

“Values can be taught through Physical Education” – narratives of Singapore’s Beginning Physical Education Teachers (BPETs)

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Abstract. Previous studies have emphasized the potential of using Physical Education (PE) as a platform to teach values. However, few teachers are deliberate in their attempts to teach values through PE as many may not have the teaching strategies to achieve the affective learning outcomes. What is unknown currently is the starting point of newly trained PE teachers, specifically in Singapore’s context, Beginning Physical Education Teachers (BPETs), on their preparedness to teach in the affective learning domain. The purpose of the study is to listen to the “lived experiences” of BPETs through interviews on their strategies and challenges to incorporate the teaching of values in their classroom. Three BPETs (2M, 1F) with no more than 3 years of teaching experience from primary and secondary schools were invited to participate in the study. Individual interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim. The transcript was analysed using thematic analysis. The findings highlighted three common themes: 1. PE being a platform to see values in action; 2. Discussion on values and what it means in students’ lives; and 3. Reflection on their BPET journey. The findings show that BPETs believe that values can be taught through PE, and they would attempt to teach values in explicit or implicit ways. However, some teachers suggested specific courses that could equip them with the strategies to teach values specifically in a PE setting. Future studies can consider interviewing senior PE teachers on their experiences and strategies teaching values through PE.

Key words: values education; physical education; character development; affective learning

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INTRODUCTION

This paper investigates how Physical Education becomes a platform to teach and instil the learning of values amongst students through the lenses of beginning physical education teachers.

In this ever-changing, dynamic, and competitive economic world, education must change so that Singapore can succeed in the future (Ng, 2015). In 2014, Singapore’s Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced the 21st Century Competencies (21CC) framework that strived to provide a holistic education to all students in schools (MOE, 2022). This framework aimed to develop the student in all the following aspects – physical, cognitive, moral, social, and aesthetic, so that he would become an active contributor, a concerned citizen, a self-directed learner, and a confident person in the future (MOE, 2022). In addition, the framework strived to equip students with the core values – respect, responsibility, integrity, care, resilience, and harmony – and social-emotional competencies – self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, and responsible decision-making (MOE, 2022). This shift in focus towards developing a holistic education system, specifically one that is ‘student-centric’ and ‘values-driven’ was a major one, considering that Singapore was once an education-system that focused heavily on academic results (Ng, 2020). It recognised that examination results and paper qualifications were no longer sufficient enough to succeed in life (Ng, 2015), and that other aspects such as values contribute to one’s success in life as well. All subjects are expected to contribute to the development of the 21CC and desired student outcomes by including it into their curriculum (PESTA & STAR, 2016).

In this article, we will be focusing solely on the subject of Physical Education and its role in the learning of values. In Singapore, the status of Physical Education has grown steadily over the past few decades. The government recognised the discipline as an ‘important and holistic vehicle for the development of the knowledge, skills, and values needed for a healthy and active lifestyle’ which in turn contributes to the achievement of curriculum goals and learning outcomes (Curriculum Planning and Development Division (CPDD), 2005, as cited in McNeill et al., 2009). With the implementation of the 2014 PE syllabus, schools have increased the number of PE periods weekly and changes to the curriculum have allowed more opportunities for teachings in the affective learning domain. Physical Education, as defined by Bailey (2006), is a set of ‘structured, supervised physical activities that take place at school and during the school day’. Furthermore, PE provides students with ‘learning opportunities that make use of movement to develop the whole person... [and] the skills to be responsible adults and contributing members of the society, the nation, and the world’ (CPDD, 2016).

Numerous studies have highlighted the potential of using Physical Education as a platform to teach and instil the learning of values in students (e.g. Bailey, 2006; Weiss, 2011; Lacroix et al., 2018; Pennington, 2017; Opstoel et al., 2020). These studies have associated PE and sporting environments as avenues that facilitate social interactions which in turn may manifest into life events where values may be taught and/or learnt. For clarity, the term values refer to ‘the principles and fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are judged to be good or desirable’ (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). In addition, students could apply the skills they have learnt through physical education to other domains of life (Opstoel et al., 2020). For example, learning to communicate and work as a team; this skill is applicable in school and in their daily lives, especially when students move on to adulthood. While the primary purpose of Physical Education remains on the focus of the development of students’ psychomotor abilities, teachers are encouraged to consciously plan for the teaching of values during their lessons too (MOE, 2014), as these experiences may ultimately lead to the achievement of the 21CC framework goals. Values teaching is often associated with the affective learning goals. Rink (2014) describes these affective goals as ‘feelings, attitudes, values, and social behaviours’ demonstrated by the student. All of which are desired outcomes for the 21CC.

