Abstract

The first purpose of this research was to explore how pre-service physical education teachers find and make meaning from their own physical activity experiences. The second purpose was to investigate the extent to which understanding their own meaning-making shapes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching physical education. Researchers have developed insights into ways that young people make meaning through physical activity – for example, by participating in experiences that are fun, involve social interaction, provide challenge, and develop motor competence (Kretchmar, 2006) but less is known about ways teachers learn to foster these experiences. Through the method of photo-elicitation and two semi-structured interviews, pre-service teachers uncovered the source of meaningful situations they experienced as physical activity participants which informed their pre-service teachers’ pedagogical practice. A renewed focus on meaning-making carries the potential to shift the focus of current physical education programs away from mere fitness or skill development and toward the intrinsic motivational elements that are more likely to lead to lifelong participation.
Acknowledgements

There are many people who have contributed to my success, both in this recent endeavour and in my life to date. I owe a great deal to those who have made this journey so lovely.

I extend my genuine thanks to my graduate studies supervisor and life-long mentor, Dr. Nancy Francis. Thank you for your passion, strength, encouragement, constant support and guidance. You showed me how to work with my strengths and accommodate my weaknesses. I am grateful for you helping me to find my own way and your support has given me a newfound sense of confidence. It has truly been an honour and a privilege to have shared this experience with you.

Thank you to my committee members: Dr. Tim Fletcher and Dr. Jill Grose. Tim, for introducing me to meaningful physical activity experiences and providing me with endless opportunities throughout my graduate studies experience. You have challenged me both to deepen my level of work and to believe in myself and my abilities. It has been a honour to learn from you both as an educator and researcher. Jill, it has been a honour to learn from you. Thank you for your endless feedback and insightful perspective on my research topic as it has truly helped to me think about my research through a different lens. Your positive attitude and sincerity is always so truly appreciated. To my external examiner, Dr. Maura Coulter, your professional expertise and feedback in the final stages of this research has been truly invaluable. Thank you for believing in my research and the importance of meaningful physical activity experiences.

I extend sincere thanks to my wonderful family, especially my parents, Ron and Sharon Price, for all of your unconditional love and support. From you I learned integrity,
perseverance, courage and generosity. You have shared in my trials and have been there to support me each step of the way; thank you most of all, for your love. To my wonderful grandparents, Reta and Norm Hedges and Betty and Bob Price, thank you for always being my biggest fans in everything I do; I love you.

To my wonderful friends in graduate studies that I have met along the way. Specifically, Steph Beni and Hannah Dabrowski, who have made the process so enjoyable. A very big thank you to my friends back home who have provided a great deal of encouragement throughout this entire process; my best friend Britt Walker, who has without hesitation edited chapter after chapter.

Mr. Bill Milley, an educator who has truly influenced my life and inspired me to pursue my desire to become a physical educator and contributed to my path to pursue teacher education.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication demonstrated by each of the study participants to this research project. Their commitment to this research reveals a desire for understanding more about themselves as physical educators and as individuals. As well, their participation in this study emerged from their choice to assist me in my quest for learning. For this I am grateful.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii

Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................... iii

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................. v

List of Appendices ............................................................................................................................ viii

List of Figures ................................................................................................................................. ix

## Chapter 1: Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1

1.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1

1.2 Meaningful Experiences in Physical Activity ........................................................................... 1

1.3 My Meaningful Physical Activity Experiences ........................................................................ 2

1.3.1 Lost at sea .............................................................................................................................. 3

1.3.2 Heart of a lion ...................................................................................................................... 4

1.3.3 Balance of nature ................................................................................................................. 5

1.4 More Than Just ‘Gym’ Class ....................................................................................................... 6

1.4.1 The role of specialist teachers .......................................................................................... 7

1.5 Teacher Education ...................................................................................................................... 7

1.5.1 The role of teacher education programs ............................................................................. 8

1.5.2 Assumptions about meaningful physical activity ............................................................... 8

1.5.3 A more meaningful direction .............................................................................................. 9

1.6 Need for Research ..................................................................................................................... 10

1.7 Study Purpose and Research Question .................................................................................. 12

1.8 Significance of the Research .................................................................................................... 12

1.9 Overview of Theoretical Framework ....................................................................................... 13

1.9.1 Teacher socialization ......................................................................................................... 13

1.9.2 Beliefs about teaching ........................................................................................................ 13

1.9.3 Meaning-making ............................................................................................................... 14

1.10 Research Design ..................................................................................................................... 14

1.11 Study Overview ....................................................................................................................... 15

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature ............................................................................................... 17

2.1 Socialization ............................................................................................................................... 17

2.1.1 Occupational socialization ............................................................................................... 17

2.1.2 Teacher socialization ......................................................................................................... 18

2.2 Recruitment Into and Preparation for the Teaching Profession .......................................... 19

2.2.1 Apprenticeship of observation ......................................................................................... 20

2.2.2 A profile of teacher candidates ....................................................................................... 20

2.2.3 Subjective warrants .......................................................................................................... 21

2.2.4 How the subjective warrant shapes the influence of teacher education programs ......... 22

2.3 Professional Socialization ....................................................................................................... 23

2.3.1 Early experiences in pre-service teaching ......................................................................... 24

2.3.2 The influence coursework has on pre-service teachers’ socialization............................. 25

2.3.3 Early coaching experiences in pre-service teaching ......................................................... 25

2.3.4 Role socialization theory ................................................................................................ 26
Section 4: Findings

2.4 Influencing Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs About Teaching ........................................... 27
  2.4.1 Pre-service teachers’ beliefs early formation ......................................................... 28
  2.4.2 Impact of teacher education programs on pre-service teachers’ beliefs .................. 28

2.5 Meaningful Experiences in Physical Education ................................................................. 30
  2.5.1 Joy-oriented physical education .............................................................................. 31
  2.5.2 Extrinsic and intrinsic meaning ............................................................................ 32
  2.5.4 Personal playgrounds ......................................................................................... 34
  2.5.5 Features of meaningful physical activity .............................................................. 34
    2.5.3.1 Social interaction ......................................................................................... 35
    2.5.3.2 Challenge ..................................................................................................... 35
    2.5.3.3 Motor competence ....................................................................................... 37
    2.5.3.4 Fun ............................................................................................................. 37
    2.5.3.5 Delight ....................................................................................................... 38
    2.5.3.6 Personaly relevant learning ......................................................................... 39

2.6 Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................... 40

Chapter 3: Method and Methodology ................................................................................. 41

3.1 Theoretical Framework ..................................................................................................... 41

3.2 Worldviews ..................................................................................................................... 41
  3.2.1 Constructivist worldview ..................................................................................... 41
  3.2.2 Phenomenological worldview ............................................................................. 42
  3.2.3 Interpretive worldview ....................................................................................... 42

3.3 Phenomenological Methodology ..................................................................................... 43
  3.3.1 Hermeneutics ...................................................................................................... 44
  3.3.2 Bracketing and reflexivity .................................................................................. 45

3.4 Data Collection ................................................................................................................. 47
  3.4.1 Site selection ....................................................................................................... 47
  3.4.2 Participant selection ............................................................................................. 47
  3.4.4 Informed consent .................................................................................................. 49
  3.4.5 Information session in preparation for interview one ........................................... 49
  3.4.6 Getting to know the participants ......................................................................... 50
    3.4.6.1 Hannah ......................................................................................................... 50
    3.4.6.2 Marty ........................................................................................................... 51
    3.4.6.3 Kelsey .......................................................................................................... 52
    3.4.6.4 Tom ............................................................................................................ 52
    3.4.6.5 Danielle ......................................................................................................... 53
    3.4.6.6 Charlene ....................................................................................................... 53
    3.4.6.7 Rebecca ....................................................................................................... 54
    3.4.6.8 Gord .............................................................................................................. 54
  3.4.7 Interview one .......................................................................................................... 55
  3.4.7 Interview two ......................................................................................................... 56

3.5 Transcription .................................................................................................................... 57
  3.5.1 Confidentiality ...................................................................................................... 57
  3.5.2 Audit trail .............................................................................................................. 58

3.6 Data Analysis ................................................................................................................... 58

3.7 Trustworthiness ................................................................................................................ 63

3.8 Chapter Summary ............................................................................................................ 64

Chapter 4: Findings .............................................................................................................. 65

4.1 Themes Generated from Interview One: Meaningful Physical Activity Experiences ....... 67
4.1.1 Rooted in Context ................................................................. 68
  4.1.1.1 Role of the environment ...................................................... 68
  4.1.1.2 Movement as therapy ........................................................ 70
  4.1.1.3 Connection to nature .......................................................... 72
  4.1.1.4 A situatedness ................................................................. 73
4.1.2 Connections with Others ...................................................... 76
  4.1.2.1 Development of friendships ................................................. 76
  4.1.2.2 Team becomes family ......................................................... 78
  4.1.2.3 Family involvement ........................................................... 79
4.1.3 Challenge ................................................................. 80
  4.1.3.1 Challenge of context .......................................................... 80
  4.1.3.2 A sense of risk-taking ........................................................ 82
  4.1.3.3 Journey to achieving a goal .................................................. 82
4.1.4 Connecting to Real-Life Situations .......................................... 83
  4.1.4.1 Non-judgmental environments ............................................. 83
  4.1.4.2 Communicating through physical activity around the world .......... 85
  4.1.4.3 Gaining experience as an educator or coach ............................ 86
4.1.5 Acquiring a Skillset ...................................................... 87
  4.1.5.2 Confidence in skill-set ....................................................... 88
  4.1.5.3 Learning new skills ............................................................ 89
4.2 Themes Generated from Interview Two: Meaningful Physical Activity
  Experiences Influencing Pre-Service Teachers Beliefs’ About Teaching .... 90
  4.2.1 Changed Perspectives of Teaching ........................................... 92
  4.2.2 Build a Community ............................................................... 94
  4.2.3 Provide Novel Experiences ..................................................... 96
  4.2.4 Relate to Students’ Lives ....................................................... 98
  4.2.5 Importance of the Physical Activity Environment ....................... 101
4.3 Chapter Summary .................................................. 104

Chapter 5: Summary, Implications and Conclusions .................................. 106

5.1 Summary of the Main Findings .................................................. 106
  5.1.1 Meaningful physical activity experiences influencing pre-service teachers’
        beliefs about teaching .......................................................... 107
      5.1.1.1 Rooted in context and the importance of the physical activity environment .. 108
      5.1.1.2 Connections with others and building a community ................................. 109
      5.1.1.3 Challenge and changed perspectives of teaching ..................................... 110
      5.1.1.4 Connection to real-life experiences and connecting to students’ lives .......... 111
      5.1.1.5 Acquiring a skillset and providing novel experiences ............................... 112
  5.2 Implications for This Research ............................................. 112
      5.2.1 Implications for PETE ........................................................ 112
      5.2.2 Implications for physical education ........................................... 114
  5.3 Implications for Future Research ............................................ 116
  5.4 Limitations ................................................................. 117
  5.5 Concluding Remarks .......................................................... 118
  5.6 Returning to Sea .............................................................. 119

References ................................................................. 122
### List of Appendices

| A | Purposeful Sampling Criteria | .......................................................... | 131 |
| B | Email Correspondence          | ...................................................................... | 132 |
| C | Letter of Invitation for One-on-One Interview | ........................................ | 133 |
| D | Informed Consent             | ...................................................................... | 135 |
| E | Information Session          | ...................................................................... | 138 |
| F | Individual Interview #1 Guide | ..................................................................... | 139 |
| G | Individual Interview #2 Guide | ..................................................................... | 141 |
List of Figures

Figure 1. Data Analysis Process ................................................................. 62
Figure 2. Interview one: Meaningful physical activity experience codes and themes .... 66
Figure 3. Interview one: Meaningful physical activity experience themes and sub-themes overview ......................................................................................... 67
Figure 4. Hannah’s photo of a sandy beach .................................................... 69
Figure 5. Kelsey's photo of hiking in a forest .................................................... 72
Figure 6. Marty’s photo of his backyard soccer net ........................................... 74
Figure 7. Hannah’s photo of the woods .......................................................... 75
Figure 8. Marty’s photo of boating and water skiing ........................................ 80
Figure 9. Marty’s photo of a playing soccer in Guatemala ............................... 85
Figure 10. Interview two: Questions, codes and themes .................................... 91
Figure 11. Kelsey’s photo of paddle boarding with students she coaches .......... 100
Figure 12. Rebecca’s photo of her favourite place for leisurely physical activity .... 102
Figure 13. Caitlin's photo of being 'Lost at Sea' ............................................ 121
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In the beginning, we are simply infused with movement – not merely with a propensity to move, but with the real thing. This primal animateness, this original kinetic spontaneity that infuses our being and defines our aliveness, is our point of departure for living in the world and making sense of it…we literally discover ourselves in movement. (Johnson, 2008, p. 20)

As human agents, we are aware of movements that make us feel good, excited and proud, but are less clear on understanding and describing what each of these experiences means (Brown, 2008). Bouchard, Blair and Haskell (2012) define physical activity as “any bodily movement produced by the skeletal muscles that results in an increase in metabolic rate over resting energy expenditure” (p. 12). Whether participating in leisure- or sport physical activities it is important that students can attribute meaning to the physical activities in which they engage in.

1.2 Meaningful Experiences in Physical Activity

Throughout this research, the work of Scott Kretchmar, who specializes in philosophy and values of physical activity, will constitute the foundational construct for meaningful experiences in physical activity. Kretchmar (2007) defines meaning:

…in a broad, common sense way. It includes all emotions, perceptions, hopes, dreams, and other cognitions—in short, the full range of human experience. Meaning, defined in this way, can be distinguished from mere stimulation…Meaning can also be distinguished from things we call meaningful. Some meaning, like the recognition of a chair, is typically not very meaning-full, while
other sorts of meaning, such as experiences of true love, are full of personal significance. (p. 382)

Kretchmar (2008) explains that individuals who find meaning in physical activity and other healthful actions are far more likely to develop and maintain active lifestyles than those who do not. He states that “who our friends are, what we are good at, where we can go, and what we can do – these things often do more to produce personal meaning than does our health” (Kretchmar, 2006, p. 7). Therefore, meaning-making or meaningful experiences in physical activity should embody features in which young people make meaning through physical activity. For example, by participating in physical activity experiences that are fun, delightful, involve social interaction, provide challenge, develop motor competency (Kretchmar, 2006; 2008) and are personally relevant (Beni, Fletcher & Ní Chróinín, 2017) can lead to a sense of meaningfulness. A more in-depth description of each feature will be provided in the literature review.

1.3 My Meaningful Physical Activity Experiences

I attribute part of my continued involvement in physical activity to my meaningful physical activity experiences that have played a significant role in my motivation to live a healthy, active lifestyle. The pre-service teachers who participated in this research were asked to share meaningful experiences they have had engaging in physical activity. Therefore, as the researcher it is important for me to reveal my own orientation to meaningful physical activity experiences to recognize and understand my own experiences as well as identify my preconceived notions regarding the topic (Byrne, 2001).
1.3.1 **Lost at sea.** One physical activity experience that immediately comes to mind when I think of a meaningful physical activity is being on the water—whether I am on a boat, water skiing, tubing or swimming. I experience joy when I merely think of activities in and on the water as they illicit thoughts of pleasure. I am transported to another emotional level when I hear the waves lightly brush the shore, seeing the shimmering reflection of the sun dance atop the marina roof as a warm summer breeze rushes through my hair waiting on the dock ready to board the boat.

Together with the roar of the engine, the beat of the music kicks in. Once we are set to depart, I head to the bow of the boat and stretch out on the soft cushions. I feel the sunshine warm my skin and my eyes have no choice but to close. The engine hums slowly until we reach the edge of the marina walls. We are in open waters now, and it is time to take off. As we gain speed, I begin to feel the cool water droplets splash up from the waves that break against the smooth hull of the boat. I become completely consumed with the sounds of the splashing water, warm breeze and smell of fresh clean air, with the odd fishy scent here and there. It is a place where I can just ‘be’ in the moment and not have to worry or think about anything else. I cannot stop smiling. It is the moment when the sun is beaming down so much that it is time to jump in the water.

The rush of the waves slowly retreat alongside the boat as the bow begins to descend closer to the water. The roar of the engine begins to quiet as the boat comes to a gliding halt. It is the feeling of jumping into the deep water, going under and feeling the drops on my face as I come up from underneath - a truly refreshing sensation. I swim away from the boat into the open water, submerge myself at any time I please, all while the hot sun beams down. As I tread the water, moving the water between my fingers, my
breath becomes heavy trying to keep myself afloat for a little while longer. The day flies by out on the water, and before I know it, it is time to head in. Feeling tired from the hot sun, but at the same time sad because it’s over, I never want it to end. I already can’t wait for the next time.

1.3.2 Heart of a lion. It was one of the last few weeks of grade 12. The breeze of hot dry air was the only thing refreshing as my skin/scalp was being scorched from the sun shining down upon me. Practicing for so many weeks had turned my performance into a serious competition; I was in the qualifiers for Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) for shot put. It was my third and final throw and I was currently sitting in fourth place, where only the top three progress to the finals. I needed to make this throw my very best. This was the moment for which I had been practicing, training and tweaking my technique for several years.

When I stepped into the circle, a rush of overwhelming nerves overcame me as I looked out into the marked parameters of the shotput sector. As I looked out I scoped out my target, the distance I would aim to throw. My coach would stand around this distance for the first few seconds to give me a goal and then he moved away. He would never stay too close, always pacing around. I never knew where he was, but always knew he was there. For this final throw, however, he stayed right along the sidelines the whole time. I then turned around to face the back of the circle, preparing for my glide. I lunged my right leg out backwards and bobbed up and down to shift my weight until it felt just right. I nested the warm, metal shot into the right side just behind my ear. I stayed in the position for a few seconds, envisioning what my throw would look like and continuing to
get myself pumped up. I thought of some situations that made me angry, to give me drive and give a little kick to my step. The whole motion seemed like a blur.

