

## INTERVIEW

Rebecca Lloyd



Prof. Dr. Rebecca Lloyd

Rebecca Lloyd is the Director of Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Her award winning, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council- funded research is premised on interdisciplinary approaches to enhancing movement. Her current *InterActive for Life Project* promotes social-emotional relational connection in and through movement. See her <https://function2flow.ca/> website for a listing of her publications, physical education resources and methodological guidelines for doing motion-sensing phenomenology.

## Living the Curriculum: Perspectives of Physical Education Teacher Education in Canada

**RCC:** Canada functions as a democratic constitutional monarchy divided into ten provinces and three territories, all of which have their own autonomous Ministries of Education. In general terms, how is the subject of Physical Education organized in the various levels of education in Canada? What is common and what is specific to the context of Ontario, when compared to other Canadian provinces?

**Rebecca:** Since the 1867 Canadian Constitution Act, each of Canada's ten provinces and three territories are responsible for their own education that is publicly funded through taxation. Accordingly, each province has developed its own physical education curriculum. The three territories borrow curriculum documents from their neighbouring provinces as depicted in the summary table created in Lloyd (2015). The following webpage from Physical & Health Education (PHE) Canada is also helpful to get an overview of the physical education curriculum documents that are used in our ten provinces and three territories: <https://phecanada.ca/about/physical-and-health-education-curriculum-canada>.

Four provinces combine Physical Education and Health education in one curriculum document, namely British Columbia (BC), Alberta (AB), Ontario (ON), and Québec (QC). Ontario is the only curriculum that places Health first in its ordering of *Health & Physical Education Curriculum*. Alberta uses the term "wellness" in lieu of health in its *Physical Education and Wellness Curriculum*. Nunavut connects physical education not only to wellness, like Alberta, but also safety as well as one's place in society. Northwest Territories, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland & Labrador have separate curriculum documents for physical education and health education.

Regardless of province or territory, elementary and secondary learning outcomes are specified in separate curriculum documents. Curriculum planning with regards to hours allocated for physical education varies across Canada. The provinces of Saskatchewan,

Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador have mandated hours for PE scheduling that range from 30 to 150 minutes per week. The other provinces do not have specified times for PE programming but have Daily Physical Activity (DPA) mandates instead. For example, the [government policy memorandum N. 138](#) in Ontario states that students in grades 1-8 are to accumulate a minimum of twenty minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each school day during instructional time. This means that DPA can occur outside of the subject of physical education and could be taught by teachers with little experience or interest in teaching movement. In terms of DPA adherence, there are no consequences in place if the policy is not followed. What is unique about Ontario is that its DPA mandate is situated within a [Healthy Schools Framework](#).

**RCC: How is Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) structured in Ontario? What is required for a Physical Education teacher to be certified to work in this province?**

**Rebecca:** There are different university programs offered in the province of Ontario. At Brock University in St. Catharines Ontario for example, a six-year concurrent teacher education program is available which affords an opportunity to combine an undergraduate degree with a Bachelor of Education program. At the University of Ottawa where I teach, there is a two-year professional Bachelor of Education program that students apply to after completing a three to four year undergraduate degree. If the student wishes to specialize in a subject area such as physical education, they will apply to study teacher education at the intermediate and senior levels. If their interest is to teach younger students in kindergarten to grade four, they will experience a generalist program where they are expected to teach all the subjects. Students enrolled in the [Intermediate/Senior teacher education streams \(grades 7-12\)](#) have the opportunity to take two, three-credit HPE teacher education courses. Students in the [Primary/Junior \(Grades K-6\) stream](#) teacher education students have half the exposure to HPE.

To become a teacher in Ontario, students must successfully complete: a minimum of a three-year postsecondary degree from an acceptable postsecondary institution, a four semester teacher education program, pass a Mathematics Proficiency Test, and apply to the [Ontario College of Teachers](#) for certification.