While it is easy to understand the notion of ‘values are both taught and caught’, several studies highlighted that mere participation in PE does not guarantee the achievement of affective learning goals; this learning has to be facilitated by the teacher (Bailey, 2006; Lacroix et al., 2008; Jacobs et al., 2013; Koh et al., 2017). Teachers are the role models and main ‘touchpoints’ to students’ learning in schools. The teacher, however; needs to be deliberate on their approach and have the strategies in place to facilitate this learning of values (Bailey et al., 2009; Koh et al., 2017; Mar et al., 2021). In addition, lessons need to be purposefully and appropriately structured. In the PE syllabus, teachers are encouraged to leverage on affective learning opportunities that occur during the PE classroom to manifest the teaching of values and life skills (MOE, 2014). Specifically, these affective learning opportunities are considered the following: explicit teaching; content setting; didactic interactions; communication styles; and teachable moments (MOE, 2014). However, unlike the psychomotor and cognitive domain where the objectives could be clearly defined and observed, the same cannot be said about the affective domain. This could be due to the vagueness of the term affect. Pope (2005) summarised this challenge about the affective domain clearly – it is subjective, imprecise, personalised, and difficult to observe and/or measure. This lack of definition and vagueness makes it challenging for teachers to set appropriate affective learning goals. When values are interpreted in layman terms, the resulting lack of definition could lead to its reduced impact and importance. Students may lose sight on how these values are applicable to their daily lives. In addition, these affective learning opportunities, or commonly referred to as ‘teachable moments’ may be lost in the process.

Although many studies have discussed how PE environments aid in the acquisition of values (e.g. Bailey, 2006; Pennington, 2017; Freire et al., 2018), little is known about the process of teaching values in the classroom. Several studies have highlighted that few teachers are deliberate in their attempts to teach values in their PE classroom (Leow et al., 2016) and not many may not have the specific methods in their repertoire of teaching strategies to bring about these intended affective learning outcomes (Jacobs et al., 2013; Lacroix et al., 2018). While there are several teaching strategies shared in the 2014 syllabus that suggested how PE teachers could leverage on these affective learning opportunities (e.g. empowering students with autonomy and choice; establishing a conducive, caring and positive learning environment) (MOE, 2014), and several pedagogical models (e.g. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR); Sports Education Model) that facilitate the teaching of the affective domain, we do not know the extent to which PE teachers enact these in their lessons in Singapore’s context. Furthermore, many of these studies have been conducted abroad with demographics very different from that of a Singapore classroom.

Those studies that have been conducted in Singapore however talked more specifically on the effectiveness of values-based training programme for educators (Koh et al., 2017), strategies for values transference from PE to the classroom and home (Mar et al., 2021), and the evaluation on the extent teachers enact specific teacher practices that aid in the development of the 21CC outcomes (Leow et al., 2016). Often, the participants in these studies were experienced PE teachers and coaches with many years of experience. Teaching experience may be a factor as to whether these affective learning goals are met and achieved as intentional planning is key to such success in the affective domain (Freire et al., 2018). However, there is one group of teachers often not talked about in this discourse, particularly in Singapore's context: the beginning physical education teachers (BPETs).

The starting point of these newly trained teachers is unknown at this juncture. 'Beginning teachers' is a term used to describe the young teachers at this stage of professional development between the end of their teacher education and their initiation into the teaching profession (Mohr & Townsend, 2001; Shoval et al., 2010). In Singapore, beginning teachers are considered teachers who are in their first two to three years of teaching (Low et al, 2020). BPETs are newly trained teachers specialised in the teaching of Physical Education. These teachers undergo a two- or four-year initial teacher training programme in the National Institute of Education (NIE) in either of these three courses: Diploma in Physical Education (Primary); Bachelor of Science (Education); Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PE). Upon graduation from NIE, they will move on to teach in either a primary or secondary school or a junior college. The transition period between graduation and to full-fledge teachership can be a particularly daunting one for these beginning teachers as some described the process like "jumping into the water and being told to swim on your own" (Shoval et al., 2010). BPETs are expected to take on full responsibility and act like seasoned veterans the moment they enter their classroom (Mohr & Townsend, 2001). However, despite the initial teacher training they had received in NIE, BPETs may still experience feelings of anxiety and unpreparedness (Mohr & Townsend, 2001; Steyn, 2004; Gariglio, 2021) when they are unable to transfer what they know into their own teachings. Furthermore, the reality of a physical classroom may be different from what they had experienced during their teacher training. Hence, this period of transition may be especially stressful for BPETs as they learn to navigate around these expectations set for them while also adapting their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their students.

