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## School HPE: its mandate, responsibility and role in educating for social cohesion

Wayne Smith<sup>a</sup>, Rod Philpot<sup>a</sup>, Göran Gerdin <sup>b</sup>, Katarina Schenker<sup>b</sup>, Susanne Linnér<sup>b</sup>, Lena Larsson<sup>c</sup>, Kjersti Mordal Moen<sup>d</sup> and Knut Westlie<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand; <sup>b</sup>Department of Sport Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Linnaeus University, Växjö, Sweden; <sup>c</sup>Department of Sport Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Linnaeus University, Kalmar, Sweden; <sup>d</sup>Department of Public Health and Sport Sciences, Faculty of Social and Health Sciences, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Elverum, Norway

### ABSTRACT

In a world of increasing diversity in which many established democracies are now consumed by capitalist individualism and protectionist ideals, a focus on equity and social justice is particularly pertinent. For many years, scholars have proposed that schools have the educational responsibility to prepare children for peaceful living in a heterogeneous society and claimed that health and physical education (HPE) activities at school can enhance interpersonal relations, and social cohesion. This paper explores the definition of social cohesion, as well as theories that support its inclusion in school practices before drawing on observational and interview data from of an international project that reveal how HPE teachers across three different countries teach for social cohesion. In our analysis of the data, we employ Allport's 'Contact Theory' (1954) and Pettigrew's (1998) extension of this theory to conceptualise and interpret the teaching for social cohesion in HPE practice. Within the overarching theme of teaching for social cohesion we present and discuss five sub-themes as examples of the teachers' pedagogies: (1) a focus on inclusiveness; (2) the inclusion of culturally inclusive practices; (3) building teacher/student and student/student relationships; (4) planning and structuring activities for students to work together in heterogeneous teams while focusing on cooperation; and (5) focusing on personal and social responsibility by encouraging adherence to the principles of fair play and democratically determined rules. We conclude by stating that HPE should be recognised for its role in creating opportunities for constructive social interaction between students of difference, which can contribute to greater inclusion, social cohesion and ultimately social justice in society.

### ARTICLE HISTORY



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### KEYWORDS

Social cohesion; inclusion; social justice; relationships; physical education

## Introduction

- I** Interaction – positive social interaction leads to social cohesion and a state of collective good
- N** Non-oppression – a non-oppressive environment welcomes everyone
- C** Communication – positive, caring ways of communicating are inclusive
- L** Learning – becoming inclusive involves learning about social cohesion and collective good
- U** Understanding – involves understanding difference and recognising the individuality of others

**CONTACT** Göran Gerdin  goran.gerdin@lnu.se  Department of Sport Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Linnaeus University, 351 95 Växjö, Sweden

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- S** Support – supportive environments and supporting others builds a sense of community
- I** Incorporating differences – recognising the other and incorporating otherness in practice
- O** Openness – being open-minded and open to change promotes inclusive communities
- N** Non-discriminatory – inclusion means the elimination of discriminatory practices. (Waite, 2019)

As a compulsory school subject, health and physical education (HPE) has a mandate, responsibility, and the potential to contribute to lifelong health and well-being. In fact, the World Summit on HPE in 1999 proposed that HPE had the potential to be *the most* effective educative forum for providing the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding for lifelong health and well-being (Doll-Tepper & Scoretz, 2001). However, the belief that the task of addressing the health and well-being of individuals is simply a matter of educating the individual so that he or she may take responsibility for his or her own health is not sufficient. In today's society there is a need to also recognise the greater forces that impact on the well-being of individuals and we must address these forces at a societal level. In a world of increasing diversity in which many established democracies are now consumed by capitalist individualism and protectionist ideals, a focus on equity and social justice is particularly pertinent (Azzarito et al., 2017). These present-day societal changes that have arisen due, in part, to increased levels of ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual diversity are requiring many of us in the teaching profession to seek answers to issues of inequality and injustice. Azzarito et al. (2017) argued that school curricula have a contribution to make by replacing the goals of neoliberal competitiveness with more equity-based goals. These messages arising from inequality and injustice have led the authors of this paper to ask, does the educative mandate of HPE have to include greater responsibility for socially critical education? We believe the answer is yes, and we have been encouraged by the findings from a recently conducted international research project, which provides examples of how this is happening in schools.

