Paraprofessional - Physical and Health Education Teacher Collaboration for Inclusion

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Abstract

Inclusive Physical and Health Education (PHE) suggests that students with disabilities be educated alongside their non-disabled peers so that all students receive similar educational experiences. Over the years, schools began hiring paraprofessionals in an attempt to improve inclusive classroom environments. Previous research has examined paraprofessional roles and responsibilities, training needs and teacher-paraprofessional collaboration. The purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE. The overarching research question was: How do paraprofessionals and PHE teachers experience working as a team in the context of PHE? This interpretative phenomenological study interviewed two dyads, each consisting of one PHE teacher and one paraprofessional. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for an interpretative phenomenological analysis. Five themes emerged as findings: (1) School environment, (2) Views on inclusion, (3) Student goals/modifications, (4) Communication, and (5) Collaboration. The participants spoke about various factors that helped them achieve effective inclusive PHE programs, such as a supportive principal, setting goals for their students, and utilizing modifications to include all students. This study expanded upon past research by uncovering various methods of communication used, especially non-verbal methods used in class. Additionally, this study found that each dyad had a unique way of collaborating that best suited the needs of the individuals within that dyad. Recommendations for future research are provided in the discussion.

Résumé

L'éducation physique et la santé (EPS) inclusive suggère que les étudiants en situation d'handicap soient éduquées aux côtés de ses pairs non handicapés afin que tous les élèves reçoivent des expériences éducatives similaires. Au fil des ans, l'école a commencé à embaucher des paraprofessionnels dans le but d'améliorer les milieux scolaires inclusifs. Des recherches antérieures ont porté sur les rôles et les responsabilités des paraprofessionnels, les besoins en formation et la collaboration entre les enseignants et les paraprofessionnels. Le but de cette étude est d'explorer la relation de travail entre les paraprofessionnels et les enseignants d'EPS afin de déterminer les divers facteurs qui peuvent avoir un impact sur l'EPS inclusif. La question primordiale de la recherche est: comment les paraprofessionnels et les enseignants d'EPS vivent-ils le travail en équipe dans le contexte de l'EPS? Cette étude phénoménologique interprétative a interrogé deux dyades, chacune composée d'un enseignant d'EPS et d'un paraprofessionnel. Les entrevues semi-structurées ont été enregistrées et transcrites mot à mot pour une analyse phénoménologique interprétative. Cinq thèmes sont ressortis des conclusions : (1) Milieu scolaire, (2) Opinions sur l'inclusion, (3) Objectifs et modifications des élèves, (4) Communication, et (5) Collaboration. Les participants ont parlé de divers facteurs qui les ont aidés à réussir des programmes d'EPS inclusifs, comme le soutien d'un directeur, l'établissement d'objectifs auprès des élèves et l'adaptation des projets afin de favoriser l'inclusion de tous les élèves. Cette étude s'est appuyée sur des recherches antérieures afin de corroborer certaines méthodes de communication présentement utilisées. De plus, cette étude a révélé que chaque dyade avait une façon unique de collaborer qui répondait le mieux aux besoins des individus composant ladite dyade. Des recommandations pour la recherche future sont fournies dans la discussion.

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Contribution of Authors

I am the first author of this study. Dr. William Harvey, my supervisor, provided feedback and guidance throughout the process of this research project.

Candidate: Erin Berry

Contributions: I took part in the conceptualization of this study, I wrote the ethics application, conducted searches for and composed the review of the literature, recruited and interviewed the participants, performed the data analysis, and wrote each chapter of this thesis. This process was completed under the guidance of the co-author and modifications to the document were made in response to his comments.

Co-author: William Harvey

Contributions: conceptualization of the study, reviewed and edited ethics application and each chapter of this thesis. Also played the role of critical friend throughout the data collection, analysis and editing processes of this study.

Chapter 1

Introduction

People with disabilities have been marginalized, poorly treated throughout history (Bouffard & Strean, 2003), and prior to the 20th century, generally lived very isolated lives (Andrews & Brown, 2012). Noticeable changes began to occur for people with disabilities, as well as other minority groups, when the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's caused society to begin viewing inclusion through a lens of social justice (Thomas, 2013). People with disabilities then began to gain acceptance during the 1970's when integration was prompted by policies that fostered the inclusion of students with disabilities (SwD) in general education (GE) (Hutzler, 2003). Policies were developed to improve inclusive education for SwD since then, however, disparities in the education received by children with and without disabilities still exist (Giangreco & Broer, 2005).

The United Nations (UN) defined disability by categories of people with physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments who interact with barriers that may hinder their participation in society (United Nations, 2017). This definition of disability is broad and encompassed approximately 4.4 million Canadians who reported having a disability, representing approximately 14.3% of the Canadian population (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HDSD], 2009). The prevalence rate of disability increased by 0.6% for Canadian children, between 0-14 years, for 2001-2006 (HRSD, 2009). Further, there was an increase in the number of SwD being taught in traditional school environments over the past couple of decades (Towle, 2015). This increase led to a call to stop the segregation of SwD and, instead, encourage all students to learn together and gain from the many benefits of inclusive education (Downing, 2002).

The goal of inclusive education is to have SwD educated alongside their nondisabled peers so that all children receive similar educational experiences (Rouse, 2009). There has been a progressive

movement towards inclusive education that has led to the need for improvements in inclusive classroom environments in GE (Volger, French, & Bishop, 1989; Wilson, Stone, & Cardinal, 2013). For example, many schools hired paraprofessionals as the main method to support inclusive education in an attempt to improve classroom environments (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002; Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, 2009). As a result, paraprofessional support in classrooms increased dramatically over the decades (MacKenzie, 2011). For instance, the number of paraprofessionals employed in schools in the United States (U.S.) increased from 10,000 to 400,000 between 1965-1986 (Volger et al., 1989) and 66% of classroom teachers reported working with paraprofessionals between 1989-1999 (Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman, 2002). The number of paraprofessionals employed in the US has continually increased, with 1,234,100 paraprofessionals employed in the year 2014 and a 6% growth projection to 1,312,800 employees by the year 2024 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

It has been suggested that paraprofessionals play an important role in the inclusion of SwD in GE (Giangreco, Edelman, & Broer, 2001a). Past research highlighted the importance of teacher-paraprofessional collaboration in GE classroom settings (Giangreco & Broer, 2005). It also placed a large focus on the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals that have broadened over time (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). For example, paraprofessionals reported being responsible for a variety of tasks such as student safety and learning, behavioural support, making photocopies, and organizing and cleaning up materials (Giangreco & Broer, 2005; Giangreco et al., 2001a). They also suggested some of their job roles may exceed their qualifications (Giangreco & Broer, 2005). For example, the most frequent task paraprofessionals undertook was one-to-one instruction (Carter et al., 2009). This point suggests paraprofessionals may often be required to make solo pedagogical decisions despite not being trained to do so (Giangreco, Broer, & Suter, 2011). Hence, while children without disabilities receive their education from highly trained professionals, SwD may receive their

education from paraprofessionals who may be inadequately trained, prepared and supervised (Giangreco & Broer, 2005). However, previous research has not explored the connections between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers in great depth.

The Quebec Education Program (QEP) mandates that PHE teachers teach fundamental movement skills to all youth, as well as how to interact with others in physically active settings so that all students will, hopefully, adopt a healthy, active lifestyle for their lifetimes (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). It is vital to include youth with disabilities in PHE because they may be less active and receive fewer opportunities to be active than their peers without disabilities (Pan & Frey, 2005). Inclusive PHE was suggested as an approach to include youth with disabilities in physical activity because all students have unique instructional and educational needs (Block & Obrusbikova, 2007). Inclusive PHE is important because it affords SwD the opportunity to learn in a stimulating and motivating environment while also improving their social skills through interactions with non-disabled, age-appropriate peers (Downing, 2002). Children without disabilities may also stand to gain an appreciation for individual differences and improved attitudes towards people with disabilities (Downing, 2002).

Block (2007) suggested that PHE teachers be provided with the appropriate supports necessary for inclusion to be successful. He explained that it is important to identify the various supports that could be provided and then determine which support is most appropriate, given the individual needs of the child. Resource support, in the form of human resources, will be explored further in the context of PHE for this study. This type of support consists of providing instructors with tangible materials (e.g., adapted equipment), informational resources (e.g., academic literature), financial resources (e.g., funds for field trips), or human resources (e.g., paraprofessionals) (Block, 2007; York, Giangreco, Vandercook, & MacDonald, 1992). Goodwin, Watkinson, and Fitzpatrick (2003) suggested a key step

in developing successful inclusive PHE programs may be determining who will assist with the inclusion of students with disabilities and what level of intensity that assistance should be. However, Bryan, McCubbin, and Van der Mars (2013) explained that there is a limited body of research about paraprofessionals and PHE teachers. Thus, the topic of teachers working with paraprofessionals in the context of PHE has been largely neglected (Haycock & Smith, 2011).

Seven studies examined various aspects related to paraprofessionals working with teachers in the PHE context (Bryan, McCubbin, and Van der Mars, 2013; Davis, Kotecki, Harvey, & Oliver, 2007; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Pedersen, Cooley, & Rottier, 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). These studies have provided information about PHE-specific roles and responsibilities (Bryan et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014), training needs (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012), and teacher-paraprofessional collaboration and communication (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012).

First, paraprofessional roles and responsibilities specific to PHE have been discussed (Bryan et al., 2013; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014). Pedersen, Cooley, and Rottier (2014) identified that paraprofessional roles involved (a) making PHE a safe and enjoyable place and (b) controlling disruptive behaviours. PHE teachers believed the most important paraprofessionals roles were to (a) follow the guidelines set by the PHE teacher, (b) physically assist the SwD, and (c) provide one-to-one instruction. Bryan et al. (2013) also noted that paraprofessionals could take on the role of being a support for teachers and students, ensure student safety, and manage behaviours. Haycock and Smith (2011) found that PHE teachers believed an important paraprofessional role was identifying the needs of SwD.

Bryan et al. (2013) discovered some paraprofessionals believed their primary responsibility to be student safety while another paraprofessional felt he had no role in PHE classes. Contrarily, some PHE teachers felt that SwD should be the responsibility of the paraprofessional. Davis, Kotecki, Harvey, and Oliver (2007) concurred that paraprofessionals may not always undertake tasks related to PHE. Only 38% of their participants reported having responsibilities in PHE. The most common task was escorting SwD to the gymnasium. The two other most common tasks, undertaken by paraprofessionals, were providing prompting cues and working individually with SwD (Davis et al., 2007). Bryan et al. (2013) concluded that paraprofessional roles were ambiguous and often unclear to the PHE teachers who worked alongside paraprofessionals in PHE. Though paraprofessionals felt their roles were fairly clear, special education teachers said they had only been given a list of paraprofessional responsibilities from the school district. The PHE teachers also explained that paraprofessional roles had not been described to them. As a result, paraprofessional skills may be poorly utilized.

Next, researchers have also suggested that paraprofessionals are lacking PHE-specific training (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Davis et al. (2007) revealed that only 16% of the total respondents reported receiving training specific to PHE. However, 90% of their participants indicated a willingness to be trained for PHE. The most desired training areas included activity modifications, attributes of students with disabilities, and knowledge of motor development. Vickerman and Blundell (2012) found that 63.3% of paraprofessionals received general training on inclusion but only 5.5% of paraprofessionals reported receiving PHE-specific training. The paraprofessionals, who participated in PHE training, felt it helped their confidence and competence when including SwD in PHE.

Maher and Macbeth (2014) found that 93% of special educational needs coordinators did not have training specific to PHE. Furthermore, 58% of participants indicated that the schools, at which they worked, did not provide PHE-specific training for paraprofessionals and 52% of participants suggested that paraprofessionals were inadequately prepared to assist in PHE. Moreover, Maher (2016) found that paraprofessionals ranked PHE 9th out of 11 subject areas in order of priority regarding the allocation of school resources for SwD. This fact may explain why so little PHE-specific training was received. Paraprofessional responses indicated that 91% had not received PHE specific training but 88% of paraprofessionals reported receiving some form of training for including SwD in GE (Maher, 2016).

Finally, communication and collaboration were also emphasized as key factors in creating successful inclusive PHE environments (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). PHE teachers suggested paraprofessionals could positively support and contribute to the inclusion of SwD, especially when paraprofessionals and PHE teachers collaborated (Haycock & Smith, 2011). PHE teachers also suggested that paraprofessionals were less helpful when they were not willing to collaborate. However, the majority of PHE teachers reported being either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with paraprofessional support, indicating a need for paraprofessional support in PHE (Pedersen et al., 2014). Overall, PHE teachers felt that collaboration with paraprofessionals worked well. They suggested the main strategy to develop positive working relationships with paraprofessionals was providing paraprofessionals with knowledge on collaborative teaching in PHE (Pedersen et al., 2014).

Similarly, Vickerman and Blundell (2011) found paraprofessionals felt more positive towards their jobs when they were able to collaborate with teachers (e.g., discussing learning outcomes). The majority of paraprofessionals felt they played an important role when working in partnership with the

PHE teacher. In contrast, paraprofessionals who were left on their own to support a child in PHE class reported negative feelings towards their relationship with the PHE teacher. Thus, the authors concluded that it is key for paraprofessionals and PHE teachers to work collaboratively. Paraprofessionals felt more informed when collaborating with PHE teachers which resulted in better experiences for students. Finally, paraprofessionals believed that collaborative planning was beneficial for everyone (Vickerman & Blundell, 2011). Therefore, the successful inclusion of SwD in PHE lies not with any one individual but rather, relies on collaboration among all stakeholders in the development, delivery, and revision of inclusive programs. These findings may indicate that collaboration is key in creating effective working relationships and may be an important factor in improving inclusive environments for SwD in PHE.

In summary, paraprofessional roles, training, and paraprofessional-PHE teacher collaboration have been examined in the PHE context, based on the studies that explored PHE teachers working with paraprofessionals (Bryan et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). PHE teacher-paraprofessional relationships are important to study because inclusion may be challenging in the context of PHE (Qi & Ha, 2012). However, clearly defined paraprofessional roles have yet to be determined (Davis et al., 2007) and they may not always be transferable to the PHE context (Bryan et al., 2013). Paraprofessional and PHE teacher collaboration was identified as a key factor for successful inclusive PHE programs (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012).

Studies have examined paraprofessional-PHE teacher collaboration from the perspectives of PHE teachers (Haycock & Smith, 2011), paraprofessionals (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012) and multiple stakeholders (Bryan et al., 2013). Yet, no study has included data from both paraprofessionals and PHE teachers who are currently working together as part of an educational

partnership. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

Central Research Questions

The overarching research question to this study was: How do paraprofessionals and PHE teachers experience working as a team in the context of PHE? The central research questions were: What factors influence the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers? What methods of communication are used and when does communication happen? How do paraprofessionals and PHE teachers determine and divide their roles and responsibilities? How do these roles and responsibilities impact their working relationship?

Significance

It is important to explore paraprofessional support in the context of the PHE environment because PHE teachers should be provided with the proper resources to successfully support inclusive PHE (Block, 2007). This study expanded upon past research in the PHE context by creating a link between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers. It explored the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers in relation to inclusive PHE. It also addressed other pertinent issues within inclusion. For example, a major issue noted in the literature surrounding paraprofessionals in GE is the perceptions of respect, appreciation and acknowledgement felt by paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 2001a). Moreover, Lieberman (2007) noted the importance of communication, collaboration and teamwork between PHE teachers and paraprofessionals in order to create successful learning environments for all students. This study addressed issues of communication and collaboration by exploring the relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers.

Bryan et al. (2013) noted that paraprofessional role ambiguity may hamper the inclusion of SwD in PHE. Therefore, the proposed study attempted to determine clear roles for both paraprofessionals and PHE teachers. In addition, the exploration of multiple stakeholder perspectives and choice of methods of the Bryan et al. (2013) study played an important role in driving the proposed study. Maher and Macbeth (2014) also concluded that paraprofessional perspectives were warranted to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the inclusion of SwD in PHE. For example, the inclusion of SwD in PHE is not one individual's role because all stakeholders must collaborate in order to improve inclusive programs (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Thus, the proposed study attempted to gain a better understanding of paraprofessionals' and PHE teachers' roles, responsibilities and collaboration by investigating the experiences of paraprofessionals and PHE teachers who were currently working as an educational dyad.

This study also contributed to practical applications in the field. For example, teachers need to be prepared to consult with and supervise other adults in order for classroom teams to work effectively (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). This study offered new insights into the field by examining effective teaching teams to serve as a model for future educators. For example, this study led to recommendations about adults working together in PHE for the local school board.

Limitations and Delimitations

No study is perfect since all research designs have inherent flaws (Hatch, 2002). The following study limitations and delimitations will now be discussed. First, the term "effective team" was not officially defined for the purposes of this study, and thus, participants' effectiveness in including SwD was not measured. However, participant recruitment relied on the knowledge and expertise of the PHE consultant who worked for the local school board. She was familiar with the selected participants and the schools' PHE programs. Next, data gathering relied solely on qualitative

semi-structured interviews, therefore, the inclusivity of the participants' classes was not directly observed. The PI relied on the knowledge of the PHE consultant and participants in determining the effectiveness of the teaching teams in implementing inclusive classroom environments. Future research should include observations to allow researchers to comment on teaching teams in action and the inclusivity of their classes.

This study also has strengths that will now be discussed. Researcher reflexivity was used as a main method of trustworthiness for this study (Hatch, 2002). My experience related to the field strengthened the study. I have a degree in physical education and have completed three years of experience teaching as a substitute teacher and assisting as a paraprofessional for the school board where I conducted the study. This experience gave me an insider perspective and understanding of the inner workings of the school board. Another strength of this study was the choice of methods. I am an insider to the school board who employed an interpretive phenomenological approach that allowed me to connect with the data gathered throughout the interviews. I was also able to discuss aspects of the participants' work in a way that others, who do not share my background, may not have been able to. Further, pilot interviews were employed in order for me, the PI, to prepare for the data gathering procedures.

Operational Definitions

Integration: refers to the notion that all people deserve to be valued, have individual rights and freedoms, and live like everyone else on a societal level (Harvey, 2014).

Inclusion: a philosophy that focuses on self-determination and individual abilities in acknowledging that all people belong in our educational system (Harvey, 2014).

Inclusive School: a school that educates SwD, for the most part, in GE classrooms without any students being taught in a separate special education classroom for the majority of the day (Hehir & Katzman, 2012).

Physical and Health Education (PHE): a school subject that aims to teach students and youth the skills, knowledge and attitude necessary to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle (Harvey, 2014).

Adapted Physical Education (APE): a sub-discipline of PHE that places an emphasis on physical education for students with disabilities (Harvey, 2014).

Inclusive Physical Education: a support-based model of education in which SwD are placed directly in the general PHE settings as soon as they begin school (Goodwin et al., 2003).

Reverse Integration: a setting where the majority of students are labeled as having a disability and the minority of students are without a disability (Hutzler, Barda, Mintz & Hayosh, 2016).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and physical and health education (PHE) teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE. This chapter begins with an overview of disability, followed by a rationale for inclusive education. It then outlines the history of inclusive education and discusses barriers to inclusive education. Inclusion in the PHE context is introduced briefly and it leads to a discussion about paraprofessional support by (1) providing a history about paraprofessionals, (2) discussing the literature surrounding paraprofessional roles, (3) exploring paraprofessional perspectives, and (4) discussing links between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the gaps in the literature that supported the rationale for the proposed study.

An Overview of Disability

Inclusion will be discussed in both general education (GE) and PHE throughout this chapter. This section will define disability and identify the prevalence of disability in Canada since people with disabilities are an important part of inclusion. Language pertaining to disability will then be discussed as it may play a pertinent role in diminishing or augmenting the marginalization and stigmatization of people with disabilities.

The World Health Organization defined disability as an umbrella term pertaining to any impairments, limitations to activity, or participation restrictions (World Health Organization, 2017). This definition refers to the function and structure of the human body as they relate to daily activities and social participation, while keeping in mind associated environmental influences (Statistics Canada, 2015). The United Nations' definition of disability included categories of people with physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that interact with barriers that may hinder

participation in society (United Nations, 2017). These definitions underpinned a survey report about the prevalence of disability in Canada. It found that approximately 4.4 million Canadians reported having a disability which, in turn, comprised 14.3% of the total population of Canada (HRSD, 2009). Approximately 3.7% of people with disabilities were children from birth to 14 years (HRSD, 2009).

It is important to keep in mind that definitions are the results of cultural beliefs, values and expectations (Bouffard & Strean, 2003) and, therefore, are fluid and subject to change. When speaking about people with disabilities, terms such as "weakness", "handicapped" or "less/not able" may be used. These terms may be seen as detrimental to the progress of inclusion because they do not promote feelings of pride or acceptance (Hodkinson, 2010). According to the language policy of *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, it is important to recognize the student first and then the disability second (Sherrill & O'Connor, 1999). This policy pertains to person-first language. For example, one would refer to a student who has autism as a "student with autism" and not an "autistic child" (Rouse, 2009). Additionally, Harvey (2014) explained that person-first terminology acknowledges a person's disability while recognizing that a person is not defined solely by their disability.

