to justify

589 himself and convince her of the benefits of using this approach.  Simon also became more

590 sensitive towards his teaching, but was less self-critical, possibly because he worked so closely

591 with Sarah who was able to offer a more knowledgeable and positive perspective on his work.

592     **Continuous and collaborative learning over time.** In line with previous research that

593 positions teachers as learners in context (Casey & Dyson, 2009; Dyson, Colby, & Barratt, 2016),

594 both Robert and Simon began to recognize that meaningful pedagogic change takes time. They

595 discussed how they felt like the change process was much slower than they expected, and that

596 they have become more aware and accepting of the fact there may be significant periods of

597 difficulty and challenge that must be overcome before any noticeable change takes place. For

598 example, during his data analysis discussion with Sarah at the end of his project, Simon said:

599     I think I've seen some changes.  I suppose part of it's almost in my, my mind-set shift

600     is probably how I've overcome it because instead of looking at it and thinking that I'll

601     see vast changes in their behavior across the school overnight, I've gottae look for

602     almost sorta small targets, small goals within that.

603 Despite this challenge, both remained very positive about TPSR, describing again how it allowed

604 them to build on their previous practice and it aligned with their values around education and

605 physical education. Martinek and Hellison (2016) highlight that learning to apply TPSR in

606     context is extremely challenging, but that challenges can be overcome with a commitment to and

607     a belief in the core values of TPSR. This is evident in the present study as both teachers continue

608     to apply and investigate their use of TPSR in a supportive and collaborative learning

609     environment, creating time to reflect on their learning with their pupils, their peers and with

610     Sarah and Peter. In addition to learning through their own inquiries, the collaborative nature and

611     process of analyzing their data and writing this paper has also given them the opportunity to

612     learn from each other. They were able to draw from their experiences to discuss the various ways

613     in TPSR might be used in different contexts. These discussions further highlighted the value in

614     working collaboratively, with both teachers suggesting that they may in the future find time to

615     observe each other teacher in the next phase of their professional inquiry.

616     **Summary and Conclusion**

617        Armour et al. (2017) proposed a framework that recognises the complexity of learning in

618     context, where teachers develop knowledge for action (bridging research/theory with practice)

619     that supports their professional growth throughout their career. Consequently, they propose that

620     the core focus of teacher learning should be "practice itself (i.e., embedded and contextualized);

621     learning is dynamic (active and requiring time for reflection); and it is never ending (continuing)"

622     (p.10). Reflecting this view, the action research projects that the teachers in the present study

623     carried out, encouraged them to explore different ways of engaging with their learners, reflect,

624     discuss, and plan activities that have taken them on a learning journey that continues to this date.

625     A number of factors have shaped this journey, including their unique contexts. Simon's

626     investigation derived from his collaboration with and support from his SLT. Robert was

627     supported by his school but was perhaps more motivated and supported by factors that were

628     external to his school context. However, these were not the only factors that influenced their

629     learning. For example, both teachers had a strong and intrinsic desire to learn, do the best for

630     their pupils, and both had core values that aligned well with those of TPSR. These core values

631     were the catalyst for learning and change, encouraging them to set 'new' learning objectives,

632  apply a variety of 'new' teaching strategies, talk more to their pupils, change their own behaviors,

633  and importantly, reflect with others to evaluate the impact that these changes had on them and

634  their learners. Their experiences of learning to apply TPSR in context have provided a platform

635  to explore their learning, develop their understanding, and create new knowledge that will

636  ultimately influence future experiences (Downey & Clandinin, 2010). This reflects Dewey's

637  (1938) notion of learning as growth, where learning is an on-going process of experience and

638  sense making (Armour et al., 2017). Importantly, they did this despite at times feeling

639  uncomfortable and despite not seeing immediate changes in their pupils' behaviors. This may be

640  because such deep and collaborative engagement in learning has enabled them to develop a

641  critical understanding of TPSR so that they can adapt and apply it flexibly to focus on the

642  specific needs of their pupils.

643      Teacher learning is difficult and complex and those responsible for organizing learning

644  opportunities for teachers need to consider the environment required to nurture teacher

645  learning. However, this research demonstrates that teacher learning can take place even when the

646  support structures within the school are perhaps more passive. There is evidence from the

647  present study that when teachers are committed to their own learning, prepared to devote time

648  to their learning, and when the subject of their learning aligns with their core values, professional

649  needs, and the needs of their pupils, then they will seek support from elsewhere and pedagogical

650  change is possible. Research often reports that teachers fail to engage in professional learning

651  because of the various pressures and constraints they are under from other areas of the

652  curriculum and school life (Muijs & Harris, 2006). The teachers in this study were not immune to

653  these pressures, yet they still devoted time and effort to their learning and inquiry. Understanding

654  why some teachers appear to be more committed to professional learning is an area of research

655  that requires further consideration. Future research might consider investigating teacher learning

656  from a broader perspective to understand how it is positioned among, and interacts with, their

657  other professional responsibilities. There are perhaps also implications here for Initial Teacher

658    Education providers, who might consider ways in which they could nurture an enduring interest

659    in teacher learning and action research, and support the development of skills that will enable

660    pre-service PE teachers to navigate their learning journey in an extremely complex and

661    demanding space.

662

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