This paper reports one of the key findings of the project – Education for Equitable Health Outcomes – The Promise of School Health and Physical Education (EDUHEALTH), which was undertaken by Health and Physical Education Teacher Education (HPETE) researchers from Sweden, Norway and New Zealand. The EDUHEALTH research team recognises that HPE has always had an educative role in attaining positive health outcomes for students, and now the examples we have gathered support the view that many HPE teachers are seeking to address (or perhaps having to address) not just individual health but broader social health issues that relate as much to the health of society as they do to individuals. One means of addressing this is through teaching for social cohesion in their HPE classes. For many years, scholars have proposed that schools have the educational responsibility to prepare children for peaceful living in a heterogeneous society (Grimminger-Seidensticker & Möhwald, 2017) and claimed that HPE activities at school can enhance interpersonal relations, and social cohesion (Benn, Dagkas, & Jawad, 2011; Lawson, 2005). Yet Dagkas (2018) cautions that the causal link between HPE and sport and positive social outcomes is still under-researched, we still lack a clear understanding of the contributions they can make. In making sense of these claims and cautions, our starting position is that the potential of HPE to contribute to social cohesion will be linked to the quality of the teachers' practices in privileging these learning outcomes. This paper explores the definition of social cohesion, as well as theories that support its inclusion in school practices before reporting on the findings of the EDUHEALTH project that reveal how the HPE teachers we observed across the three countries taught for social cohesion.

### **Conceptual framework – teaching for social cohesion 'is more than teaching cooperation'**

Maintaining social cohesion in the face of large-scale immigration from countries of widely differing cultures is one of the fundamental challenges facing Europe and other Western countries in the twenty-first century (Lleixà & Nieva, 2018). Although we often view social cohesion as simply getting on with one another and perhaps substitute the term with cooperation, a more nuanced analysis reveals that social cohesion is much more than cooperation. A meaningful curriculum

underpinned by socially cohesive goals requires teachers to have a deep understanding of societal issues and to know what outcomes they are seeking from their pedagogy. The essence lies in the word cohesion or ‘bond’ that draws individuals and groups together with a specific agenda of achieving fair and just outcomes. Emile Durkheim (1893/1960) first promoted the concept of social cohesion in the late 1800s, arguing that it exists when societies function as integrated systems with shared principles and values. He emphasised the need for solidarity stating that ‘social cohesion is not a by-product of individual behaviour but rather based on solidarity, shared loyalties, cooperation and mutual action’ (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 584). Trust in one another is an essential requirement of social cohesion. Trust in each other enables all individuals and groups to engage in a shared moral community. However, trust is not only of other individuals but also of institutions including social institutions, and this means trust in the fairness and equity of the laws, institutional practices and the moral foundations of society as a whole. Trust in others and institutions is both strengthened by and strengthens cooperation and solidarity. In turn, solidarity is the cohesion that leads to a sense of belonging, common identity, and the endeavour of socially just outcomes (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). It should be noted, however, that social cohesion only has a social justice agenda when it seeks to establish a socially just society.

Following a macro-analysis of the social cohesion literature, Schiefer and van der Noll (2017) concluded that there are three core dimensions of social cohesion: (1) the quality of social relations (including social networks, trust, acceptance of diversity, and participation); (2) identification with a social entity; and (3) orientation towards a common good (sense of responsibility, solidarity, compliance to social order). Cohesion lies in a collective understanding, empathy, acceptance of difference, and willingness to be inclusive and abide by common values and rules in our shared social spaces. Although teachers often focus on individuals when attempting to build social relationships, social cohesion should be viewed as a collective rather than individual trait, as it is a characteristic of society rather than an individual. However, these characteristics can be seen at different levels, in the attitudes of individuals towards inclusion and fairness, in communities and groups through their integration and openness to others, and in societies through their public institutions, laws and policies. When teaching for social cohesion, teachers should be cognisant of both the nature of the relationships between individuals and the nature of the relationships between groups, particularly between dominant and minority groups that may be defined by differences in ability, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

The perceived need to focus on social cohesion comes to the fore in times of social unrest, greater social inequity (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009) and large-scale social changes that undermine the established social fabric of our societies. Today, the changing face of societies and school populations, impact on why, how and what we teach in HPE. When individuals and groups with different cultures, values, beliefs, life-chances, and socio-economic resources share the same social space in our classes we have an obligation to address matters of social cohesion and inequity so that our students can learn to both recognise the unique cultural resources of different students and collectively address unjust structures in society that create unequal life-chance outcomes. If school HPE is to be *the most* effective educative forum for providing the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and understanding for lifelong health and well-being, as the 1999 World Summit on HPE stated, then it has to focus on teaching for social cohesion as part of, or a precursor to, social justice.