Before I knew it, my hand felt free. My wrist felt as though it had just pushed through a brick wall, all the pressure was finally released. As I threw the shot I could feel the release of all the anger, not actual anger, but I was in a place where I wanted something so badly and needed motivation to get there. I could feel the remaining grains of dirt particles from the shot sticking to the sweat on my neck. I could hear my coach saying on the side; “It looked like a good one Caity”. I continued to run over to my coach who was greeting me with open arms and the biggest hug. In that moment, it didn’t click that that my throw had gotten me to the Ontario finals; all that mattered was that the record was broken. As my coach was soon to retire, it seemed that he had achieved a goal as well; we were a team. This physical activity experience is one I will never forget.

1.3.3 Balance of nature. Sometimes I feel I need a break, a moment to be with myself and my thoughts. There also are days when I have been sedentary for most of the day and need to rejuvenate myself. I find that taking a walk provides a sense of freedom, connection and release and allows me to enjoy the beautiful day, the warm sunshine or the freshness of the crisp winter air. The very first inhale of fresh air that on a cold day tastes like the cozy smell of a smoke from a chimney or on a warm day tastes like a flowery, warm, gentle breeze. The moment I take my first step, I have taken a step into another world. Every walk feels completely different from the previous. I walk casually along the tree line on a path that takes me the most scenic route possible, surrounded by the tall grass and the occasional rock to diverge around.
Sometimes I bring along my head phones to listen to music as I walk. The music I chose will depend on my mood for that day. If I feel overwhelmed or stressed, I typically listen to music to calm my mood, slower paced music. However, if I am running I will listen to more upbeat music to help to motivate and keep a pace. I find that when I put the music in my ears it helps to distract me from whatever stress I may be experiencing or even the opposite, helps me to reflect on a situation.

Reflecting on these meaningful physical activity experiences reinforces the importance of physical activity and pure movement in my life. Kretchmar (2006) states that “one of the greatest things about physical activity and play is that they make our lives go better, not just longer…the things we do with our good health that matter to us as much or more than health itself” (p. 6). Meaningful physical activity experiences not only make our lives longer (from health benefits), but they make our lives better – they add to our quality of life. These experiences have contributed to my desire to become a physical educator and contributed to my path to pursue teacher education.

1.4 More Than Just ‘Gym’ Class

Imagine an elementary school gymnasium without winners defeating losers, where children excitedly run through doors that open to a carefully constructed wonderland of tasks and challenges designed to enhance their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Imagine groups of girls and boys striving to negotiate their growing bodies through movement successes and failures; imagine that these children, despite their widely variable physical and social maturity levels, play well together, cooperate fairly, communicate respectfully, and exit the gym with smiles on their faces, happy to return to their classrooms.
but ever so eager for the next opportunity to have “gym” class. Now, imagine this never happens… (Decorby, Halas, Dixon, Wintrup, & Janzen, 2004, p. 208)

Today with children leading increasingly sedentary lives, with physical activity frequently being displaced by television viewing, Internet surfing, and video gaming (Stevens, To, Stevenson & Lochbaum, 2008), schools have the potential to significantly influence the lives of young people. Highlighted in my meaningful physical activity experiences, physical education can play a vital role in shaping positive attitudes towards regular physical activity in out-of-school and post-school settings (Hardman & Marshall, 2000). However, Hardman and Marshall (2000) draw attention to an inescapable reality: physical education, as a curricular subject, faces a comprehensive threat to its existence.

1.4.1 The role of specialist teachers. In his research on physical education, youth sport and lifelong participation, Kirk (2005) discusses the importance of early learning experiences to promote lifelong physical activity. From this study, he concluded that early years are critical years for the development of physical competencies that help individuals to access and engage actively physical activity (Kirk, 2005). The contribution of PE specialists in secondary schools may come too late to impact a majority of children in relation to their competence, perceptions and motivation (Kirk, 2005). Educators at all levels must, therefore, work to create and enhance the personal meaning that students find in physical activities (Ennis, 2017).

1.5 Teacher Education

Based on Templin and Richards’ (2014) research, potential teachers who enter physical education teacher education (PETE) programs tend to have extensive sport and physical activity backgrounds and a love of children. As such, they view physical
education as an opportunity to pursue their passions (Hutchinson, 1993). An individual’s motivation to enter physical education teacher education can be placed on a spectrum ranging from teaching-oriented to coaching-oriented goals (Stran & Curtner-Smith, 2009; Templin & Richards, 2014), with some recruits falling in the middle of the spectrum (Templin & Richards, 2014).

1.5.1 The role of teacher education programs. Throughout my experience in the PETE program, we learned about effective strategies, models and practices for teaching physical education. However, there was not much of a focus on emphasizing the joy, pleasure of movement and deep play in physical education. Blankenship and Ayers (2010) explain that may be because pre-service teachers have not learned to do so in their teacher education programs. They state that there is a gap in the existing literature about how to provide teacher candidates with anything beyond utilitarian outcomes (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). Therefore, they offer ideas based on their own educational experiences as opposed to empirical support.

1.5.2 Assumptions about meaningful physical activity. Blankenship and Ayers (2010) believe that physical education teachers assume that the only way students will experience enjoyment in physical education is if the teacher allows them to play whatever game, sport, or activity the students desire instead of providing quality instruction. This misleading connection between joy and poor quality or missing instruction makes it difficult for PETE professionals to accept the challenge to embed play, delight and a love of movement as central tenets of quality physical education programs (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). As well, the focus of teacher education qualification is based on documentable, measurable outcomes. This leads to an emphasis
on the functional aspects of physical education as opposed to the more difficult to measure outcomes of joy, personal meaning, identity, and delight (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). Moreover, Blankenship and Ayers (2010) state that it is also likely that PETE faculty may not realize how much we know about developing “personal playgrounds” and joy in movement. A playground is an activity that has slowly developed into a “second world” for the participant (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). It is an environment that has developed slowly through continued participation and success (Kretchmar, 2005, 2006).

If PETE professors were aware of the strategies suggested in the existing literature for enhancing joy of movement and personal playgrounds, perhaps they could in turn teach those methods explicitly to future physical educators. Kretchmar (2000a, 2008) urges that joy and utilitarian outcomes have paralleled emphases in K–12 physical education programs. In revised K–12 and PETE programs, the development of joy and personal playgrounds should have priority, with the belief that the more functional outcomes would be achieved in the process (Kretchmar, 2000a, 2008).

1.5.3 A more meaningful direction. The overarching idea is the promotion of deep play and joy of movement throughout a PETE program, where joy of movement becomes the foundation of the program (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). They suggest that we can teach PETE teachers about joy of movement to promote lifelong physical activity for our students. For example, Blankenship and Ayers (2010) suggest the following changes to PETE programs to produce physical educators who can promote the joy in movement concurrently with the functional side:

1. Make joy of movement an explicit emphasis in PETE programs;
2. Keep philosophy of movement courses in PETE programs;
3. Help PETE candidates experience and become aware of their joy in movement and personal playgrounds during activity courses;
4. Infuse joy of movement into sub-discipline courses;
5. Transition from shallow play to joy-centered instruction;
6. Change language that marginalizes joy in physical education;
7. Have PETE candidates participate in and learn to teach more physical activity for self-expression;
8. Help PETE candidates understand that the development of playgrounds and joy in movement takes time and submersion into a subculture;
9. Teach PETE candidates to foster the development of “just-right” challenges and;
10. Develop ways of assessing joy of movement, delight, personal meaning, and identity and teach these to PETE candidates.

Blankenship and Ayers (2010) recognize that the ideas they present are introductory and are a possible way of developing physical educators whose first priority is facilitating or teaching for joy (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). However, it is clear there is not extensive research on how teachers can learn to foster these meaningful physical activity experiences.

1.6 Need for Research

Health and physical education is at a cross-roads. Kretchmar (2008) states that “we want to honor our moral obligations related to good health, but, on the other hand, we need to minimize any dangers or harms that may be lurking in the shadows cast by high-utility physical education” (p. 161). He explains that is it not easy to develop a
curriculum that serves these two priorities as each would take us in different directions (Kretchmar, 2008). We can come to know movement as a delightful distraction, the home of any number of powerful intrinsic satisfactions related to moving competently and creatively (Kretchmar, 2008). Or on the other hand, we can view movement as useful, a good habit, as something that we must do (Kretchmar, 2008). By prioritizing meaningful experiences in physical education, Kretchmar (2008) argues that both the joy of movement as well as health objectives can be achieved. Meaningful physical activity experiences are subjective to each individual. It is important to understand how future educators find and make meaning in physical activity, to understand how they will go about teaching their students. This places future teacher educators as the key holders in setting meaningful physical activity experiences.

It is known that personally meaningful engagement has been identified as a key to sustaining physical activity participation (Ryan, Frederick, Lepes, Rubio, & Sheldon, 1997). While research has developed insights into ways young people make meaning through physical activity – for example, by participating in experiences that are fun, involve social interaction, provide challenge, and develop motor competence (Kretchmar, 2006), – less is known about ways teachers learn to foster these experiences. By tapping into their own meaning-making, pre-service teachers may get a better sense of the nature of meaningful situations they experienced themselves as physical activity participants. This, in turn, shapes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about the importance of fostering meaningful experiences for young people and informs the development of their pedagogical practice.
1.7 Study Purpose and Research Question

The first purpose of this research was to explore how pre-service physical education teachers find and make meaning from their own physical activity experiences. The second purpose of the research was to investigate the extent to which understanding their own meaning-making shapes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching physical education.

This research aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. What physical activity experiences are meaningful to pre-service physical education teachers?
2. Why and what makes them meaningful?
3. Do these meaningful experiences translate into pre-service physical education teachers’ beliefs about teaching?

1.8 Significance of the Research

This research makes two major contributions to the literature. First, it advances the knowledge and understanding of pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching physical education; beliefs are a key indicator of future teaching practices (Ní Chróinín & O’Sullivan, 2014). Second, it contributes to understanding the extent to which teachers’ beliefs are influenced by their identification of meaningful experiences in physical activity. A renewed focus on meaning-making carries the potential to shift the focus of current physical education programs away from weight loss or disease prevention, and toward the intrinsic motivational elements that are more likely to lead to lifelong participation.
1.9 Overview of Theoretical Framework

A theory, as described by Savin-Baden and Major (2013) is “an organized, coherent, and systematic articulation of a set of issues that are communicated as a meaningful whole” (p. 132). Theories help to provide the parameters for the study and guide the researcher’s decision throughout all stages of the research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Similarly, a theoretical framework is used to provide academic grounding to a study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The three main bodies of literature used to frame this research are: teacher socialization, pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching physical education and meaning-making in physical activity settings.

1.9.1 Teacher socialization. Upon entering the workplace, individuals tend to experience occupational socialization, in which a person is trained and learns the roles, expectations, and values associated with a specific occupation (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Teaching as an occupation therefore comes with its own processes of socialization (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). As such, Pike and Fletcher (2014) describe teacher socialization as a socializing process that influences a teacher’s beliefs, assumptions, and values regarding teaching. Lawson (1983) outlines two forms of socialization that are important for pre-service teachers, acculturation and professional socialization. Of these, professional socialization occurs when future and current teachers acquire and maintain the values, skills and knowledge that are deemed ideal for teaching physical education (Lawson, 1983).

1.9.2 Beliefs about teaching. Teachers’ beliefs about physical education are shaped by past experiences (Green, 2000). Beliefs about teaching play an important role in teacher formation as beliefs shape how learning to teach is approached (Ní Chróinín
and O’Sullivan, 2014). Pre-service teachers often enter teacher education programs with pre-established beliefs about teaching and learning formed through their school experiences (Lortie, 1975). Thus, exploring teachers’ socialization offers a step towards a more complex understanding of the intertwined nature of teachers’ beliefs, identities, lives and careers (Richards, 2015). Pike and Fletcher (2014) describe teacher socialization as a process that influences a teacher’s beliefs, assumptions, and values regarding teaching.

1.9.3 Meaning-making. Theorists in physical education have long believed that meaning holds an important key to success in professional practice, with many suggesting that learning is facilitated when physical activity is perceived as personally meaningful (Kretchmar, 2000a). Meaning-making in physical education is a complex individual process that involves making sense of past and present experiences through a process of synthesis and reconciliation (Chen, 1998). Although a large body of literature focuses on meaning making in physical activity, little is known about the ways in which pre-service teachers’ understandings of their own meaningful experiences influences their beliefs about teaching physical education. The theoretical framework outlined conveys the scholarly foundation that supports this research.

1.10 Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological methodology was utilized for this study. This phenomenological research embodied the nature of human experience (Heidegger, 1962) by focusing on how pre-service physical education teachers find and make meaning from their own physical activity experiences, and to understand whether their own meaning-making shapes their beliefs about teaching physical education. Phenomenological
research seeks to “uncover what several participants who experience a phenomenon have in common” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 16), but also how they experience the phenomenon. The shared phenomenon in this research is meaningful experiences in physical education. Phenomenology allows an understanding of the participants lived experience from their subjective point of view (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), in order to provide the essence of experience that was central to this study.

Primary data came from two semi-structured interviews. Interview one focused on life history and was intended to retrieve the details of the experience. To dive deeper into participants’ meaning, photo-elicitation was used during the first semi-structured interview. Utilizing an image to describe meaningful physical activity experiences sparked multiple reactions, leading to outpourings of all kinds of information, feelings, thoughts, and situation details (Knowles & Cole, 2008). This information was then reflected in interview two, which focused on each meaningful experience in relation to beliefs about teaching. For this phenomenological research, it was first important to choose a site that comprised of participants who may have had meaningful physical activity experiences. Data was transcribed verbatim and analysis was framed by Hycner’s (1985) phenomenological data analysis and the hermeneutic circle.

1.11 Study Overview

The following chapters address the study and research process in greater description. Chapter two provides a detailed background of literature on several relevant areas pertaining to this study: 1) socialization overview, 2) recruitment into and preparation for the teaching profession, 3) professional socialization, 4) influencing pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching, 5) quality physical activity and 6) meaningful
experiences in physical activity. Chapter three comprises the methods and methodological considerations for this study: theoretical framework, worldviews, phenomenological and hermeneutic approach taken for this research, data collection procedures, data analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study. Chapter four outlines the findings and discussion of the results. Finally, chapter five draws conclusions and recommends future directions as a result of this research.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Although the richness of this study lies in the description of the lived-experiences of pre-service teachers’ meaningful experiences provided in chapter four, a review of relevant literature is certainly important to highlight the academic foundation, research and place to which this study contributes. First, it is important to understand how and where teachers may develop their desire to become physical education teachers. As such, this review of related literature begins with an overview of socialization that can influence teachers’ beliefs, assumptions, and values regarding teaching (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). This review is presented in five categories that reflect this research topic: 1) socialization, 2) recruitment into and preparation for the teaching profession, 3) professional socialization, 4) influencing pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching, 5) meaningful experiences in physical activity.

2.1 Socialization

The topic of socialization is introduced by presenting occupational socialization and teacher socialization. As a phase of teacher socialization, professional socialization will be discussed in further detail later in the review of literature as it relates specifically to research participants.

2.1.1 Occupational socialization. Stroot, Faucette, and Schwager (1993) explain that occupational socialization theory (OST) refers to “the processes by which a person is trained and learns the roles, expectations, and values associated with a specific occupation” (p. 2). Eventually, the processes of socialization contribute to the perceptions and actions of this individual as a teacher (Lawson, 1986). Richards (2015) explains that over the past 40 years, physical education scholars have studied the lives and careers of
teachers using Lortie’s (1975) framework of OST. Richards (2015) and Pike and Fletcher (2014) claim that much of the research on teacher socialization has been conducted largely in the United States, thus, most of the research to date has been conducted with American teachers. This is important to acknowledge because studies conducted in other contexts may yield insights not supported by current published research findings. Moreover, the existing research provides evidence of what some teachers have experienced in a particular context and the findings are not likely generalizable to teachers in other contexts.

2.1.2 Teacher socialization. Since teaching is an occupation, it then comes with its own processes of socialization (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Teacher socialization, as described by Lawson (1983), is a lifelong process beginning at birth and progressing throughout one’s career. In exploring teachers’ socialization, it offers a step towards a more complex understanding of the intertwined nature of teachers’ beliefs, identities, lives and careers (Richards, 2015). Lortie (1975) outlines the three phases of socialization that prospective and experienced teachers face.

1. Acculturation, which includes actions, beliefs, and values systems that are learned at birth and foster ideologies and professional conduct.

2. Professional Socialization, which occurs when future and current teachers acquire and maintain the values, skills and knowledge that are deemed ideal for teaching physical education. This type of socialization is influenced by teachers’ experiences in their education and is known as Lortie’s (1975) “apprenticeship of observation”, which is teacher recruits K-12 experience of school where they observe and experience teaching and learning from the students’ perspective.
Furthermore, it is influenced by subjective warrants, which are each person's perceptions of the requirements for being a physical education teacher (Pike & Fletcher, 2014).

3. Organizational Socialization, which is the process that serves to maintain the ‘traditional skills’ valued by institutions and organizations. This occurs when teachers are working in their roles, being employed in schools.

These three phases of socialization provide a framework for how socialization influences how individuals think about and go about their work, and have been used by several physical education scholars to explore socialization into physical education (Casey & Fletcher, 2012; Lawson, 1983; Lawson 2010; Pike & Fletcher, 2014; Templin & Richards, 2014). This literature review will not include the third stage, organizational socialization, as it does not directly relate to the research topic. Specifically, I am not exploring teachers’ socialization after they have been employed in schools.

2.2 Recruitment Into and Preparation for the Teaching Profession

Prior to entering teacher education, prospective physical education teachers learn what it means to be a physical education teacher through interactions with teachers, coaches, counsellors, and family members (Templin & Richards, 2014). Generally, this acculturation phase reflects an important phase of socialization in the development of physical education teachers because it is here that recruits begin to develop actions, beliefs, and values for being a physical education teacher (Pike & Fletcher, 2014; Richards, 2015; Templin & Richards, 2014). These actions, beliefs and values are learned from birth based on their own experience in physical education and in schools, a series of experiences that Lortie (1975) called an “apprenticeship of observation”.
2.2.1 **Apprenticeship of observation.** Lortie’s (1975) apprenticeship of observation can be described as the idea that “pre-service teachers arrive to teacher education programs with long-established beliefs about teaching and learning formed through beginning teachers’ own school experiences” (Ní Chróinín & O’Sullivan, 2014, p. 452). In addition, Templin and Richards (2014) explain that potential teacher candidates’ apprenticeships of observation (Lortie, 1975) during their own K-12 education provides insight into the skills they believe are required to be a physical education teacher. Individuals interested in becoming teachers during elementary and secondary school years develop meaning for teaching based on numerous social interactions in and out of school (Hutchinson, 1993). Significant people such as fathers, mothers, siblings, peers, physical education teachers and coaches influences how prospective teachers view teaching and influence their decisions to enter the teacher training program (Hutchinson, 1993).