The United Kingdom (UK) holds a different opinion on disability language in contrast to the North American person-centered approach. It would be more appropriate to say "disabled child" in the UK because disability is viewed as being entrenched in society. The label "disabled child" would indicate that disability is created by the child's interaction with society whereas the term "child with a disability" implies that the disability is intrinsic to the child (Clover, 2005). However, person-first terminology will be utilized for the purpose of this paper.

Rationale for Inclusive Education

A definition of inclusive education is provided to begin this section. The importance of inclusive education will then be described, followed by a rationale for inclusive education that encompasses the benefits of inclusion for all people.

Inclusion can be challenging to define and arguments over the best definition for it exist (Hodkinson, 2010). Though inclusion is often viewed in terms of disability, it can also be viewed as a broader term that spans beyond disability to gender, sexual orientation, race, age, ethnicity and more (Hodkinson, 2010). Inclusion, depicted in this way, would see all children educated together, despite individual differences (Hodkinson, 2010). However, the term 'inclusion' will refer to the inclusion of people with disabilities in education for the purposes of this review. The goal of inclusion is to have students with disabilities (SwD) educated alongside their nondisabled peers so that all children receive similar educational experiences (Rouse, 2009).

Rouse (2009) defined inclusion as "the process of educating students with disabilities along with their general peers" (p. 2). This definition suggests that, whenever possible, SwD should be educated in GE classrooms alongside their age-matched peers which may mean different processes for different students. For example, while some SwD may participate in inclusive classes for the whole day, others may only (a) spend a half day in an inclusive setting or (b) be included during intermittent periods (Rouse, 2009). Inclusion has also been described as a philosophy that focuses on self-determination and individual abilities while suggesting that all people belong in the educational system (Harvey, 2014). Hutzler (2003) pointed out that inclusion does not just refer to the placement of SwD in the same space as children without disabilities. It should involve the appropriate allocation of services, with a social responsibility to demonstrate respect and positive attitudes. Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson (2010) interviewed children with disabilities and found that feelings of

inclusion should come from the child who is being included. Therefore, the placement of a child in the same vicinity as the rest of the class is often not enough to be considered truly inclusive (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

Hence, inclusive education is a complex and evolving process that involves many different factors, as is the rationale behind inclusive education. For example, in addition to the social justice movement that helped push society towards the belief in inclusive education, many other reasons for inclusive education have been identified. Stainback, Stainback, and Forest (1989) emphasized the varying instructional needs of all students, not only those people with disabilities, indicating that teachers should be constantly adapting their lessons to meet the needs of all individuals. Since many abilities and learning styles may be present in any classroom, teachers have been recommended to learn to teach in a way that accommodates to each child's learning style instead of expecting students to adapt to a one-size-fits-all mold (Block, 2007). Additionally, the inclusion of SwD in GE and PHE does not negatively impact the learning of students without disabilities (Obrusnikova, Valkova, & Block, 2003; Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

People with disabilities are being accepted in society now more than ever, and it is inevitable that after finishing school they will, like all other people, play a role in society (Towle, 2012). Thus, it has been argued that inclusive educational settings should prepare children and youth with disabilities for real life settings (Goodwin, Watkinson, & Fitzpatrick, 2003). Fortunately, the majority (83.9%) of children with disabilities, 5-14 years, attend mainstream public or private school and only a small number (about 4,000) neither attend school nor receive any kind of support from schools at home (HRSD, 2009).

History of Inclusive Education

Inclusion is complex and part of understanding this concept comes from a historical perspective. This section discusses how inclusion in the present day came to fruition as society moved from the segregation of people with disabilities towards more tolerance and acceptance. Specific laws and policies that promoted the inclusion movement will then be discussed, followed by a brief history of inclusion in the Unites States (U.S.), Canada, and Montreal.

People with disabilities were excluded from the rest of society and generally lived very isolated lives during the 1700's and 1800's (Andrews & Brown, 2012). They were marginalized and poorly treated throughout history (Bouffard & Strean, 2003; Schur, Kruse, & Blanck, 2013). Though the ideology of inclusion dates back to the early 1900's (Schur et al., 2013), the road to inclusion was relatively slow. Many people with disabilities were institutionalized during the 19th century due to the generally held belief that people with disabilities needed to be segregated in order to protect the rest of society (Winzer, 2009). The Civil Rights movement of the 1960's caused society to view inclusion through the lens of diversity and social justice, and people with disabilities began to gain merit (Thomas, 2013). The service-based approach to adapted physical activity was utilized around the same time to present more services for children with disabilities to engage in physical activity, albeit still in an exclusive setting (Hutzler, 2003). There was a breakthrough in the 1970s when integration was prompted by policies that promoted the inclusion of SwD in GE (Hutzler, 2003).

Every country has a different history of inclusive education, many of which coincide along similar timelines of important international legislation granting the right to education for children with disabilities. For instance, the right to free and appropriate education was granted in the U.S. by the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (EHC) of 1975 under Public Law (PL) 94-142 (Hutzler, 2003; Jimenez, Graf, & Rose, 2007). This act enacted the inclusion of SwD into GE and

guaranteed SwD the right to specifically designed instruction at no cost to parents or guardians which also included PHE (Committee on Human Resources, 1997). Educational leaders began to implement a supports-based approach which recognized the need for various forms of extra assistance for children with disabilities in the 1980's (Hutzler, 2003). This extra assistance often came in the form of paraprofessionals (e.g., teacher's assistants; Giangreco, Broer, & Edelman, 2002) and will be discussed in more detail later in this paper. The EHC has remained, to this date, a very important part of special education. However, it has been revised over the years to eventually become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) in 2004 to emphasize the need for qualified special education teachers and inclusion of SwD in statewide assessments (Block, 2007). IDEA ensures the legal right of SwD to free, appropriate public education, and ensures special education and related services for those students at the federal level (Turnbull, 2005).

Inclusive education for children and youth with disabilities may be slightly more complex in Canada. Towle (2015) explained that while certain pieces of international legislation may outline human rights, they do little for policy implementation. Since Canadian education falls under provincial or territorial jurisdiction, the right to education for Canadian children and youth with disabilities is guided by the policies of each province or territory individually and varies from province to province (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012; Towle, 2015; Wiener & Siegel, 1992). Thus, there is provincial legislation that guides education in Canada. For example, the Quebec Education Act entitles every person to preschool, elementary and secondary school services until 18 years and 21 years of age in the case of a person with a disability (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001).

There were several historical events that led to the shift towards inclusive education. A group of psychologists, based out of the Montreal Children's Hospital, created the Montreal Children's Hospital Learning Centre in the late 1950s (Wiener & Siegel, 1992). It had a large influence on how

professionals worked with children with learning disabilities and difficulties (Wiener & Siegel, 1992). The Constitution Act of 1982 sanctioned the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which may not have had a direct effect on educational policy, but it was another step in ensuring the equality of all individuals without discrimination (Wiener & Siegel, 1992).

Increases in the prevalence of disability led to a movement towards inclusion and calls to stop segregating SwD in society and throughout the educational system (Towle, 2015). For example, the prevalence of people with disabilities in Ottawa increased by 3% between 2001-2006 (Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2010). The rate of disability in Canada also increased by 0.6% for children aged 0-14 years between 2001-2006 (HRSD, 2009). However, there may be disparities in the education received by children with and without disabilities (Giangreco & Broer, 2005). For example, a study by Blinde and McCallister (1998) found that limited participation in activities was a frequent outcome for many students with disabilities as they reported being given few opportunities to meaningfully participate in PHE. These types of disparities suggest that the fight for inclusion is not over. Most provinces require SwD to transition from school life to community life around the age of 20 years, at which point, these young adults are required to find a job (Towle, 2015). Improving access to education may lead to full participation in society later in life (HRSD, 2009).

Barriers to Inclusive Education

It is important to note the specific challenges that may come with inclusive education. These challenges will be discussed in this section and include the nature of inclusive education as well as the negative attitudes held by some educators and paraprofessionals. Another barrier to inclusive PHE that will be discussed is the low priority the subject may hold due to the hegemonic nature of the educational system (Maher, 2016).

One argument against inclusion is that SwD may not be properly included or may receive inadequate supports when included in GE (Giangreco, Broer, Suter, & 2011). The word "ideological" appears quite frequently in the literature when referring to inclusive education. MacKenzie (2011) confirmed that, in theory, most paraprofessionals believe in inclusion but they reported uncertainty about how it works in practice. Additionally, Thomas (2013) noted that there have been arguments for the benefits of segregated education that state inclusion is impractical and too ideological.

A participant in a study expressed the opinion that mainstreaming did not provide education to sufficiently meet the needs of SwD (MacKenzie, 2011). Even teachers who have years of teaching experience, lack experience and knowledge when it comes to SwD and may not know how to properly incorporate them into the class. It is important to note that teachers play an integral role in supporting inclusion in their classroom. They should take into consideration the individual needs of students, determine Individual Education Plans (IEP), and create an environment that promotes acceptance and respect (Rouse, 2009). Thus, an important aspect for teachers is to determine how each child learns best and to do so they have been recommended to take the whole child into account; this is the same for children of all abilities (Wiener & Siegel, 1992).

Subjects that are not considered to be core subjects may face additional barriers to inclusion. Maher (2016) found that English, Math, and Science were the subjects that ranked highest in terms of priority for the allocation of services for including SwD. PHE ranked 9th out of 11 subjects, placing ahead of only History and Art. It may be difficult to support and improve inclusion in PHE and other low-priority subjects if inclusion services are not being allocated to these subjects. However, the attempt at developing successful inclusive programs should not be discarded simply because some barriers may exist. Despite the fact that some teachers may believe inclusive education to be too

ideological (Mackenzie, 2011), other teachers and paraprofessionals believe that SwD should be fully included whenever possible (Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2011)

Inclusive Physical and Health Education

This section will define inclusive PHE and discuss the importance of PHE. The major events that led to inclusive PHE will then be outlined and the importance of inclusive PHE will be discussed. Goodwin et al. (2003) explained that language is dynamic and evolving, and therefore, people's understanding of inclusive PHE has changed and matured over time. Inclusive PHE is defined as giving all SwD the opportunity to participate in regular PHE classes with their peers, with the additional support services needed to help children reach the outcome of an active lifestyle, given their abilities (Goodwin et al., 2003).

PHE not only teaches physical skills, but also broader subject matter, with one of its main goals being to teach students to be healthy and physically active for life (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). For example, the Quebec Education Program (QEP) mandates PHE teachers to teach fundamental movement skills to youth as well as how to interact with others in physically active settings so that students will adopt healthy, active lifestyles for their lifetimes (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). Unfortunately, youth with disabilities are subject to be less active and receive fewer opportunities to be active than their peers without disabilities (Pan & Frey, 2005). These facts are alarming considering that youth without disabilities are not meeting the Canadian physical activity guidelines of at least 60 minutes of daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (Statistics Canada, 2017). Considering that rates of disability (a) are becoming increasingly common among Canadians and (b) increase with age, it is important to consider the related social burdens and the role that PHE might play in improving the quality of life and health related outcomes for this population (HRSD, 2006).

Historically, physical activity was not even a consideration because of the marginalization of people with disabilities (Bouffard & Strean, 2003). However, the benefits of physical activity are well known today for people with and without disabilities. PHE may play an integral role in teaching students to become physically active for life. The importance of this objective cannot be underestimated when one considers the role physical activity can play in reducing the risk of premature morbidity by decreasing the risk of illnesses such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes (Block, 2007). It is therefore important that PHE classes address the health and physical activity needs of all students, including people with disabilities, to ensure a high quality of life.

The rationale behind inclusive PHE is similar to the reasons for inclusion in GE. Goodwin et al. (2003) explained that inclusive classrooms may be preferred over other instructional settings because they demonstrate that all children are valued, able to learn, and belong in regular school settings and communities. Additionally, Block and Obrusnikova (2007) noted that all students have varying instructional and educational needs. It has also been argued that inclusive settings provide opportunities for SwD to socialize with general, age-appropriate peers, develop fundamental motor skills and be physically active in a more stimulating and motivating environment (Downing, 2002).

Students without disabilities also stand to gain from learning through an inclusive environment (Rouse, 2009). While inappropriate attitudes towards people with disabilities may form through segregation (Stainback et al., 1989), students without disabilities reported a higher tolerance towards others and improved attitudes towards people with disabilities when inclusion was successful (Downing, 2002; Rouse, 2009). Furthermore, inclusion plays a valuable role in teaching children important life lessons such as ethics, respect, and fairness, as well as providing an appreciation for individual differences and gains in perspective (Downing, 2002; Rouse, 2009; Block, 2007). It should

also be noted that Stainback et al. (1989) brought economics into their reasoning, explaining that dual educational systems create competition between schools and duplication of educational costs. This idea would come into play throughout education but especially in PHE where the cost of equipment can be quite high (CAHPERD Times, 2008).

Models exist that outline support in inclusive PHE but most of them function under the assumption that PHE teachers are given the technical and educational supports needed to ensure successful inclusion efforts (Goodwin et al., 2003). However, inclusion is likely to fail if the supports are not provided (Block, 2007). It is important for PHE teachers to take responsibility for implementing inclusive strategies in their PHE classrooms (Rouse, 2009). For example, PHE teachers need to be provided with the training and resources necessary to promote and support inclusion (Block, 2007). Harvey (2014) suggested PHE teachers actively search for supports to assist in the inclusion process. One of the supports PHE teachers may be able to utilize is paraprofessional support.

History of Paraprofessionals

This section will begin by outlining four supports for inclusive education and identifying paraprofessionals as the support of interest for this chapter. The term paraprofessional is defined and a brief history of the position is then outlined, explaining the rapid growth of the profession and providing a justification for studying this growing group of employees.

The progressive movement towards inclusive education has led to the need for improvements in inclusive classroom environments in GE (Volger, French, & Bishop, 1989; Wilson, Stone, & Cardinal, 2013). Block (2007) cited York, Giangreco, Vandercook, and MacDonald (1992) who suggested four different types of supports that can be applied for the inclusion of SwD: (1) resource support (2) moral support (3) technical support and (4) evaluation support. The first type of support,

resource support, consists of providing instructors with tangible materials (e.g., adapted equipment), informational resources (e.g., academic literature), financial resources (e.g., funds for field trips), or human resources (e.g., paraprofessionals). The second type of support, moral support, refers to interactions between people that validate a person as an individual and a colleague. The third type of support is technical support and consists of offering strategies, methods, approaches or ideas through hands-on methods (e.g., in-service training). Finally, evaluation support pertains to assistance in collecting information that allows the support to be monitored and adjusted, with the impact of the support measured (York et al., 1992).

The type of support discussed in this chapter is resource support in the form of human resources. Human resources are adults who work in conjunction with classroom teachers to support inclusion (e.g., paraprofessionals). The term paraprofessional is defined as "a trained aide who assists a professional person" (Merriam-Webster, 2017) and it will be used throughout this thesis as a blanket term to encompass any person who assists in classrooms to support the inclusion of SwD. Giangreco and Doyle (2002) suggested that the language used to define a paraprofessional should be descriptive, respectful and accurately depict the requirements of the job. It has been suggested that terms such as paraprofessional, paraeducator, teacher's assistant or classroom assistant are appropriate (Farr, 2018; Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). Terms, that may be viewed as less respectful, are advised against, such as "aide" and "support staff" (Farr, 2018; Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). Issues such as respect, appreciation and acknowledgement of paraprofessionals will be discussed in more detail later in this paper.

There has been an increase in the educational supports found in the classroom, one of which is the employment of paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 2002; Giagreco & Doyle, 2002; Piletic, Davis, & Aschemeier, 2005; Volger et al., 1989). Many schools have hired paraprofessionals as the main

method to support inclusive education (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). For example, by 1992, the number of paraprofessionals employed in the UK, had increased by 110% and in 2005 this group represented 25% of the school workforce (Farr, 2018). Additionally, paraprofessionals are, now more than ever, being used to support teaching (Farr, 2018). Paraprofessional support saw an increase from 10,000 employees to 400,000 employees in the U.S. between 1965-1986 (Volger et al., 1989). This number has continually increased, with 1,234,100 paraprofessionals employed in the year 2014 and it is projected to grow six percent to 1,312,800 employees by the year 2024 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The increase was evident and supported by study findings. For example, four school principals in Vermont reported an 83% increase in paraprofessionals' hourly service per day (Giangreco et al., 2002). This increase was attributed to the hiring of paraprofessionals to work alongside individual students. Additionally, 66% of classroom teachers reported working with paraprofessionals over the course of the 1998-1999 school year (Giangreco et al., 2002).

There is no dispute as to the important role paraprofessionals play in the inclusion of SwD in the GE setting (Giangreco, Edelman, & Broer, 2001a). This is evident given the fact that almost all students with disabilities attend schools that employ paraprofessionals, who are being employed increasingly to support the many needs of these students (Carter et al., 2009). The literature continues to (a) support the important role paraprofessionals play in the inclusion of SwD and (b) determine the most effective practices for inclusive education (Giangreco et al., 2001a; Giangreco et al., 2002; Tews & Lupart, 2008).

Paraprofessional Roles

This section will first discuss traditional paraprofessional roles and then describe how they have changed and expanded over the years. It is speculated that paraprofessionals may be required to perform roles that exceed their qualifications because their roles have expanded, and policy and

training have been unable to keep up. Next, two paraprofessional roles will be described in more detail. These two roles are (a) one-to-one instruction and (b) group instruction. One-to-one instructional roles will then be linked to paraprofessionals working in close proximity to a SwD. The disadvantages and possible benefits of this proximity will be discussed. An argument will be provided for assigning paraprofessionals to a classroom or group of students. Finally, it will be argued that close proximity may be disadvantageous to the child, and steps will be outlined to improve proximity.

The literature has questioned the appropriate roles for paraprofessionals to undertake to support SwD in GE classrooms (Giangreco et al., 2001a). It is important to identify these roles and responsibilities because the effectiveness of paraprofessional support may depend directly on how the roles are defined (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). Paraprofessional roles and responsibilities have been described in the literature mainly through questionnaires and interviews that documented the opinions of GE teachers, special educators, paraprofessionals, and parents (Carter et al., 2009; Giangreco et al., 2002; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Traditionally, paraprofessionals were seen performing clerical duties or transporting children from one class to the next but in the late 1980s there was a shift towards duties that involved teaching assistance and instruction (Volger et al., 1989). With the increase of paraprofessionals working in inclusive education, the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals broadened to include work previously completed by GE teachers (MacKenzie, 2011).

Carter et al. (2009) examined the training needs and opportunities of paraprofessionals in an attempt to extend research on the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals. The authors queried 313 paraprofessionals through a questionnaire and found that they performed a wide variety of tasks and worked with a diverse group of learners in a multitude of settings. This theme can be found across the literature. Paraprofessionals reported being responsible for student safety and learning (Giangreco

et al., 2002) as well as providing planned instruction and behavioural support (Giangreco & Broer, 2005; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Paraprofessionals also reported being responsible for clerical duties (e.g., making photocopies), organizing and cleaning up materials, and personal care for the students (e.g., toileting & changing) (Giangreco et al., 2001a). Carter et al. (2009) identified 25 different tasks that paraprofessionals were responsible for. They included some of the tasks described above as well as other tasks such as facilitating social interactions, monitoring hallways, communicating with parents and more.

Paraprofessionals reported that their roles may exceed their qualifications (Giangreco & Broer, 2005) and there may be a lack of role clarity (MacKenzie, 2011). For example, MacKenzie (2011) examined paraprofessional roles through three individual interviews and focus groups with 10 respondents. The lack of role clarity for paraprofessionals was attributed to a change in paraprofessional roles. It was speculated that policy and training may be unable to keep up with the increasing responsibilities and expectations placed on paraprofessionals (Mackenzie, 2011). Additionally, paraprofessionals are often required to make solo, pedagogical decisions despite the fact that they are not trained to do so (Giangreco et al., 2011).

In the late 1980s, paraprofessionals were identified as the fastest expanding, yet least prepared, group in education (Volger et al., 1989). Giangreco et al. (2002) collected questionnaires from 66 paraprofessionals, 122 GE teachers, 17 special educators, and 10 school administrators. Fifty-six individuals were then interviewed. The authors concurred that paraprofessionals did not receive enough training prior to beginning their jobs and they believed that, despite an attempt at in-service training, paraprofessionals remained inadequately prepared. However, it should be noted that on-the-job training for paraprofessionals varied widely, with some receiving more than adequate amounts and others receiving very little (Giangreco et al., 2002). Paraprofessionals have expressed confusion

with their roles and explained that they were never told what to do when on recess duty or how to perform a transfer without hurting their back (Giangreco et al., 2001a). These findings may also indicate that paraprofessionals are lacking training and role clarity.

Giangreco et al. (2002) found the main role of paraprofessionals was instructional. In this instance, "instruction" referred to a variety of tasks that included small group lessons, tutoring, prompting and cueing, encouraging students and giving feedback, helping to take class notes, or administering tests and quizzes. Paraprofessionals indicated they felt moderately to very prepared to provide instructional tasks such as one-to-one or small group instruction but they felt much less prepared to take on other "teacher-like" roles such as writing lesson plans (Carter et al., 2009). Teachers mentioned that the abilities of paraprofessionals varied widely. Some paraprofessionals were able to engage well in instructional tasks while others were not (Giangreco et al., 2001a). It has been speculated that paraprofessionals have been placed more frequently in instructional roles because there has been a general increase in the number of students with high incidence disabilities. Students with high incidence disabilities may need additional instructional help and include three categories of disabilities: emotional-behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, and mild intellectual disabilities (Sabornie, Evans, & Cullinan, 2006).