### **How can we teach for social cohesion in school HPE?**

Although there are many sporting interventions that focus on social cohesion (Kelly, 2011), there is little research that examines the contribution of school HPE to social cohesion. Bailey (2005) proposes that HPE (and sport) contribute to social cohesion by improving human capital gained through better physical health, improved cognitive and academic performance, improved mental health, crime reduction and reduction of truancy. Although ‘social cohesion’ as a concept rarely features in HPE literature, it is represented instead by concepts such as social inclusion (Dagkas, 2018; Lleixà & Nieva,

2018; Tolgfors, 2019) or group cohesion (Jenkins & Alderman, 2011). Tolgfors (2019) recently reported how HPE teachers in a Swedish school characterised by a large number of new immigrants promoted intercultural encounters through novel, minor games that provide 'a small step toward getting to know each other' (p. 8). They intentionally used adapted ball games and modified physical activities in randomised groups, changing the focus of the games from physical skills to interpersonal skills and collaboration to promote intercultural encounters among their Swedish-born and recently arrived students. In another study, grouping strategies and intercultural communication competence were promoted by Spanish primary school teachers as key strategies to improve the social inclusion of immigrant girls in physical education activities (Lleixà & Nieva, 2018). Previous research that has focused on social cohesion have included the benefits of social interactions (Jenkins & Alderman, 2011), the contributions of HPE curriculum models such as cooperative learning (Dyson & Casey, 2012), adventure-based learning (Cosgriff, 2000), teaching for personal and social responsibility (Helson, 2011) and sport education (Siedentop, 1994).

Bringing students of difference together in meaningful activities in order for them to get to know and understand one another better is central to Allport's (1954) contact theory. In mid-last century, Allport proposed that contact with people different from oneself would lead to attitude change if presented under the right conditions. His contact theory stated that as people come into contact with others different from themselves, their prejudiced ideas diminish. However, he qualified the nature of the contact, stating that 'the contact must reach below the surface in order to be effective in altering prejudice' (McKay, 2018, p. 76), meaning that this contact must uncover and address entrenched prejudices if it is to achieve socially just outcomes. He continued stating, 'only the type of contact that leads people to do things together is likely to result in changed attitudes' (McKay, 2018, p. 76). Allport (1954) subsequently, specified four necessary conditions that need to be present during the contact: (a) equal status, (b) adherence to common goals, (c) cooperation, and (d) identification and acceptance of social norms. Later, Slininger et al. (2000) added intimate or meaningful interactions to Allport's four categories.

Further research and scholarship relating to group rather than individual contact by Pettigrew (1998) led to a more nuanced explanation of the contact required between ingroup and outgroup participants. Whilst Pettigrew supported Allport's key conditions, he added a fifth stating that 'the contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends' (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 776, italics in original). To achieve this, he argued that four interrelated processes are necessary: (1) learning about the outgroup; (2) changing behaviours; (3) generating affective ties; and (4) ingroup reappraisal. He further argued that 'constructive contact relates more closely to long-term close relationships than to initial acquaintanceship' (p. 76). This time for building more intimate contact provides multiple opportunities to enable self-disclosure and friendship-developing practices that lead to improved social cohesion. To reconnect to the EDUHEALTH project, we propose that the very nature of compulsory school HPE, when undertaken over many years, provides the optimal long-term conditions necessary to establish ingroup and outgroup friendships.

Previous studies have used contact theory to show positive results from regular meaningful contact. For example, several studies (Barr & Bracchita, 2008; Kalymon et al., 2010; Murata et al., 2000) have focused on the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms and found that regular contact with non-disabled children improves their inclusion in society. Murata et al. (2000) concentrated on HPE classes and found that equal status contact had long-term positive effects on the students' attitudes towards children with disabilities. Other studies have found that attitudes towards members of different ethnic groups can improve through regular meaningful contact (Sigelman & Welch, 1993) and Herek and Capitanio (1996) found that attitudes towards students of different sexualities improved with regular contact. Recently, McKay (2019) advocated for the inclusion of contact theory in HPE classes. She suggested that teachers could do this by: creating HPE settings that facilitate relationship building and equitable social interactions among students; supporting equitable class environments in which no one group has an inferior role or status; planning

interactive situations that are cooperative rather than competitive and that require students to work together to achieve group goals, and; building a sense of class community.

## The EDUHEALTH project

The EDUHEALTH project was undertaken in Sweden, Norway and New Zealand over a period of three years. It followed a 'bottom-up' approach that explored how HPE teachers' can teach in ways that can improve individual and societal health, and thereby increase health outcomes for all.

## The research process

The research project was granted ethical approval by the Swedish Regional Ethical Approval Committee, the Norwegian Centre for Data Research and the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee in New Zealand. It was piloted in all three countries in 2017, which, following review, resulted in focused observations of HPE lessons and teacher interviews in New Zealand, Norway and Sweden over a period of nine months from March to December 2018. Data were generated from 20 HPE lesson observations and post-lesson interviews with 13 HPE teachers (7 male and 6 female; age 32–49 years), ranging from 3 to 25 years teaching experience. The participant-teachers were selected through purposive sampling (Bryman, 2016) based on the researchers' prior knowledge that the teachers had an interest in social justice agendas.