2.2.2 **A profile of teacher candidates.** Recent socialization research in physical education suggests that most teacher candidates, at least in the U.S., tend to be Caucasian and first-generation college students (McCullick, Lux, Belcher, & Davies, 2012; Pike & Fletcher, 2014; Templin & Richards, 2014). Templin and Richards (2014) state that this is potentially problematic because it means that pre-service teachers will not be highly diverse, but will need to teach diverse groups of students (Hutchinson, 1993).

A large proportion of Caucasian pre-service students anticipate working with children of another cultural background (Sleeter, 2001). As a whole, Sleeter (2001) found that these pre-service teachers bring very little cross-cultural background, knowledge, and experience. Additionally, many pre-service as well as in-service teachers are uncertain
about their ability to teach African American children and their feelings of efficacy seem to decline from the pre-service to the in-service stage (Sleeter, 2001). Therefore, there is a need for well-designed teacher education programs (Sleeter, 2001).

McCullick et al. (2012) suggest that the PETE recruits they studied viewed their identity and career as one and the same rather than separate. This finding has important implications for those who work in PETE programs because it signifies a strong bond between recruits’ identities and the ways in which they perceive their role (their subjective warrant) (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). More specifically, this may make it even more difficult to change and reconstruct prospective teachers’ beliefs and values so that they are open to change.

2.2.3 Subjective warrants. Lawson (1986) uses Lortie’s (1975) definition of the subjective warrant, suggesting that it consists of each person's perceptions of the requirements for teacher education and for actual teaching in schools, which results from years of socialization experienced as part of the apprenticeship of observation. Based on Lortie’s (1975) original claim, he indicates that children spend nearly 13,000 hours in schools throughout primary and secondary education. During these hours, children spend time in school gymnasia and playing fields, observe their physical education teachers, and the ways in which physical education is perceived in the school environment. During this time and as a result of the extensive contact with physical education, the type of physical education that children are exposed to leads to the construction of subjective warrants related to what it means to be a physical education teacher (Pike & Fletcher, 2014; Richards, 2015).
In turn, these subjective warrants have two important implications for the physical education profession (Richards, 2015). First, they inform how individuals view the field of physical education. Second, children’s physical education experiences impact the degree to which they see physical education as a viable career option.

To exemplify how subjective warrants inform individuals’ views of physical education, Richards (2015) uses the example of students being exposed to ineffective physical education or those who attend schools where physical education is not valued. As a result, these students are likely to view the subject as less important than other subjects in the school (Richards, 2015). Given that a subjective warrant tends to persist over time (Green, 2000), the perceptions that these students have of physical education translate into adulthood. Socially constructed definitions of physical education therefore not only inform the experiences of pre-service teachers, but it is clear they also have implications for the students that physical education teachers work with. Lawson (1986) suggests that teachers, coaches, and university educators must work together in order to create experiences that are instrumental in forming a subjective warrant for physical education.

Even though parents, siblings, and others are important agents in the process of socialization in an individual’s decision to pursue a career in teaching physical education, physical education teachers and coaches are likely to have the most direct impact in the choice to choose the career path in teaching physical education (Lawson, 2010; Richards, 2015).

2.2.4 How the subjective warrant shapes the influence of teacher education programs. Recruits enter teacher education with fairly stable subjective warrants about
teaching physical education (Betourne & Richards, 2015; Grotjahn, 1991). Lawson (1986) states that socialization begins before teachers begin their teacher education programs, contouring the subjective warrants of recruits and often preventing teacher education programs from having long lasting effects on these prospective teachers. The subjective warrant influences how individuals think about physical education and if they foresee teaching physical education as a possible career. Moreover, it influences how individuals see themselves as teachers of the types of physical education they observed. Lawson (1983) suggests that if we had a better understanding of who our prospective teacher candidates were and what their beliefs were about teaching, schooling, and physical education, that we may be able to better design, sequence, and present professional content to ensure a more refined teacher education program. Furthermore, an increased understanding of prospective teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about teaching physical education may enable teacher educators to better socialize them for their role as physical education teachers (O’Bryant, O’Sullivan & Raudensky, 2000). Therefore, the next section will review professional socialization. This form of socialization is directly related to the individuals that will be involved in this master’s research; therefore I have decided to present this topic as its own section.

2.3 **Professional Socialization**

This section focusing on professional socialization will explore early experiences, early coaching experiences in pre-service teaching and role socialization theory. Since Lortie’s (1975) original research on teacher socialization, there has been much research conducted on the socializing experiences of teachers in the subject of physical education (Pike & Fletcher, 2014). Professional socialization begins when potential recruits make a
formal commitment to study physical education by enrolling in a teacher education program (Lawson, 1983; 1986). Through PETE, recruits are trained in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that teacher education faculty deem necessary to be an effective physical education teacher (Richards & Templin, 2014). The physical education component of the teacher education program becomes important in delivering a clear and consistent message to support development of pre-service teachers’ understandings (Ni Chroinin & Coulter, 2012).

2.3.1 Early experiences in pre-service teaching. Early field experiences and student teaching are very important socializing experiences for pre-service teachers (Templin & Richards, 2014). Sometimes the teachers who are the field supervisors of pre-service teachers can reaffirm students previously held beliefs developed during acculturation, which may contradict PETE (Richards, 2015). Several studies have shown that, despite being exposed to a variety of innovative practices during teacher education, recruits tend to revert to the traditional methodologies and practices that may have characterized the physical education programs to which they were exposed to as children (Dowling, 2011; McCullick et al., 2012; Pike & Fletcher, 2014; Richards, 2015; Templin & Richards, 2014). In other cases, cooperating teachers can help pre-service teachers question their beliefs about what it means to be a good physical education teacher and can influence them to change their subjective theories (Templin & Richards, 2014). Therefore, it is important that teacher educators encourage pre-service teachers to challenge and interrogate their belief systems. By challenging prospective teachers this will provide them opportunities to develop the pedagogies needed to be successful in teaching physical education (Stroot & Williamson, 1993).
2.3.2 The influence coursework has on pre-service teachers’ socialization.

Course work during teacher education programs can also have an influence on pre-service teachers’ professional socialization. A study by Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) indicated that during a critically oriented methods course and early field experience pre-service teachers were able to do more than just “…keeping pupils under control as well as happy, busy, and well behaved” (p. 134). However, they were able to develop “theories-of-action” (p. 134) in which behaviour management, student interest, and student involvement were elements that were mixed in or facilitated learning and achievement (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004). Furthermore, Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) found that the pre-service teachers were not only able to create these theories-of-action, but were able to compare their own theories-of-action with their “theories-in-action” (p. 134). They were able to do this using critical reflection on their own experiences as well as during their early field experiences while at the same time learning about the research and theories in their methods course (Curtner-Smith & Sofo, 2004). Therefore, professional socialization occurs from not only pre-service teachers’ own experiences, but from course-based work as well. Similarly, another field experience comes with coaching and being socialized through experiences with different coaches or coaching opportunities.

2.3.3 Early coaching experiences in pre-service teaching. Additionally, pre-service teachers’ orientations to teaching and coaching play a significant role in the effectiveness of PETE. Those students who are teaching-oriented often have subjective theories about the purpose of physical education that align with those of the PETE faculty (Templin & Richards, 2014). A teaching orientation can be described as recruits who are more likely to have been extensively involved in physical activity other than organized,
traditional, competitive sport, who are female, and who have experienced and been successful in good quality physical education during their own school careers (Curtner-Smith, 2001). They are, therefore, more open to having their perspectives or beliefs being challenged and changed. On the other hand, students who have strong coaching orientations are unlikely to be socialized by PETE programming (Templin & Richards, 2014). A coaching orientation can be described as recruits who are more likely to have participated in a high level of interschool sport and have attended schools in which there had been little emphasis on instruction during physical education lessons, but a great deal of importance had been attached to the performance of extracurricular school teams (Curtner-Smith, 2004). A study done by Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) stated that since pre-service teachers come into methods courses with subjective warrants that may be focused on coaching rather than teaching physical education they were likely to resist any attempt to socialize them toward other perspectives. Curtner-Smith and Sofo (2004) suggest that there is more need than ever to recruit intelligent and able people to the profession, preferably attracted by teaching rather than coaching.

2.3.4 Role socialization theory. Although OST has proven to be an effective lens through which to view the socialization process (Hutchinson, 1993; Lawson, 1983, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Stroot et al., 1993), Richards (2015) states that in order to understand the best ways in which teachers are socialized, “one must also acknowledge socially constructed and contextually bound definitions of the teacher role” (p. 2). Therefore, Richards (2015) used role socialization theory, which combines both OST and role theory in describing the lived experiences of physical education teachers within the “sociopolitical context of schools” (p. 2).
Richards (2015) also states that OST falls short of providing a comprehensive overview of how the role of the physical education teacher is defined and conveyed within schools. Similar to Lortie’s (1975) OST, role socialization theory adopts an approach to understanding socialization across the three phases of socialization: acculturation, professional socialization and organizational socialization. In relation to my research, role socialization theory suggests that individuals’ understanding and performance of the physical education teacher role is shaped through the socialization process as they are prepared for their responsibilities, and as they interact with various role-sets as part of their daily work. Participants involved in this research had a variety of experiences in a physical activity or physical education settings. These experiences represented many different important role-sets resembling physical education teachers, coaches, camp counsellors, etc. that all have played a critical socializing function (Richards, 2015). Through socialization, these individuals may have developed expectations of what it means to perform the role of a physical education teacher (Richards, 2015). Therefore, these expectations could manifest in the way in which individuals behaved in their previous experiences to comply with their beliefs about how physical educators or coaches should perform their roles in the context of schools, practice settings, at camp, etc. (Richards, 2015).

2.4 **Influencing Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs About Teaching**

Teacher socialization can influence a teacher’s beliefs, assumptions, and values regarding teaching (Pike & Fletcher, 2014; Lawson 1983). Beliefs, as defined by Matanin and Collier (2003), are “propositions that individuals hold to be true; they can be learned implicitly or taught explicitly at any time during life” (p. 154). Core beliefs are the
strongest, acquired early in life and most resistant to change (Matanin & Collier, 2003). Green (2000) states that teachers’ beliefs about physical education are shaped by past experiences – those that have occurred during their socialization. Beliefs about teaching play an important role in teacher formation as they shape how learning to teach is approached (Ní Chróinín & O’Sullivan, 2014).

2.4.1 Pre-service teachers’ beliefs early formation. Pre-service teachers often enter teacher education programs with pre-established beliefs about teaching and learning formed through their school experiences (Lortie, 1975). Preservice teachers frequently assimilate new information into their existing beliefs—such as the purpose of physical education being to promote lifelong activity—which complements their existing belief system that physical activity is health-enhancing (Matanin & Collier, 2003). This process is referred to as assimilation, whereby new information is incorporated into existing beliefs (Matanin & Collier, 2003). Moreover, accommodation is the process whereby new information cannot be assimilated into existing beliefs, thereby requiring that the belief be replaced or reorganized (Matanin & Collier, 2003).

2.4.2 Impact of teacher education programs on pre-service teachers’ beliefs. Matanin and Collier (2003) state that beliefs are important because they determine how an individual will interpret what he or she is learning about teaching. With most preservice teachers, the tendency is to incorporate new knowledge into the existing belief system and put aside knowledge that is contradictory (Matanin & Collier, 2003). Beliefs are formed early in life, tend to self-perpetuate, and persevere against contradictions stemming from reason, time, school, or experiences (Matanin & Collier, 2003). Moreover, beliefs are a filter through which new information is interpreted (Matanin &
Collier, 2003). The earlier a belief is incorporated into the current belief structure, the more difficult it is to change (Matanin & Collier, 2003). The chance of beliefs changing during adulthood is relatively rare as individuals tend to hold on to beliefs even if they are based on incorrect or incomplete knowledge (Matanin & Collier, 2003). Beliefs therefore play a pivotal role in how preservice teachers interpret and act upon new knowledge presented during teacher training.

Hutchinson (1993) states that teacher socialization occurs in the 12 to 15 year time period before entering teacher education programs. During this time individuals develop meanings regarding the knowledge, values, attitudes, beliefs, skills, and interests (Hutchinson, 1993). The significant people and experiences that these individuals have encountered before entering teacher education programs may determine and influence their pedagogical behaviours. If teacher education programs are expected to impact what teachers believe, intend, and do, they must first explore what beliefs students bring with them to the teacher education program (Matanin & Collier, 2003). Richards (2015) explains: “if we truly want to understand who teachers are, we need to understand their lives beyond the classroom both within and outside of the context of schools” (p.12). One aspect that has a significant influence on pre-service teacher’s decision to become a physical educator is their previous experience in physical activity and physical education. In particular, the ways pre-service teachers make meaning from their physical activity/physical education experiences can serve as a strong indicator of why they chose to pursue physical education teaching as a viable career option.
2.5 Meaningful Experiences in Physical Education

Meaningful experiences in physical education will be explored by looking at the topics of joy-oriented physical education, intrinsic and extrinsic meaning, and the five features of meaningful experiences outlines by Kretchmar (2006) – social interaction, challenge, motor competence, fun and delight. To begin, Metheny (1968) describes meaning in physical education, explaining:

As he experiences feelings about himself and his discoveries, he will find his own meanings in what he has learned. The teacher can’t explain these meanings to him; neither can he ask the learner to explain his own meanings... each man’s connotations are his own, and he must find his own meanings in his own feelings about them. (p. 95)

Metheny (1968) continues to state that the educational experiences that activate the meanings of movement are commonly assigned to the curriculum of physical education or to some extension of it within the school program. Similarly, Johnson (2008) explains that moving bodies have an extraordinary ability to make meaning in and of physical activity. However, Brown and Payne (2009) state that the capacity for physical educators to maximize this potential for learning and, therefore, for teaching is repressed as there is a lack of conversation about the physical education qualities and characteristics of the movement experience. In the same way, Kirk (2005) underlines the pivotal importance of the nature children’s early experiences of sport and physical education for the development of life long participation in physical activity noting that primary school physical education typically fails to offer quality experiences and that by the time young people enter secondary school it is too late to positively influence their dispositions.
toward sport and other physical activity. As a result, Kretchmar (2005) suggests joy-oriented physical education as it is based around meaningful physical activity.

### 2.5.1 Joy-oriented physical education.

Kretchmar (2005) suggests that joy-oriented physical education as it is based around meaningful physical activity. Kretchmar (2008) explains that “movement is experienced as joy, it adorns our lives, makes our days go better, and gives us something to look forward to. When movement is joyful and meaningful, it may even inspire us to do things we never thought possible” (p. 162). Joy-oriented physical education is grounded in meaning as it fosters creative imagination and personal story lines (Kretchmar, 2005). In comparison to joy-oriented physical education, there is health-oriented physical education, which is grounded in biological and physiological facts related to heart rate, caloric expenditure, range of motion, etc. Kretchmar (2006) poses two questions:

- Are we activity educators who teach toward the joy of movement while producing some healthful by-products?

- Or are we movement-related health educators who try to make movement as much fun as it can be under the constraints of health-promoting efficiency?

The challenge is to find ways to prioritize a life-enhancing form of physical education over its utilitarian counterpart, but then to compromise in a manner that promotes health for those who will always need to be talked into moving (Kretchmar, 2005). Kretchmar (2000b) suggests that if practitioners guide students into groups where meanings that have the power to move are everywhere in the space, students will find their own meanings and build their own activity-related stories. Therefore, movement will become more than just important to their health or fun (Kretchmar, 2000b). In order to further
understand meaning and meaningful physical education, it is important to take a look at extrinsic and intrinsic meaning.

2.5.2 Extrin**sic and intrin**sic meaning. Kretchmar (2000b) explains that physical activities that are difficult or at times enjoyable must lead to something personal or intrinsically valuable. If not, these forms of physical activities may not be sustained (Kretchmar, 2000b). Many individuals do not experience exercise as an end in itself, but have some sort of extrinsic motivation. On the other hand, the experiences that exercise leads to satisfaction of completing sessions or increased quality of life are usually intrinsic. In this sense, Kretchmar (2000b) states that intrinsic meaning is the engine that drives programs that seem at first to rely on extrinsic motivation. In saying this, practitioners have to find ways to promote what might be called “deep play,” where the movement environment touches and moves students intrinsically (Kretchmar, 2000b).

2.5.3 Shallow and deep play. Play is “activity that is participated in freely, is outside of real-life, and has its own locality, duration, and rules” (Blankenship & Ayers, p. 172, 2010). Kretchmar (2005) states that play falls on a continuum between two extreme types: shallow and deep play. Blankenship and Ayers (2010) describe shallow play as somewhat superficial and temporary. In shallow play, a positive affect is experienced, where we are amused for a period of time, but it does not “...grab us at our core...engage the imagination . . . inspire . . . carry us away...” (Kretchmar, 2005, p. 150). Typically, shallow play is what most physical educators strive for in their physical education lessons, their students experiencing a temporary positive affect during class (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). At the other end of the play continuum is deep play. Blankenship & Ayers (2010) describe deep play as “extremely personal, long-lasting, and
does engage, inspire, and delight us” (p.172). Deep play touches us and moves us; the activity becomes part of our identity (Kretchmar, 2005). Ayers and Blankenship (2010) believe the true joy of movement is found in deep play and that deep play should be a vital part of a joy-oriented physical education program.