Instruction has been categorized as (a) one-to-one that involves a paraprofessional to work with an individual student or (b) group instruction where a paraprofessional is assigned to a classroom or group of students (Giangreco et al., 2002). A key component of one-to-one instruction pertains to the paraprofessional's proximity to the student (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002; Tews & Lupart, 2008). It is not surprising that the amount of time spent in close proximity increased when a paraprofessional was assigned to an individual SwD (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). Giangreco and Broer (2005) found that paraprofessionals, who worked one-to-one with a SwD, reported spending approximately 86% of

their time in close proximity to the child they were assigned to. In this instance, proximity was defined as being within 3 feet of the student.

Close proximity of paraprofessionals to SwD may be disadvantageous to the child (Giagreco & Broer, 2002). MacKenzie (2011) interviewed 13 paraprofessionals in the UK and touched on the downfalls of having paraprofessionals work in close proximity to a SwD. One participant argued that when paraprofessionals provided one-to-one assistance to a SwD, it created negative views of the SwD because he or she received assistance while other students did not. In other words, the SwD received more attention and help than the other students, causing their classmates to have negative feelings towards them. When assigned to an individual student, paraprofessionals rarely interacted with other students in an instructional way (Giangreco et al., 2002).

Conversely, Tews and Lupart (2008) interviewed eight SwD and found that paraprofessionals may play an important role in facilitating social interactions between SwD and their non-disabled peers. When paraprofessionals were liked by the peers of a SwD, a positive relationship was more likely to be formed between the SwD and their age-matched peers. Only one student in this study felt the relationship with his/her peers was negatively affected by the peers' adverse feelings towards the paraprofessional. The authors also found that four of the eight SwD interviewed preferred paraprofessionals to be in close proximity to them. They speculated that the desire for closeness was an indication of the student's perceptions of his/her own capabilities. Though the students preferred having the paraprofessional nearby, it was also an indication of dependence on the paraprofessional.

Overall, it seems that when paraprofessionals were assigned to a classroom instead of an individual student, they reported feeling as though they were part of a team (Giangreco et al., 2001a). As well, paraprofessional turnover is greater when assigned to individual students rather than a group or classroom (Giangreco et al., 2002). Given that paraprofessional proximity can detract from the

amount a classroom teacher interacts with a child with a disability, it may be more appropriate to have paraprofessionals take on roles other than those involving one-to-one instruction.

Giangreco and Doyle (2002) outlined four steps to improve the proximity of paraprofessionals which they categorized as the "four A's: awareness, assessment, actions and alternatives" (p. 6). The authors suggested the paraprofessional must be aware of the extent of their proximity and they must then assess this proximity to determine its effectiveness and when it is warranted. Actions can then be taken based on the knowledge gained from these first two steps. Finally, alternatives to paraprofessionals should be identified based on need. This is key information considering that teacher instruction and academic ownership is influenced by paraprofessional proximity (Tews & Lupart, 2008). Giangreco and Broer (2002) explained that teachers are also responsible for ensuring that paraprofessionals interact with all students in the classroom, not only those with disabilities.

Carter et al. (2009) emphasised that quality education rests on the knowledge and abilities of the people who provide educational services. Thus, it is important for educational providers to be well trained and have a clear understanding of their expected roles. Paraprofessional support can either hinder or help SwD in their learning and social interactions (Broer, Doyle, & Giangreco, 2005) and the extent to which paraprofessional support is either beneficial or disadvantageous is dependent on many factors. Some of these factors have been outlined above, such as proximity (Tews & Lupart, 2008) and the understanding of paraprofessional roles and abilities to perform these roles with competence (Giangreco & Broer, 2005). Other factors that can affect a paraprofessional's performance (e.g., job satisfaction) will now be discussed.

Paraprofessional Perceptions

This section will discuss the wide variety of perceptions experienced by paraprofessionals. Paraprofessional wages will be discussed in relation to the negative perceptions that low wages may

cause. Paraprofessional experiences will be discussed, as they may vary widely, be it either positive or negative, and depend on multiple factors. Some examples of the difficulties paraprofessionals face while working with teachers will be provided. Next, teacher and paraprofessionals training will be discussed and the importance of collaboration and communication will be outlined. Teacher engagement will be related to paraprofessional perceptions, and finally, suggestions to improve collaboration and increase feelings of value in paraprofessionals will be provided.

A major issue noted in the literature is the perceptions of respect, appreciation and acknowledgement felt by paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 2001a). While the relationship between teachers and paraprofessionals has been speculated to influence paraprofessional's feelings of appreciation (Giangreco et al., 2001a), other factors also influence the feelings of appreciation felt by paraprofessionals, such as monetary compensation (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). Paraprofessionals often received very low wages. In the early 2000s some reported starting salaries as low as seven U.S. dollars an hour, which they expressed as being insulting and an indication of being undervalued (Giangreco et al., 2002). Paraprofessional wages ranged from 7-16 dollars an hour, with the average salary between 7-8 dollars an hour (Giangreco et al., 2001a). Half a decade later, however, paraprofessionals still received low monetary compensation. In a study that investigated paraprofessional turnover and retention issues, one school reported a 40% pay increase in starting salary from 6.50$ to 9.00$ an hour, while another reported starting salaries for paraprofessionals at 10.65$ an hour (Ghere & York-Barr, 2007).

The relationship between teachers and paraprofessionals is often less than ideal. MacKenzie (2011) noted that not one paraprofessional remarked having a positive relationship with the teachers with whom they worked. One paraprofessional discussed the difficulty of working with teachers and navigating the politics of schools. She explained that she was not given lesson plans before class,

denoting a lack of communication and cooperation. This meant that the paraprofessional was expected to listen as the teacher taught, while simultaneously focusing on the child in order to support his or her needs, and then immediately adapt any part of the lesson that may need adaptation. One of the greatest challenges for paraprofessionals is negotiating what is expected of them and working in agreement with PHE teachers (Bryan et al., 2013). Hence, Lieberman (2007) noted the importance of communication, collaboration and teamwork between educators and paraprofessionals in order to create successful learning environments for all students.

Conversely, Hughes and Valle-Riestra (2008) interviewed 52 paraprofessionals and found that 77% of the participants expressed feeling valued and respected by the teachers with whom they worked. Of the 59 teachers interviewed, the majority indicated similar feelings of respect towards the paraprofessionals, denoting the essential role paraprofessionals played as a "co-teacher". Paraprofessionals also commented that being entrusted with important responsibilities made them feel more valued. For example, paraprofessionals perceived receiving respect from their colleagues when they were given more responsibilities, such as instructional tasks (Giangreco et al., 2001a).

However, as discussed in the previous section, a caution comes with entrusting paraprofessionals to undertake instructional tasks. One teacher interviewed by Giangreco et al. (2001a) pointed out the paradox of assigning children with the highest needs to paraprofessionals who may be underqualified or underprepared. This concern is denoted by the inadvertent effects that may come from having paraprofessionals act as the primary instructors of children with disabilities (Giangreco, Broer, Edelman, 2001b). These negative effects include separation from classmates, dependence on adults, lower personal control and restricted access to quality education (Giangreco et al., 2001b).

Teachers and paraprofessionals had different opinions about the tasks that should be completed by paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 2001a). Some paraprofessionals expressed discontent with having to perform clerical tasks, not wanting to be perceived on the same level as custodians, while teachers believed these types of tasks were both helpful and important. This denotes the importance of having paraprofessionals and teachers being in agreement regarding their separate roles which can be traced back to professional training for both teachers and paraprofessionals. Teachers should be prepared to consult with and supervise other adults in the classroom in order for classroom teams to work effectively (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). However, while teachers are trained extensively on topics such as classroom organization and behaviour management, few meaningful courses are given on subjects such as working alongside other adults (Carnahan, Williamson, Clarke, & Sorensen, 2009). When paraprofessionals are properly trained and receive the necessary supports, they reported feeling as though they are a valuable member of the educational team (Giangreco et al., 2001a). However, planned training happened only for a small number of paraprofessionals (Giangreco et al., 2001a).

Carnahan, Williamson, Clarke, and Sorensen (2009) discussed the importance of a shared philosophy between classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. A shared philosophy may allow the two colleagues to have the same values, goals and desired outcomes for the school year, which may create a more cohesive team. Teachers and paraprofessionals should collaborate prior to the start of the school year because adults have varying beliefs about what is best for students and setting the tone for the year is important (Carnahan et al., 2009). When the duties performed by paraprofessionals matched their own expected roles and the roles GE teachers expect of them, the appreciation and value that these paraprofessionals felt was higher (Giangreco et al., 2001a). For example, if a paraprofessional successfully implemented an activity that was assigned by a classroom teacher with

a small group, he or she may feel more valued. In this instance, the teacher acted as program director and was responsible for planning while the paraprofessional implemented the instructional plans. Conversely, Giangreco et al. (2001a) found that when the expectations of teachers and paraprofessionals did not match, job satisfaction for paraprofessionals was lower. For example, when teachers did not give paraprofessionals explicit instructions, there was a lack of communication, and as a result paraprofessionals ended up working on their own.

One important support for paraprofessionals is teacher engagement. Teacher engagement referred to: (a) the instructional contact of GE teachers with SwD in their classrooms, and (b) the engagement of GE teachers with the paraprofessionals in their classroom (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). Teacher engagement was identified in the literature as one of the key factors in successfully creating inclusive classrooms (Giangreco et al., 2001b). Giangreco et al. (2001b) explored various aspects of teacher engagement and found that teacher engagement was largely dependent on the method of paraprofessional service. Similar to the types of instruction discussed earlier in this paper, the two types of services provided by paraprofessionals were program based (i.e., providing instruction to a group of students) or one-to-one instruction. An important finding of this study was that when the paraprofessional provided program-based services, teacher engagement was higher.

Carnahan et al. (2009) suggested that affording paraprofessionals the opportunity to give feedback and allowing their voices to be heard might be a valuable method of improving communication between paraprofessionals and classroom teachers. Additionally, Giangreco et al. (2001a) found three major implications from their study on paraprofessional perceptions. First, all members of an educational team should share the same expectations pertaining to paraprofessional roles. Second, there should be a match between what is expected of a paraprofessional and what he or

she is actually trained to do. Finally, compensation should be re-evaluated if the first two study implications were met.

The aspects mentioned in this section, such as teacher engagement and having a shared philosophy, are closely linked to job satisfaction, which is a key factor in retaining a productive workforce (Carnahan et al., 2009; Giangreco et al., 2001b). This, in turn, is central to building a school community that provides positive learning outcomes for students with disabilities in GE (Giangreco et al., 2001a). The idea of having a strong school community is supported by comments from paraprofessionals who explained that being excluded from meetings that occurred during the school day led them to feel undervalued (Giangreco et al., 2001a). If paraprofessionals are adequately trained, prepared and supervised, and able to take on the same tasks as the classroom teacher, then they must be paid accordingly. Thus, Giangreco and Doyle (2002) question why schools would hire paraprofessionals over additional teachers. A solution to this issue could lie in clarifying paraprofessional roles and responsibilities so that classroom teachers take on the role of program director and paraprofessionals provide the needed support (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002).

Paraprofessionals and Inclusive Physical and Health Education

Paraprofessional support is not well understood in the PHE context (Wilson et al., 2013). Researchers have suggested that paraprofessional roles may not be transferable from GE to PHE contexts (Bryan et al., 2013) while anecdotal evidence hypothesised that many paraprofessional responsibilities may be easily transferrable from GE to PHE (Piletic et al., 2005). Many of the issues surrounding paraprofessionals in GE have also been discussed regarding paraprofessionals in PHE.

Seven studies examined paraprofessional support in PHE (Bryan et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012) by inquiring into the perspectives of different stakeholders (e.g.,

paraprofessionals & PHE teachers). The next section will provide a brief overview of each study while highlighting the various participant perspectives examined in each study. Thus, information will be provided on the perspectives of PHE teachers (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014), special educational needs coordinators (Maher & Macbeth, 2014), paraprofessionals (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012) and multiple stakeholders (Bryan et al., 2013). The section directly following will discuss topics that have been explored in the literature pertaining to inclusion in PHE. These include PHE-specific roles and responsibilities (Bryan et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014), training needs (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012), and paraprofessionals and PHE teacher collaboration and communication (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012).

Varying Participant Perspectives. Two studies inquired into the perspectives of PHE teachers (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014). First, Haycock and Smith (2011) utilized focus groups to gather data about PHE teachers' perceptions of working with paraprofessionals in mainstream secondary PHE classes in North-West England, UK. There were a total of 12 participants (five males & seven females) who were employed at five different schools. Three themes emerged for the study findings. First, the PHE teachers spoke about the role that paraprofessionals play in identifying the needs of SwD. The participants explained that they were required to seek information about SwD from colleagues who were not specifically assigned to PHE because paraprofessionals were often housed within other departments (e.g., Learning Supports Unit). They also felt the information received was not relevant to PHE which negatively impacted their ability to include SwD. Further, there was a focus on the positive aspects of paraprofessional support where PHE teachers suggested paraprofessionals could positively contribute to the inclusion of SwD. Finally, the PHE

teachers discussed the negative impact of paraprofessionals in inclusive PHE. They felt that some paraprofessionals viewed PHE as a lower priority subject that, in turn, could negatively affect their ability to assist with PHE lessons. The teachers also suggested paraprofessionals to be less helpful when they were not willing to collaborate and possessed less knowledge related to PHE.

Next, Pedersen et al. (2014) examined the role of paraprofessionals in PHE based on questionnaire data. The authors sent a survey to 450 PHE teachers in Australia but received responses from only 14 participants, giving them a 6% response rate. The PHE teachers felt that paraprofessionals could make PHE a safe and enjoyable place, and control disruptive behaviour. In addition, the teachers expressed low levels of self-efficacy in being able to include SwD in PHE classes without the help of paraprofessionals. The majority of PHE teachers reported being either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with paraprofessional support, indicating there is a need for paraprofessional support in PHE. However, results indicated a lack of paraprofessional subject-specific knowledge and training so the authors suggested that reciprocal communication may be a key strategy in fostering collaborative working relationships.

One study queried into the perspectives of special educational needs coordinators and teachers who work as administrators in schools in the UK (Maher & Macbeth, 2014). The authors examined inclusion and paraprofessional support through web-survey data from 135 special educational needs coordinators. The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the views and experiences of special educational needs coordinators on the inclusion of SwD in mainstream secondary schools in England. A link to an electronic survey was emailed to 414 special educational needs coordinators and 135 participants (119 females, 16 males) started the survey. Ninety participants answered every survey question but all information given by participants was utilized in data analysis, even those given in partially completed surveys. Results indicated that allocation of services were prioritized to

core subject areas (i.e., Math, English, & Science) which may have constrained the ability of teachers to provide quality education for SwD in other subjects (e.g., PHE).

Three studies have examined paraprofessional support in PHE from the perspective of paraprofessionals (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Davis, Kotecki, Harvey and Oliver (2007) distributed surveys to 138 paraprofessionals from 34 different school districts in the Midwestern U.S. The purpose of this study was to determine the responsibilities and training needs of paraprofessionals, with a focus on those who worked in PHE. Seventy-six paraprofessionals (75 females, 1 male) responded to the survey but only 29 participants reported having responsibilities related to PHE. This study also indicated that, overall, paraprofessionals were lacking training, however, there was a willingness to be trained.

Maher (2016) gathered survey data from paraprofessionals about their views on the inclusion of SwD in PHE. This study was part of a larger study, in which 414 schools were contacted. The special educational needs coordinators at those schools were asked to forward a web-survey to all paraprofessionals employed at their school. In total, 343 paraprofessionals started the survey and 154 paraprofessionals completed it. All answers were included in the data analysis, even from partially completed surveys. The author found paraprofessionals were not receiving enough PHE-specific training. Additionally, the findings indicated that 88% of paraprofessionals reported receiving some kind of training related to GE. However, paraprofessionals ranked PHE 9th out of 11 subjects in order of priority regarding the allocation of school resources for SwD. This result is supported by other studies that found PHE to be a low perceived priority in schools (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Maher & Macbeth, 2014). It might also be an explanation for why so little PHE-specific training was received.

Vickerman and Blundell (2012) examined 142 paraprofessionals' views about their perceived competence and confidence in supporting SwD in PHE. The study involved two stages. Questionnaire

data were collected in stage one by mailing 500 surveys to primary, secondary, and special schools in the UK. They received responses from 142 paraprofessionals (25 males, 117 females; 28.4% response rate). Phone interviews were conducted with five paraprofessionals for the second stage of the study (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Communication and collaboration were the main topics that emerged from these interviews.

Finally, only one study included multiple stakeholder perspectives. Bryan et al. (2013) examined paraprofessionals' roles from the perspectives of four different stakeholders (i.e., four PHE teachers, four paraprofessionals, four adapted physical education teachers & three special education teachers). A phenomenological approach was adopted to gather information through questionnaires, individual interviews, and observations. The main finding was that paraprofessional roles were often ambiguous, creating a disconnect between paraprofessionals and their co-workers. Participants explained that the main role of paraprofessionals was being a support for teachers and SwD, however, responses varied. Some paraprofessionals suggested their primary role was behaviour management and ensuring student safety while student learning was a second priority. Another main finding was that paraprofessional roles were often unclear to the PHE teachers who worked alongside paraprofessionals in PHE and, as a result, paraprofessional skills may be poorly utilized.

The following three sub-sections will provide more information on the themes, identified in this literature review, that include paraprofessional roles, training needs, and collaboration.

Paraprofessional Roles. Paraprofessional roles and responsibilities specific to PHE have been explored throughout the literature (Bryan et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2007; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014). Studies have demonstrated that paraprofessional roles and responsibilities are vast and may be unclear in the PHE context. Various stakeholders reported that paraprofessionals could be responsible for individual and group learning, providing prompting cues (Bryan et al., 2013;

Davis et al., 2007), escorting SwD to PHE class (Davis et al., 2007), behaviour management and student safety (Pedersen et al., 2014), as well as including SwD in PHE (Haycock & Smith, 2011). Some PHE teachers believed that including SwD in PHE should be the responsibility of paraprofessionals by keeping the students on track while others believed paraprofessionals had no role in PHE (Bryan et al., 2013).

PHE teachers indicated that paraprofessionals "rarely" or "never" set up materials and equipment, administered tests or planned learning activities (Pedersen et al., 2014). However, these tasks were ranked as being less important by PHE teachers. Tasks that were ranked as more important were (1) being able to implement the guidelines set by PHE teachers, (2) physically assisting a SwD, and (3) providing one-to-one instruction. Pedersen et al. (2014) also found that an important paraprofessional role was integrating SwD in PHE. Integrating SwD, especially in group activities, was a task that PHE teachers viewed to be most important. For example, the PHE teacher can teach a skill and then the paraprofessional can take over by continuing to assist and give cues. In this instance, the PHE teacher is in charge of giving initial instructions and the paraprofessional is responsible for assisting the SwD to successfully implement inclusive PHE (Pedersen et al., 2014).

Piletic et al. (2005) noted that paraprofessionals could identify and develop information to create behaviour management plans, since they know the student best. Other helpful roles paraprofessional could undertake are (a) providing learning cues and prompts, (b) modifying activities to match students' abilities, (c) providing students with reinforcement, and (d) assisting with student assessment. PHE teachers explained that it was easier to focus on the lesson when paraprofessionals acted as an effective extra set of hands and took responsibility for the SwD (Haycock & Smith, 2011). The roles that PHE teachers take on are also important for inclusion. As Lieberman (2007) suggested, the PHE teacher should take on the responsibility of providing paraprofessionals with clear directives,

which links to a notion that places the teacher in the role of "program director" (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002).

Though some paraprofessionals believed their roles to be fairly clear, the special education teachers said they had only been provided a list of paraprofessional responsibilities from the school district. Conversely, PHE teachers explained that paraprofessional roles had not been described to them, and thus, their roles were often unclear to the PHE teachers (Bryan et al., 2013). The role ambiguity of paraprofessionals has been discussed in the literature and has been linked to training needs (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016; Maher & Macbeth, 2014; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Davis et al. (2007) found that paraprofessionals were generally not well prepared to assist in PHE. Though 46 respondents (33%) believed themselves to be adequately trained to assist in PHE classes, only 16% of the total respondents indicated ever having received training specific to assisting in PHE. These findings are supported by Vickerman and Blundell (2012) who indicated that 63.3% of paraprofessionals had received training related to inclusion in GE, but only 5.5% of participants received training specific to PHE. The findings are supported by other studies that suggested paraprofessionals do not receiving enough PHE specific training (Davis et al., 2007; Maher, 2016).

Training Needs. Maher and Macbeth (2014) suggested that paraprofessionals were not receiving sufficient training. Fifty-eight percent of participants suggested that the schools at which they worked did not provide PHE-specific training for paraprofessionals. Furthermore, 52% of participants believed that the paraprofessionals in their schools were not adequately prepared to support SwD in PHE classes. Additionally, 93% of special educational needs coordinators did not have training specific to PHE. These findings indicated that coordinators may not prioritize PHE over other subjects in many schools and as a result there was a lack of PHE specific training (Maher &

Macbeth, 2014). Maher (2016) also found that paraprofessionals were not receiving enough PHE-specific training. The findings indicated that 88% of paraprofessionals reported receiving some kind of training related to GE. However, 91% of paraprofessionals had not received PHE-specific training, which included formal training (e.g., workshops) and informal training (e.g., in-service training delivered by a PHE teacher). Additionally, 71% of paraprofessionals believed they were not adequately equipped to support inclusion in PHE. This brings into question whether paraprofessionals are qualified to support inclusion in PHE (Maher, 2016).