The lesson observations employed critical incident technique (CIT) (Tripp, 2012) and stimulated-recall interviews (Patton, 2002). 'Critical incidents' were incidents that captured the teachers' pedagogy and class events that foregrounded issues of equity and social justice. The observations were undertaken by cross-nation researcher teams. All but one lesson observation had a least one researcher from each country. Incidents were recorded independently by each researcher on a common proforma that was specifically designed for the project. Significant events were initially recorded as 'captured incidents' (CAPs), which were anything from a momentary interaction or happening during the lesson, to an apparent whole lesson objective or occurrence. Following each observation, the research team met and collated their lists of captured incidents. For a captured incident to become a critical incident, there was a need to determine its link to the social justice agenda. In many cases, this required clarification of the teacher's intentions, which was sought during the stimulated-recall interviews that followed as soon after the lesson as possible (for an in-depth explanation of captured versus critical incidents, see Philpot et al., *in press*). For consistency in the stimulated-recall interviews, a common set of open questions was used. The questions were designed to allow the teacher the opportunity to elaborate on their pedagogies and explicate their thinking behind the identified CAPs.

## Data analysis

The recorded incidents and interview transcripts were uploaded to a common password protected online document storage platform. The data were then analysed independently by all researchers, following the principles of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). The data analysis resulted in three primary themes. The three themes were (1) relationships, (2) teaching for social cohesion, and (3) explicitly teaching about and acting on social inequities.

What follows specifically focuses on the second theme, 'teaching for social cohesion' and highlights the teachers' related pedagogy as well as the significance the teachers gave to addressing social cohesion in their lessons. To enable this, following the initial identification of the three primary themes, the first author of this article undertook a second-tier analysis of the data using the same principles of thematic analysis with a specific focus on drawing out examples of 'teaching for social cohesion'. From this, five sub-themes were identified. They inform the

proposition of this article, which is, that teaching for social cohesion in school HPE is seen to be important and perhaps a precursor to, as well as an integral component of, teaching for social justice.

## Findings – the EDUHEALTH project research contexts

Before specifically addressing the five sub-themes of teaching for social cohesion we first highlight the range of research contexts we drew from in this EDUHEALTH project. To protect the confidentiality of the teachers, but retain the context, we have used pseudonyms for the teachers, referred to the context by country only and not named any of the schools. In our data presentation, we use the abbreviation ‘CAP’ to show a captured incident, along with the participant-teacher pseudonym to designate the teacher and country-code NO (Norway), SWE (Sweden) and NZ (New Zealand) to designate the context.

The cross-nation scope of the EDUHEALTH project enabled observation of a range of participant-teacher practices and student interactions. We focused exclusively on the junior secondary or middle school sector and restricted our observations to mixed-gender classes in co-educational schools. These included a range of socio-economically different schools with a high number of students of ethnic and religious difference. We observed classes with new immigrant children in them, some of whom were refugees, as well as classes with minority and/or indigenous students. For example, our captured incident records show that in Norway we observed ‘a class of 15 girls, 9 boys – 2 Muslim girls with hijab’ (CAP, Per, NO), in Sweden we observed classes with ‘high numbers of recent arrivals, many of whom were refugees’ (CAP, Kane, SW), and others in which ‘up to 50% of students had parents who were not born in Sweden’ and where ‘there were 32 different languages spoken’ (CAP, Charlie, SWE). In New Zealand we observed ‘a class of 18 students, two New Zealand European, rest Māori/Pacific Ocean/Chinese’ (CAP, Kendall, NZ) and ‘a co-educational [school], [of] 550 students, 68% New Zealand European, 16% Asian, 6% Māori, 6% Pacific Islanders, 6% Other’ (CAP, Tane, NZ).

## Teaching for social cohesion

Within the overarching theme of *teaching for social cohesion* we present five sub-themes that in effect, are examples of the teachers’ enactment of pedagogies for social cohesion. These sub-themes are: (1) a focus on inclusiveness; (2) the inclusion of culturally inclusive pedagogies; (3) building teacher/student and student/student relationships; (4) team building, heterogeneous teams and cooperative games; and (5) developing personal and social responsibility. We will now provide examples of these pedagogies linking them to the previously named conditions for, and elements of, contact theory and social cohesion.

### *A focus on inclusiveness*

Many of the participant-teachers demonstrated the importance of establishing an inclusive class environment, with several stressing the need for them to ensure that they included all students to make them feel that they belonged. Inclusiveness was most often generated by the teachers’ own positive and supportive attitude towards their students, or in their planning to provide meaningful enjoyable experiences. For example, in her interview, Kari stated that ‘I want everyone to be successful. When everyone is successful, they feel part of the group. The students’ experiences matter most with the student’s self-achievement being most important not performance outcomes’ (Kari, NO). When teaching, Kari presented a positive disposition, which she wanted to be infectious. As she said: ‘enthusiasm gives enthusiasm back again’ (Kari, NO).