Deep play can lead one to be physically active for a lifetime; it provides deep, personal meaning for activity, which develops a commitment to an activity. Shallow play can lead to deep play (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). They use the example of a fourth-grade boy who is participating in some creative dance lessons in his physical education class. He does not necessarily enjoy the dancing, but he does have fun being in a group with his friends and having the opportunity to create dances about sports to music that he chooses (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). As he continued into high school, he chooses a dance class as one of his electives, and later even joins an after-school dance club. He finds himself getting carried away with the music, the movements, and the interactions with fellow dancers, and time escapes him (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). The shallow play he experienced with creative dance as a fourth grader introduced him to the possibilities, and with continued positive experiences with dance, led to deep play (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). For this boy, dance became a “playground.” A playground is an activity that has slowly developed into a “second world” for the participant.

Blankenship and Ayers (2010) probe, “how do we move students from shallow play to deep play and the development of playgrounds? What does instruction that focuses on joy and the deeper dimensions of play (e.g., delight, personal meaning) look like?” (p. 173). To answer their question, they believe that shallow play can lead to deep play. More shallow forms of play that can be incurred through dimensions of novelty,
challenge, and participation (Kretchmar, 2000a). More deep forms of play can be fostered through adventure and outdoor education are activities that are adventurous, foster achievement, and by nature engage the senses as well as a certain level of skill (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). It is difficult for beginners to experience delight and develop a personal identity with a movement form (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). While fun in the form of shallow play can be experienced quite quickly, deeper play, meaning, and the development of personal playgrounds take considerable time (Kretchmar, 2008, 2000a, 2000b).

2.5.4 Personal playgrounds. A playground requires commitment, time, effort, and persistence to grow and continue (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). Key to playgrounds is the existence of “just-right” problems and challenges; play is most enjoyable when we attempt tasks that are not too easy or too hard for us (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). While many people share common playgrounds, the problems and challenges each person realizes in her or his own playground is part of the individual nature of that experience (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). In a joy-oriented physical education program, teachers would help students develop their own playgrounds (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). PETE candidates must become aware of their own pleasurable experiences with movement, and understand the differences between shallow play and all forms of deep play if they are to help their own students develop a love for movement (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). PETE candidates cannot be expected to help foster the development of playgrounds in their own students if they have not experienced it themselves.

2.5.5 Features of meaningful physical activity. Kretchmar (2006) suggests that the “the promotion of a personally meaningful education experience lies in the
direction of social interaction, challenge, increased motor competence, fun and delight” (p. 7). More recently, Beni et al., (2017) found evidence supporting these features while also adding that physical education is more meaningful when personally relevant.

2.5.3.1 Social interaction. Bailey (2006) found that physical education positively affects young people’s social development. The feature of social interaction can include any and all interactions in the movement environment, for example, interactions with peers, coaches, teachers and spectators (Light, Harvey & Memmert, 2013). Bailey (2006) explains that positive social experiences in physical education have the opportunity to bring individuals from a variety of social and economic backgrounds together in a shared interest, offering a sense of belonging to a team or group. Furthermore, in Light’s (2010a) study around the meaning and nature of children’s experiences in French and Australian swimming clubs, an Australian boy stated:

We’re all quite close. We’re all really good friends here. It’s a very important part of my life. I haven’t got many like, extremely good friends at school or wherever outside the swimming club. Outside the club I haven’t really got any close friends so it’s really important for me. (p. 9)

As a result, it is evident that social interaction is an important aspect that positively influences physical activity experiences.

2.5.3.2 Challenge. Additionally, the feature of challenge plays a role in an individual’s physical activity experience. Challenge can be defined as relative task difficulty that is dependent upon the individual. Essentially there should be enough challenge to produce learning, but not so challenging that success is not possible. Finding the right amount of challenge can be related to Vgotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal
Vygotsky (1978) believed that when a student is at the ZPD for a particular task, providing the appropriate assistance (scaffolding) will give the student enough of a ‘boost’ to achieve the task. Once the student, with the benefit of scaffolding, masters the task, the scaffolding can then be removed and the student will then be able to complete the task again on his own. Vygotsky (1978) views interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. He suggests that teachers use cooperative learning exercises, linking back to social interaction, where less competent children develop with help from more advanced peers within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Students interviewed by Dyson (1995) describe individual challenge or challenging themselves as a meaningful experience in their physical education program. For example, one student who challenged herself during a physical education lesson stated, “My goal for the lesson was to try to do my best and do what I could. Not try to do what somebody else wanted me to do” (p. 399). Furthermore, another student responded, “The thing I enjoyed most was the sit-ups… I was trying too hard, and when I made 27, then I felt pretty good…Because I feel I met my goal because I thought I couldn’t do more than five, but I actually got more” (Dyson, 1995, p. 400). For these students challenging themselves was a key factor in creating meaning for their physical education experience.

Additionally, competition is often associated with challenge. In Light’s (2010a) study, competition was a meaningful aspect of being a part of a French swimming club. For example, a boy responded with “Maybe I prefer competition because at meets I get to meet and talk with my friends in other clubs so that’s a good part of competing” (p.12).
Furthermore, in Light’s (2010b) research there was also an emphasis on personal competition and although they were competitive swimmers, they were concerned with their own personal best scores that acted as a source of motivation for them. For example, a French male stated “Yes, it is important to win if you can but bettering your own PB is more important because nobody can win all the time” (Light, 2010b, p.12). All in all, despite these variations all swimmers at both sites enjoyed competing and were able to experience personal achievement due to the emphasis on personal best times (Light, 2010b).

2.5.3.3 Motor competence. Coinciding well with challenge is motor competence, which is an individual’s skill development or ability to perform the movement task. Perhaps as important to actual level of competence is the individual’s perception of their own competence. For example, Dyson’s (1995) study supports that students felt more confident in their shooting abilities after that teacher had taught them about the skills required for basketball. One student named Carla “learned to dribble the ball faster when you're running or in different ways when you're running in a circle. I learned how to shoot better” (p. 400). Therefore, it is evident that it is not whether or not they are “good” at something, but whether or not they believe they are, as well as whether or not others perceive them to be competent.

2.5.3.4 Fun. If students are trying hard, succeeding, learning, improving, playing with friends, and experiencing rich sensory environments during their physical education activities, they will usually perceive these activities as being fun. Dismore and Bailey (2011) did a study of children that participated in physical education activities to see their
attitudes towards fun and enjoyment. One middle school girl preferred to play fun games and was able to describe one game that she found particularly fun:

When we had been really good, what he [the teacher] does, all the kids sit in a giant circle with a chair in the middle with the keys under ‘em. And somebody is sitting on there with a blindfold and you have got to go around once and then, where you are, where you have been sitting, you have to go in and go and try and get the keys. But while you are running around, if they point to you, you are out. It’s quite fun really. (p. 510)

Kretchmar (2006) explains that fun in physical activity does not usually add any important chapters to our stories and does not “carry” us away. Although fun is pleasant and desirable it is not usually personal (Kretchmar, 2006). So while fun is important, it cannot be relied upon in isolation to other features of meaningful experiences.

2.5.3.5 Delight. Kretchmar (2006) describes “delight is different from ‘fun’, just as ‘love’ is different from like and ‘excellence’ is not the same thing as ‘competence’” (p. 7). Kretchmar (2006) describes delight is the type of feeling that is experienced when an individual becomes carried away, absorbed, or captivated in what we are doing, even forgetting the time. Kretchmar (2005) provides an in-depth example of delight:

The boat is perfectly level. Set up beautifully, we skim the surface on an invisible laser beam running from horizon to horizon. There is no friction; we ride the natural cadence of our stokes, a continuous cycle. The crew breathes as one. Inhale on the recovery; exhale as we drive our blades through the water; inspiration and expression. In. Out. Row with one body and so with one mind. Nothing exists but: Here. Now. This. Rushing water bubbles under our hull, as if a
mountain brook buried within the Charles flows directly beneath us. I have never heard this sound before, but I know it means we are doing something right”. (p. 203)

Kretchmar (2006) explains that this experience could not be deemed “fun” or “agreeable” and that those words would take away from the experience and incorrectly represent the event. Delight seems to be rare, elusive, and difficult to produce on demand. It is not planned for and even if we look our hardest we may not find it (Kretchmar, 2006). Delight is found close to our heart, in areas that are very personal (Kretchmar, 2006). It is evident in Kretchmar’s (2006) article that often physical educators teach toward fun, outlined in literature by several tips and techniques, such as strategies for making an activity enjoyable. Kretchmar (2006) explains that when we experience delight it is something we often want to share with our family or friends. Beni et al., (2017) suggests we might think of delight being captured in a “runner’s high” or when time seems to stop during participation. Physical education goes from being a good school day to an unforgettable part of their school experience.

2.5.3.6 Personally relevant learning. Beni et al., (2017) explain that learning is identified as more meaningful when individuals are able to make connections between their current physical education and sport experiences to aspects of daily living outside the school or community. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of educators making explicit connections for their learners in how their physical activity experiences may connect to a wider range of physical activity participation outside of the classroom. Beni et al., (2017) suggest that by providing students with opportunities to take ownership of their learning “through being involved in making choices and reflecting on their
experiences may strengthen the personal significance and therefore the meaningfulness derived from their experiences” (p. 14).

2.6 Chapter Summary

Overall, it is evident that pre-service teachers often enter teacher education programs with pre-established beliefs about teaching and learning formed through their school experiences. Therefore, exploring teachers’ socialization offers a step towards a more complex understanding of the intertwined nature of teachers’ beliefs, identities, lives and careers (Richards, 2015). Teachers’ beliefs about physical education are shaped by past experiences and these beliefs about teaching play an important role in teacher formation as beliefs shape how learning to teach is approached (Ni Chróinín & O’Sullivan, 2014). Pre-service teachers often enter teacher education programs with pre-established beliefs about teaching and learning formed through their own school experiences. By gaining an understanding of what a quality physical education program could look like gives us insight to further understand Kretchmar’s (2006) joy-oriented physical education and the five dominant criteria (social interaction, challenge, motor competence, fun and delight) and Beni et al. (2017) personally relevant learning that make up a meaningful physical education experience. Fostering the idea that practitioners have to find ways to promote “deep play,” where the movement environment that motivates students intrinsically and encourages them to find meanings of their own. Thus, the foundation for this study: to explore if pre-service physical education teachers’ meaning-making from physical activity shapes their beliefs about teaching physical education to help foster or create meaningful experiences for their students.
Chapter 3: Method and Methodology

This chapter provides information about the methods used in this research and how the project was conducted. This chapter revisits the theoretical framework, introduces my worldviews, and outlines the phenomenological and hermeneutic methodology, data collection procedures, data analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

As outlined in the introduction, the three main bodies of literature used to frame this research are meaning-making in physical activity settings (Kretchmar, 2000a, 2008), teacher socialization (Pike & Fletcher, 2014) and pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching PE (Green, 2000; Ní Chrónín and O’Sullivan, 2014). These theories help provide parameters for this study and guide my decisions throughout all stages of the research (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In the same way, my co-existing worldviews shape my decisions throughout this research.

3.2 Worldviews

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) state that a worldview is “a belief system that guides the researcher and the research process” (p. 525). The research purpose of exploring how pre-service physical education teachers find and make meaning from their own physical activity experiences align with an overarching constructivist worldview.

3.2.1 Constructivist worldview. A constructivist worldview emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning (Kirk, MacDonald & O’Sullivan, 2006). Within this worldview individuals are personally involved in building their own knowledge that relates to their past and present knowledge (Kirk, MacDonald & O’Sullivan, 2006). Constructivists believe that individuals “seek understanding of the
world in which they live and work” (Creswell, 2013, p. 8) and tend to develop subjective meanings of their experiences, with these meanings being directed toward certain “objects or things” (Creswell, 2013, p. 8). Therefore, a constructivist worldview was used to assist individuals within this research to develop their own meaning of their past and present physical activity experiences. I adopted the central constructivist worldview, with the co-existing phemenonological and interpretivist worldviews which work in concert with the methods of my study.

3.2.2 **Phenomenological worldview.** Phenomenologists perceive that meaning is shaped through individual experiences of the world and that reality is not something that is viewed as separate from the individual (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Rather, understanding is grounded in an individual’s perceptions of their own meaningful experiences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Therefore, the phenomenological worldview fits with the methods of this study as I aimed to gain insight into individuals’ lived experiences and understand their physical activity experiences which they deemed meaningful.

3.2.3 **Interpretive worldview.** The methods of this study also align with the interpretive worldview. This worldview facilitated my understanding of how individuals construct their reality, their perceptions, explanations and beliefs surrounding participating in meaningful experiences in physical activity (Willis, 2007). Rather than starting with a theory, I developed (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) patterns of meaning based on individuals’ meaningful physical activity experiences. An interpretive worldview, as described by Mack (2010), aims to “understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants” (p.8). Mack (2010) relates an
interpretivist worldview to phenomenology as multiple people can interpret events differently, therefore resulting in different perspectives. In this way, Mack (2010) states that interpretivism is often referred to as constructivism because it emphasizes the ability of the individual to construct meaning. Creswell (2013) explains that often an interpretivist worldview is often in combination with the constructivist worldview.

3.3 Phenomenological Methodology

Person A may view a painting and call it ugly, person B may view the same painting and call it beautiful. For person A, the painting will have all of the phenomenal properties of ugliness, and for person B, it will have the phenomenal properties of beauty. However, for a phenomenological perspective no claim is made that the painting is in itself either ugly or beautiful; only its presence for the experiencer counts, and an accurate description of the presence is the phenomenon, and it usually contains many phenomenal meanings. (Girogi, 1997, p. 236)

Sadala and Adorno (2002) explain that phenomenology “aims describe to the full structure of an experience lived, or what that experience meant to those who lived it” (p. 289). The primary task of phenomenology is to reveal the meaning of an event by understanding the experiences of the participants (Knaack, 1984). As such, phenomenological research seeks to “uncover what several participants who experience a phenomenon have in common” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 16), but also how they themselves experience the phenomenon.

Merleau-Ponty identified four qualities that are considered as 'celebrated themes' or characteristics common to phenomenology (Kalfe, 2011). These qualities are
‘description’, ‘reduction’, ‘essences’ and ‘intentionality’. According to Merleau-Ponty, the aim of phenomenology is the description of phenomena (Kalfe, 2011). Reduction is a process that involves suspending or bracketing the phenomena (Kalfe, 2011). An essence is the core meaning of an individual's experience that makes it what it is (Kalfe, 2011). Finally, intentionality refers to consciousness since individuals are always conscious to something. This means intentionality is the total meaning of the object or the idea which is always more than what is given in the perception of a single perspective (Kalfe, 2011).

Max van Manen considers phenomenology as the most appropriate method to explore the phenomena of pedagogical significance, elaborates upon phenomenology as a response to how one orients to lived experience and questions the way one experiences the world (Kalfe, 2011). In this research the shared phenomenon focused upon is meaningful experiences in physical education and phenomenology facilitated an understanding of the participants’ lived experience from their subjective point of view (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Therefore, the purpose of this research was not to attempt to generalize data to the population, but to explore individuals’ lived experiences (Vishnevsky and Beanlands, 2004). Within phenomenology there is the possibility that new meanings emerge about a phenomenon that draws “something forgotten into visibility” (Kafle, 2013, p. 189).

3.3.1 Hermeneutics. A type of phenomenology that connects with the interpretive worldview is hermeneutics. Plager (1994) defines hermeneutics as a “philosophical methodology used to uncover the meaning of human beings, which enables the investigation to interpret the being of human beings” (p. 66). Kafle (2013) says that interpretations are all we have and description itself is an interpretive process.
To generate an interpretation of a phenomenon the hermeneutic circle can be used (Kafle, 2013).

Savin-Baden and Major (2013) explain the hermeneutic circle is when “the researcher’s interpretations move from seeking to understand particular component of experience to developing a sense of the whole, back again to examining a further component” (p. 218). As such, in relation the interpretive worldview hermeneuticists suggest that knowledge is created by the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Creswell, Shope, Plano Clark, & Green, 2006). According to Kafle (2011) the hermeneutic phenomenology enables experiences to be understood through stories we tell of that experience. To understand the lifeworld, we need to explore the stories people tell of their experiences, often with the help of some specific hermeneutic or method of interpretation. This process allows the researcher to engage in an “increasingly deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied” (p. 218).

Essentially, the interpretive process is circular. In this research, I moved between the individual’s meaningful physical activity experiences and the overall meanings which encompass all individuals (Plager, 1994). The goal of using hermeneutic phenomenology was to understand pre-service teachers’ meaningful experience in physical activity in order to find commonalities in these meaningful experiences (Plager, 1994). As well, the purpose was to interpret the ways in which individuals’ meaningful physical activity experiences influenced their beliefs about teaching.

3.3.2 Bracketing and reflexivity. According to Knaack (1984), in order to undergo phenomenological research, it is important to make one’s assumptions, preconceptions and presumptions about the research topic in writing to avoid
misunderstanding the phenomenon as it exists in the individual. Bracketing is to “approach analysis with an openness to whatever meanings emerge” (Hyncer, 1985, p. 282). This does not mean that the researcher must empty themselves of all possible knowledge; however, Girogi (1997) explains that it is important in phenomenology that the researcher acknowledges past assumptions about the phenomenon, in order to be fully present to it.

When bracketing, Kafle (2013) explains the acceptance of the difficulty of bracketing. To overcome this difficulty the researcher is to acknowledge assumptions and attempt to make them explicit and come to the realization that there may be many possible perspectives on a phenomenon (Kafle, 2013). Therefore, it was important to this study for me to be aware of my prior experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and values prior to beginning data collection to allow and encourage participants to accurately describe their meaningful physical activity experiences. To help acknowledge, illuminate and reflect on my meaningful physical activity experiences, I wrote three descriptions/narratives within chapter one (see Section 1.3). During this reflective process, it became clear to me that my beliefs about teaching physical education highly prioritize social interaction; aligning myself as a social constructivist. I also acknowledged that I have background knowledge, understanding and experience as a former research assistant and teaching assistant that focused on and prioritized learning about meaningful physical activity experiences. It was evident to me that this prior knowledge was present as I found myself using the language around meaningful physical activity such as, challenge or social interaction during the data collection and analysis process.
3.4 Data Collection

This research employed two semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2013). Interview one focused on life history and served to retrieve the details of the participants’ experience through photo-elicitation which was based upon the premise that utilizing an image to describe their meaningful physical activity experiences sparks multiple reactions, leading to outpourings of all kinds of information, feelings, thoughts, and situation details (Knowles & Cole, 2008). This information was then reflected in interview two, which focused on each meaningful experience in relation to participants’ beliefs about teaching. For this phenomenological research, it was first important to choose a site in which participants would have meaningful physical activity experiences.