As such, it is important to understand to what extent do our BPETs enact the explicit teaching of values in their lessons and what their current teaching strategies are to bring about these intended affective outcomes. Whether these strategies have been successful or not. These 'lived experiences' would help us understand how our BPETs make meaning to their own practice in regard to values teaching and their preparedness to teach in the affective learning domain during these critical early years of their teaching career. By understanding these 'lived experiences', we may be able to identify the learning gaps that BPETs may have regarding values teaching and learning, and potentially make improvements in the teaching and learning of physical education. If we are to realize the true potential of Physical Education as a subject discipline capable of bringing about the holistic development of our students, we need to ensure that all PE teachers, including BPETs, are well equipped to teach beyond the psychomotor and cognitive learning domains.

Henceforth, the purpose of the study is to listen to the 'lived experiences' of Singapore's beginning physical education teachers on their success stories, the challenges, and the barriers they faced when they attempt to teach values through Physical Education.

These findings may provide relevant information on BPETs' preparedness to teach values in their classroom; the strategies they use to achieve the affective learning goals, and also specific content they wish to know prior to the beginning teachership.

METHOD

To best achieve the purpose, the study adopted a narrative approach. Narrative approaches may help to explain the lives of our BPETs and the complex environments they function in; learning about their first-hand experiences teaching values; their strategies used; and the reasonings behind such methods (Polkinghorne, 1995; Oliver, 1998). Narratives may also provide in-depth subjective data and reveal individual differences between the participants (Jowett, 2008, as cited in Smith & Sparkes, 2009). Such qualitative methods would allow us to explore the phenomena, situations, or people as a whole (Patton, 1980, as cited in Oliver, 1998), understanding the 'fullness and uniqueness of human existence' (Oliver, 1998). These stories of struggles and successes shape the person to be who they are today; and we acknowledge that every teacher may have his or her own unique story to share. Hence, analytic methods that focus on narratives may be well-equipped to explore meaning and experiences (Smith & Sparkes, 2009) and henceforth allow us to better understand our BPETs.

Participants

Four BPETs from 2 primary schools and 2 secondary schools were invited to participate in the study. However, due to personal commitments and scheduling conflicts, one BPET had to withdraw from the study. In all, two BPETs (one male and one female) from the primary school level and one BPET (male) from the secondary school level agreed to participate in the study. All BPETs were no more than 30 years of age ($M = 28$, $SD = 2.6$) and had no more than three years of teaching experience upon graduation from NIE. Pseudonyms, specifically 'code names', are used to identify the three participants: BT1 is in the primary level who graduated from NIE in 2020; BT2 is in the primary level who graduated in 2021; and BT3 is in the secondary level who graduated in 2021.

Procedures

Prior to the commencement of the interviews, ethical clearance was requested and obtained from the NTU institutional review board (NTU-IRB) and the Ministry of Education. Upon approval, a letter of invitation was sent out to randomly selected schools via e-mail to seek the school principal and head-of-department's approval prior to approaching the BPETs. The letter of invitation contained all the information regarding the study and the nature of the participants' involvement (e.g., interview method and duration). Four schools responded positively. Thereafter, the BPET of the respective schools was contacted via email and invited to participate in the interview study. The BPET had full autonomy to decide on their participation and was allowed to withdraw from participation at any time with no questions asked. In all, three BPETs agreed to participate in the study. Two of which were teaching in two different primary schools and one of which was teaching in a secondary school.

Data were collected by having each BPET participate in a single interview session conducted online via Zoom on a date and timing of his or her convenience. Prior to the commencement of the interview session, the BPET was briefed on the intention of the study and was reassured that all responses being shared would be kept confidential. Their identities and the audio recording would not be publicly released or published onto any platform and that only pseudonyms will be used when interpreting or presenting the results. Participants were instructed to keep their video cameras off during the interview. Participants had the right to refrain from answering any questions and they could request to end the interview session at any time with no questions asked. Upon acknowledgment, the interview and audio recording commenced. An interview guide was used to facilitate the conversation with the participants, bearing in mind to allow the participant to share his or her responses freely. Probes were used to encourage the participant to go into further details.

Each interview session lasted no more than 60 minutes ($M = 36.3$, $SD = 9.2$). Upon the end of the interview session, the audio recordings were downloaded and thereafter transcribed verbatim. The transcribed scripts were analysed using NVivo software to purposefully code-block similar and/or contrasting themes that were shared by the BPETs. After analysing through the transcribed scripts and the various codes, three themes were decided on for the categorization, interpretation, and discussion of the findings.