**RCC: In the curricula of Canadian provinces, health is frequently associated with Physical Education. What is, broadly speaking, the understanding of health that is featured in these curricula, and how is this concept integrated into PETE, as well as into other relevant initiatives of continuing studies tailored to school teachers?**

**Rebecca:** The term Health, as it is depicted on pages 7 and 8 in the 2019 Ontario (ON) Health and Physical Education Curriculum (ON HPE) (ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2019) is situated within the concept of Health Literacy. In contrast to the monist philosophy upon which physical literacy is based (WHITEHEAD, 2010, 2019), there is a cognitive underpinning to Health Literacy as the focus is placed on the ability to “access, understand, evaluate and communicate

information” (ONTARIO HPE CURRICULUM, 2019, P. 7). This cognitive focus is also apparent in the Infographic on page 8 of the [ON HPE](#) curriculum as Health Literacy is associated with Understanding Health Concepts, Making Healthy Choices, and Making Connections for Healthy Living. The [ON HPE](#) curriculum also makes references to mental health by including Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills that pertain to identifying and managing emotions, recognizing sources of stress and coping with challenges, maintaining positive motivation, building relationships and communicating effectively, developing self-confidence and thinking critically and creatively (ONTARIO HPE CURRICULUM, 2019, p. 26). Healthy Living is also one of the four strands in the curriculum (see pages 24 and 40 in the [ON HPE](#) curriculum document) where grade specific learning outcomes are identified for the topics of Healthy Eating, Personal Safety and Injury Prevention, Substance Use, Addictions, and Related Behaviours, Human Development and Sexual Health, and Mental Health Literacy.

Many resources are made available to help physical education teachers integrate health literacy in their lessons and health-related learning outcomes. The Ontario Health and Physical Education Association (Ophea) provides [lesson and unit plans](#). The national organization of Physical and Health Education (PHE) Canada also provides resources for teaching health to students such as the sponsored [Always Changing](#) program as well as resources for teacher mental health such as [TeachResiliency](#).

**RCC: In your perspective, the curriculum is comprehended as a ‘living experience’ (LLOYD, 2018), thus hinting at the dynamic and ongoing nature of the educational process. Considering your expertise in this area, what are the most common feelings that PETE students and teachers express when they engage with the Ontario Curriculum for Health and Physical Education (ON HPE)?**

**Rebecca:** I think PETE students and teachers experience the [ON HPE](#) Curriculum in different ways. Some might get overwhelmed and focus on all the different objectives to reach in a disconnected fashion. My approach to introducing the curriculum is integrative and focused on creativity and possibility. I encourage my students to refer to the infographic on page 8 of the [ON HPE](#) curriculum as a sort of guide and checklist for creating and reflecting on their lessons as it outlines the importance of encouraging active participation, fitness, and safety in ways where we become aware of movement concepts and strategies, choices available to us, and connections to ourselves, others and the various contexts in which we find ourselves. When we start to think about healthy, active living in this integrative way, many curricular objectives and outcomes are naturally combined. Hence, a sense of synergy emerges.

I also point out to my students that our HPE curriculum affords creativity in that teaching methods or approaches are never prescribed. Reference is made to the Teaching Games for Understanding model on pages 35-38 in the [ON HPE](#) curriculum in terms of grouping activities into tactical categories of target, net/wall, striking/fielding and territory games, but no reference is overtly made to teaching styles or particular approaches to physical education pedagogy. What I do to encourage divergence and emergence in my PETE student’s

interpretation of the curriculum is point out that if one is to embody the curricular goals of critical and creative thinking, then a departure from command-based pedagogy is required.

In sum, I have a very dynamic relationship with the HPE curriculum as I think of it as a verb, a living document filled with possibility, not a noun that is static and fixed (LLOYD, 2011a; 2012a, 2012b; 2016, 2018; LLOYD; SMITH, 2015; 2021). I connect with the *etymological roots* of curriculum, notably its connection to *currere*, which means 'to run' (ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY, 2021), only when it comes to HPE I feel we that we may move through our course in many different ways – not only running but also walking, hopping, rolling, jumping, balancing, giving, receiving and so on.