Emma said that ‘she wanted her students to feel safe and comfortable’ (CAP, Emma, SWE). When asked to explain a captured incident in which she helped a student one-on-one, Emma said, ‘I just



wanted to make her feel comfortable because she was really *struggling*' (Emma, SWE). Another teacher, Charlie, greeted all her students and gave some a hug as they arrived. As our captured incident states '[Charlie] goes the extra mile to make her students feel welcome, she greets the students and gives some of them a hug' (CAP, Charlie, SWE). Kendall also presented a caring approach stating that 'she saw herself as being a caring mother figure as much as a teacher who was giving sound, experience and knowledgeable guidance to her students' (Kendall, NZ).

Another key inclusive characteristic was the teachers' wish to see their students as being unique individuals, with many intentionally providing different forms of support and different opportunities for different individuals. Dillon said that 'he treated students differently according to [their] history and earlier involvement' (CAP, Dillon, NZ). Per mentioned that 'social inclusion is something that is always there. It's important not to exclude anyone' (Per, NO). Many 'went the extra mile' to give students extra time (sometimes outside of class time). For example, Emma, 'knowing that one of the new immigrant children didn't have a bike, organised for one to be available for him' (CAP, Emma, SWE). In her interview she said, 'I have bikes and optional clothing for swimming ... because I want them to know that if you want to come and be clothed then you can' (Emma, SWE).

The above examples of the participant-teachers' pedagogies exemplify how the teachers aimed to provide inclusive learning environments. The examples provided demonstrate how these teachers aimed to build social inclusion, acceptance of all, and full participation. Their practices align with Allport's (1954) contact theory in attempting to create equal status and inclusion among the student body which they did in various ways from 'warm' 'caring' teaching approaches to seeing the uniqueness of individual students and being supportive of the students' different learning needs.

### ***Including culturally inclusive pedagogy***

As an extension to inclusive pedagogy some of the participant-teachers recognised the need to include culturally inclusive or culturally sensitive pedagogy. For example, in New Zealand two of the teachers included the indigenous Māori language and Māori values in their lessons. Kendall, for example, stated that she included them because of her awareness of past and ongoing Eurocentric colonisation and her wish to address this in her lessons. Kendall:

used te reo Māori (Māori language) on a wall chart and on the whiteboard. 'He mahi tahi tatou mo te oraanga o te katoa' – which means 'we should all work together for the wellbeing of everyone'. (CAP, Kendall, NZ)

When asked during her interview why she had this commitment, Kendall explained that:

this was her commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi (a treaty signed by Māori and the British crown in 1840) indicating further evidence of her critical consciousness and willingness to establish not only an inclusive environment but also what she perceived to be issues of equity and social justice. (CAP, Kendall, NZ)

Another teacher, Tane, also used te reo Māori during his lesson, with directions such as 'Haere mai (come here), taonga (the treasured ball in the middle)' (CAP, Tane, NZ). In Sweden, Kane had been teaching classes of new immigrant children for two years and recognised the need for culturally sensitive pedagogy (Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2018). Kane stated:

when I started working [at this school] I started with full immigrant children and I had to adapt my way of teaching to that with body language and always showing or using other students to show them how to do it. (Kane, SWE)

He explained how he had overcome potential issues with swimming lessons for these students.

There was so [much] stuff that was new to them. [We] kind of put a lot of time into swimming because in Sweden you have to be able to swim 200 metres and many of the students who were coming here have never been swimming in their whole life ... I think at this school we have 40 or 50 girls who only swim with other girls. They are not allowed to swim with boys ... We have the Iman from the mosque coming here talking to them ... So [now] they have like a full dress on like a swimsuit and it covers their hair and then they can participate. So, it is no problem. (Kane, SWE)



These teachers showed that they were aware that cultural sensitivity and critical consciousness are necessary starting points for building social cohesion across multiple groups and for addressing deeper issues of equity and social justice. They were very aware that their inclusive pedagogy had the potential to increase trust, acceptance of diversity, and full participation, but perhaps more importantly, to break down social barriers between different groups. These inclusive practices for outgroup students are important in terms of facilitating meaningful contacts with and inclusion of outgroups to reduce negative social interactions (Pettigrew, 1998).

### ***Building positive teacher/student and student/student relationships***

Building positive teacher/student relationships is very important for teachers because it helps to build trust, acceptance and equal status, as well as increase trust in institutional authorities, like schools, that aim to serve the common good. The teachers' dispositions were key to building positive relationships. Our captured incidents described these as 'being warm and friendly', 'vibrant and enthusiastic', 'always smiling', 'humorous' and 'empathetic'. For example, John said 'I think when someone is positive to you, you are inclined to be quite positive yourself and you feel as if you have done something well and it sets the tone' (John, NZ). Dillon said '[they] know it is okay for me to just have a bit of a joke ... it just kind of takes away that authoritarian approach' (Dillon, NZ). Kari also smiles and jokes with the students saying it 'breaks down social barriers' (Kari, NO). Candice stated, 'I find it almost impossible to teach if I don't have a relationship with the students, like I find it really difficult' (Candice, NZ). Kari also recognised that one-to-one relationships were effective. She 'talks one to one with the students before and after class, so that students feel safe to express themselves' (CAP, Kari NO).