Purpose of study

As the aim of the study was to listen to the 'lived experiences' of the BPETs as they enact the teaching of values in their PE classroom, there were several research questions which guided our interview-conversation. These research questions aimed to understand the BPETs' beliefs in the teaching of values through PE; the experiences that shaped their view on values education and/or character development; their teaching strategies; their successful moments teaching values through PE; the challenges they faced teaching values through PE; their preparedness or unpreparedness to teach values through PE; the skills and knowledge they wished to have experienced prior to their graduation from NIE; and lastly, any additional stories they wished to share regarding their experiences as a beginning teacher. All these questions were asked for all teachers, except for one question, "What do you hope your students would take away from your lessons?", which was only answered by two teachers (BT2 & BT3), as the question came up randomly during the conversation with the second participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the content and stories that were shared by the three BPETs, the findings were organized into three main themes: 1. PE as a platform to see values in action; 2. Discussion on values and what it means in students' lives; 3. Reflection on the BPET journey. These themes will be used to discuss the findings, and relevant

extracts from the three interviews will be used to discuss them. While the quotations and its' meanings remain the same, paraphrasing is used to provide better clarity. Participants' identities are kept confidential and henceforth, only their code names: BT1, BT2, and BT3, will be used to quote them.

Pe Being A Platform to See Values in Action

This theme addressed the teachers' beliefs with regard to values teaching and learning through PE and the observations and/or experiences they had which shaped this belief.

The BPETs were asked to respond to the statement, "Values can be taught through Physical Education – to what extent do you agree or disagree with this?" All three BPETs mentioned that they strongly agreed that statement. They were then asked to share what illustrated this view. Coincidentally, the BPETs all shared similar sentiments regarding how PE provided a platform for values teaching to occur:

BT1: PE is one of the best subjects to teach values... it's very dynamic [as] you'd be out of the classroom. There's more interactions than [in] a classroom setting where it can be quite monotonous [with] not as many experiences...

BT2: ... the very unique situation where we are not confined by physical walls of the classroom [allows] students to become more free and flexible. And in itself, the removal of physical constraints presents opportunities for teachable moments to manifest... or certain structures that is set in PE that allows the inculcation of values to appear naturally in itself.

BT3: There's a lot of opportunities where [the students] need to show these kinds of values in order for them to carry out the lesson... PE involves social interaction... values can only be exhibited through actions.

Additionally, the BPETs were asked to share the observations and/or experiences they had which made them believe that values education is important. BT1 shared an experience where values were not being exhibited in the perspective of a student participant during an inter-class floorball competition that was organized by the PE department.

BT1: [During the competition,] there was this class that had the most number of floorball and sports [players] from the main team. ... instead of being very gracious, they bullied everyone [and] they were very rough and did not show... sportsmanship... they actually pushed people and... they didn't use kind words. So that made me feel like, if I'm a teacher next time, I will not allow my students to be like that.

BT1 highlighted that there were no interventions done by the teachers despite the group's behaviour and ultimately, it made BT1 reflect on how values could influence one's behaviour even in the heat of the incident. On the contrary to BT1's story, BT3 shared a similar experience with a different outcome and perspective. BT3 was a referee in the National School Games (NSG) floorball competition. BT3 highlighted a positive and impactful experience with values being exhibited by a student during a match.

BT3: Throughout [my years] being a floorball referee, you would see a lot of good, outstanding players, [and] players who are not as good. But what strike[d] me most is this student, who in a very important game... scored a goal... but admitted to me that it hit his hand instead of the stick. So I disallowed the goal... I think it struck me most because even in a moment where your team needs to win, your character stands out more. It just so happen [that] he is the captain of the team... and [this experience] shows why he is the captain.

BT2 shared a teaching experience in their class where they witnessed students exhibiting certain values during a relay and basketball skills activity. Students were grouped in mixed abilities with the intention to let them learn from one another. However, this incident captured BT2's attention.

BT2: I had this one group who... just so happen that they are on the not so physically-able side, so they tend to be a bit slower than the others [but] they didn't give up and I saw their efforts and the wanting to learn... [This] progressed throughout the weeks and I saw them – the tenacity and the resilience in learning and wanting to do better... I thought that was very commendable.

BT2 highlighted that incident involving the group to the rest of the class and the values that were exhibited during that incident: tenacity and resilience. While some of the experiences being shared by the BPETs may not have all happened in a PE setting, these experiences did highlight events that did showcase the exhibition (or lack thereof) of values by students during their schooling years which ultimately shaped their belief that values can be taught through PE; and that PE and sporting environments can bring these values to life.