It is important to note that when paraprofessionals received training, they generally reported that it was helpful. Paraprofessionals who received PHE-specific training felt that it helped their perceived confidence and competence in including SwD in PHE (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Paraprofessionals also reported that the training they received may only be helpful in certain situations (Maher, 2016). For example, the small amount of training that took place either focused on a specific sport (e.g., soccer) or a specific need (e.g., supporting a child with cerebral palsy). None of the training received by paraprofessionals synthesised these elements (e.g., support a student with cerebral palsy while playing soccer). Additionally, most of the training occurred over a one or two-day period (Maher, 2016). Though paraprofessionals may not be receiving sufficient training, the majority (90%) of paraprofessionals expressed a willingness to be trained and the most desired training areas included activity modifications, attributes of students with disabilities, and knowledge of motor development (Davis et al., 2007).

Furthermore, paraprofessionals reported a lack of opportunity as the most common answer for why they had not received training, and most paraprofessionals reported not being offered the opportunity to be trained for PHE-specific roles (Maher, 2016). Some PHE teachers expressed the belief that the school should be responsible for providing this training (i.e., a weekend workshop)

while others felt PHE teachers should train the paraprofessionals (Pedersen et al., 2014). However, it was suggested that training should be given by special education teachers who have training in PHE, or general or adapted PHE specialists because they have knowledge about PHE curriculum and standards, as well as activity modifications and behavioural guidelines specific to PHE (Lytle, Lieberman, & Aiello, 2007).

Paraprofessionals suggested that some PHE teachers may not have the training required to successfully implement inclusive PHE (Maher, 2016). It was suggested that teachers should plan their lessons to be more inclusive and suited for the various abilities of students (Maher, 2016). Maher (2016) also speculated that PHE teachers may be unable to plan differentiated lessons due to a lack of knowledge, which could be negated if PHE teachers were to consult paraprofessionals. However, 91% of paraprofessionals indicated not having input in making adaptations for lessons or activities. Thus, paraprofessionals were often informed about elements of a lesson but rarely influenced the lesson. Still, some PHE teachers did rely on the experience of paraprofessionals. Maher (2016) concluded that, though findings were mixed, there was a general power disparity between PHE teachers and paraprofessionals. PHE teachers play a large role in determining the extent to which a paraprofessional will shape or participate in a lesson.

Collaboration. Paraprofessional-PHE teacher collaboration and communication has also been explored in the literature (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Findings related to paraprofessional and PHE teacher collaboration were generally positive and, overall, PHE teachers felt that collaboration with paraprofessionals worked well (Pedersen et al., 2014). Vickerman and Blundell (2012) also found positive results. The majority (55.4%) of paraprofessionals perceived their working relationship with PHE teachers to be “very effective”, while 29.2% felt it was “fairly effective” and 10.8% responded neutrally.

However, relationships between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers were not always positive. One PHE teacher expressed the view that SwD were the responsibility of paraprofessionals and if a paraprofessional was not present, SwD would not have a place in PHE (Bryan et al., 2013). Conversely, one paraprofessional explained the difficulties in getting teachers to accept the SwD and value the knowledge he had regarding the students that he supported. Additionally, paraprofessionals who were left on their own to support a SwD reported that it negatively impacted their relationship with the PHE teacher (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Bryan et al. (2013) found that the PHE teacher and paraprofessional did not communicate on the days observed, further indicating difficulties in paraprofessional and PHE teacher collaboration. PHE teachers perceived that some paraprofessionals held negative views about PHE and, as a result, did not provide PHE teachers with the support they needed to include SwD in PHE (Haycock & Smith, 2011). Some PHE teachers felt that PHE was a lower priority subject for paraprofessionals and, when paraprofessionals were unwilling to collaborate, they were viewed more negatively.

Vickerman and Blundell (2012) revealed that paraprofessionals viewed their work more positively when they collaborated with PHE teachers (e.g., discussing learning outcomes). They felt more informed when collaborating with PHE teachers which resulted in better experiences for students. Paraprofessionals believed that collaborative planning was beneficial for everyone, and they felt as though they played an important role in PHE classes when PHE teachers worked in partnership with them. PHE teachers indicated that if paraprofessionals were not present, SwD would not be included in PHE because PHE teachers felt they did not have the means to properly adapt the curriculum (Pedersen et al., 2014). This finding indicated the importance of a team approach that could be facilitated by setting aside time for meetings between the PHE teacher and the

paraprofessional to discuss planning, establish norms, and express feelings related to job satisfaction, appreciation and support (Lieberman, 2007).

One PHE teacher, who participated in the Haycock and Smith (2011) study, explained that the inclusion of SwD in PHE was ameliorated when collaboration with paraprofessionals happened. It is important for paraprofessionals and PHE teachers to work collaboratively, especially in the planning stage of a lesson (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Another PHE teacher explained that lessons were more beneficial for SwD when they were planned in advance using information received from paraprofessionals (Haycock & Smith, 2011). PHE teachers also believed paraprofessionals to be more helpful when they collaborated with PHE teacher, were knowledgeable and enthusiastic about PHE, and were able and willing to engage in PHE (Haycock & Smith, 201). Paraprofessionals can also be helpful during lessons by communicating with the PHE teacher about (a) the lesson activities, (b) which student(s) he or she should be working with, (c) safety aspects of the lesson, or (d) boundaries and safety areas (Maher, 2016).

Pedersen et al. (2014) discussed strategies for PHE teachers to develop better working relationships with paraprofessionals. These strategies centered around increasing paraprofessionals' knowledge about (a) working collaboratively with PHE teachers and (b) providing support in PHE. PHE teachers suggested providing paraprofessionals with knowledge on collaborative teaching in PHE as one method to develop positive working relationships. Interestingly, PHE teachers reported that they also learned from paraprofessionals, indicating that collaboration is key in creating effective working relationships and may be an important factor in improving inclusive environments for SwD in PHE.

It was suggested that a key component of communication is active listening, which requires making eye contact when listening and signaling that one has understood what was said, which can be

accomplished with a simple nod of the head (Lieberman, 2007). Lytle, Lieberman and Aiello (2007) also presented ideas for PHE teachers to help paraprofessionals feel like an invaluable member of the educational team. Some of these ideas included giving the paraprofessional a locker so they can keep shoes and a water bottle at school, acknowledging the paraprofessional both in front of the class and in staff meetings so they feel as though they are part of the team, and asking for the paraprofessional's opinion on issues such as equipment for the students or modifications to the lessons. These findings are important to my proposed study because communication is one of the main relationship factors that will be explored.

Maher and Macbeth (2014) concluded from their exploration of PHE teacher's perspectives that a deeper examination from the perspectives of paraprofessionals is warranted to gain a more in-depth understanding of the inclusion of SwD in PHE. Many of the studies that examined inclusion in PHE gathered information on the perspectives of either paraprofessionals or PHE teachers. However, if the responsibility to provide quality education lies with the PHE teacher, the paraprofessional, and student (Lytle et al., 2007), then it is important to gain insight into the perspectives of multiple stakeholders.

Gaps in the Literature

Though the literature has begun to explore paraprofessional support in PHE, there remains many aspects yet to be uncovered (Lytle et al., 2007). Studies have mainly examined paraprofessional roles and responsibilities (Bryan et al., 2013), training needs of paraprofessionals and PHE teachers (Maher, 2016), and communication and collaboration (Haycock & Smith, 2011). Research has also uncovered that paraprofessionals undertake a wide variety of roles and responsibilities (Giangreco & Broer, 2005) and these roles may be unclear in the context of PHE (Bryan et al., 2013). Much of the literature has focused on paraprofessionals' roles and responsibilities from the perspective of one

stakeholder. However, it is important to gain an understanding of the roles of all adults working in the PHE classroom. The proposed study aims to expand on this issue by examining the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals and PHE teachers from both their perspectives.

A driving force behind this study is the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers. Past research has demonstrated that some paraprofessionals and PHE teachers had positive experiences working with each other (Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012) while other studies have found less positive results (Bryan et al., 2013). It is important to uncover more about the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers since paraprofessionals and PHE teachers reported feeling more positive about their work and inclusion when they collaborated (Haycock & Smith, 2012; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). This study furthered this understanding by gaining the perspectives of paraprofessionals and PHE teachers who were currently working as part of the same educational dyad. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

Chapter 3

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

Approach/design

This study followed a social constructivist worldview design in an attempt to explore how "individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). In doing so, the researcher searched for complexities in the data in an attempt to understand how participants developed subjective meaning of experiences rather than simply fitting information into a few theoretical categories. Constructivists hold the view that meaning is subjective and is created socially and historically, therefore, individuals gather information through their interactions with others (Creswell, 2014). Thus, constructivist researchers often study individual interactions and focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work (Creswell, 2007). Researchers, who follow this paradigm, must recognize that their own experience will influence their interpretations, and as a result, they must position themselves in the research by acknowledging their own beliefs (Creswell, 2014).

A phenomenological approach was used throughout this study to describe the meaning of the participants' lived experiences surrounding the particular phenomenon. Phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience, with a commitment to understanding the essence of peoples' lived experiences of the world (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The focus is on describing what all participants have in common (Creswell, 2007). It is the study of phenomena or, more specifically, the study of things as they present themselves and are then perceived by a person's consciousness (Allen-Collinson, 2016). More specifically, an interpretive phenomenological approach

was followed for this study. This approach concerns itself with examining a phenomenon as it appears while implicating the analyst in the making sense process (Smith et al., 2009). It is largely idiographic, concerning itself with the particular. Thus, the product is a detailed analysis that is committed to understanding how a particular phenomenon is experienced from the perspective of particular people in a particular context (Smith et al., 2009).

Allen-Collinson (2016) suggested that phenomenology is not simply about describing subjective experience but concerns itself with setting aside the everyday flow of subjectivity. It requires the researcher to set aside their "natural attitude" which can be achieved by bracketing one's prior knowledge (Allen-Collinson, 2016). Bracketing one's beliefs requires a researcher to take on a specific type of reflection where one must be willing to identify, question, and bracket his/her underlying assumptions and beliefs regarding the phenomenon being studied in order to view it in a new, fresh light (Smith et al., 2009). Thus, the researcher is making sense of the participants, who are making sense of the phenomenon in question (Smith et al., 2009)

The phenomenon that was explored for this study was the relationship between the working dyads of one paraprofessional and one PHE teacher. The primary investigator (PI) gathered data, in the form of questionnaires and interviews, to capture how the participants experienced working together to develop a composite description of "what they experienced and how they experienced it" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58).

Participants

University Research Ethics Board (REB-II) and local school board ethics approval were obtained prior to the recruitment of any participants. This study employed a purposeful sample of four participants who represented a specific subset of individuals from the population of interest in order to select information-rich cases for an in-depth study (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2015). Smith et al. (2009)

suggested that a sample of between three and six participants is a reasonable size for a graduate student conducting a Master's level IPA study. Participants were all employees from a school board in Montreal where the study was conducted. They were all over the age of 18 years and, therefore, able to consent to participate in the study. The PHE consultant, who worked for the local school board, assisted in the identification of potential participants based on the inclusion criteria explained below.

The study participants were recruited as dyads. The main inclusion criteria follow. Each dyad must have: (1) consisted of one PHE teacher and one paraprofessional who worked together in the PHE context, (2) had at least one year of experience working together prior to data gathering, (3) worked together with at least one child with a disability, and (4) been identified by the PHE consultant as an effective team.

Once ethics approval was obtained, the PHE consultant from the local school board was first contacted by the PI via email (see Appendix A). The consultant was asked to provide a list of potential participant names and the names of the schools at which they were employed. Next, each school principal was emailed to request their permission to access their school and employees (see Appendix B). After the principal agreed to the research being conducted at his or her school, the PHE consultant sent an email to the potential participants, on behalf of the PI (see Appendix C, D). Each email explained the purpose of the study and briefly described what was required from each participant who chose to participate in the study. The contact information of the PI was included in the initial email and interested people were asked to contact the PI directly. Upon contacting the PI, each potential participant was emailed to set up an interview time. The PI explained the study and participant rights thoroughly at the meeting before the participant signed the consent form and prior to the commencement of the interview.

Data Gathering Procedures

Demographic questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were the methods of data gathering for this study. First, a demographic questionnaire was utilized to gather personal background information about each participant such as age, gender, and level of education (see Appendix E). Next, a semi-structured interview was conducted because it allowed the participants to provide detailed, first-person accounts of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). The interviews gathered information regarding the research questions and allowed the PI to gain insights into the perspectives of the participants (Patton, 2015). Each participant underwent one in-depth, semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. This method enabled the participants to speak about their individual perspectives and experiences without restricting their answers with closed questions (Creswell, 2007). The PI developed rapport with each participant during the interview while also trying to remain neutral (Smith et al., 2009). Each interview was between 25-35 minutes in duration.

Interview protocols were developed by the PI and her supervisor who had experience with qualitative interviewing. The questions delved into the participants' experiences by asking them to reconstruct details of their experiences working together within the context of inclusive PHE (see Appendix F). The PI pilot tested the interview questions before gathering any other study data. The participants for the pilot interviews were one teacher and one support staff who had experience working with children with disabilities and other adult co-workers in the classroom. They were employees at a school that the PI is affiliated with, which is also part of the same school board as the study participants. Individual consent was obtained prior to the pilot interviews. These interviews allowed the PI to practice her interviewing skills and familiarize herself with the interview guide that was developed (Hatch, 2002; Creswell, 2007). The pilot interviews also served to ensure that the interviews were an appropriate length and allowed the PI to refine the interview guide as well as

reword any questions or section as need be (Turner, 2010). The pilot interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and de-identified for the PI and her supervisor to review. He provided necessary feedback and adjustments were made for future interviews.

The members of each dyad were interviewed in succession and the interviews were spaced no more than one week apart. Thus, both members of the dyad were interviewed within the same week. Once both members of the initial dyad were interviewed, the next dyad began the interview process. This procedure allowed the PI to focus her notes on one teaching team at a time. The paraprofessional was interviewed first and the PHE teacher was interviewed afterwards for the initial dyad interviewed. The order was reversed for the next dyad interviewed, with the PHE teacher being interviewed first and the paraprofessional being interviewed second. This procedure was performed in an attempt to place the voices of both the paraprofessionals and PHE teachers at an equal level of importance.

The PI arrived to each interview early to prepare and set up the space. The interviews took place in the schools at which the participants were employed. The procedures and aims of the study were described to the participants in detail and they were informed of the PI's roles over the entire course of the investigation. Each participant was reminded of his or her right to withdraw from the study at any point and for any reason before each interview began. They were also reminded of their right to confidentiality, which was of the utmost importance, since the participants disclosed information about themselves and their relationship with a colleague with whom they worked closely. Participants were assured that nothing they said would be shared with anyone, including their colleague who was also participating in the study, until all identifiable markers were removed from data transcriptions. The PI thanked each participant for his/her time at the end of each interview and asked if he/she had any questions or comments.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The gathered data consisted of participant answers from the demographic questionnaires and audio-recordings of the participant interviews. The audio-recordings from the interviews were transcribed verbatim for an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to analyze the various experiences of the participants (Smith et al., 2009). The transcriptions were kept in a secure location to protect both the data and the identities of the participants. Each participant was assigned a unique pseudonym to further protect each individual's identity during the transcription and research process.

Data analysis was recursive to account for the emergent characteristic of naturalistic inquiry (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, methods for making sense of the data began during the data gathering process. The main bulk of data analysis, as described below, did not begin until all data had been gathered. IPA was used to analyze the data. IPA was chosen because it is easily accessible and takes into account the experience of the PI (Smith et al., 2009). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) outlined six steps to IPA. The first was reading and re-reading, where the PI deeply immersed herself with the data by reading the first transcript multiple times until the content became very familiar. The second step was initial noting. During this step, the PI examined the "semantic content and language on an exploratory level" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 83). This step further ensured familiarity with the transcript.

The first two steps merged as the PI read the transcript and began inserting comments into the margins to produce a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments regarding the data (Smith et al., 2009). The PI commented on aspects related to the research question, as well as experiences that seemed important to each participant (Smith et al., 2009). During this step, the analysis was broken down into three discrete processes with distinct focuses. The first process focused on descriptive comments. These comments centered around describing what the participant had said. The next process focused on creating linguistic comments, which centered around exploring

the specific language used by the participant. The final process focused on conceptual comments, in which the PI engaged with the data on an inquisitive and conceptual level.

The third step was developing emergent themes. During this step the PI attempted to reduce the amount of detail in the notes produced in the previous step, while trying to maintain the complexity of what was said. The PI developed themes that represented the participants' initial words, while also considering her own interpretations. Themes were ordered chronologically as they appeared in the transcript (Smith et al., 2009). The fourth step was searching for connections across emergent themes and involved developing the themes and fitting them together. The PI attempted to draw the emergent themes together to produce a structure that pointed to all the important aspects of the participant's transcript. During the fifth step, moving to the next case, the PI continued on with the transcript of the next participant and repeated the process (steps one through four). She attempted to set aside comments made for the first transcript and not be influenced by them. The sixth and final step was looking for patterns across cases. The PI made connections across cases and determined which cases were most potent. Themes were reconfigured, relabeled and then were ultimately situated within the overall report (Smith et al., 2009).

Trustworthiness

It is important to introduce a level of rigor to a study to enable the voices of the participants to emerge in qualitative research (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Qualitative research relies on the insights, conceptual capabilities and integrity of the analyst (Patton, 2015). A first strategy to ensure trustworthiness was accomplished by conducting pilot interviews prior to any data collection. Zitomer and Goodwin (2014) identified six criteria and associated strategies for encouraging trustworthiness in adapted physical activity (APA) qualitative research designs. The first criterion is reflexivity that involves researcher self-awareness and opening the research up to scrutiny. For example, a strategy

for reflexivity is to disclose researcher bias. The second criterion is credibility that suggests the phenomenon represents the collective experiences of the participants or the perspective of the researcher. Strategies to encourage credibility may include triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, and thick descriptions. The next criterion, significant contribution, may be suggested if the research contributes to a greater understanding and clarification of the topic or generates new insights regarding a phenomenon. Strategies may include providing context and purpose for the study, evaluating the practical use of knowledge gained by the study, and encouraging further exploration of the topic.

The fourth criterion is ethics where research is carried out with morals and values. Examples of strategies that may be used to achieve ethics include receiving informed consent, collaborating with participants, and challenging the power dynamics between researcher and participant by maintaining an open and respectful relationship. Resonance, the fifth criterion, is the impact the study may have on the reader. It may be encouraged through thick descriptions, writing in an evocative manner, and describing the experiences of the participants in a way that is relevant to the findings and the reader. The sixth criterion is coherence, which may be achieved if a clear and concise epistemological framework is followed throughout the study. For example, the researcher may use strategies such as ensuring that the study accomplishes what it claims to be about and demonstrating interconnectedness between the literature review, methods and findings.

The criteria that encouraged trustworthiness for this study are coherence, reflexivity, credibility, and resonance (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). A high level of rigor was followed to encourage trustworthiness. These four criteria and strategies are now be discussed in more detail. First, a constructivist worldview design and interpretive phenomenological approach were applied consistently so that the study methods may be viewed as coherent (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Next,

researcher reflexivity was used as a second method to encourage trustworthiness since the researcher is an important data-gathering tool in qualitative research. It is "the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways that reveal deep connections between the writer and his or her subject" (Goodall, 2000, p. 137). Since axiological assumptions characterize qualitative research, it is important, as a researcher, to position myself in the study by admitting my underlying values and biases (Creswell, 2007). The following four paragraphs will discuss my relevant experience in an attempt to situate myself in the research, set aside my biases and inform readers of my point of view to allow the participants' voices to be heard (Patton, 2015).

This study centers around inclusive PHE by conducting an in-depth examination of PHE teachers and paraprofessional relationships, thus, my related experiences are now outlined. First, I completed my undergraduate degree in PHE, and therefore, this field knowledge played an important role while interviewing the participants because it allowed me to discuss various factors related to inclusive PHE contexts with the participants from an informed, educational standpoint. For example, I am aware of the aims and objectives of PHE. I have a working knowledge of adapted and inclusive PHE as well as an understanding of how educational teams work together. Additionally, I am currently an employee for the school board where I conducted the study interviews. I have worked as a PHE teacher and paraprofessional at many different schools in this school board. This experience gives me an insider understanding of how the school board operates, various cultural practices and the craft language used.

I also have experience working at a reverse-integration school for SwD where many paraprofessionals are employed and work alongside classroom teachers. The pupils who attend this school range from pre-kindergarten to secondary students and they have a wide range of disabilities. The most common disability for the students is a physical one that is often accompanied by secondary

disabilities (e.g., social, emotional or behavioural). In addition to the SwD who attend this school, several classes include some students without disabilities who are called reverse-integration students. The school employs teachers and support staff as well as occupational therapists, physiotherapists and préposé aux beneficiaries because of the nature of the impairments experienced by the SwD.

