

It is what it is': Critical Interpretations of Visually Impaired Persons' Experiences in Integrated Physical Education

Aaron Mason Justin A. Haegele (1) , Lindsay E. Ball (2), (3)

(1) Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University ,Graduate Student ,2004 Student
Recreation Center
4700 Powhatan Ave,
Norfolk Va, 23529

(2) Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University

(3) Human Movement Sciences at Old Dominion University

Type of Contribution:

Age Range Middle School, High School

Population Visual Impairment

Physical Activity Visual Impairment

Session Activity Poster Session

The purpose of this study was to explore the acceptance of visually impaired students within integrated physical education. A critical qualitative research approach was utilized, and 22 visually impaired youth (age 12-17 years) acted as participants. Data sources included one-on-one Zoom interviews and reflexive interview notes. Data were analyzed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach, and three themes were constructed: (a) ocular-centric norm producing stigma; (b) accepting the 'humility' of a visually impaired persons; (c) microsocial origins of oppressing visually impaired persons. Participants remained sensitive to external sources this is illustrated in interactions between peers, teachers, and settings. The ways in which the participant's found solace (i.e., 'humility') was potentially through accepting circumstantial inevitabilities of participating in 'norm' led interactional settings. These coping strategies suggest that the conditions were that of ambivalent survival and not participant-generated thriving (i.e., pursuits of joy, engagement, enjoyment). Even for participants, who did indicate comparatively positive associations with PE, which were fewer, indicated less excitable states of amotivation perhaps avoiding over-excitation towards feelings of hope that change is even plausibly accessible from their worldview. Socially oppressive conditions, often taking the form of, "they are doing their best", were intrinsically linked to interconnective levels of positive generativity. For example, in one situation, a student could enjoy a familiar group of peers, but this stretched only insofar as the peer-group interactions were that of offering more consistent conditions of supportive modes of being; whereby acceptance is not a universal state of being. Engaging critically was integral to the analysis process, as it allowed for researcher self-identification of 'epistemically violent' interpretations. As 'critical interpretation' can be misunderstood as inherently negative, critical engagement with the data led to otherwise taken-for-granted missed opportunities to challenge existing assumptions. To illustrate this, participant's conditional justificatory statements or post-rationalized assessments, often elevated the 'negativities' and by doing so, mitigated impact on 'able-others' behalves (e.g., doing their best) or were 'humbled' through