3.4.1 Site selection. Guided by a phenomenological approach, Creswell (1998) explains that when selecting a site or individuals for phenomenological research, it is best to choose the site and potential participants based on the premise that multiple individuals have experienced the same phenomenon. Therefore, a University in southern Ontario served as my study site.

3.4.2 Participant selection. When identifying individuals to participate in this research it was pertinent to include only those with “rich experiences in the phenomena of concern” (Seidman, 2013, p. 314). Thus, students were chosen using a purposeful sampling technique which included “selecting information-rich cases for the study in depth when the goal is to understand something and when generalization is unnecessary” (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013 p. 314). Thus, I made a series of strategic choices about “with whom, where and how” I did my research (Palys, 2008).
Utilizing this method enabled me to choose participants who would provide the greatest insight into the research questions. Most importantly, potential participants were required to articulate a story about a meaningful physical activity experience (Appendix A). This implied that the participant could self-reflect on their experiences, articulate more than merely what happened and explore their experience as a whole. Therefore, with guidance from my supervisor and committee, we felt the potential participants from a group of university physical education students whom I had previously taught would be well suited for this research. I had positive rapport with these students and could identify those who had the potential to be insightful participants for this research. At the time of the research, the participants were enrolled in their Teacher Education year (fifth year) pursuing a physical education as a teachable subject. With the help of my supervisor, we reviewed a list of students whom we thought would be best suited for this research.

Seidman (2013) and Savin-Baden and Major (2013) state that if a researcher is seeking in-depth responses, fewer participants are needed. Therefore, we narrowed the list down to 8 possible participants, which included five females and three males.

3.4.3 Recruitment. Upon gaining clearance from Brock University’s Research Ethics Board (File: REB 16-092 FRANCIS), participant recruitment began. I emailed the 8 students whom we believed were the most suitable for the study using an email correspondence recruitment script (Appendix B). Within this email, I attached my letter of invitation (Appendix C) and the informed consent form (Appendix D). Once each participant responded to my email agreeing to participate in this research, I set up a brief information session at a mutually agreed upon time and location at the convenience of the participant.
3.4.4 Informed consent. All participants needed to be informed of the “rights of the participants,” that they were being researched, and the nature of the research (Seidman, 2013). After briefing the participants about their involvement in the study (Appendix C) and reviewing the informed consent form with the participant, the informed consent form was signed (Appendix D). Once the informed consent form was signed, the information session in preparation for interview one began.

3.4.5 Information session in preparation for interview one. To brief the participants on the process of retrieving their images, I arranged information sessions that were about 10 to 20 minutes in length. In this information session, either individually or in a group setting, I explained the process of taking/retrieving photographs and how they would foster conversation for the first interview (see Appendix E). Initially, I referred to this method of data collection as photovoice. However, this interviewing technique is better explained as photo-elicitation, which offered a visual dimension to the unobservable thoughts, feelings, experiences, and understandings (Patton, 2002). Photo-elicitation has become a frequently used method of data collection in phenomenology (Harper, 2002; Loeffler, 2004; Sandhu, Ives, Birchwood, & Upthegrove, 2013). Thus, in preparation for interview one I asked participants to bring three to five pictures of a meaningful physical activity experience. Participants were asked to avoid pictures of themselves or others that were easily identifiable to maintain ethical considerations.

Prior to the first individual semi-structured interviews, participants were encouraged to take one to two weeks to collect photographs of their meaningful or significant physical activity experiences. The day prior to the interview, participants were encouraged to email their photographs to me if they preferred, which they all did. The use
of photographs provided an innovative approach as participants could use them as prompts or points of departure in the interview.

For this study, photo-elicitation assisted in participants’ articulation of their meaningful experience in first semi-structured interviews (Knowles & Cole, 2008). The images and words from their life experiences created the basis for discussion. Using images was a method to add to the depth of individual responses within the interviews. In correspondence with the images, students were asked to write personal written entries about their meaningful experiences in physical activity. These journals did not have to be lengthy, but were meant to act as refresher notes for the participant about their image/meaningful experience during the interview. Journals were used as supporting documentation as talking points while explaining their meaningful experiences in physical activity to aid in the conversation during the individual interviews.

3.4.6 Getting to know the participants. The pre-service teachers that participated in this research were all concurrent education, physical education (intermediate/senior) teacher candidates between the ages of 23 to 25. Prior to the beginning of every interview I took the time to chat with them to find out how their teacher education program was going, their experiences thus far, any questions they had, to share information I learned from my own practicum placement experiences, opportunities after graduation and much more. From these conversations and throughout the interviews, I got to know the participants and some insights about who they are as individuals and physical educators.

3.4.6.1 Hannah. Hannah arrived at the first interview eager and excited. She opened her computer to show me her pictures that she had organized in a folder and
turned her computer to face me so that I could look at them as she spoke. She had also prepared notes to refer to throughout. Hannah sat on the edge of her seat, her passion radiating as she spoke. At the beginning of the interview Hannah referred to her notes a few times, but as she got into her first picture description I could tell she was passionate about her experience and words just flowed. She used the word “love” several times when speaking about her physical activity experiences.

Hannah was an energetic and passionate individual, who was enthusiastic about teaching and had a radiant glow about her. She foresaw every teaching experience as an opportunity to better herself as an educator. She was inspired by physical education teachers she had and hopes to do the same for her students. She played several sports; however, hockey and ultimate frisbee were her favourites growing up.

3.4.6.2 Marty. Marty arrived to the first interview with a demeanor that was laid back and casual. He had sent me his photos in advance, so I could refer to them throughout the interview as he spoke. During the interview, he took his time to think about the pictures he had and Marty often asked for a few minutes to collect his thoughts as he was explaining them. At the beginning of the interview, Marty would check with me from time-to-time to see if he was on the right track. I reassured him there was no right answer to the questions.

It was clear that Marty was family-oriented, volunteered and enjoyed travelling. He spent many of his most memorable moments with his family and friends. Marty talked very highly about his family and the memorable role his Dad and grandparents played in his physical activity experiences. He shared his realization that sport connects
us through culture and even in different parts of the world, such as Guatemala. Sport acts as a language to communicate through.

3.4.6.3 Kelsey. Kelsey arrived at the first interview prepared and enthusiastic. During the interview, Kelsey sat back on the couch, she appeared as if she was comfortable and spoke with ease. It seemed as if we were just two friends catching up in regular conversation. Like Hannah, Kelsey did not require much prompting. She often checked for my understanding to make sure I was understanding her descriptions.

Kelsey is an adventure-seeker and it was clear she has a love for the outdoors. Whether she is hiking, paddle boarding, or taking her dog for a walk, Kelsey loves being outside. She was inspired by young athletes to volunteer to coach a summer basketball program, where she aimed to develop young girls holistically, focusing on skills that could transfer and help them in several different aspects of their lives.

3.4.6.4 Tom. When Tom arrived at the first interview he sat down on the couch and got out the pictures/notes he had prepared and printed for the interview. I also opened his pictures on my computer to look at as he described them. As he settled in, Tom sat with one arm resting on top of the couch, appearing at ease. He only referred to his notes near the end of each interview question just to make sure he had covered the points he had wanted to cover. A few times during the interviews, Tom apologized for getting a little carried away with a story that lead to another story. I reassured Tom that is was all helpful to provide context for his meaningful physical activity experiences and his detail added to his descriptions.

Tom was a hard-working and competitive individual who was not sure if he would deviate from his initial path of teaching to pursue a career in physiotherapy. Tom
had been a part of many highly competitive sport teams, specifically baseball and football. He experienced much of his success in football and was even scouted for a few teams in the United States, however an injury lead him to baseball.

3.4.6.5 Danielle. Danielle arrived to the first interview with a confident calm about her. She had notes that she had prepared in advance and I opened her pictures on my computer to refer to throughout the interview. With her descriptions, she was concise and to the point. She did not refer to her notes many times during the interview, however would double check them at the end of each interview question to make sure she had covered everything she aimed to.

Danielle was a driven and motivated individual who had a long career in high-level basketball. Danielle decided that upon moving towards university she would have to think about her future career. She decided to forego a scholarship for basketball, which was something she loved, but was becoming more of a chore than an enjoyment. She pursued her passion to become a teacher. She mentioned that one of her favourite places for physical activity was at the cottage where she could participate in kayaking, swimming and hiking as they were activities she does not have readily available to her at home.

3.4.6.6 Charlene. Charlene arrived to the first interview appearing confident and ready to get started. It was evident she had prepared talking points prior to the interview. Charlene often repeated the interview question or parts of the interview question to check that she understood what she was being asked prior to formulating her answers. It was evident when she was passionate about a topic she tended to repeat the point she was trying to get across to make sure it was clear.
Charlene was a leader and not afraid to voice what she believed in. She had many opportunities in her physical activity experiences to be a leader. She mentioned that even though she was not the best at a sport, coaches often saw a powerful leader in her. She was driven by competition and still has that competitive nature when it comes to participating in sport.

3.4.6.7 Rebecca. Rebecca arrived to the first interview prepared with notes to accompany her pictures. She spoke clearly and slowly in a gentle voice. Her descriptions were clear and she used several examples from her physical activity experiences to support each point she made. Rebecca did not require much prompting as she dove right into description, so much so that I almost felt as though I was there with her in the moment.

Rebecca is an individual who finds joy in participating in physical activity for the social interaction. She enjoys physical activities in which she can participate with her family and friends and that take place in non-judgmental environment. She believes that teaching her students to be active outside the walls of the school is important and that students need to learn how to transfer/apply what they learn in class to other contexts.

3.4.6.8 Gord. Gord arrived to the first interview with confidence and an eagerness to get started. He had emailed me his pictures so I could follow along as he spoke during the interview. Gord used these pictures to spark his memory as he spoke. It was evident that many of Gord’s picture descriptions overlapped with the main ideas he was trying to convey. During a few of the questions, Gord asked for some time to organize his thoughts and formulate his answer.
Gord is a determined, devoted and motivated rugby player who decided he wanted to change his lifestyle when he went into high school. Growing up, Gord did not participate in many physical activities, until he tried football in elementary school. He realized quickly he was much faster and stronger than his peers and decided he wanted to get in better physical shape. Gord’s interest in football shifted to rugby; he had a goal that by the end of high school he wanted to make Team Ontario rugby and to wear their jersey, his own jersey. He did just that.

3.4.7 Interview one. The first semi-structured interview developed from the photograph discussion (Knowles & Cole, 2008). Using photographs in research acts as memory prompts for writing or as points of departure for starting the first semi-structured interviews (Knowles & Cole, 2008). The images and words from the life experiences of participants created the basis for discussion. Participants were to take photographs of meaningful or significant physical activity experiences they have had whether it was a picture of a place, artifact, etc. and a one-on-one interview was held with each of the eight participants (Appendix E). The photographs were therefore used as an aid to narrative and participants were always involved in to understanding the meanings associated with their chosen images (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2012). It focused on putting the participants’ meaningful physical activity experience into context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about him or herself, the situation, etc. within the meaningful physical activity experience (Seidman, 2013). It involved participants articulating ways in which (if any) they experienced meaningful physical activities or learned about what constitutes meaningful physical activities (Appendix F). It focused on
the details of the participants’ lived experience in their meaningful physical activity experience (Seidman, 2013).

Interview one was guided by a semi-structured approach to interviewing, which Savin-Baden and Major (2013) describe as an interview that allows the researcher to follow preset questions but includes additional questions in response to participants’ comments and reactions. Therefore, I could ask open-ended questions to allow participants to express their perspectives/lived experiences of the phenomena regarding their meaningful experiences in physical activity, which is a key element in phenomenology (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). During interview one I took detailed notes as well as recorded the participants’ responses to each question. At the end of interview one, the participant chose a day and time that worked best for their schedule for the second interview.

3.4.7 Interview two. The second individual interview (with the same eight participants) took place in the middle/end of the week, as long as it was within the same week as the first individual interview. This allowed time for participants to reflect on their experiences in meaningful physical activity from the first interview, but not enough time for them to forget their thoughts (Seidman, 2013). I asked how participants could or if they do apply their personal meaning-making experiences in physical activity to their own teaching practices (see Appendix G). The aim of this interview was to see if this meaningful physical activity experience shapes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about the importance of fostering meaningful experiences for young people and influences their pedagogical practice as located in their beliefs about teaching.
3.5 Transcription

Transcription in qualitative research must take into account what is transcribed – the interpretative process – as well as how it is transcribed – the representational process. Guest and MacQueen (2008) explain that data can be transcribed verbatim (recorded word-for-word, exactly as said), partially verbatim, summarized or translated from one language to another. Essentially, researchers undertake their first data reduction step when they decide what will be transcribed and what will be left out (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2003). In the case of this research, all data was transcribed using intelligent verbatim transcription (Whiting, 2008) also referred to as partially verbatim (Guest & MacQueen, 2008) and did not include words such as, um, like, etc. to maintain integrity of the participant.

Following interview one and two, the audio recordings were transcribed. In some instances, I had two participant interviews during the same week, therefore I was not able to transcribe and return them for member checking before their second interview. Although a lengthly process, as Whiting (2008) describes playing the recorder back several times increases accuracy, but can take an excessive amount of time, I found transcribing to be very beneficial. I was often highlighting interesting comments in the transcription as I went along. Transcribing gave me the opportunity to immerse myself into the data and enabled me to capture the detailed descriptions participants gave (Seidman, 2013).

3.5.1 Confidentiality. Within research, there were many ethical codes put in place to protect participants’ identity and privacy (Cacciattolo, 2015). An essential aspect surrounding ethical consideration was confidentiality and anonymity. I used pseudonyms
for participants in order to ensure that their identity remained confidential and anonymous (Cacciattolo, 2015; Seidman, 2013). Participants were told at the beginning prior to the interviews that their name and any identifying elements within their meaningful experiences (school name, institution, etc.) would be changed to ensure confidentiality. I chose a pseudonym for each participant for the documentation of this research.

3.5.2 Audit trail. As the participants’ descriptions and stories developed from their photographs were an essential element of this study, it was important to keep participant data organized and anonymous. Each participant’s interview was labelled with the research participant’s pseudonym, the interview number, and the date. For example, the interview transcript containing Tom’s (participant #7) first interview on March 25, 2017 was labelled: Tom – Interview 1 – March 25, 2017. Similarly, each audiotape was also labelled. The audio recording containing the above interview with Tom was appropriately labelled: Audio recording – Tom – Interview 1 – March 25, 2017.

Participant files were also created to organize data and secure the anonymity of the research participants. Each participant file contained their photographs, transcripts, audio recordings, journals and notes I made during and immediately following each interview (Appendix E and Appendix F).

3.6 Data Analysis

Analysis of these data was framed by Hycner’s (1985) phenomenological data analysis pertaining to the two semi-structured interviews. With support and guidance from Hycner’s process, the tenets of this phenomenological data analysis that were incorporated are displayed in Figure 1. The process involved the following:
1. I returned the transcripts to each participant to make sure that what I transcribed was what they wished to say (Hycner, 1985). Member checking is an important way to ensure that I bracketed and transcribed data to enhance the credibility of this study. Shosha (2012) and Hycner (1985) describe that employing a variety of strategies can add rigor to the study, such as "member checking," which was achieved by getting agreement from the participants on the transcription regarding what they had said. In this research, I asked participants to review and respond to the interview transcriptions (if there was anything they would like to have changed). In this way, participants were invited to verify that and confirm the accuracy of my account in presenting their perspectives and opinions (Hycner, 1985).

2. For each transcript, I used the margins to the left of the transcription to note units of general meaning (codes) (Hycner, 1985).

3. I read the transcription numerous times. This provided a context for the emergence of specific units of general meaning (codes) which Hyncer (1985) describes as “words, phrases or non-verbal communications express a unique meaning” (Hycner, 1985, p. 281). After I felt confident with my codes for each transcript, I went through each again and recorded the codes on a separate piece of paper. If the code was present more than once in the transcripts I put I tally beside it on my piece of paper which helped me to keep track of reoccurring codes that could be potential themes.

4. I then went through my separate sheet of codes and highlighted (colour coordinating) similar codes. For example, codes regarding family, friends, team
like a family, new friendships and sense of community were all highlighted the colour blue.

5. My supervisor checked to see if the units of general meaning (codes) aligned in terms of my research question (Hycner, 1985). To further deem this study as trustworthy, Hycner (1985) suggests having other researchers independently carry out the data analysis procedures in order to verify findings. In this case of this research, cross-checking of the analysis process specifically the themes that emerge, was fulfilled by my research supervisor (Hycner, 1985).

6. I determined if there were any units of meaning (codes) that naturally clustered together into a common theme (Hycner, 1985). I went back to the codes I had written out and highlighted on a separate piece of paper and typed them into a word document grouping them into possible themes based on the respective highlighted colour.

7. I looked for themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as individual variations (outlier codes) (Hycner, 1985). I narrowed it down to five themes that were prevalent to all participants and two outlier themes that only a few participants shared experiences relating to. I chose to only use the five themes that all participants described as I decided the two outliers did not have enough data for them to stand on their own and fit within the five major themes.

8. Again, my supervisor checked to see if the units of meaning (themes) aligned in terms of my research question (Hycner, 1985).
9. I returned to the transcripts looking each unit of general meaning (code) I made in the left-hand margin and highlighted the associated phrase – colour coordinating for each theme.

10. I then typed up a table that consisted of the overall themes (highlighted the same colour as the theme colour in the transcript), quotations to support themes along with the respective participant name, interview number, page number and paragraph number for easy access to data information.

11. I repeated steps one to ten for the second interview for each participant interview.

12. For the second interview I then interpreted participant answers to the questions asked within the interview (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) to see if these meaningful experiences shape pre-service teachers’ beliefs about the importance of fostering meaningful experiences for young people. I then constructed knowledge by using the context provided in the first interview to understand and interpret (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013) if these meaningful experiences in physical activity inform the development of pre-service teachers’ pedagogical practice.