The knowledge I have obtained through my experiences allowed me to conduct interviews from an informed, educational perspective. However, the school where I am drawing my experience is not an inclusive school which could have influenced the way I view the working relationship between paraprofessionals and teachers. I have observed that paraprofessionals may be viewed as an integral part of the educational staff at this school, especially in the PHE class where many children need the additional support to complete physical tasks. For example, in special schools, the responsibility for teaching and learning may lie with all staff members taking on a multi-disciplinary approach, instead of teachers taking on the majority of responsibilities (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). PHE lessons may not be taught as effectively without extra assistance and, therefore, this specific school environment developed to be one that is very appreciative towards the staff. It was important to keep in mind that I had less experience with mainstream education while interviewing participants and analyzing and interpreting the data.

The strategies used to encourage reflexivity also involved writing memos throughout the study (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Hence, I wrote memos throughout the study about my underlying assumptions in order to have a clear point of reference (Patton, 2015). A critical friend further questioned my assumptions and thoughts throughout the process to understand my values and biases as a researcher since they could influence the findings of the study (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

Credibility, the third criterion, attempted to encourage trustworthiness through the use of thorough descriptions of the transcribed interviews (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). The interview guide

consisted of open-ended questions, which enabled the participants to give unrestricted answers. Prompts and probes were used to encourage the participants to share their experiences to the fullest extent (Creswell, 2007). Finally, thick descriptions were used as a strategy to encourage both credibility and resonance (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Resonance was also sought through the attempt to write evocatively and elicit interest by describing the experiences of the participants in a way that translates relevant knowledge to the reader.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and physical and health education (PHE) teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE. The study included a total of four participants who made up two dyads consisting of one PHE teacher and one paraprofessional. The dyads were selected from two separate schools within the same Montréal school board. A profile for each school is written below to provide context for the results that follow. The participants and their respective schools will be introduced and described within each profile. Please note that pseudonyms were provided for the names of the schools and participants in order to ensure confidentiality.

The first school, Midtown Elementary School, has existed in Montreal for 35 years. The student population at this school is overwhelmingly of Italian origin from middle class families. The school serves a population of students from kindergarten to grade six who live in the immediate area. The building has 36 classrooms to accommodate 750 students. The school facilities consist of a large gymnasium, library, resource room, teachers' room and administrative offices. The gymnasium is equipped with a rock-climbing wall and copious amounts of equipment. Midtown is located directly beside a large park that offers many recreational and sporting facilities. The school is an English institution but provides bilingual (French and English) services for students in kindergarten through grade six. Midtown has specialists for PHE, music, art and Italian. The school has a principal and vice principal, two secretaries, 48 teachers, three of whom work in the PHE department, one librarian, and 11 support staff. Additionally, Midtown employs a psychologist, a social worker, a speech pathologist, an occupational therapist, a spiritual animator, and a nurse, plus 13 lunch-time staff who work at the school on a part-time basis.

The two participants, who were interviewed from Midtown Elementary School, are Kara and Diana. Kara is a 40-year-old female who holds a degree in social work with a specialty in marriage counselling and a minor in criminal justice. She has 11 years of experience as a behaviour technician and has been employed at Midtown since 2008. She has worked with the same class for the past two years. Kara had a lot of experience working with people with disabilities and, as a result, had a strong message to share. There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child and Kara believed that this is true when teaching students with disabilities (SwD). She believed that it takes patient, strong, and devoted men and women to care for the safety and well-being of SwD. She truly believed in the importance of her work as she helped empower and build resilience in the students that she worked with.

Diana, also female, is 42 years old and has 20 years of experience working as a PHE teacher. She has been employed as a PHE teacher at Midtown for seven years and is one of three PHE teachers currently employed at this school. Diana has a diplôme d'études collegiales in health sciences and a Bachelor of Education in PHE. Her experience working with students with disabilities was limited to the integrated and segregated classes she has taught at school. However, despite her limited experience, she enjoyed working with SwD. Her experience and training as a PHE teacher allowed her to create activities and progressions for the students to optimize their learning. Diana is a passionate and hardworking PHE teacher. The dyad had two years of experience working together.

The other two study participants were from Smallville Elementary School. It opened in 1925 and, for decades, served the affluent neighborhood that directly surrounds it. However, Smallville has evolved since and is now home to students from various cultural, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds that, in turn, classifies it as an inner-city school. Most often, Montréal public schools serve students who live within the same borough as the school. However, Smallville is

unusual because the student population comes from a larger geographic area. The school accommodates over 215 students and it has approximately 15 classrooms, a library, a modern computer lab, a gymnasium and a large school yard and jungle gym. The Smallville gymnasium is also fortunate enough to have a rock-climbing wall. Though both schools have rock climbing walls, this is not something that is usual of elementary schools.

Smallville has one principal and one staff administrator who is also the only PHE teacher at the school. There are 15 additional teachers employed at the school, four special education teachers, a psychologist, a speech language pathologist, an occupational therapist, a social worker, a school nurse, 11 support staff, three daycare monitors and two lunch monitors. Smallville was unique in that it prided itself on incorporating an inclusive school environment. The school was committed to following a model of inclusion that best met the needs of all its students. Thus, there are many SwD who were included into the general student population. In fact, the school's mission centers largely around including students of all needs, both those who struggle to meet the curriculum requirements and those who excel at meeting the requirements. In doing so, Smallville follows an educational model based on the philosophy of inclusion while embracing diverse backgrounds in a multicultural environment.

The two participants employed at Smallville are Logan and Steve. Logan, a 45-year-old male, has been employed at Smallville for 12 years. He worked as a paraprofessional for 15-20 years and has a degree in early childhood education. He was initially hired part-time but his hours were increased within the last five years. He now works full-time in the gymnasium with Steve. This type of full-time employment is unique to Smallville and, to my knowledge, no other school employed a paraprofessional full-time in the gym at the time of the study. Logan has enjoyed working with SwD since he was young and his experience was mainly within camp and school settings. In fact, Logan

ran his own basketball camp every summer. He considered basketball to be his speciality as he has a wide breadth of knowledge surrounding the sport and played professional basketball when he was younger. The PHE teacher, Steve, is 38 years old, has a Bachelor of Education in PHE and is currently working on a master's degree in leadership and administration. He has 10 years of experience teaching PHE and has worked as the only PHE teacher at this school for five years. He also worked as the staff assistant at this school which required him to undertake some administrative duties. Steve explained his experience working with SwD was minimal before working at Smallville. Both men have similar personalities as they both could be described as easy-going people who like to have fun. However, it was clear that they both believe in and care deeply about their work and students. The dyad had five years of experience working together.

Each participant was interviewed once and interviews lasted between 25 – 35 minutes in length. The audio-recordings from each interview were transcribed verbatim yielding 33 pages of text. The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was initially performed on each transcript at an individual level. Next, a within-dyad analysis was performed to search for similarities and differences within each dyad. Finally, a cross-dyad analysis was performed to compare cases across dyads. A total of five themes emerged: (1) *School environment*, (2) *Views on inclusion*, (3) *Student goals/modifications*, (4) *Communication*, and (5) *Collaboration*.

Theme 1: School Environment

The first theme was labeled as *"School Environment"* because the participants shared information about the school at which they worked. This theme included four lower order themes: *(1) Staff, (2) Classes and students, (3) Activities offered and extra-curriculars,* and *(4) Equipment.*

The first lower order theme was called *Staff*. The participants expressed their views about their principal and other staff members from their current and previous schools for this theme. All four

participants spoke about the important role their principal played in supporting and improving their PHE programs. The participants explained that the principal led the staff and the school by outlining expectations and ensuring that everyone was involved: "I mean, the principal, from the principal, that's where it started because he always, no matter what we're doing here, he always tries to get everyone involved" (Logan). Principals were also responsible for providing the staff with their schedules: "The principal can tell you, 'well I want you to be specific in this class. I want you to be with Diana from this hour to this hour'" (Kara). It was evident that the participants believed their principals to be instrumental in the success of the PHE programs. "The principal is very supportive of Phys. Ed., so we work quite a bit with him as well in planning and implementing different activities and different strategies and stuff" (Steve).

It appeared as though having the support of a strong principal could be very beneficial to teachers and paraprofessionals.

> We have a very strict, very good principal, and I think she probably lays down what her expectations are, and I think she probably tells them *(the paraprofessionals)* that they need to be involved in every aspect with the kids. (Diana)

Diana also spoke about the amount of equipment she was able to order because of her principal's support. The hierarchy of a school dictates that many requests must pass through the principal, thus, having his or her support allows teachers to order equipment, plan schools trips, extra-curricular activities, and more. For example, both schools have rock-climbing walls, something that would not be possible without the support of the principal. Thus, the administrative support was evident at both schools. Additionally, I was amazed by the amount of equipment available to the PHE department at Midtown. I have experienced substitute teaching in many other schools at the same school board and have yet to see a school fortunate enough to have the amount of equipment that Midtown does. In my experience, PHE teachers often struggle to gain the funding necessary for equipment, school trips and

other extra-curriculars because not all principals value PHE over other subjects. However, at both schools this did not seem to be a problem. In fact, it seemed that PHE at these schools may be prioritized over other subjects.

The participants also mentioned their experiences working with other staff members. Both PHE teachers had experience working as the only PHE teacher at a school and both had worked at schools with multiple PHE teachers. Steve explained that it is often easier to work as the sole PHE teacher in a school.

> Sometimes at previous schools, sometimes it's a challenge working with numerous Phys. Ed. teachers. And it's, in terms of planning and making changes, making adjustments. Everyone has their style I guess, and has their ideas, so sometimes when you have to work with several other teachers, you're bound a little bit by what the group wants to do versus how you foresee things going. Whereas here, because I'm the only Phys. Ed. teacher, we kind of have free reign a little bit to dictate how the program goes. (Steve)

Diana, who worked at a school with two other PHE teachers, discussed similar experiences: "I came from a school where I was the only Phys. Ed. teacher. So, you did what you wanted to do. Here, we're three Phys. Ed. teachers. And if you don't have a team player, it's really hard". These quotes demonstrate the difficulties in trying to navigate working with multiple PHE teachers. They suggest that being the only PHE teacher provided more freedom to plan, execute lessons and make other important decisions about the PHE program. Through my various work experiences as a pre-service and in-service teacher, I worked in schools with many PHE teachers and only one PHE teacher. Not surprisingly, it is easier to run a PHE program as the sole PHE teacher. Working with multiple PHE teachers becomes more difficult as teachers are often required to coordinate class schedules, share the gymnasium and collaborate to run intramurals and extra-curricular activities. PHE teachers who team-teach must additionally collaborate to plan lessons, evaluate students, and balance who will lead and assist during each class.

The second lower order theme, named *Students and classes*, discussed aspects about the classes and students that the participants taught. They spoke about the nature of the students in their classes and their varying abilities and skill levels. For example, each participant conversed about the students they taught and types of disabilities present in their PHE classes. They commented on the students' diagnoses and disabilities: "You'll get a kid who is on the spectrum but also has ADHD" (Diana). They also discussed some of the challenges that may come along with their students' disabilities: "I have a particular student that can't deal with the noise" (Kara). There also seemed to be a wide range of disabilities physically present in the classes, though the most common disability reported was autism.

> We have a lot of autism, uh, I couldn't tell you the exact number but at least four or five per class of about 20 students. Um, we've got a lot of behaviour, but a lot of autism within the school, and some learning disabilities as well. (Steve)

Both schools had quite a few SwD included in regular PHE classes: "We have a lot of kids that are fully included in classes" (Diana). There appeared to be a higher than usual number of SwD included in regular classes at Smallville. Steve suggested that SwD may not be viewed as different because of the increased number of these students included in each class.

> I think because a high percent of our population is, uh, has special needs, or has needs. So, there's no one that's drastically different, I guess. Um, so, it's fairly small classes but there are a lot of needs in general. (Steve)

Additionally, the participants mentioned the varying skill levels of the students in their classes: "Even in one class I can have one kid who's very physically agile and another one who, literally, starts out the year not being able to step over a hurdle" (Diana). This may be true of many PHE classes: "There's always some kids that are ahead and some that are back" (Logan). These statements resonated strongly with me as I have also experienced teaching classes with students of varying skill levels. In my experience, this varying skill level is true of both students with and without disabilities,

indicating that teachers should be constantly adapting and modifying their lessons, regardless of whether they are teaching SwD or not.

The third lower order theme, *Activities offered and extra-curriculars,* was discussed by the participants from Smallville only because they described activities such as the unique health program that they ran together in the mornings: "We have about 80 students in the gym and it's all fitness based. So, the students, kind of, come in two days a week. So, that's an hour of Phys. Ed. a week that they wouldn't normally have" (Steve). Smallville offers a number of other activities as well: "We do a lot of different things in here. So, we might, like, sometimes we go skiing. We go sledding, like we do a lot of different things. Walking the kids down to the park, you know" (Logan). These programs are not typical of all schools as they require a lot of extra work on the part of the teachers and paraprofessionals: "Logan and I have planned lots of things, lots of activities, I run a big outdoor Ed. program" (Steve). Though many elementary school PHE programs run intramurals and extra-curriculars, in my experience, few have the means to go skiing and do the other activities that Smallville offers. For example, a group of students were able to go on a field trip to a place similar to Arbraska, which is an obstacle course in the forest. A trip, such as this, requires funding for a school bus and the price of admission for each child. Though other schools may also offer similar class trips, it seemed as though Smallville provided more activities and extra-curriculars than the average school.

The final lower order theme is named *Equipment* and was discussed by only the participants who worked at Midtown because the school principal supported Diana in ordering materials and equipment to help improve her lessons: "The amount of stuff she *(Diana)* orders for them. She goes from scooters to helmets to, um, the balls. She goes for ping pong tables … Trampolines" (Kara). Having all this equipment allowed Diana and Kara to work on fundamental movement skills in new and interesting ways.

> My first term is a lot of hurdles. It's a lot of obstacle course kind of things. Um, getting them to climb, getting them to use different kinds of steps, lateral steps, forward steps, backward steps, with poly spots, with arrows. So, I'll set up a whole course and I try to make it different every time. (Diana)

Though some schools are lucky enough to have a plethora of equipment, many other schools are not as fortunate. Some schools, where I have worked, lacked equipment and made it difficult to plan age-appropriate lessons that are safe for all students. For example, I once taught a lesson where the focus was to improve students' throwing accuracy. However, the school did not have pins and, thus, the PHE teachers were required to use make-shift pins out of large cans. Though this method worked, it was not ideal and presented safety risks as the cans were metal and not well suited for a PHE class with elementary school aged students. Equipment is important for PHE teachers to develop educational, motivating, and safe lessons but it becomes particularly important when trying to modify and adapt a lesson to meet the students' various needs.

Theme 2: Views on Inclusion

The second theme was labeled "Views on *Inclusion"* since each participant spoke about their views and experiences surrounding the subject. The participants acknowledged the benefits and challenges to inclusive education throughout this theme. Thus, the theme is comprised of two lower order themes: (1) *Challenges of inclusion* and (2) *Benefits of inclusion*. Within each section, some participants also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of segregation respectively.

The first lower order theme, *Challenges of inclusion,* explored the challenges of inclusion and benefits of segregation. Three of the four participants spoke about the challenges they had experienced while working in inclusive classroom environments.

> I just find that basically, especially with the kids that we're dealing with nowadays, it's so difficult at times to, like, no matter if they're experiencing difficulties or not, just to have them being able to be included in our, like, in everything that's being offered in the school. (Logan)

> For kids with autism, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, quite honestly. I have some in my regular classes and I have to completely modify things for them. Sometimes they just go off and do their own little thing and I don't always, I won't force them. Like, I'll try to get them to do what the rest of the kids are doing, but if they're just not capable, then as long as they are working on something and moving, then I'm ok with it. (Diana)

It appeared that it may be difficult for SwD to follow the pace and content of a lesson with the rest of class. Activities provided for SwD often required modifications. SwD may not be included if teachers and paraprofessionals lack the knowledge and resources required to do so.

> Certain places that I've worked before, basically they had, like, if they can or cannot cope with whatever's being taught to them, then they basically exclude them from, you know, from whatever activity, or whatever work was being handed out at the time. (Logan)

Logan expressed the challenges he experienced in previous work environments where SwD were excluded because teachers believed they were unable to participate with the rest of class. These challenges may be true for many schools as I have also worked with PHE teachers who seemed to lack the knowledge and means to include SwD in their lessons. As a student teacher, I was mentored by cooperating teachers who expressed the difficulties they experienced trying to include SwD in their PHE classes. They admitted that they simply did not know how to include SwD. Thus, the difficulties with inclusion may often come from a lack of knowledge.

Furthermore, both PHE teachers discussed the benefit of having SwD educated in segregated classrooms.

> Sometimes I feel that some of the students, they would almost be better served in a regular, uh, not an inclusive classroom. That they would get more one on one, more assistance, more (pause) progress maybe a little further. (Steve)

> They *(SwD)* do really well in the learning classes. Which is, we've got 6 or 7 students, they're all kids who are, I think diagnosed, or as having some form of autism. And then, you know, my approach to teaching them is very different. And they do so well, we see so much progress. It's a lot of fun. (Diana)

The PHE teachers indicated that SwD may progress faster in a segregated learning environment because they may receive more individual attention. Hence, the majority of participants expressed the

view that inclusion can be challenging and both PHE teachers experienced benefits to segregation. The school, where I perform substitute teaching work most often, is primarily for SwD, and thus, I have experienced first-hand the benefits of educating SwD in a segregated environment. This school has very small class sizes that average 8-10 students and many paraprofessionals are employed to assist. It is possible that this environment allows the teachers and paraprofessionals to help students to progress faster than they would in an inclusive classroom. However, Kara, the paraprofessional from Midtown, voiced a different opinion: "I know for some people they look at it *(inclusion)* as a disadvantage but for me it is a plus and I'm able to be part of this" (Kara). She acknowledged that some people may view inclusion as a challenge but she believed the benefits outweigh the challenges.

The second lower order theme was called the *Benefits of inclusion* because all four participants recognized the various benefits of inclusive education. One participant described her views on inclusion: "Inclusive education for me, in general, is leaving no child behind. That everyone is special, unique in their own way and then that they need to be fit into the environment that they are in" (Kara). In saying that students should be "fit into the environment", Kara was expressing her belief that it was the educator's responsibility to ensure that children's needs are met so that all students can be taught in the same environment. Overall, the participants had positive views regarding inclusion.

> I think there's a lot of benefit to having kids included. I'm not sure who it benefits more. Whether it's the student with the, you know, with the learning, well with autism, or if it's the student who just learns to be a little bit more caring about those types of students. (Diana)

Some participants went into more detail, explaining why they believed inclusion to be important: "They (*SwD)* are part of the community. They feel they belong. They feel accepted in spite of their challenges, for me it's a plus" (Kara). One participant commented on the experience she had with her

own children. She observed that having contact with SwD benefitted her daughter and hinted at the downfalls to segregation.

> I also have my kids, who are in school in the French system, where there isn't much inclusion. So, I find the kids in the French, where they aren't included, um, my daughter didn't get that exposure, and so when she would come here and she would get to work with our learning class; she loved it. Um, so I think there's a big benefit there. (Diana)

Although participants believed inclusion to be beneficial to students without disabilities, they also believed SwD could benefit from being taught in an inclusive environment.

> So that they learn a little bit by seeing the other students … just in that setting they can learn a little bit faster, a little bit more, and they get a bit of the social side of it as well. But we do see some that progress faster because they are able to see the modeling from other students as well. (Steve)

Thus, presenting the opportunity for SwD to learn from their age-matched peers was one perceived benefit of inclusive learning environments. The participants also believed in inclusion because they didn't want students to feel excluded.

> You don't want to see kids left out. And I noticed it from other places where kids just, you know, you're trying to focus on the ones that might be strong in doing certain things, and then, others get left out and are sitting on the sides. You can see that, that look on their face, you know, like, they want to be involved but they just don't know how to do certain things. (Logan)

Logan emphasized the belief that often SwD were not included in regular PHE classes because lessons were developed and taught for students with higher abilities and skill levels. Thus, SwD may not be given the tools necessary to successfully participate. Finally, it is essential to recognize the strong view one participant had in favour of inclusion: "The message should go out there that, um, never try to take away inclusive education, especially for the special needs students" (Kara). I was encouraged to hear Kara speak in this way as I believe that inclusive education should never be taken away from students without disabilities because of its many benefits. It is my opinion that a teacher's responsibility is to prepare students for life after school and not only to teach subject matter. Students

can be taught life values such as respect, ethics and fairness by including every person in the school system. I believe that inclusive education could play a large role in forging societies full of dedicated, caring and appreciative people.

Theme 3: Student goals and Modifications

The third theme was named *"Student goals and modifications"* because participants discussed the various goals that they had set for their students. Some PHE class adaptations and modifications were also talked about. Hence, this theme was comprised of two lower order themes: (1) *Student goals* and (2) *Modifications*.