Discussion on Values and What It Means in Students' Lives

This theme addressed the teaching strategies that the BPETs have used to enact the teaching of values in their PE classroom, the rationale behind these strategies and how this may help the students.

Specifically, the BPETs were asked to share their successful or unique teaching strategies or concepts which they have used to teach values in their PE classroom. In particular, BT1 shared how they have broken down the learning objectives into simpler terms when they set their expectations.

BT1: I will ask my students, "How are we going to engage our head, our heart, and our hands?" So the heart means affective... Like what kind of behaviour or things I wanna see. Like for example, if we're doing pair work [or] group work... I wanna see them care for each other, take care of each other, help each other along in the lesson... the hands would be psychomotor [and] the head would be cognitive.

By bringing up the learning objectives explicitly to the students, students would know what is the expected behaviours, skills, and concepts that they are supposed to exhibit. BT1 used simple terms such as 'heart', 'hands' and 'head' to allow students to relate to these parts of the body with the learning domains. In addition, BT1 also shared on how teacher modelling and peer support can encourage inclusivity in the classroom.

BT1: As a teacher, it is important for us to create this safe environment for everyone... we are the ones who set the stage and model the behaviour for our students. [In] this class, for this special needs student... I get some of the students with higher ability to help take care of this child, as peer support. They take turns on a rotational basis... Because of how I set the tone for this class, they know what is expected of them, like they don't make fun of the student with special needs [and] they actually try to include the student in all activities.

BT1 articulated that the teacher needed to model the expected values and/or behaviours so that students would be able to learn these from them. For example, in this case of fostering inclusivity in the classroom. In this sense, BT1 highlighted that the values are caught by the students, instead of being taught. On the other hand, by strategically pairing up students, students could practice exhibiting values through their actions. Additionally, BT2 shared a different strategy whereby purposeful planning of leaning activities may lead to the learning of values in the classroom. In this case, BT2 specially tailored a lesson that targeted the value of Integrity when a 'cheating' incident occurred.

BT2: We played a couple of mini games and scores were recorded... I noticed someone who... did an alteration to their own score, thinking I wasn't around to observe... I addressed [this incident] to the class but I didn't single-handedly highlight that particular student. So I just talked about integrity. [The next lesson], I showed them videos on athletes who were caught cheating in professional competitions then I made them reflect on why certain people cheat. What is their rationale. And what does it mean to win.

By getting the students to reflect on the actions of these athletes and the rationale behind those actions, BT2 highlighted the value of Integrity to the students. In addition, BT2 highlighted that they utilized a 'Values Package' in their lesson that targeted specific values or behaviours they wished to observe. For example, on the value of integrity, students would record and tabulate their own scores and at the end of the day, BT2 would record down these scores. BT2 addressed this to the students:

BT2: I tell them, "I don't know the scores you have come up with, and I don't know if you're honest or not, but I choose to believe so." I made it clear to them that the results are entirely in their hands. They are given the opportunity to manipulate the scores in their favour, but I do keep a lookout for them... After that, I get the class to come together and as a closure we talked about [the meaning behind those actions].

While it could have been easier to avoid addressing the 'cheating' incident, BT2 addressed that such moments are often neglected, and swept under the rug, which ultimately lost that opportunity to discuss a teachable moment. Through such lessons, students were provided the opportunity to decide on what is right and wrong. In another sharing, BT2 shared how students tackled the value of Resilience.

BT2: I purposefully challenge them a bit more difficultly every step of the way. I had differentiated instructions to cater to the different learning needs... and I give them the opportunity to 'level up' and see whether they want to or not. Some of my students are actually willing to try, but they are not successful at the higher levels, and I told them, "It's fine! As long as you tried."

In this sense, BT2 encouraged students to practice resilience through differentiated instructions. This henceforth showed that purposeful and strategic planning of lesson activities may allow the teaching and/or learning of values. On the other hand, BT3 shared the power of rationale to discuss the importance of displaying values in everyday life. In this scenario, BT3 highlighted how routines would allow for more physical activity time.

BT3: It is actually their responsibility for doing the routines [so that I can] facilitate the class. ... If they are not able to do [these routines], I teach them how to do so... telling them, "With everyone's efforts, we can do this within one minute." ... I realized that... if they're responsible enough, they listen to the routines, we get to facilitate or run the class faster... For secondary school students, ... they may lose why we have routines, so we reiterate through reasoning.