13. I created a flow chart diagram on paper to interpret connections between participants’ meaningful physical activity experiences and their beliefs about teaching.

14. Once I completed steps one to ten for the first interview and steps one to thirteen for the second interview, I then examined interview one data as a whole and interview two data as a whole to modify or add themes as necessary (Hycner, 1985).
Figure 1. Data Analysis Process

Member Checked Transcript

Coded in Left Margin

Read and Re-read

Cross-Checked Codes with Supervisor

Combined Code Clusters to Form Themes

Interpreting
Reflective Writing
Reading

Interview #1 as a whole to modify themes
Interview #2 as a whole to modify themes
3.7 Trustworthiness

Throughout this process of data analysis, it was important that I took into account ethical considerations of the participants to maintain the trustworthiness of this study. There were steps taken throughout this research to ensure trustworthiness in the approach and process. Patton (2002) defines trustworthiness by “being balanced, fair, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, multiple interests, and multiple realities” (p. 575). According to Cope (2014), researchers can perform specific strategies that increase the likelihood of producing credible findings. Researcher strategies that facilitate this process include prolonged engagement and reflexivity (Cope, 2014).

Prolonged engagement is the process of building trust and rapport with participants to foster rich, detailed responses (Cope, 2014). During this research, it was important to ensure I had rapport, a trusting relationship, and understood the people and phenomenon of the study. Shenton (2004) suggests developing an early familiarity with the culture of participants before the first data collection dialogues take place. As I was a student in the same university program as the participants, I felt that I could relate to them as we had many similar physical activity experiences. Additionally, I have the necessary background, understanding and experience as a former research and teaching assistant who focused and prioritized learning about meaningful physical activity experiences.

Reflexivity is the awareness that the researcher’s values, background, and previous experience with the phenomenon can affect the research process (Cope, 2014). One way the researcher can address this issue is to maintain a reflexive journal to reflect and note thoughts and feelings to bracket perceptions and subjectivity (Cope, 2014). Due to the nature of the importance of subjectivity in this research, I acknowledged that as the
researcher, I had assumptions that needed to be considered to avoid bias. Firstly, I assumed that the physical activity experiences participants shared with me are truthful and that their perception and emotions attached to the experiences are authentic and genuine. Secondly, I assumed that participants trusted me and felt comfortable to share their meaningful experiences in physical activity, expressing and embodying the whole experience. To help ensure the above, it was a priority for me to develop a strong rapport (Seidman, 2013) with each participant.

Moreover, triangulation is the process of using multiple sources to draw conclusions (Casey & Murphy, 2009). With methods triangulation, the researcher uses multiple methods of data collection to gain an articulate and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Thus, my methods of data collection in this research included interviews, notes, journaling and photographs to add to the depth of this phenomenological study.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methods of the research. A rationale to taking the phenomenological approach was explained, where an overall constructivist worldview married with phenomenological and interpretive worldview. Phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches to data collection and analysis were taken. The primary means of gathering data were two semi-structured interviews for each of the eight participants. Data from each interview was analyzed using Hycner’s (1985) phenomenological data analysis. My role as the interviewer was identified as both a potential source of bias and as a strength, as the trustworthiness of interpretations of the qualitative data was a primary concern of the study.
Chapter 4: Findings

The aim of this chapter is to provide a description of the themes that were generated from the data collection and analysis process outlined in the third chapter. The descriptions that pre-service teachers ascribed to their meaningful physical activity experiences and how these experiences influenced their beliefs are supported through verbatim quotes from the interview transcripts, photographs and journal reflection quotations. The photographs in this research added a visual representation of participants’ experiences, which added to the depth of their descriptions. Throughout many instances during the interviews, participants gave such thorough descriptions, it felt as though I was present in the experience. The verbatim quotes are included to allow the voices and lived-experiences of participants to be shared with the reader and validate the themes.

Material from all eight participants is used in the following theme descriptions, indicating that even though participants’ meaningful experiences in physical activity and beliefs about teaching were unique, there were underlying and common threads among the participants. The data analysis process was inductive; however, the themes that are reported align with a priori categories based upon Kretchmar (2006) features of meaningful experiences. The purpose of using a priori categories was to legitimize and support Kretchmar’s (2006) work as well as add to the literature to have a better understanding of meaningful experiences.

The themes that were generated from this data are neither independent nor mutually exclusive from one another. In fact, there is much overlap or integration among the themes, some of which is noted within the descriptions and some of which should be recognized as part of the complexity of lived-experience. For example, participants talked
about several of the themes that seemed to work together in an integrated way that resulted in an overall fun experience. Findings pertaining to the first interview are organized around five common themes and subthemes. These themes include ‘rooted in context’, ‘connections with others’, ‘challenge’, ‘connection to real-life experiences’ and ‘acquiring a skillset’. The format of the thematic descriptions of meaningful physical activity experiences is mapped in Figure 2.

*Figure 2. Interview one: Meaningful physical activity experience codes and themes.*
4.1 Themes Generated from Interview One: Meaningful Physical Activity Experiences

Out of the five themes that were generated in interview one, there were three major ones: rooted in context, connections with others, and challenge. Each will be discussed in the following sections. These three themes were described by every participant during the interview process. Furthermore, several participants also described that their experience was meaningful when it connected to real-life experiences and developed their skill-set. Each of the five themes were further divided into and explained through the use of sub-themes, which are overviewed in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Interview one: Meaningful physical activity experience themes and sub-themes overview.
4.1.1 Rooted in Context

Pre-service teachers physical activity experiences of being rooted in context were particularly evident in four areas: role of the environment, movement as therapy, connection to nature and a situatedness (which will be defined in section 4.1.1.4).

4.1.1.1 Role of the environment. The environment played a significant role in the participants’ physical activity experiences. Every participant identified the environment as a foundation to their experience. For example, the weather, temperature, and surface all played a role in adding meaning to their experience. While explaining her photograph of two Muskoka chairs on the dock facing the lake at her cottage, Danielle described how the lake environment at the cottage makes her physical activity experience more enjoyable:

I would go canoeing, kayaking, water skiing, and wake boarding. Things that you get to do there because it is available to you. It was so relaxing. It didn’t feel like I was doing physical activity. It didn’t feel like I was going there to work out, it was just something I enjoyed doing and I love doing it. In the summer, we would go to tons of trials looking for new things to do. We always had a dog, so constantly taking the dogs for a walk. In the winter, we did a lot of snowshoeing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, tubing, and tobogganing. I think I had a sense of freedom to explore. Being able to go and do whatever because there is so much available than what I am used to at home. In the water, I felt so calm and relaxed…I would love to lay on my floaty and tan…Even at night and the stars and looking up. Up north is my happy place. (Danielle, Interview 1)
In the same way, Hannah outlined how the role of the environment, more specifically the sandy beach, added to her experience playing ultimate Frisbee in Figure 4.

![Figure 4. Hannah’s photo of a sandy beach.](image)

Hannah specified:

…I think sand would be the most fun I have had. Even though it is the hardest… I think I like the environment where it is more open and I feel like I am more free, like I don’t have restriction of shoes or sock or any of that. I can wear my bare feet and feel like I am on a beach somewhere relaxing and it gives that kind of relaxed feel…I like the aspect of being on a beach… (Hannah, Interview 1)

Moreover, Marty also described his experience in an environment that was surrounded by water (see Figure 8). He explained his memories from being at his family cottage. He also related this experience to memory of playing soccer with his Dad at dusk.
(see Figure 6). He mentioned that the warm temperatures and calm water played a role in his meaningful water skiing experience:

There was this one day where we went skiing. It was kind of the same hour when I played soccer in my back yard. The sun was just starting to go down and the water is calm. That is usually when it is warm later at night. (Marty, Interview 1)

4.1.1.2 Movement as therapy. Physical activity was meaningful to pre-service teachers because in their busy lives of planning, marking, university classes and interacting with students, it provided them with a stress-relief, refreshing feeling and therapeutic outlet. Tom described his reasoning behind taking his dog for a walk or riding his bike:

For me it is like meditation. Walking the dog right now clears the mind. That is what I always liked about a bike ride…When you are out there for two and a half hours and put in 60km it is just refreshing and clears the mind. (Tom, Interview 1)

In the same way, Marty described his experience of participating in physical activity, more specifically the sports teams he has been part of, to help relieve the stressors in his life. Marty explained:

…[the] therapeutic aspect of it. School can sometimes be stressful or other stresses in your life. It is a time for me when I kind focus on something else for a couple hours to refresh my mind. I think that is the biggest reason why I commit to the sports I commit to today. (Marty, Interview 1)

Moreover, Hannah described that going for walks in the woods (see Figure 7), which helps to calm her when she is stressed with school:
When I am in the woods there is no one else around me. I don’t hear anything. It is quiet, calm and I can hear the water or leaves. It is so calming. All the hustle and bustle of stress I have at school; it goes when I am going on my hike. As I am walking I don’t think about things or I think about one million things when I am trying to figure stuff out. Or think about what I have to do this week that leads me to think about my grandparents. It leads to so many directions. It reminds me growing up my backyard is a forest. As a kid, we used to play in the forest and pretend we were spies and make tree forts. Going on these hikes reminds me that I built a tree fort or I would climb that tree. I feel like a kid again… The fall is so beautiful. Seeing all the leaves and all the colours. In winter, you can see all the frozen branches and everything is so still. I like being outside, being in somewhere different that is not a hockey rink or a school gym. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Kelsey also mentioned how she enjoys going for walks or hikes to clear her head (see Figure 5). “If I am feeling stressed out I go for a walk or hike to forget and ground myself. When I do go back to the homework my head is a little more clear. I am more mindful” (Kelsey, Interview 1). Danielle also described using walks as an outlet, “…it is a place where I go to relieve my stress. I tune myself out to the outside world and just focus on myself” (Danielle, Interview 1). For Gord, movement was a de-stressor and he also found therapy through movement, “I guess it would have been a release for me as well. Going through high school was pretty rough…and was also a good outlet for me. It was therapeutic” (Gord, Interview 1).
4.1.1.3 Connection to nature. The interviews revealed that the participants described their meaningful connection to nature. While expressing that walking through the forest was one of her favourite activities to do, Kelsey described her photograph of hiking in Figure 5 and her connection to nature.

Figure 5. Kelsey's photo of hiking in a forest.

Kelsey explained:

… I have a picture of hiking. It is not a specific place or time where I have hiked. When I go hiking I feel in tune with nature. I feel free and happy. More patient when I am hiking outside. In tune with the time of nature. It is nice and slow and a stress relief. The picture was taken at fall time and the leaves were changing. It was so beautiful. I love fall. (Kelsey, Interview 1)

In the same way, Rebecca described her photograph of walking in the forest in and her connection to nature:
… any forest is something that identifies the seasons; you can’t really see that in any other way. I like to be outside in the sense and just being in nature. There is just no other place to be connected to than that. I would say than taking a walk through the forest…It triggers a memory of the whole outdoor aspect… the event in itself wasn’t just one occurrence. This picture is regularly a part of my life and something that continues to be. It is always there and always an option. It always seems to be an option we take as well…It is not just something that happened once, but something I will be able to continue to build upon. (Rebecca, Interview 1)

4.1.1.4 A situatedness. All pre-service teachers discussed a sense of situatedness within their meaningful physical activity experiences. Situatedness, as described by Rohlfing, Rehm, and Goecke (2003), is the interplay between individual, situation, and context. Situatedness describes the close relation between an individual and its environment, and the influence of this relation on the nature and development of the individual itself (Rohlfing, Rehm, & Goecke, 2003). The pre-service teachers experienced many moments that contained certain elements, people, and environments, that were attributed to this picturesque memory. When these factors worked together, it set the foundation for the meaningful experience to happen. It took them right back to the time they were there. Marty illustrates this in his photograph in Figure 6.
In reference to Figure 6, Marty voiced:

There is a soccer net there. We moved to this house in 2003 and the first summer we had there we were all disappointed we moved into the country from the city. To give us a gift our parents got us this soccer net and put it in our backyard. It was a really nice field for a soccer net. Some of my favourite memories of growing up in this house was with this soccer net. Especially during the time at night when the sun was starting to go down. It was still bright out, but the hotness has gone down and there is no wind. I would go out with a soccer ball after supper around 7:00 pm and throw on my cleats with the soccer ball. My dad would be on the tractor cutting grass or doing something outside. I would be kicking the ball around waiting for him to finish… I would never formally ask him to come play soccer with me, but he always finished and rarely he would go inside and leave
me out there to myself. He would always get off the tractor after he is done, throw on his shoes and he would always be the goalie. We did this when I was young, but even still I remember doing it once or twice when I was in university. I would just go out and he would join me for old-times-sake…We would do this until it got dark out or we were tired from it. Those are some of my favourite memories of the back yard and the physical activity I did by myself and with my dad as well. (Marty, interview 1)

Furthermore, Hannah is also taken back to an experience where she is reminded of all the external factors that fostered her meaningful experience and situated her right back in this spot in her memory (see Figure 7).

![Figure 7.](image) Hannah’s photo of the woods.

Hannah explained:

Hiking here I found it to be relaxing and another way to get outside the class and the gym…It is something I can do all the time…[it] is so beautiful and I feel
relaxed and calm. It allows me to think about things and de-stress. I go with friends or by myself. It is something I can do completely alone and be satisfied. Or I can go with someone and we can chat about life... I also like to photography aspect. I have pictures of rocks forming or roots coming out of things. How the rocks form different steps. This picture is the trailing leading off and you can kind of see a trail... I like the whole adventure aspect as I am curious about things. I took my parents through here as well. I am far from home so when they come and visit I always want to do something with them. Something that I can do forever. I can go hiking as long as I can walk. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Hannah also outlined a situatedness of the environment, weather, scenery, season, and nature all working together as a foundation to create a meaningful experience in her reflection journal, “I hear the water flowing, the birds chirping, and the branches breaking. I love hiking especially in the fall because of all the beautiful leaves and colours” (Hannah, Reflection Journal).

4.1.2 Connections with Others

Pre-service teachers’ connections with others were particularly evident in three areas: the development of friendships, a team becomes family and family involvement.

4.1.2.1 Development of friendships. One of the meaningful aspects throughout pre-service teachers’ physical activity experience was the opportunity to build new and stronger friendships. This was felt through the opportunity to play with a team within and outside the school walls. It is evident that being part of a team fostered new friendships and strengthened existing ones. One pre-service teacher, Hannah, explained how her upbringing consisted of playing hockey. She pinpoints a specific hockey team in which she
formed long lasting friendships with several team members. More specifically, she explained how the friendships she formed on her team made her experience playing hockey even better. Hannah described her deep connection with her team “Just that whole coming together community…I felt like I was a family with this team” (Hannah, Interview 1).

Throughout her hockey experience, she explained it helped to expand friendships beyond the walls of her high school. She voiced, “I never thought about having friends at other high schools until I started doing it and it was amazing. I was able to connect them with my friends and made an even bigger friend group” (Hannah, Interview 1). As a result of new-found friendships, she chose to continue to play with her team rather than move up to another level in hockey. Hannah stated:

…I loved how close we got and I didn’t want to leave it, I didn’t want to go any higher because It didn’t matter about if I could be a better hockey player. It was just the connection I made with these friends, these are my lifelong friends because of playing hockey with them and having hockey brought us together. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Charlene also identified that throughout her physical activity experience she was able to make some strong friendships on her team “Again, I continue to do it for the social aspect and I have made great friends through it and I continue to be friends with them” (Charlene, Interview 1). Kelsey also made friendships, which continued outside her practices and games, “You know more about them and just start bonding with them and you hang out at school and afterschool and then on weekends” (Kelsey, Interview 1).
4.1.2.2 Team becomes family. Another focal aspect of participants’ interactions with others was when their team became more than just a team; it was transformed into a family. Tom had a similar experience to Hannah growing up with hockey. This is further illustrated when he explained that hockey meant more to him than the actual game itself. It was about the connection he had with his team, ‘the guys’, who made hockey enjoyable for him. Tom explained:

When I gave up hockey and would go and watch their games I missed the locker room way more than playing the sport. You miss playing with the guys and going to tournaments with the guys. I miss that way more than playing hockey itself.

(Tom, Interview 1)

Similar to Tom, Gord explained an experience where his rugby team, the ‘brotherhood’ played a big part in his rugby career:

… the second part of it would be the sense of community more of a brotherhood… You are a team and they don’t want to let you down. For me it is a massive character builder and sense of community. I have played with people that I do not like at all, but I am still to the left of that person, to the right of that person helping them make hits, being there for them, I have their back and support…. It is one of those that you will see anyone you step on the field with shares that sort of common thing. You see this person working hard and it makes you want to work hard for them because you see them doing it. They are your brothers that you went to war with on the field. (Gord, Interview 1)

Danielle found meaning in the unified relationships she formed with her team, which over time became like her family. She stated, “I built a family with my team and
thrived off it” (Danielle, Interview 1). Hannah also described the importance of her relationship with her hockey team, “…just that whole coming together community aspect I learned from it was incredible, I literally felt like I was a family with this team” (Hannah, Interview 1).

**4.1.2.3 Family involvement.** In addition to their team becoming a family, participants also discussed how their family’s involvement in their physical activity experiences added to their found meaningfulness. To express this, Charlene attributes meaning to situations where her father supporting her throughout her life in the different sporting events she was involved in. Charlene stated:

My Dad came to majority of my events, which was a big deal for me because my mom never came to a lot because she worked the nine to five job…From elementary to high school he was almost at all my sporting events. (Charlene, Interview 1)

Similarly, Marty spoke about his father being present in his meaningful physical activity experience. “I would just go out and [my dad] would join me for old-time’s sake. When I was young we would do this a lot in the summer. He would be the goalie and I would practice my shots from everywhere” (Marty, Interview 1).