**RCC: Taking into consideration the knowledge and experience that you have accumulated as a professor at the University of Ottawa, what are, in your understanding, the methodological and theoretical perspectives that should be emphasized in PETE?**

Physical Literacy is the predominant philosophy upon which the ON HPE Curriculum is based. I take time to introduce the phenomenological underpinnings of this curricular concept (e.g., WHITEHEAD, 2010, 2019; LLOYD, 2011b, 2016) in terms of rejecting Cartesian, dualistic notions of the objective body, and the focus on developing a relational connection to ourselves, others and the world in and through movement. I also point out the curricular definition of Physical Literacy that is provided to them on page 6 of the Ontario HPE document that mobilizes the phenomenological basis of physical literacy in practical terms:

Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person.

Physically literate individuals consistently develop the motivation and ability to understand, communicate, apply, and analyze different forms of movement.

They are able to demonstrate a variety of movements confidently, competently, creatively and strategically across a wide range of health-related physical activities.

These skills enable individuals to make healthy, active choices that are both beneficial to and respectful of their whole self, others, and their environment. (ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, 2019, p. 6).

When we read this together, I ask the students to address what words and terms call out to them. Discussions naturally emerge in response from curricular planning in innovative ways that afford more time for students to develop confidence and competence, to the importance of variety in terms of what we do and where we experience activity, and the ways we can encourage communication in our planning, analysis and feedback both verbally as well as in and through movement.

If physical literacy is fully understood, many issues, such as the disjointed multi activity model, as well as the tendency for physical educators to teach movement in isolated, disconnected ways, can be not only challenged, but resolved.

**RCC: What do you think Brazilian educators can learn from the way in which Physical Education is structured in Canada? What do you feel that Canadian teachers, in turn, can learn from how Physical Education works in the Brazilian context?**

From what I have learned in our inquiry, where we compare our experiences in PETE at the University of Brasilia and at the University of Ottawa (FREIRE; LLOYD; WIGGERS, in progress), I think our focus on health, mental health as well as adapting curriculum for students with special needs would be interesting for Brazilian educators. Juliana Freire was also my teaching assistant for a course focused on the cross-curricular concept of teaching in universal ways where instruction is differentiated. She informed me that she was inspired by the number of resources available to support inclusion and teaching students with special needs.

I was very inspired to hear about the integrative ways *Curriculum in Movement* (DISTRITO FEDERAL, 2018) is conceived in Brasilia. Just having "movement" in the title is mind blowing to me as a phenomenologist with a gravitation toward conceptualizing curriculum as living experience. Simply stated, movement is life (INGOLD, 2011). Our Health & Physical Education course title in Canada, by comparison draws attention to what is "physical", as in tangible, fixed, etc. By referring to your document as "movement" you are already setting up your teachers to make connections not only between the courses it includes such as language arts, but the culture in which they are situated. Physical Education in Canada has little connection to culture. Some Canadian scholars have provided critical comments on the lack of connection to our indigenous roots (i.e., HALAS, 2011, 2014; HALAS; MCRAE; CARPENTER, 2012). Much work is needed if we are to adopt the 94 Calls to Action in regard to Truth and Reconciliation. Hence, I feel that Canadians can learn much from the way culture is integrated in the Brazilian curriculum.

I also feel that more practical examples and variety is offered to Brazilian physical education teachers. Our curriculum has few examples on how to meet our objectives and many curricular resources from provincial and national organizations are required. My sense from speaking with Juliana Freire is that there is more of an emphasis on the practicalities of curriculum planning in the *Curriculum in Movement* (2018) document itself.

In sum, I very much enjoyed learning about teacher education and physical education in Brazil. I also enjoyed collaborating with Juliana and experiencing firsthand, her joy and love for movement. I feel that learning about physical education practices in different parts of the world helps us gather new and interesting ideas and ultimately create better programs for our future generations. ■

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