Specifically, on BT3's scenario, older students required rationalism to highlight why they practiced certain routines and values. In addition, BT3 focused on utilizing the school's values such as Respect, Teamwork, and Inclusivity, as these values are relatable and familiar to the students. Conversations and meaningful sentences were used to encourage students to exhibit resilience. Lastly, BT3 attempted to modify lesson activities to practice certain values of teamwork and inclusivity.

BT3: ... in a class, you might have students with special needs... you would have to tell the other teammates or friends to be more understanding and accepting... it has to be explicit, [so] students understand the rationale of why we [had to] take it down a notch... so that everyone is able to play, ... and enjoy the game.

All three BPETs highlighted how they have seized 'teachable moments' to talk about values. They did share similar yet contrasting perspectives on the power of such teachable moments.

BT1: Authentic learning experiences are better than explicit [teaching of values]... What I mean by authentic is like things that happen organically. Because forcing the situation means that you would have to make plans for it to actually happen which can be done... but as a BT, I focus more on teaching the other aspects. Values teaching is something... like if I see it, then I'll address it. But if it doesn't, then I won't... sometimes it's difficult to catch because we're only one person to like 30 to 40 students... we may not be at the right place at the time the teaching moment could have occurred.

BT2: ... we have to view [the students] as 'blank canvases' where they come to us wanting to know more... we are here to guide them along the way. And the catching of that moment, is on the teacher, whether the teacher is aware of such situation that can be caught, and at the same time, taught.

BT3: Normally, this [teachable moment] happens when I scold them, and it'll be very explicit /laughs/... if you don't say it, the students won't catch it.

In summary, all three BPETs had their own unique teaching strategies that they used to promote the teaching and learning of values in their classroom. Ultimately, they had hopes that students may eventually learn these values through the experiences they had during the lesson; and eventually apply these values to their daily lives.

Reflection on Their BPET Journey

This theme addressed the challenges that the BPETs have faced with regard to the teaching and learning of values in their classroom as well as the realities they face as a BPET in school. It also highlighted the skills and knowledge they would have liked to experience during their initial teacher training period.

The BPETs were asked to share challenges they faced during the teaching of values in their classroom and their preparedness and/or unpreparedness to teach values. When asked to share their feelings of preparedness and/or unpreparedness, BT1 responded confidently that they felt always prepared. When probed to share the reasoning why they responded as such, BT1 shared

BT1: I'm always prepared... if something happens... whenever I see anything or any teachable moment, I will just gather my students, then I'll state the situation. What we'll do is to discuss about it, have an open discussion, but there's no right or wrong answers... everyone's entitled to their own opinion. Because the thing about values is what makes it right or wrong.

In this sense, BT1 elaborated that the discussion on values and the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of certain events depends a lot on the social construct. Ultimately, BT1 chose not to dictate their opinions regarding the events as it is subjective to everyone. BT1 highlighted the floorball competition again:

BT1: ... is it wrong for [the class] to form a whole team of school team players? It might not be right. Like to some people, they would think it's wrong [but others] may think it isn't wrong. But of course when they speak or bully others by saying unkind things then maybe this [scenario] is more straightforward.

Henceforth, in the discussion of values, BT1 focused on framing the students' thinking by focusing on the situation, and to have open discussions with the student so that they would be able to arrive to their own conclusion. Instead of dictating their opinions of what was 'right' or 'wrong' with the students. Coincidentally, BT2 highlighted a similar challenge when BT2 felt unprepared instead. BT2 mentioned the challenge of balancing their own opinions and beliefs system against certain social events. This scenario involved a question posed by a student regarding the fairness of competitions and transgender athletes. BT2 shared their dilemma.

BT2: My student asked me, "is it fair for this athlete to compete in the woman's event when she's basically a man?". Two thoughts came in – a sociological perspective and a human rights perspective. What are the values we are trying to say when we become empathetic towards the person's situation, or do we see it through the value of integrity – is it an integrity issue where he/she now is not being honest in a way that's physiologically or physically puts her at an advantage against the other athletes?

While BT2 shared this experience, BT2 mentioned that it was easier to address 'simple values' that can be taught in schools, for example through the school values and how they aligned to those. However, BT2

mentioned that the challenge comes when their own morals or values system may be contradictory to what is supposedly taught or supposedly right to societal laws and expectations. BT2 mentioned that when values are coupled against social events or world news, it is a challenge to remain objective while also providing their own opinions regarding the events, without being seen as swaying the students' mindset into what they believed it. BT2 stated that there needs to be a distinction drawn between what they believed and what is deemed right for the student.

All three BPETs highlighted a common challenge they faced with values teaching: time. Specifically, they mentioned that despite their intentions to create affective learning opportunities, or catering time to discuss about the topic of values, certain expectations such as high physical activity time is still a barrier. Two BPETs shared their sentiments.