Hannah talked about physical activities as a connection between her and her dad as well as her and her poppa. Physical activity was something she could do with her family. Hannah mentioned:

One thing I didn’t mention, but my new thing is I started golfing…And my dad plays too, so I like that. It is something I have been able to do with my dad,
friends and poppa. My poppa is 92 years old and we go golfing together. It is something I can share with my family. (Hannah, Interview 1)

4.1.3 Challenge

The experiences of participants in physical activity are diverse; however, there are collective attributions of meaning placed on challenge. Pre-service teachers’ experience of challenge was particularly evident in three areas: challenge of context, a sense of risk-taking and the journey to achieving a goal.

4.1.3.1 Challenge of context.

Several participants described their enjoyment resulting from the challenge their environment or that the activity demanded. This is evident in Marty’s description of the thrill and challenge he found in water skiing in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Marty’s photo of boating and water skiing.

Marty voiced, “It was about the speed, how fast you are going across the water. The rush of it. As soon as you get up and when you are carving out wide. The splash that you get
from that” (Marty, Interview 1). Marty also described the challenge of the temperature of the water, “The lake is pretty cold as it is pretty far up north… but I think all of us could say once you get up you forget how cold the water is and enjoy water skiing” (Marty, Interview 1).

Several pre-service teachers also mentioned the challenge of the trails in the forests they were hiking. For example, Hannah stated “It is a different adventure each time, even if it is the same trail” (Hannah, Interview 1). She continued to explain:

I love the hills and the unexpected terrain. That I have to turn and [it is] not just a straight road… I like having to jump over a rock or step over a root. Even if I trip, I walk it off and keep going. I don’t know what the next corner is going to be. Maybe it is a squirrel, maybe it is a snake. It is a different adventure each time, even if it is the same trail. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Several pre-service teachers also talked about challenge of context in regards to the challenge of a competitive context. For example, Tom demonstrated this by saying, “I would say [competition] is a big involvement… I would say in anything I do”. Tom continued to explain that “When you are playing the top level you can at whatever age you are and are dominating teams, it is fun when you are in competitive sport” (Tom, Interview 1). Danielle was another pre-service teacher who placed emphasis on competitive physical activities. During her high-level basketball career, she talked about one game that stuck out to her and explained why:

We played so hard because we wanted it so bad. It was a close game and we won by two points. It was nail biter. It was not a blow out and it was back and forth the whole game, which made it exciting and fun…It was nice to feel that you were
competition with a great team and finally winning and accomplishing that.

(Danielle, Interview 1)

4.1.3.2 A sense of risk-taking. Pre-service teachers found meaning in activities that involved a sense of risk-taking or adventure. Kelsey illustrated this while she was describing her enjoyment for hiking up a cliff, she made a direct link to rock climbing, as it also involved the same form of risk-taking challenge. To illustrate this, Kelsey explained:

Climbing up the cliffs is the risk-taking part of it. It is thrilling too because it could be dangerous sometimes going up the hills. It brings back memories of when I rock climbed. I used to work at a rock wall and we were taught the most efficient ways of how to climb. Sometimes I will use that when I am rock climbing and will try a higher rock than I normally would. Or using the ropes to help myself get up in certain way. It feels like I am risk taking and that is thrilling that way. (Kelsey, Interview 1)

In addition, Marty explained that he enjoyed the rush of adrenaline he felt while water skiing (see Figure 7), “It was about the speed, how fast you are going across the water. The rush of it. As soon as you get up and when you are carving out wide. The splash that you get from that” (Marty, Interview 1).

4.1.3.3 Journey to achieving a goal. Several pre-service teachers talked about the challenges of achieving a goal. Although these challenges were a small bump in the road, it motivated them to push on. Gord illuminates his journey and how the level of challenge, although difficult at times, kept him motivated to achieve his goal:
That was a meaningful experience for me because that was pretty much one of the first concrete long-term goals I have ever set for myself, ever. I am a very goal-oriented person now, but for me that was the beginning of it. Growing up I would say I will try out for this team and if I don’t make it I won’t be upset and there is always next year. This was a realization for me. I could take a picture of a track because the amount of times I have been out there and laying on the side or my back was strictly based upon that goal of reaching that. A picture of the track, jersey and weight lifting platform would be one giant thing. Once I had that goal I had to do it. (Gord, Interview 1)

Tom spoke about how his baseball team overcame adversity when they were down during a tournament, the coach put in their less experience pitcher, and the conditions for the game were not favourable. Tom stated, “We just overcame a lot of adversity in that tournament. We lost the game in the fog that we should have never lost to that team” (Tom, Interview 1).

4.1.4 Connecting to Real-Life Situations

Pre-service teachers’ experience of connecting to real-life situations was particularly meaningful. They deemed physical activity experienced personally was meaningful due to: non-judgmental environments, communicating through physical activity around the world, and gaining experience as an educator or coach.

4.1.4.1 Non-judgmental environments. A few participants spoke about their meaningful physical activity experiences as experiences that allowed them to work at their own pace in an environment that did not have a feel of comparison. This type of environment fostered participation in more leisurely activities. For example, Rebecca
explains her enjoyment of swimming outside in her grandparents’ pool; she reveals the deeper meaning responsible for her enjoyment of swimming. Rebecca voiced:

I think that is also why I enjoy leisure activities because there is no sense of comparison. There is no sense of I am good at it so I am going to participate in it. More like everyone is good at it, so why not…Other activities being more of a leisure aspect and working more at your own pace…Again, it kind of translates to my inspiration to participate in a gym setting. It is not only because I don’t have anyone to do it with me, but because I feel like it is that kind of environment where I am subject to a sense of comparison. (Rebecca, Interview 1)

In this example, it is evident that Rebecca felt that in the gym setting she was being watched and felt as though her body was being compared to or judged by others. She continued to voice, “This is more of my ideal active lifestyle and just the walk itself represented my personality because it was not intended to be a competitive aspect” (Rebecca, Interview 1). She found that her personality reflects a more leisurely lifestyle; therefore, she wants her physical activity experiences to represent and align with her personality.

Similarly, Danielle commented on how she decided to change gyms as she felt she did not ‘fit in’. She stated, “A lot of my friends go to a different gym and I tried it out, but I felt inferior there…I felt like I didn’t fit in. At the other gym, I felt intimidation factor…I did not like the environment” (Danielle, Interview 1). She moved to a gym where she could go in the evening and she mentioned that “typically there is no one there” (Danielle, Interview 1).
4.1.4.2 Communicating through physical activity around the world. A few pre-service teachers discussed how universal physical activity can be and can connect us to others around the world. More specifically, one pre-service teacher described his journey in Guatemala and how he was able to connect with individuals from another country through physical activity. See Figure 9. For him, physical activity provided a language to communicate, which was helpful to him in navigating through his trip.

![Marty’s photo of a playing soccer in Guatemala.](image)

Figure 9. Marty’s photo of a playing soccer in Guatemala.

Marty explained:

We were all high-level players and I think it is one of those games that is universal. It is not necessary to speak the language. As long as you can make some kind of sound or show you are open you can play with everyone. It goes over those barriers. After that game the Guatemalans didn’t speak too much English, so whenever they would come up and talk to me they would always
make some kind of soccer remark. They would say a word in a joking kind of way. They would always come up to me and say ‘eh soccer’. (Marty, Interview 1)

Marty continued to explain that the equipment used in physical activity connected him to the people in Guatemala “…super simple piece of equipment but produces a lot of laughter and smiles from the kids. Something they seemed to really enjoy” (Marty, Interview 1)

4.1.4.3 Gaining experience as an educator or coach.

Some participants explained how several of their physical activity experiences provided them the opportunity to grow as an educator or coach. For example, Kelsey described how she volunteered to be her summer baseball team captain/coach. During this role, she had responsibilities that developed her skills as a future educator and coach. As she was an aspiring teacher, this was a helpful experience and encouraged her growth. Kelsey voiced:

It also helps me build character because I am the team manager/coach. I am not actually the coach, but I handle all the scheduling, paying the umpires, scheduling practices if we have them. It has also helped me gain skills such as time management, organization… You also have to make the decisions, like the batting order. (Kelsey, Interview 1)

Additionally, Rebecca explained how, throughout her more recent physical activity experiences while teaching in her practicum placement, she had learned much as a future educator:

Everything I have learned was significant to me… I saw physical activity in a whole other lens… In the sense that we shouldn’t be striving for competition. We
shouldn’t be creating activities that create a sense of comparison…the learning I have gained about physical activity and education… (Rebecca, Interview 1)

4.1.5 Acquiring a Skillset

Pre-service teachers’ experience of acquiring physical skills was particularly evident in three areas: transferable skills, confidence in skill-set, and learning new skills.

4.1.5.1 Transferable skills. Many pre-service teachers discussed that they were able to transfer a skill-set from one given activity to another. As a result, this added to the number of physical activities they could participate in, giving them a diverse background of experiences. Hannah explains how this experience in many physical activities added to her motivation to become a physical educator:

I did just so many different sports so that is why I have a very diverse kind of background and that all lead me to wanting to teach, get into sports and get involved with that so that is why I decided to go to university for phys-ed as well. (Hannah, Interview 1)

Similar to Hannah, Tom also found meaning in his ability to transfer skills from one physical activity to another. Tom voiced:

Definitely playing baseball helped my transfer to football. Being able to track a ball in the air. The physicality you could get some from hockey, but I don’t think hockey is a near play to play as physical as football. (Tom, Interview 1)

To further illustrate pre-service emphasis on transferable skills, Kelsey explained “It also helps me build character because I am the team manager/coach. I am not actually the coach, but I handle all the scheduling, paying the umpires, scheduling practices if we have them” (Kesley, Interview 1). Kelsey was building upon the skills required as a
coach and saw the transferability they would have in other aspect of life, such as teaching.

**4.1.5.2 Confidence in skill-set.** Many pre-service teachers mentioned that they enjoyed physical activities that they felt they were “good at”. Tom felt as though he had the acquired skills needed to be successful in football. He explains, “I transferred into football and my love for watching the game and being a student of the game, I got a lot better very quickly. I was always fast. That was one of my better skills in sport was speed” (Tom, Interview 1). Similarly, Rebecca found enjoyment from being skilled in certain physical activities and explained that the ones she was not good at, she tended to stray away from. Rebecca expressed:

> I think I enjoy it because obviously not as encouraging to play something that I am not that good at. I consider myself to be a pretty good, have those basic fundamental skills to be successful in the game. The one thing that comes to mind is I always try to stray away from volleyball because I know myself I am not a good volleyball player. It is not something that I am itching to go play. Even at school or when teaching I try, as bad as that sounds, to drift away from something I am not good at because it is not encouraging (Rebecca, Interview 1)

Similarly, Charlene felt she was a strong leader and even though she was not the best player on the team, she had confidence in her strong leadership skills “…I knew that I wasn’t the best on the team, so I knew to be a leader I needed to show it through my actions rather than my skills on the field” (Charlene, Interview 1).
Furthermore, Danielle talked about how she was interested in coaching when she becomes a teacher. She mentioned that even though she enjoyed many sports, she felt more comfortable coaching the ones she had more experience with and knowledge about:

Even for coaching, I think I stick with [sports] I am more comfortable with. Basketball and volleyball, I am more comfortable with coaching those. It is not that I am not open to coaching other things, but I feel like those are areas I can give a lot to because I am very knowledge in those areas. (Danielle, Interview 1)

4.1.5.3 Learning new skills. A few participants also found meaning in learning new skills. Often, they mentioned they enjoyed learning skills that people did not necessarily already know how to do. For example, Marty described his experience learning how to skim board in the water, “It was something that a lot of other people did, beside my friend group. No one was really that good at it. It was always a funny time and when you feel it didn’t really hurt” (Marty, Interview 1).

Moreover, Charlene felt that her experiences in soccer helped her to gain life skills “I feel like soccer taught me a lot of life lessons. That responsibility role when I got the captains position on how to lead. It taught me about commitment and perseverance” (Charlene, Interview 1)
4.2 Themes Generated from Interview Two: Meaningful Physical Activity Experiences Influencing Pre-Service Teachers Beliefs’ About Teaching

These next findings will focus on participants’ meaningful experiences influencing their beliefs about teaching that were generated from interview two. This section is organized around five common themes that emerged. These themes include ‘changed perspectives of teaching’, ‘build a community’, ‘provide novel experiences’, ‘relate to students’ lives’ and the ‘importance of the physical activity environment’.

Thematic descriptions of pre-service teacher beliefs about teaching is outlined next in Figure 10. In both findings sections, figures and photographs were used to clarify, organize and provide a visual representation of various moments in the phenomenological analysis.
Figure 10. Interview two: Questions, codes and themes.

1. Can you briefly describe your beliefs out teaching? What do you believe is important and why?

2. Could you or do you already apply what you have formed your own meaningful physical activity experiences to your beliefs about teaching? How? Can you give some examples?

3. Would you say this meaningful physical activity experience has influenced what you believe is important in teaching PE? How? The way you will go about teaching or already do teach?

4. Do you think that teaching for meaningful experiences is important? If so, which elements stick out to you as being the most important?

5. Would you apply [these meaningful experiences] to your teaching practice? How are you already or how would you teach in ways that promote meaningful experiences?
4.2.1 Changed Perspectives of Teaching

Throughout their reflection on their own meaningful physical activity experience, pre-service teachers saw a shift in their thinking about teaching. They realized that even though the physical activity experience may have been meaningful to them, that it may not be meaningful for all students they will teach. This is seen in Hannah’s description of her beliefs in relation to the skillset her students may come to her with. Hannah realized that even though she was skilled in soccer and enjoyed it, her students may not have the same fundamental movement skills. Hannah voiced:

I would play soccer every day or I would do a skill, learn how to pass the ball with a friend and then a drill and then we would play a game and that would be my physical education class. For me that was great because I love soccer or we did that with field hockey and thought it was so fun, but for other kids if they don’t know how to do the skill properly or don’t understand how to pass, or run or even scoring or they don’t know how to aim or any of those skills to apply them to a game setting. (Hannah, Interview 2)

In the same way, Kelsey had a shift in thinking of how she will go about teaching when she realized that even though she enjoys being in the outdoors, she will not only teach lessons that happen in the outdoors. Kelsey said, “Not that I would just go outdoors because I like outdoors, but that is an option” (Kelsey, Interview 2).

Moreover, several pre-service teachers shared their understanding that even though they attributed meaning to competition in physical activity, they were aware not all students may feel the same. Growing up in competitive sport has always been a part of
Danielle’s physical activity experience; however, she realizes that she cannot place the same emphasis on it in her own lessons. Danielle articulated:

I have learned a lot that students love competition and they are quite competitive. Not everyone, but most of them. Teaching them healthy competition and knowing what is healthy and what is not. I incorporated competition in my classes sometimes, but not in an extensive way where that was the main focus… A lot of us are born with that competitive nature inside of us, it is not healthy to ignore that, but I also think it is not healthy to focus solely on the competitiveness.  
(Danielle, Interview 2)

Similarly, Tom, who had also grown up playing competitive sport came to the same conclusion. He stated:

I know, as I said I am a super competitive person, but I don’t think PE is always the place for that. Competitions is great and offering different levels in your classroom…it allows students to choose what they want to do… I always try to have some differentiation as far as competitiveness goes. Competitiveness as far as winning matters is more reserved for after school sport and coaching. The main goal in phys-ed class as a teacher is never to see your students win a game, it is to see how they are progressing and learning through movement. I know that winning is all that matters to some students…I think competitiveness has a purpose, for some students it is great and some it’s not and you have to be able to design a lesson that there is a side that is not competitive. (Tom, Interview 2)
Furthermore, pre-service teachers were beginning to realize that even though they have created a lesson plan, they felt as though they need to have an openness to reading their students and adapting their lessons as they go. Tom exemplifies this in saying:

Teaching is definitely an art and is the art of assisting discovery. I find a lot of times especially in teacher’s college because the lesson plan is so overdone that we tend to focus on our lesson plan and our lesson and trying to get through everything. I think the main thing we are trying to get out of it is student learning. If you don’t stick to your lesson plan, that is okay. As long as you are assisting students in learning…you need to have a plan going into it, but the students will take you where you need to go as the teacher. (Tom, Interview 2)

4.2.2 Build a Community

Every pre-service teacher talked about the importance of building relationships with their students in order to better understand how they could create a more meaningful experience for them. By tapping into their likes, moods and attitudes, Hannah explained that the relational time she spent with her students helped to guide how she went about her teaching. Hannah explained her first time using a Kin ball with her class to help build positive relationships:

I wanted students to willingly want to participate and by finding out those interests and building those relationships with students will make your teaching so much more meaningful. Growing up, the teachers I remember are the ones that connected with me. They care about you, they ask you questions, how did you do in your soccer game last night, or how was your weekend or what did you do this weekend. When they ask you questions to find out more about you. Those are the
teachers I thought they care about me. They wanted to know more about me and I felt that is was an exciting environment. If they had some great news they would share it with us. It felt like even if there were bad times at home, that students can clear that off their mind and come into a classroom. I can be able to see each student by their attitude and how they respond to me. If someone is like “oh it was fine” or they don’t want to say much and they are usually more positive I can say something must have happened. I can take that one step further by talking to them again or try to bring them out of their funk. What I teach that day will reflect how my students are. (Hannah, Interview 2)

Hannah reflected on her relationships in her physical activity experience and explained “How I build my relationship with my students is so important…” (Hannah, Interview 2). Hannah discussed how she had amazing teachers who took the time to get to know her, which made her experience in the learning environment much more meaningful.