As we see in the above examples, building teacher/student relationships was seen to be important (for further discussion of this see Mordal Moen et al., 2019), but building student to student relationships was just as important. Many teachers showed that they wanted to develop cooperative student to student interactions in their lessons. Often, the aim of developing inter-student cooperation was the focus of the lesson and not simply a secondary outcome, that is, these teachers saw this as being an important learning outcome of HPE. Charlie, for example:

introduced the lesson by explicitly showing that the aim was to develop collaboration and tactics through games. She used a card with the word 'collaboration' on it so that the students could clearly see that this was the lesson focus. (CAP, Charlie, SWE)

Most teachers purposefully and carefully mixed students and used multiple-paired activities to maximise the range of student to student interactions. For example, Kari used 'Cross-group mixing to encourage social integration ... and different combinations to encourage intra-group diversity and to help the students understand the nature of diversity within their own class' (CAP, Kari, NO).

The nature of the pedagogies used to build positive inter-student relationships frequently involved physical contact between the students, with students holding hands during game activities or physically supporting one another during problem-solving activities. Kari used 'a tag game [that] required students to hold hands and work with a partner BUT rather than stay with the same partner, the pairs must split everytime a tag is made' (CAP, Kari, NO). The lessons also involved deep discussions among groups of students, as they discussed and negotiated who would do what, what was fair and what was not etc. For example, Charlie, 'asked the students to go to their places on the court in their teams and discuss how they can work together (collaborate) in the game they are playing' (CAP, Charlie, SWE). Although competitive in nature, most of these games were not formal sports involving high stakes competition but rather made-up games that required teamwork and cooperation with the reward being perhaps a momentary sense of collective achievement. Many were self-governed, to encourage cooperative interaction. Candice's focus was on self-management so she:

chose small teams ... to enable self- and group management at a level that was possible for these students. It appeared that the expectation was that ALL, i.e. boys and girls, who were of different backgrounds, would participate equally. (CAP, Candice, NZ)

We can see here a high degree of congruence with Allport's (1954) variables for building the quality of social networks, developing trust and solidarity, and reaching below the surface to alter prejudice and Slininger et al.'s (2000) call for the development of long-term, intimate or meaningful interactions so that students come to know one another for who they really are.

### ***Team building, heterogeneous groups and cooperative games***

The foundation of Allport's (1954) contact theory is the need for meaningful contact between people of diverse backgrounds and different life experiences to come together within a context of equal status to embark on common goals. With his focus on 'ingroup' and 'outgroup' interactions, Pettigrew's (1998) went further arguing for active, goal directed 'intergroup' interactions. He specified the establishment of structured interactions that enable affective (intimate) ties between groups. These interactions, he said, should require both groups to learn about the other, reflect on and reappraise their own relative positions and where necessary change behaviours. He also stated that intergroup cooperation in schools provides the strongest evidence of how having common goals can enhance intergroup cohesion.

Team building, team games, cooperative group activities, and the use of teacher structured heterogeneous groups was a cross-nation feature of most HPE classes we observed. These interactive, team activities cohere with the aforementioned calls from Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998). They also support Slininger et al.'s (2000) claim that individuals need to identify with a social entity (a team) in the pursuit of common goals. In Norway we observed Kari:

working on team building, that is, how to work together as a team. She uses cross-group mixing to encourage social integration through working together for the common good of all in the team. Uses different combinations to encourage intragroup diversity and to help the students understand the nature of diversity within their own class. (CAP, Kari, NO)

In her post-lesson interview Kari said:

The aim of the session was to do activities where they must work together and do something together ... with a view to building a safe and happy environment ... Also, I like to add the [rule] where they have to change partners after each, and be with more, in that I want to build this social community and the relationships between pupils ... then they must even more talk together and make a plan and perhaps discuss a little to solve the task together. Also, I wished that they would dare to hold hands, be a bit, like that close then, that is also to build relationships and make it safe. (Kari, NO)

Per (NO), also explained his reasons for focusing on intergroup relations:

Interviewer: you had a conscious thought around this group composition, based on what you said earlier?  
 Per: Oh yes. And forcing some processes that they have to work with someone they usually do not communicate much with. Building relationships with each other. ... I think they need training in working in this way, and I knew that from before. That it is a way of working that they are not very well practiced with.