The first lower order theme was labeled *Student goals* since participants spoke about the goals they had set for their students. Three participants discussed seven different goals, ranging from improving physical skills to helping students gain confidence and teaching life skills. The first goal, discussed by Kara, Logan, and Diana, was developing the students' physical skills: "I want them to develop their physical skills in some way" (Diana). Kara seconded this goal and further explained: "In the beginning, our kids, they were very low function, to now, actually functioning. This is unbelievable" (Kara). It was encouraging to hear this dyad converse about the students achieving their goals. Logan also spoke about physical goals: "If they are having problems, maybe getting up the stairs, we find something, some exercise in the gym for them to do to improve whatever difficulties they are having" (Logan). It is not surprising that improving physical skills was one of the participants' goals since they work in a PHE setting where physical skills regularly come into play.

The next goal that participants discussed was improving students' confidence and self-esteem. This goal was discussed by Diana and Logan. Logan explained that he believed in: "Building their self-motivation, self-esteem, and just making them feel a part of everything that's happening in this school". He felt these skills were valuable in helping build an inclusive classroom environment. Diana

also spoke about improving student's confidence and offered an example of how she helped her students reach this goal:

> Getting them confident, yeah, like this year I had a little girl who's just scared of everything. No, no, no, no, no, and then, you know, just encouragement, letting her hold my hand, putting my hand on her back as she's climbing over the ladder, and now she does it on her own. (Diana)

It is not surprising that participants spoke about confidence as a goal. In my experience as both a teacher and an athlete, confidence plays a major role not only in a person's ability to participate in sports and recreation but also in their proficiency to do so. It is important for teachers to build confidence in students because it plays a valuable role in facilitating the inclusion of SwD in PHE and enabling participation in various activities inside and outside of school.

The third goal, discussed by Diana and Logan, was introducing students to activities to help them discover one they enjoy and encourage them to be healthy and active throughout their lifetimes. One important goal was: "To try to expose these kids to as many activities and sports as I can so that, somewhere along the line, they get passionate about something that they want to do for the rest of their life" (Diana). This goal aligns with the Québec curriculum as the third competency taught is "to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle" (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). Logan felt strongly about this goal as well, explaining the importance of teaching children to be active from a young age:

> Just keep them going. Because right now, if they never started, like, I think this is the level where it starts. If they don't get it here, I think it's just worse, like, the longer they wait to get involved, it's just going to get worse. (Logan)

He indicated that it may be more difficult to become involved in sports and recreational activities at an older age. Thus, he felt it was important to introduce students to activities and help them develop the skills necessary to continue participating in sports after leaving Smallville. Diana also mentioned the importance of teaching life skills that complement the activities taught. For example, she taught activity skills for students to utilize outside of school:

> I wanted to start to teach them things they could use outside in the summer, in a park, or in the winter. I want them to be comfortable with these things. A lot of them, their parents are scared to take them out, um, because they're runners or, you know. So, I want to expose them, to get them comfortable with these things. (Diana)

The life skills she teaches included safety rules that may be applied during activity participation: "The rule is, because I want them to learn that if you are going to ride a scooter or a bicycle, you have to wear a helmet, it's safety" (Diana).

The fourth and fifth goals, improving student focus and unblocking the students, were discussed by Kara. She spoke about improving students' ability to focus: "I want them to be more focused. I want them to be more alert". She also expressed the importance of unblocking students: "We want to empower, we're pushing them, we're unblocking, uh, we're making them explore new things, like very adventurous". She clarified what she meant by the word "unblock":

> To unblock the students, meaning helping them to overcome obstacles that seem to be in their way. Redirect them to stay on task and to help them to be able to complete what has been presented. Also, to help them face any new and unusual challenges at hand. (Kara)

Kara believed in empowering and building resilience in her students and it was clear from her goals that she cared deeply about her students and their success.

The sixth goal involved encouraging students to be active and the seventh goal was improving student behaviour in the gym and classroom. Both goals were discussed by Logan. He spoke about increasing students' activity levels, especially when they were unable to go outside:

> Based on what's happening outside, if they are not allowed to go outside, because if it's too cold or it's raining or something, they're not allowed to go outside. So, we try to find more activities to let them burn a lot more energy because they're not getting to go outside, right? So, if they are inside, we would be trying to get them moving a lot more, rather than slower sports or games that might, you know, just let them burn off a bit more energy if they don't have the chance to be outside. (Logan)

Logan indicated that goals may differ slightly depending on the weather. He perceived the goal of increasing students' activity levels to be more important when students were not able to expend

energy while outside during recess and lunch hours. He also suggested sport activities offered in the gymnasium could help modify some students' behaviour and encourage them to achieve their behaviour goals:

> A lot of kids that we see sometimes as having problems, they're the ones in the lunch time sports program. So, we try to use the lunch time sports program as a means, as a way of getting them to, even behave better upstairs, not even just in the gym class. If they are not behaving the way they should upstairs in the other classes, we try to use, you know, "Ok, you might not be able to come back here" … And then, it does work. And we found that a lot, because of them loving to come here so much, it just, like, you don't want to stop them from doing it, but just by putting it in their head, that they might be losing out, it changes them a bit. Like, you go up there and you hear, like, some of the teachers will tell you, like, "today, today he was really good". And it's not every day, and like, we keep telling the kids, like nothing happens overnight. Everything is progress, just show us that you are working towards it. (Logan)

Though he did not want to take the time to be active away from the students, he also recognized that this consequence can serve as an effective behaviour management tool. Additionally, Logan recognized the importance of students working towards their goals by acknowledging that improvement is a process that takes time. In my experience, removing something a student enjoys can serve as an effective tool in improving student behaviour, not only for that student, but for other students as well. However, I believe there must be a balance between enabling children to be active because of the many health benefits and taking an activity away as a form of punishment. Please note Logan spoke about a punishment that involved taking away extra physical activity time. This consequence is different than taking away activity time within a PHE lesson. I believe it should only be done in very short segments, such as sitting a child out for one or two minutes. I believe these consequences may be effective but should be used with caution.

The second lower order theme, *Modifications*, was discussed by the Smallville participants. Logan and Steve communicated about how they adjusted and modified lessons to meet students' needs. It was common practice to adjust activities based on the lesson and student needs: "If we see

it's working, we continue with it, and if not then we try to find something else to replace it with; that's similar, you know, so we're just changing it a bit" (Logan). Adjustments were also made for individual or small groups of students.

> So, we might adjust some of it for some of them. Or vice versa, if there's someone that's a little more ahead of the whole group, we would make stuff a little bit more challenging for someone. So sometimes it's more adjusting for the top end than ones that are struggling a little bit more. (Steve)

Thus, the lessons were built from the bottom-up: "We start low and then kind of adjust from there" (Steve). Plans were created for the lowest skill level and the difficulty was increased by including progressions for the children who were able to complete the initial task with ease. Activities were also developed from one class to the next:

> Basically, we would try to teach them the basics of each activity, like each sport, whatever it is that we are teaching them. If we do it, we might work on passing today, then the next class we are going to work on running and passing. (Logan)

Teaching in this way helps students learn basic skills and then build on them. This type of instruction maximizes student success since students do not progress to the more challenging task until they have completed the initial task.

Thus, Logan and Steve instructed their PHE classes through various teaching techniques, such as progressions, and they adjusted the lessons as need be. Furthermore, they implemented many modifications into their teaching. Logan spoke extensively about these modifications and explained how it helped the students:

> If we are playing a game of soccer. Like, for example, we have some rules that we added because, if you go out and watch a regular soccer game, they are going to start by just passing the ball, passing and running and kicking. So, basically what we do now to get everybody involved in the game is, when you pass the ball to someone, then they have to stop, basically stop the ball and they have about, maybe three seconds where they have the ball to themselves. As soon as they touch it, they have three seconds to make a pass. So as soon you touch the ball the next person has to stay away from you and give you a chance to pass the ball instead of it being an up and down thing all the time. (Logan)

Logan further explained that these types of rules were implemented in other sports and activities as well. It seemed as though Logan had learned these techniques while working at Smallville as he indicated that he had not experienced teaching in this way elsewhere. He also appeared to be impressed with how well the techniques worked. He felt strongly about the benefit of these added rules and expressed the desire for other places to begin implementing them as well:

> Honestly, I wish a lot of places, like, schools and even recreation would adapt stuff like that because it does help the kids, and they feel so much involvement. And when they, they're able to catch a ball and ok, be able to do something with it rather than someone coming up and could take it away from them … It makes a big difference. (Logan)

In addition to benefitting those students who struggle with activities, Logan felt that the stronger students also enjoyed the modifications: "Even the ones that usually, you know, are good at everything, like, they enjoy it also. They are like, 'Ok, ok, I get more room also', so it's working on both sides". I have experienced many of the modifications that Logan spoke about in action and have observed the difference they can make in teaching activities. Often, children are able to perform skills in isolation but then struggle in a game situation. As Logan mentioned, slowing the game down affords all students more time during the game to, for example, use the proper technique, or make the best decision. These modifications help to promote an inclusive classroom environment and are important because they contribute to student learning and success.

Theme 4: Communication

The fourth theme was labeled "*Communication*" because all participants spoke about the various methods they used to communicate. Each dyad had developed a unique way of communicating based on their needs, and thus, the similarities and differences between the dyads were evident in this theme. The participants revealed which methods of communication worked best for them throughout this theme. Hence, this theme consisted of four lower order themes based on

those methods: *Verbal communication, Non-verbal communication, Communication topics,* and *Frequency, duration and location of communication.*

The first lower order theme was named *Verbal communication* because all participants mentioned that they communicated verbally by talking with one another: "We do, like, one on one, we speak" (Kara), "We talk all the time" (Diana), "Like just direct conversation" (Steve). It was evident that most verbal communication occurred in person, however, Logan also mentioned that he and Steve spoke on the phone: "Once and a while we call each other". The participants' comments about verbal communication were brief, possibly because the topic seemed straight forward: "It's so hard to talk about because it's so simple. We're just able to, if there's something, we're able to talk about it" (Logan). It was clear that speaking to one another was the preferred communication method for all participants: "Speaking is the number one thing, being able to speak to one another" (Kara), "We talk to each other a lot, and it's the talking that's number one" (Logan). It is not surprising that participants preferred to communicate verbally since this form of communication is quick, efficient, and is found throughout many human interactions.

The second lower order theme was labeled *Non-verbal communication*. All four participants indicated that they used non-verbal methods of communication in addition to speaking to each other. Steve and Kara spoke very briefly about communicating through writing, though neither Logan nor Diana mentioned this method. Kara explained that she sent Diana messages to either her phone or email:

> I would send her a message, or sometimes I would send her a photo, like a video of, like (pause). I'll record something, either they were doing an activity that they were refusing and now they're cooperating. And I'll say, "Here you see, we have success." (Kara)

Though Steve also mentioned that he communicated with Logan through writing, his comment was very brief. Hence, I suspect that Kara and Diana may have communicated through writing more

frequently than Logan and Steve. Since Kara and Diana are only together for a maximum of one period per day, it logically follows that they communicated more through methods such as texting or emailing. Conversely, Steve and Logan may have had less use for these techniques because their schedules dictated that they remained together in the gymnasium all day and, as a result, were able to use more effective methods, such as verbal communication.

The participants also utilized other methods of non-verbal communication. For example, both dyads indicated that they were able to communicate by simply looking at each other: "Even during, stuff is happening, like, sometimes it's not even verbal. We might just look at each other and then we know, ok, ok, this is done. Let's just change this up. Let's just do something else" (Logan). Logan indicated through this quote that he and Steve could exchange a look and know that it is time to make a change or continue to the next activity. He further explained how he and Steve understood what the look, they gave each other, signified.

> Because from watching them play you know, you see if something is working or it's not working. And then if we see, like, they're having problems understanding something that we are teaching them, you know, we, uh, "what's going on here", then, ok, time to do something else right now. (Logan)

Thus, it seemed as though they were able to understand each other without uttering words based on the context of the lesson. It is possible that being able to communicate without words is a result from working together for numerous years and an indication that the members of this dyad are very familiar with each other.

The dyad from Midtown also indicated they were able to communicate without speaking. Diana and Kara mentioned using non-verbal methods, such as looking at or signaling each other:

> It's probably a look. We probably give each other a look, or you know, for sure if I see something that I get excited about I'll point, or I'll say, "Hey Kara" and I'll point. So yeah for sure I use hand gestures. (Diana)

Kara further explained that they communicated non-verbally to avoid triggering negative student behaviours:

> Sometimes I make eye contact, because we don't speak, like I might point to someone, to not trigger a behaviour. Sometimes I would clap, and she would turn around and she would understand that someone is doing something they're not supposed to. Sometimes I'll do a wave, like you know, kind of (waves), "hey coucou", or something like that. (Kara)

Logan and Steve also mentioned that they may signal each other while they teach: "Like we kind of signal each other. So, maybe not having that direct conversation in class, but kind of help each other report to someone who might need a little extra help" (Steve). This dyad also used non-verbal communication in order to encourage the lesson to run smoothly:

> Because, certain things, when it's happening, you don't want the kids to really see that you were, ok this is not really working … but basically, we're doing it for them, but we don't really have to let them know, like, this is what's happening, make a scene with it, you know. (Logan).

The third lower order theme was named *Communication topics* since the participants discussed the various topics they spoke about. For example, Diana, Kara, and Logan all mentioned that they conversed with their teaching partner about the students. They discussed numerous topics that related to their students. For example, Kara relayed messages to Diana about how the students were feeling: "I would say, 'oh, so and so is not having a good day, so that's why he's not more engaged in the activity'". The participants considered the areas where their students needed to improve: "We talk about the kids, like, what they need to improve and things like that" (Logan). They also spoke about challenges the students may face.

> I might speak about a challenge that the student is facing. Um, let's say that an activity is put forward for them to do and I might say, "well, from looking at what the experience they had from that first lesson, I find that it was more difficult for, for example for A, compared to B." And I would say, "Well, what do you think if we do it this way?" (Kara)

It was clear to me that the participants communicated about their students in order to help the students improve and overcome challenges. Diana explained that overcoming challenges such as hygiene and appropriate PHE dress were frequently discussed topics at Midtown:

> Sometimes we talk about, like, if there's a hygiene issue. Sometimes we talk about if we should ask their teacher to talk to the parent about a clothing issue. You know, if we have a kid with his pants so low his butt was showing, like they keep falling down, or a kid with not the right, well, inappropriate shoes for Phys. Ed., or girls in dresses. But, um, hygiene comes up quite a bit with these kids. Um, sometimes it's certain behaviours they're doing that we don't want, like putting their hands in their pants. So, yeah, stuff like that. (Diana)

Thus, the participants frequently communicated about their students and there was a wide variety of topics discussed regarding the students.

It appeared as though the paraprofessionals and PHE teachers from both schools conversed about many topics other than the students. Logan indicated that there were many topics he and Steve spoke about: "We're just able to, if there's something, we're able to talk about it. Like, no matter what it is, you know". For example, one topic Steve and Logan might discuss are the lesson plans: "We discuss beforehand what we are going to plan each class" (Steve). Kara and Diana did not discuss lesson plans, most likely because they did not have time together dedicated to planning. However, they also spoke about a wide-range of topics: "We communicate whenever it's necessary. Sometimes to indicate transitions, rotations, break times, um, music, or when one-on-one is required. Or water, bathroom, and those type of things. But they're short, if needed, and here and there" (Kara). Though there were many topics that may have been discussed, the participants communicated when they needed to.

Kara also expressed that she and Diana communicated their feelings and other tasks that may seem insignificant:

> We communicate, you know, happiness, disappointment, we communicate. If she's feeling like something is not working well, she will ask me and I would say, "it's nothing personal", I say "don't worry". Either she sees something in me, like maybe I'm not 100%, and I'll say,

> "Oh, today I'm just not feeling well, it has nothing to do with work." And same thing for her. And if she needs to go, even just to the table to put something away, she doesn't just turn her back. She'll say, "Kara, I'm leaving to go drop the pen." And the same thing, "I'm leaving to go take some kids to the bathroom". I don't just go and take the kids and leave. (Kara)

Putting a pen down on a table is a quick task and other people may not feel the need to communicate about something like that. Nonetheless, communicating even the smallest of things demonstrates respect, and may be a key element in developing the positive relationship that Kara and Diana have. I have experienced very small lapses in communication while working in PHE. For example, a paraprofessional may allow a child to go to the bathroom but not communicate it with the teacher. It is an important communication because the teacher is also responsible for all the students in the class and should know where they are at all times. Such communication is important because it helps promote feeling as though one is part of a team.

The final lower order theme was labeled *Location, duration and frequency of communications* because the participants spoke about where, when and how often they communicated. The location in which the participants communicated differed only slightly between dyads. The most frequent location for communication was the gymnasium where they taught their PHE lessons. However, Steve and Logan also communicated in the office that they shared: "In the office, in the gym office, yeah. Or in the gym itself" (Steve). This dyad was able to communicate outside of the gymnasium because they had identical schedules. Hence, the two men shared the same timetable and would be able to sit in the office during spares to debrief about a lesson, plan for future lessons or communicate about anything else they may have felt necessary. Diana and Kara did not have the luxury of working together all day and, as a result, the locations where their communications took place were more limited. Thus, they communicated mostly during class time: "In the gym. If we are doing indoor activities, if we are doing outdoor activities then it will be like, in the park, or it would be anywhere that we were having the activity that day" (Kara).

The two dyads may have differed in their communications because of their individual schedules. For example, it appeared as though Steve and Logan communicated mostly before and after classes: “We talk between classes I would say” (Steve). Logan concurred that meeting before class worked well for the pair: “I mean, it’s just like, meeting up with each other before, a couple minutes before, I find that works for both of us really well” (Logan). Logan and Steve also communicated during spares and after school: “So, if we have a spare or whatever, after school, we’ll use that time to communicate. Um, and then even during class sometimes” (Steve). Steve explained that when he and Logan communicated during class it was usually between activities or as the students were engaged in an activity. It seemed that this dyad had many different opportunities throughout the day to communicate since they taught together all day. Hence, it was less necessary for them to communicate during class time.

Conversely, Diana and Kara mostly communicated during or directly after the class: “During or after the class. Uh, sometimes during the class, after the class” (Kara). Diana seconded that they most frequently communicated during class time, however, she added that sometimes they communicated outside of class but only when they saw each other: “If we run into each other, we often talk, or if something happens, we’ll share a story. But mostly during class”. I have experience working with adults in the gymnasium all day and I have also taught classes where paraprofessionals entered and left with the students. When paraprofessionals are not attached to the gymnasium, it is more difficult to communicate because the focus during class time should be directed towards the students instead of communicating with co-workers. However, there are opportunities to communicate prior to and after lessons when a dyad works in the gymnasium all day. This time presents the opportunity to speak about the lesson set up, equipment, rules and more, which cannot be easily discussed when paraprofessionals enter and leave with the students. Thus, it was not surprising

that Diana and Kara communicated less often outside of class time since they were rarely together unless they were teaching.

Both dyads communicated very frequently. Although Kara and Diana may not have had as much time outside of their PHE lessons to communicate, they communicated very often while in class: "We're constantly talking" (Diana), "Very often, very often we communicate" (Kara). In addition, their in-class communications were concise and purposeful: "Usually it's just little conversations. You know, I'll say "Hey, check this out. Look at what he's doing", or um, yeah 'Let's get him involved'. Or (pause) yeah, it's like little conversations" (Diana). My experience teaching PHE has taught me that communications during class time should be short and to the point in order to focus on the lesson and the students. Thus, it is not surprising that the participants communicated this way in class. Logan and Steve also indicated that they communicated fairly constantly: "Daily for sure. Several times a day. Yeah, sometimes not as formal, but sometimes a couple of minutes, sometimes longer depending on how much time we have" (Steve). Hence, Steve and Logan communicated every day but their communications were not always formal and then length of communications may differ depending on time.

Theme 5: Collaboration

The fifth theme was named "*Collaboration"* because each participant discussed their experiences working with their teaching partner and other paraprofessionals. This theme is comprised of four lower order themes: (1) *Praising their teaching partner*, (2) *Working with other paraprofessionals*, (3) *Similarities,* and (4) *Differences.*

The first lower order theme was labeled *Praising their teaching partner* because each participant demonstrated that they held their teaching partner in high regard. For example, Kara explained that Diana had many strengths:

> I'll tell you honestly, I have worked with different colleagues, but Diana is just different. I'll tell you in which ways she is different. Um, she, like, the passion in her, the knowledge. She's well informed. She's well aware. She has, like, the "it" factor. I'm like pushing her and I'm like "Why don't you open your own business?" She comes with tools, with gadgets, like she really unblocks. You know the word unblock, like we're really here, like decoding what they want, she knows that, "Ok, this one is going to be the ball. This one is going to be the Frisbee. No, this one is the flag". It's like she's really, uh, you can't compare the two. I'm sorry, I have great colleagues and I'm telling you, but Diana goes above and beyond and that's what makes her unique. (Kara)

Thus, Kara believed that Diana was able to remain current and she demonstrated a respect for her partner. It seemed that having knowledgeable co-workers was important to Kara and it was clear to me that she was impressed by Diana's knowledge: "She doesn't know, it's a secret, but I'm in love with her knowledge. And every day I look forward to whenever I have her. I'm smiling, I have my sneakers, I'm ready to go" (Kara). Thus, Kara believed in Diana's knowledge and abilities and as a result, she enjoyed and looked forward to working together.