BT1: ... one of the challenges is to balance activity time and sitting the students down to discuss about certain things... when we're talking about values, there has to be an example, like a teaching moment. And for the teacher to engage the whole class, you would have to sit the students down to discuss lah... so it affects activity time.

BT2: ... we are so focused on getting things right... and coming fresh from NIE where you're being told that instructional time shouldn't be too long, to have higher levels of engagement time, the ratio stands 70:30... all these just keeps playing at the back of your mind.

In this sense, BPETs feel pressured to meet the certain expectations of higher engagement times, while also catering time to focus on the teaching of values. In addition, BT3 highlighted how certain expectations they had put in place may not always showcase the intended outcomes. In this scenario, BT3 spoke about how despite their best efforts to encourage inclusivity, students may still exhibit negative values.

BT3: When you are trying to teach values eg. teamwork... we want to make sure everyone is able to participate and play well with one another but then there are some students who think that they are better than the rest and ... do not want to include others. [They would say], "why pass to him? He lousy", [which ultimately is] disrespect, besides not having teamwork within the team.

In addition, BT3 added on how COVID safe management measures affected some flexibility with the grouping as certain measures such as sticking to the same groups to facilitate easier contact tracing affected the group's dynamics when met with a challenging teammate.

Lastly, the additional roles and responsibilities on top of teaching was a common reality and challenge faced as a BPET. For BT2's case, they felt challenged to find time to manage the lesson planning for an academic subject and PE; a non-academic subject.

BT2: It does take a toll on Beginning Teachers who are not experienced in the fast-paced learning, or rather the steep learning curve that BPETs have to endure... It is a bit overwhelming at times... but we have to remind ourselves of who we're doing this for.

BT3 concluded the sentiments nicely and how teaching is a learning journey.

BT3: Teaching as like they say, the tip of the iceberg... It is still a learning journey, a lot of trying new things, a lot of exploring to see how you would like to carry on your lessons, to deliver your lesson objectives, to see whether the students are able to achieve your learning outcomes... As a BPET... you haven't gotten everything in control, it's a lot of exploration, in trying new ways... and not [settling].

With the intention to improve the teaching and learning of values in PE, the BPETs were asked questions regarding the specific skills and knowledge and/or modules they wished to experience during the initial teacher training program in NIE so that they would be better prepared to teach values in their PE classroom. BT1 felt that there was nothing more that NIE could have done during the training period as they felt that teaching experience was needed, to know the strategies to teach values in their classroom. BT1 explained their reasonings behind this opinion.

BT1: I don't think they could have done anything more for us... as training because... it requires experience to learn how to manage; how to teach values. Like experiences. Teaching experience is needed. [The PE environment] is too dynamic already. No two situations are the same. Maybe similar but they're not the same...

However, BT1 did recommend that NIE could include the teaching of specific strategies that facilitated thinking processes on the topic of values. For example, questioning techniques to facilitate discussion. To add on, BT2 suggested that a specific module that was catered to the teaching and learning of the affective domain in a PE setting would be great to have. Particularly, this module could include specific lesson structures and designs that targeted the affective domain. In addition, future BPETs should be provided with more opportunities to practice the teaching of values in a PE setting. While there were modules that covered the CCE topics, the BPETs felt that these were very general and more catered towards a classroom setting, instead of a PE setting. Lastly, BT3 highlighted that modules could include the lecturers explicitly mentioning the values

that were intended to be exhibited during their own teachings as these would allow BPETs to learn what was being taught.

The study aimed to gather insights into the ‘lived experiences’ of Singapore’s BPETs with regard to values teaching and learning. Through the three interviews, the findings were summarised into three main themes for discussion: PE as a platform to see values in action; Discussion on values and what it means in students’ lives; and a Reflection on the BPET journey.

The findings revealed that the BPETs all shared similar beliefs that values could be taught through PE and have shared scenarios that made them realize its importance. The BPETs highlighted positive examples of values being exhibited, such as students showing tenacity and resilience despite challenges, or when students demonstrated values outside a PE setting. These positive encounters with values were supported by current literature that highlighted the benefits of the PE and sports setting as a platform to see values in action due to the high social interactions involved and dynamicity of the environment (Lacroix et al., 2008; Jacobs et al., 2013; Freire et al., 2018). On the contrary, negative experiences with values could be encountered in PE or sports setting as well. High tensions as a result of competition and pride could result in the complete forgoing of values and sportsmanship (Lacroix et al., 2008) as evident in the scenarios shared. Additionally, despite the best efforts of our BPETs, their students may not exhibit the ideal behaviours.