Interviewer: So, what you're saying then is that this cooperation must also be learned?  
 Per: Yes, yes. It must be learned ... So, yes, it applies to all, teamwork and fair play, and all that should be considered, in physical education. We have worked [on] the team building activities, It is now the second year I have [had] them ... We have worked a lot with activities to avoid unwanted incidents and tensions between the different groups ... So, we [have] had a lot of activities in which they [have] had to cooperate.

Charlie also worked on group cohesion. She 'placed the students in mixed groups and changed these during the lesson to mix students up. [She] questioned the students about cooperating and ensured that they understood it in practice' (CAP, Charlie, SWE). One of the other teachers, Candice, used:

a known, enjoyable team game for teaching the more important 'bigger matters' of establishing strong social cohesion. The enjoyable game enabled social collaboration and a medium for developing socially acceptable practices and in this case self-management within this collective. (CAP, Candice, NZ)

In her follow up interview, Candice explained that:

they [the students] have to take part in group processing and they have to work together and they have to discuss group processes on how they work together as a group and whether [they are] successful or not. (Candice, NZ)

These examples of critical incidents reflect the teachers' intentional pedagogical work (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000) for social cohesion with their use of heterogeneous groups, and enjoyable cooperative team activities in their HPE lessons. The teachers recognise the value of HPE for developing meaningful relationships within and across groups. They also recognise the role they play in creating socially safe educational contexts. Team cooperative games and heterogeneous groups are particularly valuable for bridging social barriers especially when students find themselves in contexts of unfamiliarity or insecurity such as at the start of school years, or when they move between schools, or immigrate to a new country or simply when their ethnicity, cultural or religious values differ from others who share the same social space. The formal setting of the HPE classroom interactions both while playing and in discussion enables the type of intimate meaningful interaction between individuals and groups that is necessary to generate common ties, learn about others including members of an outgroup, negotiate the conditions of play and perhaps change behaviours, but most importantly, appraise their own beliefs (Pettigrew, 1998).

### ***Developing personal and social responsibility***

Two further variables of social cohesion are the acceptance of society's norms and support for authorities, law, or custom (Pettigrew, 1998). It is presumed that both ultimately lead to solidarity and a common good. In HPE these values are often addressed when teachers focus on developing personal and social responsibility and compliance to social order. This can, for instance, be taught using Hellison's (2011) well known pedagogical model of 'Teaching for Personal and Social Responsibility' (TPSR). Another common approach is through the enactment of the principles of 'fair play'. Fair play, and its inherent democratic principles of fairness for all, is almost always associated with games and sport but when one drills down it is not hard to see how these principles of fairness, self and social responsibility, and the need to value and adhere to democratically determined rules can also be applied beyond the HPE class.

In the classes we observed, the students were encouraged to answer what it means to be fair and why they should play fairly. In one example, the teacher, John (NZ), chose some rules from a list that the students had devised. After the initial games were played the teams were encouraged to reflect on how well they worked and if they wanted to change them to get more players involved in the game. In Kendall's lesson, some of the students cheated during a game, resulting in some of the other students complaining to her, however:

she didn't respond at the time but rather afterwards said how did you feel when they cheated? How did it affect the game and what shall we (collectively) do about it in the next game? The expectation was that the students themselves (with her support) would come up with the solutions to their issues rather than her ... At the end of the lesson, [Kendall] talked to the class about the levels [TPSR levels] that they had achieved and the cheating that some did. She said: 'Don't look at me as an umpire – be honest'. She asked what level cheating was, and everyone seemed to know that it was level 0. This highlighted that each person had a responsibility to not cheat, as an issue of fairness. (CAP, Kendall, NZ)

Like Kendall, many teachers felt that they had a role to play in helping their students become more responsible for their actions rather than being directed by an authoritative source. In this endeavour, many of the participant-teachers provided the opportunity for the students to work independently in supervised but trusting environments. They encouraged student choice with the expectation that the students would accept this and behave responsibly. In one incident the teacher, Candice, selected mixed teams, then:

sent the students off to organise their own small-sided games of a game they knew well. She expected the students to take responsibility for their own actions and play fairly and to support or caution others when necessary.