Diana also spoke highly of Kara which indicated a cohesiveness between the pair. Diana suggested that she enjoyed working with Kara for many reasons:

> She's so enthusiastic. She's so, I mean I've had other really good paraprofessionals, but she's wild (laughs). Honestly, she can be wild and she, she's just so much fun, and she gets the kids so excited, and um, she really will get nitty and gritty, you know, she'll get down on her knees and roll. She'll try to do a summersault, like I'm trying to teach the kids, and she'll make a fool of herself and she doesn't mind. And the kids love it, and they'll laugh at her, and they'll laugh together. So, I think that's different. Not everyone will kind of (pause) although they'll get involved, you know, you have to with these kids, but they don't necessarily get down and do that summersault and end up sprawled on the ground or something, and she will. (Diana)

It seemed as though both women were dedicated, passionate, and involved in every aspect of their lessons. In addition, I believe Kara possessed many traits that Diana indicated were important: "She's like a no-nonsense kind of woman. She doesn't play games". Thus, Diana believed that it was important to have a teaching partner who is outgoing and fun, but also able to be strict when needed. Diana explained that Kara was able to effectively manage poor behaviour: "For sure Kara intervenes

very quickly when there's any behavior issues, like she's really good". She also praised Kara's ability to connect with the students:

> She's like "no", we're going to do it, you can do it. And she really, she usually manages to get them to do something that they were very hesitant to do, let's say. And then once they've done it, it's all about confidence, and then they're fine and they'll go off and do it on their own. Um, so to me that's huge. (Diana)

I believe that the dyad worked well together because they complemented each other. Both women saw the other's strength as an asset and, as a result, they appreciated working together.

Steve and Logan also had very positive things to say about one another. Logan felt that it was easy to work with Steve because of his personality: "Man, he's just a people person". He further indicated that Steve was a fun and easy-going person:

> He's a funny guy. He's not just like all about the work and that's it, you know. He would make jokes and things like that and it's his personality, it's not like he's doing it on purpose, he just wants to get, like, it's just who he is. So, him being that kind of a person makes it a lot easier, like he just comes in and he's just a friendly person. (Logan)

Logan seemed to think that having an outgoing and fun teaching partner was important. He explained that it was easier to work well together because they were able to have fun: "Even like with me and Steve, I guess, that makes it a bit more easy because we enjoy what we're doing". Logan also enjoyed working with Steve because of his dedication and hard work: "Everybody would do the same thing but basically, he would do more of what they would be doing". This quote indicated Steve often went above and beyond the job description and did more work than an average teacher. Logan believed the skills Steve possessed were important and may have contributed to their success in working together.

Steve thought very highly of Logan and it appeared as though he was very appreciative of the work Logan accomplished. Smallville had an ambitious PHE department that required a lot of extra work. Logan's contributions to these programs reduced Steve's workload and ameliorated the programs:

> A lot of that stuff wouldn't happen if he wasn't there in terms of planning and just being able to implement because he gets so involved and has the knowledge to be able to do it as well. So, a lot of the things that we do, not that we couldn't do it if he wasn't there, but it's a heck of a lot easier because he is there and capable of leading as well. (Steve)

Clearly, Steve considered Logan to be an asset. Steve also acknowledged Logan's sports background which he believed to be important in helping during PHE classes and extra-curricular activities: "He kind of, just has that instinct". Logan often took initiative and completed tasks without being asked.

> I think just that probably through experience. And then, I think a little bit of that, because his background is a sports background, he already has that knowledge, and he runs a day camp as well in the summer. So, he kind of works with students of this age and a little bit older but, so he has a lot of experience in this type of setting. And he has been working in schools, elementary schools for a long time so, he just has that experience. Uh, knowledge of the system a little bit as well. (Steve)

Steve indicated that it was important for Logan to have this background in sports and recreation and experience working with children and youth. I believe Steve enjoyed working with Logan because he saw the value in Logan's strengths. Hence, the dyad was able to utilize their strengths to their advantage in order to be an effective teaching team. I have experience working as a paraprofessional in the gymnasium and in other classrooms. I found it much easier to assist in PHE classes because I have a sport and PHE background.

The second lower order theme was called *Working with other paraprofessionals* and was discussed by the PHE teachers from both schools. Throughout this lower order theme, both PHE teachers discussed their experiences working with other paraprofessionals. It was uncommon for paraprofessionals to assist with PHE classes at both schools.

> Often times they don't come into the gym with us. They, because they have two or three kids that they work with, sometimes more, and things seem to go well in the gym. Often times they'll come, bring them, they'll check in, poke their head in, but then they'll go work with other kids in the classroom who really need that support. (Diana)

> So, in our classes, each class has a child care worker in it, but they don't come to gym. Or very few do, because Logan is there. So, it just allows them to have more time in the classroom versus in the gym. Um, at times they were coming and then we didn't need them as much, or

> they didn't need to be as active. So, they were kind of just sitting back and then they would kind of like, have a 45-minute break, and then they would have their lunch break. So, it was just kind of like wasted time. So, over the last couple of years Logan's been full time. (Steve)

Paraprofessionals often did not stay to assist in the gymnasium because they were viewed as being more helpful in the classrooms. Diana also mentioned that she often taught two classes within the same PHE class with the help of one other PHE teacher. Thus, both PHE teachers indicated that other paraprofessionals did not come to PHE because there were already two adults working in the gymnasium. In my experience, the amount of paraprofessional help varies from school to school, but it is becoming more common to have more than one adult working in a classroom. In fact, I have rarely experienced working in classrooms where there was no support.

Both Steve and Diana had experience working with other paraprofessionals despite the fact that other paraprofessionals did not often come to PHE. Overall the PHE teachers had neutral feelings about other paraprofessionals, indicating that there may be a wide range in paraprofessional abilities. Diana expressed that most paraprofessionals did a decent job: "I think pretty much they all come, and they get involved, and they do what they have to do". Despite her belief that other paraprofessionals were capable, she indicated that Kara may have been more competent than others:

> They're not all as enthusiastic as her or as outgoing a personality, but that's just personality … you can't force that on someone. You can't force them to be crazy and wild, uh, no, I think they all do a pretty good job. (Diana)

Steve indicated that Logan possessed skills that others may not, which made him an asset to the PHE program at Smallville. For example, Logan worked with all the students and understood the goals of the PHE program:

> He sees a lot of the students behave different in the gym versus the classroom as well. So, the child care workers, if they're just coming in and out, they kind of, they don't necessarily see how they, yeah, that they behave differently. And we tend to let things go a little bit more than maybe they would in the classroom and Logan understands that, yeah. (Steve)

Logan may have been preferred over other paraprofessionals because he worked in the gym full time. This type of schedule allowed him to work with all the students in the school versus other paraprofessionals who may be paired with only one or a small number of students: "It makes a difference because he knows the kids. He knows the students. He's kind of working with everybody versus if a classroom paraprofessional who comes in and has one or two students that they're working with" (Steve).

Both PHE teachers mentioned the various traits and skills that were important for a paraprofessional to possess. Consequently, they both spoke about the importance of paraprofessionals being capable of taking initiative. Neither PHE teacher wanted to micro-manage paraprofessionals:

> I mean I have had replacements come in the gym and I would have a really hard time with a paraprofessional who kind of stood back, and who didn't just get, like I mean, I don't want to have to tell you every little thing that you have to do. If you notice a kid has gone off to the side and is sitting down, I don't want a kid sitting down. I want you to go and get that kid, pick that kid up, get him involved. If he doesn't want to get involved in what we're doing directly, then figure out what makes them tick. (Diana)

> I have to, if I don't dictate to them what I need them to do, um, then they'll either do nothing, for the most part, some are better than others. But I'd say they either sit back until they see they're really needed. (Steve)

They felt that it was important for paraprofessionals to be involved and work with all the students. They suggested that paraprofessionals were not simply there to deal with a crisis.

> You know, I can't have someone who comes in the gym and just kind of sits there. They're not there just in case there's a meltdown, or a crisis. Like, they've got to be hands-on, they can't be wearing high heels in the gym (laughs). (Diana)

The participants may have felt this way because it is difficult trying to manage other adults while teaching a lesson. I have experienced being both a teacher leading a class and a paraprofessional who assists. Thus, I have experienced the difficulties in trying to manage a class while also providing directives for paraprofessionals. However, I also understand the struggle of trying to assist when not

given clear instructions. It is important for there to be a balance between PHE teachers providing directives and paraprofessionals being involved by asking how they can help.

The third lower order theme, *Differences,* discussed the different approaches to collaboration used by the dyads. Each dyad developed a unique method of collaborating to suit their individual needs. The biggest difference between the dyads was in the roles undertaken by the PHE teachers and paraprofessionals. Each pair divided their roles differently, for example, Diana and Kara had clearly outlined roles and responsibilities.

> Diana is the teacher, so she's actually teaching. So, I'm like her second hand. I sometimes see things that she doesn't see while she's teaching, like, for example, someone is misbehaving. Somebody's having a hard time, not understanding, confused, or walking away, um, totally disregarding what's happening. So, she's the teacher, I'm her right hand. (Kara)

The dyad from Midtown specifically divided their roles in accordance with their position but also to favour each person's strengths. Diana has a degree in PHE and thus, took on the more traditional teacher roles, such as planning and leading the lessons: "For sure in our relationship I'm a bit more of a leader when it comes to what we're doing. But she's more of a leader when it comes to dealing with certain behaviours" (Diana). Kara was responsible for more of the behaviour aspects of the lesson since her official role was as a behaviour technician. It was evident that both Kara and Diana clearly understood their roles: "I would have to say, yes, our roles are different. I'm the Behaviour Tech. I foresee more of the behaviour aspects. She's more into the learning aspect but we still work together to make a great team" (Kara).

Conversely, Logan and Steve did not clearly divide their roles, for example, they often took turns leading the class: "During class time one of us tends to take the lead a little bit. Um, sometimes it'll be him, sometimes it'll be myself" (Steve). Often, they both took part in planning and leading lessons and they worked together in almost every aspect of the PHE program.

> We kind of plan out what we're going to do. So, sometimes we don't have it planned out a week in advance, or, what we're going to do, but we chat about it before the class or when he comes in. And he just, yeah, if I'm leading, he has, he already knows what to do in terms of managing students and vice versa, like if he takes the lead. (Steve)

However, Steve indicated that there were certain tasks each person tended to take on more often: "I would probably tend to do a little bit more of the one-on-one and a little bit more of the feedback side of it to the students. Logan would kind of manage or lead the class". Steve also indicated that he worked a little more on planning the lessons but he often sought Logan's opinions. It appeared that Logan and Steve began working this way almost immediately:

> He didn't come in with a mentality like "I'm the boss." No, he wanted to know what I wanted to do, like, even now, he still like, you know, "what do you want to do?". And you know, you feel good when you hear that. He's not just taking everything on by himself to just do everything on his own. He, he includes me in everything that he does, so… And that's why I like him, because, I mean, most people would come in and just think "ok, I'm the one in charge here, I'm going to do whatever I want and whatever", but he would be like, "So what did you guys used to do before?" (Logan)

The method they developed to collaborate was quite unique as I have never seen a paraprofessional lead a lesson. However, their collaboration seemed to work very well. Steve explained they really were a partnership: "I kind of would almost see it as co-teacher, per say".

Logan and Steve spoke less frequently about their roles and it appeared as though their roles often overlapped, making the subject complicated to discuss: "We don't always designate who's going to do what and that kind of stuff" (Steve). However, Kara and Diana were able to speak definitively about their roles because they had clearly differentiated ones. Kara felt that it was important to know her role, follow it, and not cross any boundaries.

> Some behaviour techs, they will step on the teacher's toes, and they want to take the teacher's position. Me, I know my role. I went to school and I know what I went to school for, and I know that she's the teacher and I never cross, like boundaries. I have my boundaries and she has hers. (Kara)

This role clarity may have been an important factor in aiding Kara and Diana to develop an effective working relationship. However, the dyad from Smallville held a different belief about effectively working together and they often did not designate roles: "We just go with the flow, because there are some things that, you know 'man, you're better off doing this', or he might be better off doing it" (Logan).

The role division for each dyad was dependent on multiple factors. For example, Diana planned the lessons alone because she and Kara did not have the opportunity to plan lessons together. Additionally, Kara could not lead because she did not know what the lesson plan was ahead of time. Logan and Steve had the opportunity to plan lessons together, therefore, they both knew the plan, and either person could lead. This arrangement worked well because the pair was not concerned with having a clear hierarchy.

> There's no one, you know, we're not bitter with each other if someone takes over, or whatever. You know, if he takes over and it doesn't bother me, if you know, if he sees something that he wants to adjust. (Steve)

Moreover, the dyads' roles may also have differed because of their administration. Kara explained that the school board provided her with her roles and responsibilities: "Well we do have a manual. Before, when we get hired they tell us, ok, this is what you need to do". She also mentioned that the principal and PHE teacher could further break down her roles. While the dyad from Smallville mentioned that the principal could help determine roles, they explained that they mostly determined their roles themselves: "A little bit through the principal but mostly through ourselves, I guess. We kind of, I'm the only Phys. Ed. teacher, besides from Logan, so we kind of guide ourselves and determine those responsibilities on our own" (Steve). Diana was not the only PHE teacher at Midtown and, as a result, had less control over the roles she and Kara undertook. Thus, the dyads may have

differed in their roles because Kara and Diana followed more of the roles outlined by the school board and principal whereas Logan and Steve had more freedom to decide upon their own roles.

The final lower order theme was named *Similarities* because both dyads spoke about similar ways of collaborating. All participants indicated that having fun and enjoying working together was important for their relationship.

> I think we get along, and then, yeah, just have fun and able to joke about stuff too I guess, like things that happened in class. Yeah, mostly we just get along with each other so it's easy to communicate. (Steve)

> You know, I'm the same way too. I like to mess around sometimes, you know, just be silly and I just think that you have that sense, that side of you, it makes it a lot easier to work with people in general, period. (Logan)

Both Kara and Diana also enjoyed what they do: "We just work together. We joke around. We have fun. I mean, we're like two extra kids in the gym (laughs)" (Diana).

Another important factor in establishing a strong relationship was asking questions. Participants recognized that they had varying levels of experience and expertise. Hence, they worked together to be a better team by asking each other questions.

> Because, honestly, he's a lot more experienced than I am, so I would ask him a lot of questions and then, you know, even though he might be more experienced than I am, he still comes to me and like, "Logan, what do you think about this?". And I think that really helps us to get everyone involved and find new ways and, you know, techniques for doing things with the kids. (Logan)

> She'll ask for advice in terms of the students' needs. So, for example, she might ask me "what do you think A would like to do this morning?" or "Do you think activity B would be ideal for C or activity D?", "Should we stay indoors or outdoors today based on the weather for the following activities", or maybe she'll say, "I'm thinking of getting scooters and helmets, do you think the kids will enjoy them?". So yeah, it's questions like that, advice for things like that. (Kara)

The participants also believed it was important to accept that everyone has a different way of doing things: "I mean, we both have different ideas and different ways of doing things" (Logan). They were open-minded and recognized there may be multiple, correct ways to complete a task:

> Sometimes you have to take a step back, you know, if Kara is dealing with something, maybe behaviour let's say, and it might not be the way I would deal with it but that's ok. Because it works for her, everyone has their own way. And I could learn from her too, and in other ways she can learn from me. (Diana)

Accepting that everyone has a different way of working may be key in developing strong working relationships. The participants were able to learn from each other to improve and forge a strong relationship by accepting each other and asking questions.

One factor that may have encouraged the participants to ask questions was being able to share answers honestly and without judgment. The participants all indicated that they were able to openly voice their opinions: "We're pretty open with each other so I think that it works well" (Steve). They also indicated that they were not timid about sharing their ideas honestly:

> I think also to not be shy to say, "well what if we try to do it this way", um, in a way that is not offensive. But that's the biggest part in being a team player, to not being controlling over what I want. (Diana)

> It's just being honest with each other, like, if you see that there's something that's wrong and you don't like it, just let each other know, because I might not like something that he might like but then it's not coming across to him, but I don't want to just keep it in my head, like "man we need to change this". (Logan)

Both dyads may also have been able to ask questions and be honest and accepting because all four participants were easy-going people. They all indicated that they were flexible and willing to have less structure in their classes at times: "I think we are both kind of laid back in many respects. We're not rigid, and because we're both flexible and we're both open minded, it just works really well" (Diana). Diana emphasized that they were laid back in many respects, thus, the dyad worked together to find the methods that worked best for them. Kara concurred that they often made decisions together about what best suited them: "We also work things out. Like, we might say, this is what is going to work for us". Hence, this dyad developed a relationship where Diana planned and orchestrated the lessons, and Kara supported her in many ways. They also indicated that things did not always go

according to their plans but they were undeterred when this happened because of their flexibility: "I'll do a demonstration and she watches and then she just goes with it. You know, sometimes she doesn't do exactly what I, because she was distracted with something else, ultimately, it's not a big deal" (Diana).

The dyad from Smallville was also very flexible and adaptable. Steve explained that they planned for their lessons, however, the plan could change if someone had an idea they thought might work better.

> Sometimes he'll come in and has an idea for a game and like it's not a big stress to adapt and to adjust. So, I think that that works really well, and we can, we can make adjustments on the fly and it doesn't bother the other person if one of us takes, uh, takes the lead over the other. So, it's a little more of a partnership. (Steve)

It appeared that this dyad had developed a way of working together that suited their laid-back personalities. They were able to exchange ideas freely and were not upset if something changed or did not go according to the plan. This adaptability may have been key in forging their strong relationship. The dyad recognized their strengths and utilized them to their advantage.

Being able to communicate clearly and honestly allowed both dyads to form and maintain their strong relationships. All participants worked well together because they functioned as a team. Participants indicated that they were able to be a team player by not doing things by themselves but instead working with their partner: "I don't decide for myself. She doesn't decide for herself. We're really a partnership and really, it's been working well" (Kara), "We don't just, you know, do things on our own" (Logan). It may also be important to recognize that it is not possible for a person to always do things their way in order to work well as a team.

> I think sometimes you have to be willing to, um, we all have objectives and a certain way we like to do things. I think to be a team player you may sometimes have to give that up and do what someone else wants to do. (Diana)

Participants explained that the skills needed to be a team player at work did not differ from those needed to maintain other life relationships: “We talk, like, the things that you would need to make a relationship work, regardless of if it’s personal or in the work field or whatever, like, I feel that we have it here and its working” (Logan).

> I just think that if you haven’t had experiences in your life where you had to be a team player, then it’s harder for you. You don’t realize, you know, you’re not used to taking other peoples, or compromising what you have to do in order to you know, make your partner happy, but that’s just life relationships too, I think. (Diana)

Thus, the experiences people have in life may help them to develop strong relationships. All four participants had prior experience working with others which may have been another factor that contributed to their success in working together.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the working relationship between paraprofessionals and physical and health education (PHE) teachers to determine the various factors that may impact inclusive PHE. Five themes emerged from the interpretative phenomenological analysis: (1) *School environment*, (2) *Views on inclusion*, (3) *Student goals/modifications*, (4) *Communication*, and (5) *Collaboration*. This chapter will provide the study findings and the implications for each theme, associated recommendations for future research, delimitations and limitations, a summary and conclusion.

Study Findings and Implications

The first theme was labeled School environment because the participants had a unique school environment that played a key role in their ability to include SwD in their PHE lessons. The participants discussed factors that aided them in implementing successful inclusive PHE programs. All participants spoke about the important role the principal played in supporting and encouraging their PHE programs. The current study findings indicated that PHE at both schools may have been prioritized because both programs received sufficient support from the principal. For example, both schools had additional funds for equipment, extra-curriculars and other activities. Further, the principal from Smallville invested in paying a paraprofessional to work full-time in the gymnasium. Other research also uncovered that school principals play an important role in determining the allocation of services for SwD and fostering a supportive team environment within the school (Irvine, Lupart, Loreman, McGie-Richmond, 2010; Maciver et al., 2018; Maher, 2016). However, these services may often be prioritized to core subject areas (e.g., Math, English, Science), with PHE being considered a lower priority (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Maher, 2016). It may also be important for PHE

programs to be viewed as a priority by other staff members within a school. Paraprofessionals were viewed more negatively by PHE teachers when they considered PHE to be a lower priority subject (Haycock & Smith, 2011). These negative views were not present in the current study because both paraprofessionals understood the importance of PHE programs. Future research should examine the role a strong principal can play in supporting and improving inclusive PHE programs since the learning experiences of SwD may be ameliorated in PHE when PHE is viewed as a priority by all staff in a school.

The second theme was Views on inclusion. All four participants believed in the benefits of inclusion. They discussed positive views on inclusion and believed it to be their responsibility to find ways to include SwD in their lessons. For example, participants developed inclusive activities with added rules and modifications to ensure their lessons were accessible and encouraged learning and success for all students. When delivered successfully, inclusion may have many benefits for both students with and without disabilities (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). Casebolt and Hodge (2010) also found that teachers expressed the belief in inclusive education that it was their responsibility to find the adaptations and modifications necessary to include SwD in their lessons. These positive views towards inclusion can also be found in other studies (Batsiou, Bebetsos, Panteli, Antoniou, 2008; Casebolt & Hodge, 2010).