Ultimately, these experiences with values highlighted the importance of the role of the teacher. The teachers’ beliefs may drive their choice and action, and eventually may influence the pedagogical approaches that they would use (Wrench & Garrett, 2015; Freire et al., 2018). The teacher himself needed to believe that values can be taught through PE and put in deliberate efforts to bring forth these learning opportunities with the students (Görgüt & Tutkun, 2018). While most teachers shared their teaching strategies, very little was spoken about the effect it has on the student, particularly on how they applied the value into other contexts (Mar et al., 2021), and how the student has demonstrated the said value on a measurable setting. They did not mention specific measurables they used to assess the achievement of affective learning outcomes.

Additionally, the findings revealed that the BPETs had their own unique concept of what values education meant to them and shared some of their teaching strategies they used thus far. Many of the teachers spoke fondly on how they seized ‘teachable moments’ to highlight specific values being positively or negatively exhibited (Leow et al., 2016). BT1 shared how teacher modelling, or roleplaying (Samalot-Rivera, 2014), taught students to be more accepting and inclusive; while BT2 shared how lessons could be tailored to practice certain values during the lesson (Görgüt & Tutkun, 2018); and BT3 focused on the power of rationale and communication to explain the importance of values. However, they did acknowledge that despite their best efforts, some students may not grasp the importance of these values and exhibited less-than-ideal behaviours (Gariglio, 2021); these sentiments go hand in hand with Koh et al.’s (2014; 2017) study that highlighted the challenges faced by the practitioners of values.

While the findings have somewhat unpacked the role of PE and how it would help attain the goals of the 21CC framework, few details on how these could be done were brought up during the three interviews. This could imply that the teachers may not understand how the curriculum goals related to the 21CC (Leow et al., 2016). The teachers did highlight the purpose of PE and education in general in building people of character and value to the community; and how they prioritized in developing students to be better versions of themselves.

Implications to Practice

Our findings suggest that despite the current practices that teachers are utilizing in their own lessons, teachers need to be well equipped with a multitude of teaching strategies which they could tap on to bring forth the explicit teaching of values in their PE classroom. While we acknowledge that experience is needed to know the feasibility of these strategies and that the learning journey never ends, it is recommended that the initial teacher training programme could specifically cater modules that target the teaching of the affective learning domain specifically in a PE setting, in addition to the current pedagogy being taught as these environments are more dynamic hence professional development is needed in this sense (Cardina & James, 2018). Mentorship programmes with senior PE teachers may also provide the guidance needed for BPETs (Steyn, 2004).

Limitations And Future Research Directions

While the present study contributed to the literature and provided a deeper insight on the matter, there are limitations to this approach. First, we only managed to recruit 3 BPETs that met the study criteria to contribute their stories and teaching strategies. This limited the amount of input we received. Future studies could consider expanding to a larger participant pool to include BPETs of: a wider age group, taking into consideration that

BPETs may be above the age of 30 upon graduation; of different teaching levels (e.g. primary schools, secondary schools and junior colleges) in different parts of Singapore and school backgrounds; and of varying years of teaching experience (e.g. including senior teachers in the interviews). With a bigger participant pool, we may be able to build up a bigger list of teaching strategies that BPETs and teachers could adopt for their lessons. Henceforth, building a community of learners. Second, the research methods. As the study adopted a narrative approach, proper questioning is needed to facilitate the conversation between the participant and the interviewer. More probes could be used to elicit in-depth accounts. Further training on such research methods may better equip the researchers to fully utilize the narrative approach. Lastly, research limits. As only a single interview was conducted with each participant, the time constraints could have limited the content that the BPETs had shared as they might have had challenges recalling their teaching methods. It factored in only the specific strategies that they have attempted prior to the interview. Future studies could consider a longitudinal approach to follow the BPET on their journey towards being a full-fledged teacher as they experiment with the various teaching strategies that target the affective learning domain.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the present study was to listen to the ‘lived experiences’ of Singapore’s BPETs on their successes and challenges and/or barriers faced when attempting to teach values explicitly in their PE classroom. Our findings provided insights into the specific teaching strategies that BPETs use to teach values explicitly, the rationale behind their actions, the setbacks they faced, and how they made meaning to their own professional practice; in addition, it highlighted how the initial teacher training programme could equip trainee teachers with explicit teaching strategies and facilitation skills that can bring forth the teaching and learning of the affective domain specifically in a PE setting. Future studies could include more teachers with varying years of teaching experience on their strategies and realities faced when teaching values through Physical Education.

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