She asked them to organise their own captains, set up the equipment on the field, begin the game and referee themselves. At the end of the lesson she gathered the class in and asked. How did the games go? (Even though she had at times joined in and probably knew). How did you behave? How can you work on your personal and social responsibility outside of the PE lesson, in life? (CAP, Candice, NZ)

In her interview, Candice clarified the lesson goal saying that:

self-management [was] the unit and we have done lots of different things ... So the first lesson was teaching personal and social responsibility. It is quite a big task to get them from never hearing about what TPSR is to being able to have some thoughtful reflection. (Candice, NZ)

Kari also used team and cooperative games to teach personal and social development. At the beginning of her lesson:

she and the students discuss the meaning of fair play so that they all have a common understanding ... Students share in discussion to decide the nature of fair play so it is an opportunity for them to participate in a democratic process for the good of all. The teacher supports the lesson objectives with related questions about fair play. (CAP, Kari, NO)

Another teacher, Emma:

had been teaching the same students for many years and knew them and their capabilities well. She had trust in them. She asked each student to create an activity for the others to follow. After leaving them to come up with the activities she then joined in and commented on the chosen exercises. (CAP, Emma, SWE)

She said in her interview that she knew:

they would be personally responsible to carry out the exercise lesson and undertake an out of class assignment ... [because] they are used to this expectation of independent learning and taking responsibility for their own learning. (Emma, SWE)

This last sub-theme specifically addresses the need for all to develop responsible social relations, identify with a social entity, cohere with democratically determined rules of fairness and ultimately to establish social order for a common good, the very nature of social cohesion (Durkheim, 1893/1960; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017).

## Discussion

The intention of the EDUHEALTH project was to find out and describe how HPE teachers enact pedagogies that have a social justice agenda, however, our findings show that in many instances, the participant-teachers foregrounded teaching for social cohesion rather than teaching for social justice. In some instances, it is possible to draw a direct link between the two, such as when employing culturally responsive or culturally sensitive pedagogy (Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2018), whilst at other times it is not so obvious. It is also possible that teaching for social cohesion is both a precursor and necessary first step towards teaching for social justice. When pupils limit their interactions to peers with the same cultural backgrounds in school, there is also little prospect of social cohesion outside its walls (Perry & Southwell, 2011). Learning tasks in HPE that require collaboration in mixed groups can therefore be seen as important for the students' understanding of both the subject content and each other (Tolgfors, 2019).

Although we, as critical scholars, propose that teachers *should* attend to social justice issues by addressing structural inequities, we recognise that many of these structural issues are possibly beyond the power of the teacher to control. Perhaps, as Tinning (2002) suggests, a modest (critical) pedagogy which focuses on more modest but realistic outcomes, such as developing a more socially cohesive society, is a more achievable goal for HPE. Perhaps we need to better recognise the often taken-for-granted value of the playful, interactive environment of compulsory HPE, and the skill of a quality HPE teacher to build social cohesion through a context that privileges the positive social interaction of heterogenous groups of students.

To the outside observer, the playful interactions of the students in HPE could well be taken to be just typical adolescent behaviour, but the findings represented above show that these structured HPE lessons amount to much more than play, by providing meaningful interactions that focus on social cohesion. The teachers in this study recognise that all students need to build relationships, trust and learn to value others and they therefore purposefully and carefully structure classroom learning experiences in a range of contexts including minor games, outdoor pursuits and modified sports to build social cohesion. Similar to previous studies that have examined how HPE teachers strive for social cohesion (see e.g. Jenkins & Alderman, 2011; Tolgfors, 2019), the findings in this paper highlight how teachers provide opportunities to work in heterogeneous groups and to problem solve in these mixed group settings and cooperative games, and perhaps most importantly how they developed their practices in culturally responsive ways. As Perry and Southwell (2011) suggest, until students interact with peers beyond their own social and cultural backgrounds in school, there is little prospect of social cohesion outside its walls. For this reason, HPE should be recognised for its role in creating opportunities for constructive social interaction between students of difference (no matter how big or small that might be).

The findings of the EDUHEALTH project exemplify how the HPE teachers teach for social cohesion, however, as Pettigrew (1998) argued, social cohesion as a quest for, or precursor to, social justice must move students' thinking beyond mere social integration to address the social conditions that privilege the values and beliefs of some communities, cultures and religions and require others (minorities) to adhere to these conditions. A socially cohesive society that seeks to negotiate and create a bond based on trust and shared values of all citizens is necessary. For this reason, whilst the five sub-themes identified in this research are important, teachers should remain mindful of the requisite conditions and processes in which social cohesion may develop. These include both Allport's (1954) and McKay's (2019) calls for activities that promote equal status, cooperation and agreement on social norms and Pettigrew's (1998) advocacy for practices that provide sufficient interaction to enable 'ingroup' students to learn about and develop affective ties with the 'outgroup', in order to appraise their own beliefs and change their behaviours.

Finally, if we ask the question – what is the role of HPE in relation to working for social inclusion and social justice, we could answer that it provides an ideal interactive learning context for the teaching of social cohesion and through extension social justice, by providing active learning experiences where students can learn with and about other students with whom they may not normally associate with in their daily lives and develop personal and social behaviours that can ultimately lead to both increased student and societal health and well-being. This study has served to reinforce our belief that the very nature of compulsory school HPE highlights its mandate, responsibility and role in educating for social cohesion.

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The results presented in this article only reflects the authors' views and the European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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## ORCID

Göran Gerdin  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2922-1993>

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