Hence, this study's participants firmly believed in inclusion but they also indicated some ambivalence surrounding the subject. They recognized the challenges that came along with inclusion. The theme of ambivalence can be found throughout the literature and was present in this study as well (Casebolt & Hodge, 2010; Maher, 2016; Pedersen et al., 2014). PHE teachers and paraprofessionals from other studies reported that they believe in the benefits of inclusion. However, there was uncertainty about how successful inclusion may be at providing an education that sufficiently meets

the needs of SwD (MacKenzie, 2011). Other studies discussed the challenges to inclusion, describing its difficulty and the negative views surrounding it (Bryan et al., 2013; MacKenzie, 2011; Thomas, 2013). For example, PHE teachers felt it was difficult to include SwD in team games (Ammah & Hodge, 2005; Maher, 2010). The participants in the current study also indicated it was sometimes difficult to include SwD in PHE lessons because the content and pace of the lesson had to be modified. Clearly, inclusion can be challenging and teachers find it difficult to include SwD in their lessons. Thus, it is important to continue investigating teachers' and paraprofessionals' views on inclusion since these teaching teams may be key in implementing successful inclusive PHE programs.

The third theme was Student goals/modifications. The participants had set many different goals for their students to ensure all students felt included in their PHE lessons. First, the participants spoke about the goals they wanted their students to achieve. The various goals included: (1) developing the students' physical skills, (2) improving students' confidence and self-esteem, (3) helping students adopt a healthy and active lifestyle and teaching other life skills, (4) improving student focus, (5) unblocking the students, (6) encouraging the students to be active during class time, and (7) improving student behaviour in the gymnasium and in other classrooms. This area has been largely neglected in the literature as very few studies discussed student goals. One study discussed the benefits of collaboration in general education (GE) on facilitating student progress but did not report on the specific goals set for students (Nochajski, 2002). Future research should attempt to uncover if there are other goals that PHE teachers and paraprofessional set for their students. This area is important to continue to research because the goals set for students relate to their learning and success. Teachers and paraprofessionals may be able to work more effectively as a team if they share common goals for their students.

Next, the participants who worked at Smallville used a variety of modifications to include SwD in their classes. Logan and Steve provided rules and modifications to their games and activities in order to create a differentiated PHE environment. All of the students were included in the activities taught with these modifications to enable each student to play at their own skill level. A few studies discussed the benefits of using differentiation and the importance of adapting the curriculum in order to include SwD in PHE (Ammah & Hodge, 2005; Casebolt & Hodge, 2010; Maher, 2010; Pedersen et al., 2014; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Some participants believed that SwD should be included whenever possible and differentiation should be used to meet the needs of all students (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Differentiation may be a key variable in creating pedagogically sound PHE lessons as it encourages teachers to adapt the lesson to meet the abilities of all students (Morgan, Bryant, Edwards, & Mitchell-Williams, 2019).

I have experienced teaching students who struggle to catch a ball, making it difficult for them to play games that involved catching. As a result, these students were very rarely passed the ball. However, I have observed rules added to games that encourage other students to include the students who struggle. For example, those students do not have to catch the ball, but instead, if they touch the ball it becomes theirs and other students provide them with space and give them time to make a pass. There are many other ways to create lesson plans that meet the needs of all students but teachers must be provided with the means to do so (i.e., knowledge, skills, equipment). PHE teachers in other studies indicated that they did not adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of SwD, thus, SwD would not be included in PHE if paraprofessionals were not present (Pedersen et al., 2014). However, the learning experiences of all students in PHE classes may be improved if teachers and paraprofessionals can work together to adapt and modify their lessons (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Future research should investigate various modifications and other methods of differentiation that can be used in PHE

classes to include SwD. Improving teachers' knowledge of modifications and differentiation could, in turn, better the learning experiences of SwD in inclusive PHE.

The fourth theme was labeled Communication because participants spoke about the various methods of communication used and related topics. First, the participants discussed methods of communication which included verbal communication and multiple forms of non-verbal communication such as emails, text messages, gestures, or looking at each other. However, all participants agreed that verbal communication was the most effective method. Other studies have discussed how teachers communicate with students (Maciver et al., 2018; Sato, Walton-Fisette, & Insook, 2019) but, to my knowledge, no other study has specifically examined the methods of communication used between adults working together in the classroom. One study, that explored inclusion practices in GE, mentioned communicating non-verbally via email but did not discuss the effectiveness of this communication method (An & Meany, 2015). Additionally, PHE teachers may not always communicate with paraprofessionals during class time (Bryan et al., 2013). However, communication plays a large role in creating effective teaching teams and supporting inclusive classroom environments (An & Meaney, 2015). Thus, it would be important for future research to further examine various methods of communication that are used but also the effectiveness of these communications within the PHE environment.

Second, the participants spoke about numerous topics related to communication in PHE. For example, the participants also indicated that they discussed the students with their teaching partner. This communication between Kara and Diana was evident in their relationship. Kara would often report information about the students to Diana. This dyad did not specifically plan lessons together but Diana often sought information from Kara about their students to aid in creating activities that would work best. Conversely, Logan and Steve worked together in most aspects of the planning and

often created lesson plans together. Communication in the planning stages allowed Logan and Steve to take turns leading and assisting with the lesson. Discussions about the students may be important because it can help teachers and paraprofessionals conduct pedagogically sounds lessons by tailoring lesson plans to meet the needs of all students. For example, often paraprofessionals spend more time with SwD than a classroom teacher and, as a result, may be more aware of the student's needs, which was the case for Kara and Diana. Thus, it is important for teachers and paraprofessionals to communicate during the planning stages (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012) since paraprofessionals can provide information about SwD to PHE teachers in order to better include SwD in their lessons (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Pedersen et al., 2014). Other studies discussed the importance of teachers communicating with paraprofessionals during the planning stages of a lesson (Haycock & Smith, 2011; Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). One teacher explained that it was beneficial for the inclusion of SwD when lessons were planned in advance using information about SwD provided by paraprofessionals (Haycock & Smith, 2011).

Finally, the participants in the current study communicated about numerous other topics such as transitions, water breaks, trips to the bathroom, music, and indicated when one-to-one instruction was required. Future research should continue to investigate the various topics related to communication that are important for teachers and paraprofessionals to improve inclusive classroom environments.

The fifth theme was Collaboration. First, all participants had a very positive relationship with their teaching partner that allowed them to collaborate effectively. These positive relationships were forged by the many similarities between the dyads. The participants indicated that they were able to work collaboratively because they (1) asked questions and were open and honest with each other, (2) accepted that everyone has a different way of doing things, (3) were open minded and flexible, and

(4) did not do things on their own. Second, each dyad had developed a unique way of working together that best suited their individual needs. They were able to recognize each other's strengths and use them to their advantage.

All participants from this study had a positive relationship with their teaching partner. However, other research presents mixed results on collaboration. For example, MacKenzie (2011) noted that not one paraprofessional remarked having a positive relationship with the teachers with whom they worked. Other studies found that PHE teachers and paraprofessionals felt their collaborations worked well (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008; Nochajski, 2002; Pedersen et al., 2014). Some studies found mixed results, with some paraprofessionals and PHE teachers noting positive collaboration and others reporting more negative relationships (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). There may be a considerable difference between collaboration in theory and in practice (Nochajski, 2002).

This study finding supports results from some studies about PHE teacher and paraprofessional collaboration. For example, it was clear that all four participants were able to ask questions and learn from each other, enabling them to improve the learning environment for their students. The literature also suggests that PHE teachers and paraprofessionals can create an effective working relationship and improve inclusive environments for SwD in PHE by learning from each other (Pedersen et al., 2014). However, the study uncovered other factors that expanded upon past research about collaboration. For example, the participants were all able to accept that everyone has a different way of doing things. They were also open minded, flexible, and worked together, further enabling their positive collaboration.

Next, each dyad had developed a unique way of working together that best suited their individual needs. Both dyads functioned very effectively as a teaching team. Logan undertook important responsibilities, such as leading the class, which contributed to his effective relationship

with Steve because he was entrusted with important responsibilities that made paraprofessionals feel more valued (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). This finding confirmed other study findings that suggest it is possible for paraprofessionals to play an essential role as "co-teacher" (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2008). However, it may not be necessary for paraprofessionals to take on "teacher-like" responsibilities in order to feel valued. For example, Kara undertook very few instructional roles, but she and Diana felt her contributions to the lessons were instrumental. She was able to effectively manage behaviours, keep the students on task, and push students to do their best, ultimately leading to their overall success in PHE.

The type of role distribution, undertaken by Diana and Kara, was similar to past research which indicated that paraprofessionals should act as support while teachers act as program directors (Giangreco et al., 2001a). Diana planned and directed the lessons while Kara supported her and dealt with behavioural issues. However, Steve and Logan did not follow this type of role allocation, opting to share roles and take turns leading the lesson. Past literature has questioned the appropriate roles for paraprofessionals to undertake to support SwD in GE classrooms (Giangreco et al., 2001a). Studies have found that paraprofessionals roles may exceed their qualifications and there may be a lack of role clarity (Bryan et al., 2013; Giangreco & Broer, 2005; MacKenzie, 2011). Hence, identifying roles and responsibilities is important because the effectiveness of paraprofessional support may depend directly on how the roles are defined (Giangreco & Doyle, 2002). Participants from other studies have noted concern for the inadvertent effects of assigning students with higher needs to paraprofessionals who may be underqualified or underprepared (Giangreco et al., 2001a; Giangreco, Broer, Edelman, 2001b). However, both paraprofessionals from the current study were entrusted with important responsibilities and were capable of carrying them out.

The participants from both dyads communicated about their roles when they began working together and determined which roles best suited them. Once they determined a system that worked best for them, there was not much need to continue discussing roles. Thus, it may be important to discuss roles initially and then check periodically to determine if any adjustments need to be made. The literature also suggests that teachers and paraprofessionals should communicate about the roles they undertake because one of the greatest challenges for paraprofessionals is negotiating what is expected of them and working in agreement with PHE teachers (Bryan et al., 2013). Some paraprofessionals indicated that the PHE teachers, with whom they worked, were very good at providing directions and instructions (Bryan et al., 2013). However, other paraprofessionals felt negatively towards PHE teachers because roles were unclear and, as a result, they were left on their own to support a SwD (Vickerman & Blundell, 2012). Communication about appropriate roles for each person to undertake may be an effective strategy when helping students develop their skills (Pedersen et al., 2014).

Thus, this study's findings of how the two dyads collaborated simultaneously support and contradict the literature. These ambivalent findings are new to the literature and indicate that individuality and flexibility may be important factors in creating effective teaching teams. The areas where PHE teachers and paraprofessionals collaborate may not be so important, as long as they can collaborate and agree on what is important to them. For example, both dyads had different ways of working together but they complemented each other in the roles they undertook. Each person completed the roles that best suited their strengths in order to ensure the class ran smoothly. In doing so, both dyads developed an effective working relationship by determining what they felt was important and communicating about those topics. Thus, it may be important for PHE teachers and paraprofessionals to determine amongst themselves which roles are best for each person to undertake.

The specific roles each person is assigned may be less important, so long as each necessary role is filled and the roles undertaken are best suited for whoever takes on that responsibility. Perhaps an interdisciplinary approach should be used in order for future research to uncover more information about school-wide collaboration (Szostack, 2018). Clearly, more research should be conducted to examine PHE teacher and paraprofessional collaboration in order to develop and expand upon the best methods and practices in this emerging research area. Thus, it is important for research to continue to uncover why relationships between PHE teachers and paraprofessionals may or may not be effective.

Limitations and Delimitations

There were at least two limitations to this study. First, this study did not include observations but relied solely on the responses from the participant interviews. Observations conducted prior to the interviews could have added a different perspective to the findings. For example, the PI may have developed a more complete understanding of how the dyads worked together through observations that may not have been possible through interviews alone. A second limitation was the limited time spent at each school and with each participant. The study could have been strengthened by the inclusion of prolonged engagement with each dyad to assist the PI in creating a more in-depth analysis of each team. For example, a second interview with each participant would have further added to the depth of the results. Additionally, the principals from each school could have been interviewed to gain information regarding their perspective of the part they play in fostering a successful inclusive PHE program. It may also be important for future research to include the perspectives of SwD to uncover how they experience being taught by collaborative dyads and how that, in turn, affects their experiences in inclusive PHE settings.

There are also important delimitations that this study had to offer. First, the strengths-based approach that this study undertook allowed the PI to interview people who were part of an effective

educational dyad. This approach helped to uncover how people work together and contributed to the literature by demonstrating two different but effective ways of teaching together. Next, the PI's experience working as a PHE teacher and a paraprofessional, at the same school board where the study was conducted, further strengthened this study. This experience allowed the PI to relate to both the paraprofessionals' and PHE teachers' experiences during the interviews. The participants also may have felt more comfortable during the interviews because of the experience and knowledge that the PI brought to each interview. Finally, the use of a demographic questionnaire as a data gathering method also strengthened this study. The information received from these questionnaires was used to create a profile for each participant which added depth to the study.

Summary

The findings answer the central research questions in the following ways. The first research question was: what factors influence the working relationship between paraprofessionals and PHE teachers? The factors that influenced the participants working relationships were their supportive school environment, their ability to communicate effectively, and their many positive collaboration methods. The participants in the study collaborated to create an effective relationship by asking each other questions, listening to each other and respecting the other's opinions. Both dyads had built strong relationships through their years working together by recognizing their partners strengths and utilizing those strengths to their advantage. They were also open-minded and allowed each other to do things their own way, which helped forge and maintain the respectful relationships between the dyads.

The next research question was: what methods of communication are used and when does communication happen? The methods of communication used included verbal communication which was expressed as being the most effective method and non-verbal communication which was used mainly when participants wanted to be discrete. The participants mostly communicated during class

time. However, Logan and Steve were also able to communicate during spares, and before and after class because their schedules presented them with many opportunities to communicate.

The third research question was: how do paraprofessionals and PHE teachers determine and divide their roles and responsibilities? Each dyad had determined and divided their roles and responsibilities slightly differently. Kara and Diana followed a more traditional role distribution that was clearly differentiated. The roles Logan and Steve undertook were less clearly divided and this dyad had difficulty discussing their role distribution because of this overlap.

The final research question was: how do these roles and responsibilities impact their working relationship? The participants' relationship may have impacted the way they chose to divide their roles and responsibilities. For example, Logan and Steve were extremely laid-back people and were not concerned with having a clear leader for each class. They were undeterred if the other took over or changed part of the lesson on the spot. They were able to share roles and teach lessons together because of these shared personality traits. Kara and Diana chose to collaborate in a way that suited their job titles and strengths. Kara was very competent when it came to managing behaviour issues while Diana's background aided her in creating and leading lessons. Thus, the roles undertaken by both dyads may have been impacted by the participants' personalities and relationships.

Conclusions

This study explored how PHE teachers and paraprofessionals experienced working together in inclusive PHE settings. Many of the findings are original and they will contribute to the understanding of this working relationship. An interpretative phenomenological approach facilitated the development of emergent findings that demonstrated two models of effective working dyads. This study uncovered various goals that the participants set for the students. The participants indicated that the goals set for students may help facilitate inclusive PHE by contributing to student learning and

success. It may also be important to examine goals students set for themselves and compare them to the goals set by teachers and paraprofessionals. Student learning and success may be ameliorated if goal setting between paraprofessionals, PHE teachers and students align. The experiences of the four participants from this study demonstrated two different, but effective working relationships. The ways in which the dyads collaborated helped to build their strong relationship which suggests there may not be one correct method of collaboration and certain methods may be better suited for some dyads than others. The study findings provide a strong rationale for continuing to examine teaching dyads in inclusive PHE settings. It will be important for future PHE teachers and paraprofessionals to foster strong relationships in order to improve their pedagogical practices in inclusive PHE. This study will contribute to the literature surrounding inclusive PHE and will hopefully lead to changes in inclusive PHE practices. It is hoped that successful changes to inclusive PHE could help improve the learning experiences of SwD and encourage all students to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle for their lifetimes!

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Appendices

Appendix A

Email to PHE Consultant

Hello [insert name of PHE consultant],

My name is Erin Berry and I am conducting a Master's study about the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical and health education (PHE). The goal of the study is to explore the relationship between paraprofessionals (i.e., support staff) and physical educators to learn about their working relationship experiences and determine factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

My research project is titled "Paraprofessional - Physical and Health Education Teacher Collaboration for Inclusion" and I am being supervised by Dr. William Harvey at the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education of McGill University.

You are receiving this email to solicit your help in recruiting participants for my proposed study. We are in search of teaching partnerships that are effective in implementing inclusion in PHE. The inclusion criteria for recruitment follow. Each dyad must: (1) consist of one PHE teacher and one paraprofessional who have worked together in the PHE context, (2) have at least one year of experience working together prior to data gathering, (3) work together with at least one child with a disability, and (4) be identified by the PHE consultant as an effective team.

Please contact me by email if you are interested in helping with the recruitment of participants for this study.

I hope to hear back from you soon,

Erin Berry

Appendix B

Email to Principal

Dear [insert name of principal],

My name is Erin Berry and I am conducting a Master's study about the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical and health education (PHE). The goal of the study is to explore the relationship between paraprofessionals (i.e., support staff) and physical educators to learn about their working relationship experiences and determine factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

My research project is titled "Paraprofessional - Physical and Health Education Teacher Collaboration for Inclusion" and I am being supervised by Dr. William Harvey at the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education of McGill University.

You are receiving this email to request your permission to enter your school so that two of your staff members may be interviewed in your school for my study. The PHE consultant at your school board has recognized these two employees on their ability to work as part of an effective team in PHE.

If you agree to allow me to conduct the study in your school, I will ask permission from both individuals to take part in one 45-90 minute interview with me. The interview will discuss their roles and responsibilities in PHE as well as the communication and collaboration practices they utilize in PHE.

Please contact me by email if you are willing to grant access to your school for this study.

I hope to hear back from you soon,

Erin Berry

Appendix C

Email to Potential Paraprofessionals

Dear potential participant,

My name is Erin Berry and I am conducting a Master's study about the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical and health education (PHE). The goal of the study is to explore the relationship between paraprofessionals (i.e., support staff) and physical educators to learn about their working relationship experiences and determine factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

My research project is titled "Paraprofessional - Physical and Health Education Teacher Collaboration for Inclusion" and I am being supervised by Dr. William Harvey at the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education of McGill University.

You are receiving this email because you have been identified as a potential participant for my study by the PHE consultant at your school board. She recognized your ability to work as part of an effective team with the PHE teacher who you assist in PHE.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to take part in one 45-90 minute interview with me. The interview will discuss your roles and responsibilities in PHE as well as your communication and collaboration practices with the PHE teacher who you assist.

Please contact me by email if you are interested in learning more about participating in this study.

I hope to hear back from you soon,

Erin Berry

Appendix D

Email to Potential PHE Teachers

Dear potential participant,

My name is Erin Berry and I am conducting a Master's study about the inclusion of students with disabilities in physical and health education (PHE). The goal of the study is to explore the relationship between paraprofessionals (i.e., support staff) and physical educators to learn about their working relationship experiences and determine factors that may impact inclusive PHE.

My research project is titled "Paraprofessional - Physical and Health Education Teacher Collaboration for Inclusion" and I am being supervised by Dr. William Harvey at the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education of McGill University.

You are receiving this email because you have been identified as a potential participant for my study by the PHE consultant at your school board. She recognized your ability to work as part of an effective team with the paraprofessional who assists you in PHE.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask you to take part in one 45-90 minute interview with me. The interview will discuss your roles and responsibilities in PHE as well as your communication and collaboration practices with the paraprofessional who assists you in PHE.

Please contact me by email if you are interested in learning more about participating in this study.

I hope to hear back from you soon,

Erin Berry

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Name: Age:

Gender:

Please list all educational diplomas, certificates, and degrees you have achieved:

How many years of experience do you have working as a paraprofessional/PHE teacher?

How long have you worked at the school at which you are currently employed?

How long have you worked with the paraprofessional/PHE teacher who is also participating in this project?

What has been your experience with individuals with a disability – in both your personal and professional life?

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Introduce yourself to the participant. Remind the participant about the general purpose of the study. Explain that the participant will first be asked to fill out a short questionnaire (see Appendix G) and then will begin the interview. Assure the participant that there are no right or wrong answers and remind him or her that he or she has the right to not answer, or skip, any question without having to give a reason. Also remind the participant that he or she has the right to withdraw at any time and for any reason without any consequences.

Interview Time - Start: Finish:

Date:

Location:

Interviewer:

Participant #:

Notes:

1. What are your views on inclusion in schools?
    a. What about in physical education?
2. What are your roles and responsibilities as a paraprofessional/PHE teacher related to students with disabilities?
    a. How are your roles and responsibilities decided upon and divided?
        i. Who decides on your roles? How do you know what your roles are?
3. What method(s) do you use to communicate with the PHE teacher/paraprofessional you work with?
    a. What is/are the most effective method(s)?
    b. When do these methods of communication occur?
        i. before, during, or after the lesson?
    c. How often do these interactions occur?
    d. Where do these interactions occur?
        i. inside the classroom or outside the classroom
4. How has your experience working with the PHE teacher/paraprofessional been similar to other teachers/adults you have worked with?
    a. How has your experience been different from other teachers/adults you have worked with?
5. What factors may enable you to have an effective relationship with the PHE teacher/paraprofessional?
        i. What could improve your relationship?
6. Please discuss some examples of trials and triumphs when working as a team with PHE teachers/paraprofessional?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add?
8. Do you have any questions or comments for me?

Thank the participant for their time and participation. Remind them that everything will remain confidential.