Similarly, Tom felt that the community atmosphere in his class was important for creating a meaningful experience for students. He explained:

…the most important part is getting to know the group…because the courses are open…A lot of your students are there for the credit…getting to know your group allows you as the teacher to take your units and make those lessons geared towards and tailored towards your class. (Tom, Interview 2)

Later in the interview, Tom referred again to the importance of relationships within a class setting. By utilizing different small groups in his lessons, he provided one way for students have the opportunity get to know one another. He expressed:
Relationships are always big with me…getting to know your students and building that relationship with them. You can be a part of the class and not always the leader. The ability to camouflage in and be a part of that class…in a class of 30 there is over 435 individual relationships between everybody…so when you talk about making small groups having them always change…allows them to develop and everybody can take something away from someone. (Tom, Interview 2)

In the same way, Kelsey related back to her own meaningful experiences in physical activity. When she felt comfortable with students in her class she felt as though she was safe to learn. As this experience was meaningful for her, she wanted to recreate this for her own students. Kelsey stated:

Having that connection with students. Myself with the students and the students with each other…when I feel more comfortable when I am around people I feel safe to learn. I can be myself and take risks and it is alright to make a mistake because people are there to support you. (Kelsey, Interview 2)

4.2.3 Provide Novel Experiences

Reflecting on their own meaningful physical activity experience, many pre-service teachers mentioned that they enjoyed learning new activities; for example, trying activities such as rock climbing, water skiing or skim boarding. Therefore, they wanted to provide the same experiences for their students rather than the typical traditional sport units. Hannah spoke about using different variations of a game by making modifications to equipment and rules:
I was able to show them there is different variations of games and it is not just “This is how you play kickball”, there is no other option. There are so many different ways to play it and they were able to see a different perspective of it. How sports can be changed, so they don’t have a mindset that hockey is played like this and there is no other option. It got their minds open to it. Growing up I loved playing dodgeball and those kinds of games and I think it was because I was good at those games. Teaching something is so different. When I go to the classroom I am seeing that this kid doesn’t like dodgeball at all, this kid likes soccer, this kid likes basketball. Every kid has their own interests and I think that was challenging to get through that and think how can I incorporate that to include everyone. (Hannah, Interview 2)

Furthermore, Tom also expressed how he makes modifications to games in order to create a novel experience for students. Tom was reflecting on his own experience of trying physical activities such as football. It was something he had never played and was able to transfer his skills from other sports he played to football. Tom voiced:

I enjoy doing new things. Football was new to me as far as playing goes at an older age...I found a huge passion for something that was new to me, so I try to develop that passion in students as well. (Tom, Interview 2)

The novelty of football was an aspect Tom found meaningful. Tom elaborated on his belief for introducing students to novel games. Reflecting on his example, he realized that all students do not excel at the same physical activities:

…I was finishing up a basketball unit, so I took it into speedball and all these other games that were like basketball skills transferred to, but it was just territorial
games…yes, my class is very athletic, but you still had a group of students that were in phys-ed and weren’t athletic. They turn off when the athletes start playing basketball… If you can introduce a novel game like speedball that nobody is necessarily good or bad at going into it, it levels out the playing field a little bit. You can do that with anything. If you are playing football and you throw a rubber chicken in instead of a football, it just evens the playing field… (Tom, Interview 2)

Similar to Tom, Charlene wanted to show her students that there are many forms of physical activity. She was reflecting on her experiences, such as spin classes at her gym, that she had the opportunity to try in high school. Charlene realized:

Doing that with your students would help as well. Realizing they don’t have to just do what everybody thinks is physical activity doesn’t have to be physical activity. There are so many other things you can do. (Charlene, Interview 2)

4.2.4 Relate to Students’ Lives

Reflecting on their own physical activity experiences, pre-service teachers acknowledged many of their experiences occurred beyond the school walls and helped to contribute to their lifelong participation. Hannah stated, “I think by making those connections to real world or outside the classroom will make their learning more meaningful to them” (Hannah, Interview 2). In the same way, Rebecca agreed that her beliefs were founded on the importance of making connections to physical activity they can do at home or when on vacation and they do not have the same equipment available. “I think this is something to offer to students who may not have the ability to access equipment at home, to still continue an active lifestyle” (Rebecca, Interview 2). It was
evident that Rebecca found leisure activity, such as walks and jogs in the outdoors very meaningful. She explained this by providing an example of how she tries to help her students be physically in other settings:

I had a grade 11 girls’ weight training course and a lot of my students were either leaving early for Christmas break and they had a fitness plan that they were trying to work and improve upon throughout the semester. A lot of the things I was teaching I would try to say; “How can you gain this benefit in Jamaica when you don’t have this machine and you don’t have all this equipment?” I think even when I am using the resources at my disposal I am always trying to make it relevant in a sense to the students as to how they can do this in their own day-to-day life. For example, they would be using to TRX and I would say okay what other ways can you use your own body weight or other things in your room to improve upon your goal of gaining muscle mass in your arms? I think that was an important strategy I used…to try and make it relevant to the students”. (Rebecca, Interview 2)

Later in the conversation, Rebecca returned to her belief about finding a sense of relevance for students by saying:

Making the course relevant and meaningful to students is really the best way to keep them engaged and keep them active because if they find that sense of familiarly to their life or to their own preference or interests that is what is going to keep them physically active across the lifetime. (Rebecca, Interview 2).

Rebecca wanted to provide her students with the knowledge of how they could connect their physical activity experiences learned at school to how to be physically active at
home. For example, she summarized by saying “I think this is something to offer to students who may not have the ability to access equipment at home, to still continue an active lifestyle” (Rebecca, Interview 2).

In order to make physical activity relevant to the students they were teaching, many pre-service teachers shared that they found providing choice in activities helps to make an experience more relevant to them. Tom provided an example:

Students are super important in your classroom. They are the ones learning and you are the one trying to teach them. Any sort of feedback you can get from them…to see what they want to do…if you had a topic for striking and fielding, you usually don’t play that many throughout a year, but if you bring up that topic and show a list of sports and ask what would students want to do. I think the student voice is very powerful and it engages them more when they are there. (Tom, Interview 2)

Kelsey shared the example of how she gave students different activity options during her summer training program such as paddle boarding (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Kelsey’s photo of paddle boarding with students she coaches.
Paddle boarding was a new activity to many and was something the students could do leisurely on their own time as well. Kelsey explained, “Student choice. Whenever you are planning you want to make sure they like it. It is not just you teaching, it is their learning…making sure you get the students opinion” (Kelsey, Interview 2).

4.2.5 Importance of the Physical Activity Environment

For many pre-service teachers, the environment or context that physical activity took place in was foundational for creating a meaningful experience for not only themselves, but for their students as well. Being in nature and the outdoors was something all pre-service teachers mentioned was meaningful to them. Danielle illustrated this:

Enjoying nature and hiking allowed me see how we should be teaching students more about the enjoyment of physical activity and finding something they are passionate about more than fitness testing and throwing a ball in a hoop.

(Danielle, Interview 2)

Additionally, Kelsey felt strongly about physical activity occurring in an outdoor environment. She voiced that it sets the scene for a meaningful physical activity experience:

When I think about teaching physical education I hope to do a lot of it outdoors when I can…I would take that into my teaching practice and whenever it is nice out go outside. If it is not nice outside, for example, if it is snowing outside I would say to students; “It’s going to snow tomorrow, let’s go for a nice walk in the snow.” Doing other activities on water, snow, rock climbing. Trying to bring that into my physical education program…not just working out at the gym and
trying to go as fast as you can. Not just the quantitative part trying to reach that perfect body. It is more of the qualitative things like the social part of it. In physical education, everything is measurable…to get people to do physical education you have to think about the meaningful experiences. Hopefully by exposing them to different contexts like the outdoors, maybe they will find something they like there. (Kelsey, Interview 2)

Rebecca was a participant who highly prioritized being in an outdoor setting. She used swimming in her grandparents’ pool as an example (see in Figure 12).

![Figure 12. Rebecca’s photo of her favourite place for leisurely physical activity.](image)

She also linked the outdoor experience to learning that connects to outside school and believed that showing students activities they can do to encourage lifelong participation:

I find myself really intrigued by the outdoor education component because students have the opportunity to experience physical activity outside the regular
setting. I think that is good because a lot of the time in physical education you can be at a great school with all this amazing equipment…but when the students go home they don’t have that at their disposal anymore. Bring a shift in direction, even if it is just for a unit…it shows students how they can transfer different things into their life and have the ability to do so. (Rebecca, Interview 2)

However, Rebecca realized that as a pre-service teacher and not the contacted classroom teacher:

I think as a pre-service teacher it is difficult to actually apply those beliefs and my framework. As much as I say I want to shed light on different physical activity components and different things students can take out of it…it is difficult to do so when it is not my own class and it is me taking over someone else’s class.

(Rebecca, Interview 2)

Connecting to learning that relates to individuals’ lives, Rebecca discussed how the environment that disregards a sense of comparison creates a foundation for her learning to be meaningful. Rebecca explained:

Not having a comparison. If I am creating a classroom where there is this distinction that students are not working as a team or do not collaborate well or there is the identified student that is significant better athlete…creating that sense of comparison, there is no way that the class as a whole can be successful. What I find important in my own physical activity experiences does translate into my own personal perspective as a physical educator. (Rebecca, Interview 2)
However, even though this type of environment is foundational for Rebecca, she realized that some of her students may need this comparison or competitive aspect to find meaning:

I think ensuring that I am using a wide variety of teaching strategies and different games and different health components…I know I am shedding light on something every student has an interest in and not just to one group. I am well aware that even if I try and promote my leisurely lifestyle, it could just as easily not be something that is meaningful to any of my students. I understand the fact that I can recognize my own experiences, but it may not be meaningful to my own students. Using a variety of contexts in my class would allow me to make it meaningful at least at some point to some of the students in my class. (Rebecca, Interview 2)

4.3 Chapter Summary

In summary, pre-service teachers’ meaningful physical activity experiences were described. A priori categories were used to legitimize and support Kretchmar’s (2006) work as well as add to the literature to have a better understanding of meaningful experiences. The themes generated from this data are neither independent nor mutually exclusive from one another. Findings pertaining to the first interview are organized around five common themes and subthemes. The themes pertaining to pre-service teachers’ meaningful physical activities experiences included: ‘rooted in context’, ‘connection with others’, ‘challenge’, ‘connection to real-life experiences’, and ‘acquiring a skillset’. Moreover, findings pertaining to the second interview are also organized around five common themes and subthemes. These themes regarding pre-
service teacher’s beliefs included: ‘changed perspective about teaching’, ‘build a community’, ‘provide novel experiences’, ‘relate to students’ lives, and the ‘importance of the physical activity environment’.
Chapter 5: Summary, Implications and Conclusions

In chapter one I outlined that my desire to pursue this topic was rooted in meaningful experiences as a vehicle to foster both the joy of movement as well as the promotion of health objectives in physical education (Kretchmar, 2008). As meaningful physical activity experiences are subjective to each individual, it is important to learn how future educators find and make meaning in physical activity to understand how they will go about teaching their students. This places future teachers in physical education teacher education programs as key in fostering meaningful physical activity experiences. This chapter will provide a summary of the major findings, and implications.

5.1 Summary of the Main Findings

The results of this phenomenological research recognize and support the notion that meaningful physical activity experiences are diverse and are individualized processes (Beni et al., 2017). However, this study provides evidence that alongside the subjectivity/individuality of meaningfulness, there are common threads between individual experiences of meaningful physical participation. The findings within this study alluded to Kretchmar’s (2006) features of meaningful experiences and personally relevant learning (Beni et al. 2017) to provide further support for meaningful experiences. During this process, I struggled with being inductive and not using the terminology of Kretchmar (2006), however; I came to the realization that these results are nevertheless inductive, but further support Kretchmar’s (2006) work.

It is important to note that the findings from this study suggest that meaningful experiences are not necessarily dependent upon all features (i.e., social interaction, fun, delight, motor competence and challenge) being present in an experience or reliant on
only one feature, but rather combine, intersect, layer, and are interpreted by learners and teachers (Beni et al., 2017). Each of these features therefore merit further in-depth study individually and in combination and can be used to guide research agendas focused on meaningful participation (Beni et al., 2017).

Overall, the findings of this research support that pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching were influenced by their own meaningful physical activity experiences. In such that their meaningful experiences act as a lens to filter their pedagogical practices/beliefs within their teaching practice. My interpretations of the data linked several of the pre-service teachers’ meaningful experiences to their beliefs about teaching. These connections were made after themes for each data set were completed. It is important to note that during the data analysis process the themes from the first interview did not inform themes from the second interview.

5.1.1 Meaningful physical activity experiences influencing pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching.

In this section I briefly summarize the five main findings from this research. In doing so I position the findings within the literature and describe how these findings contribute to pre-service teachers’ meaningful physical activity experiences and my interpretations of how they influence their beliefs about teaching. The main findings directly address the research questions detailed in chapter one. The five main findings are:

1) Pre-service teachers’ experiences of the context of which their physical activity experience took place in influenced their belief of the importance of the physical activity environment.
2) Pre-service teachers’ experiences of their connections with others within their physical activity experience influenced their belief of the importance of fostering a community in their physical education classes.

3) Pre-service teachers’ experiences of challenge and competition within physical activity influenced their belief that even though they have enjoyed competition, not all their future students may feel the same way towards competition.

4) Pre-service teachers’ physical activity experiences were often connected to many aspects of their life outside their physical education classes and as a result, prioritized their lesson content to relate to students’ interests and provide them choice of activity.

5) Pre-service teachers’ experiences of acquiring skills in physical activity influenced their beliefs to provide their students with physical activity experiences that are novel in order to further develop their skillset and enhance the skills they already had.

5.1.1.1 Rooted in context and the importance of the physical activity environment. One finding that stood out to all pre-service teachers was the theme of the importance of the context in which their own meaningful physical activity took place. For them the context created a situatedness, a moment that they could go back to and clearly describe in their mind. The pre-service teachers prioritized context and environment in their own teaching as creating a foundation for their students to experience meaning. The pre-service teachers who participated in this research are athletic individuals who are enjoy physical activity in its myriad of forms; however many of them enjoyed non-judgmental environments.
This notion of context as the foundation to meaningful experiences captures Kretchmar’s (2006) idea of creating personal playgrounds for students. Kretchmar (2006) states: “we are the purveyors of one of the greatest playgrounds known to humankind” (p. 7). He described these playgrounds that include grassy fields, challenging gymnasiums, dance floors, a variety of watery and snowy places, mountainous cliffs, biking trails, and running paths (Kretchmar, 2006. These are places that that generate “unique sensuous delights and locations” (p. 7). Playgrounds are places for special experiences — the kinds of experiences students have difficulty encountering when confined by classroom walls and seated in a chair (Kretchmar, 2006).

**5.1.1.2 Connections with others and building a community.** Participants placed emphasis on the significance of building relationships with their students as well as between students. This emphasis of connections with others relates to Kretchmar’s (2006) feature of social interaction. Beni et al., (2017) explains that social interaction has been identified as contributing to meaningful experiences. The role of social interaction has been studied with a wide variety of people involved in physical education and youth sport contexts: friends, peers, teachers, coaches, and even family members of other participants (Beni et al., 2017). Lortie (1975) states that teachers enter education programs with pre-established beliefs about teaching and learning formed through their school experiences. This meaningful experience informed pre-service teachers’ beliefs of the importance of building a community with their own physical education classes. Several participants placed value on having relational time with students in order to get to know them. Beni et al., (2016) describe that teachers and coaches should consider the ways in which opportunities for social interaction are organized and structured based on the needs and
desires of learners. Such considerations require considering all relationships in the learning environment, provide opportunities for individual and group work, take into consideration group work dynamics (Beni et al., 2017).

5.1.1.3 Challenge and changed perspectives of teaching. Moreover, participants found meaning in activities that involved appropriate challenge, risk-taking, and learning curves. In the same way, some participants found meaning in competition. This theme of challenge relates to Kretchmar’s (2006) feature of challenge. Beni et al. (2017) explain that activities that provided an appropriate and optimal level challenge in physical activity settings was noted as an important component of a meaningful experience. Based on their own meaningful experience, pre-service teachers expressed that they realize that even though competition may have been meaningful for them, not all their students may feel the same towards competition. Their perspective of teaching and learning shifted with their realization that just because they experience something, not everyone will.

Similar to this, Beni et al. (2017) explains that although competition may be viewed as meaningful for many youth sport participants, the evidence from this review suggests this is not the case for students in physical education. For this reason, Beni et al. (2017) suggest that physical education teachers carefully consider how competition is presented. Students from research reviewed preferred emphasis to be placed on the challenge(s) inherent in the process of competing rather than on the outcome (that is, winning and losing) (Beni et al., 2017).

Harvey and O'Donovan (2013) support the need for pre-service teachers to become aware of their beliefs, and in particular their beliefs about competition. For example, some pre-service teachers’ beliefs about competition in regard to how they
understood competition in physical education and interpreted ideas about developmentally appropriate competition (Harvey & O’Donovan, 2013). Assisting pre-service teachers in making sense of their thoughts of competition in relation to their own memories and personal experiences of competition explained how a number of the pre-service teachers began to consider developmentally appropriate competition (Harvey & O’Donovan, 2013).

5.1.1.4 Connection to real-life experiences and connecting to students’ lives.

Participants placed an emphasis on connecting their physical activity experiences to experiences outside the school walls in order to continue to be physically active lifelong. These experiences link to Beni et al.’s. (2017) personally relevant learning. Beni et al. (2017) describe personally relevant learning as “when participants were able to recognize the importance of what they were learning and could make explicit connections between their current physical education and sport experiences and future aspects of daily living outside of the school or community setting” (p. 13). The pre-service teachers were able to use their knowledge of sport and transfer it to other aspects of their life. They believed it was important to prioritize their lesson content to relate to students’ interests and provide them choice within activities. Several pre-service teachers wanted to create a physical activity experience where students were active because they want to be. Instilling an intrinsic motivation by incorporating activities that are personally meaningful. Beni et al. (2017) suggest that teachers and coaches assist students in clearly identifying the purposes of what they are doing by making connections between what they are learning, why it is of value, and how it applies to their lives beyond the classroom or youth sport setting. Providing students with opportunities to take ownership of their learning through
being involved in making choices (with teachers and coaches) and reflecting on their experiences may strengthen the personal significance and therefore the meaningfulness derived from their experiences (Beni et al., 2017).

5.1.1.5 Acquiring a skillset and providing novel experiences. Participants found meaning in learning new skills, transferring their skills to different activities and enhancing their skills. This relates to Kretchmar’s (2006) feature of motor competence. Beni et al. (2017) explain that “experiences in physical education were more positive when students’ perceptions of their own motor competence were high, which had implications for the meaningfulness made from their experiences” (p. 12). In terms of pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching, one of the recurring ideas was to provide novel experiences. Providing students with an opportunity to try new physical activities enables them to further develop their skillset and enhance their already existing skills.

5.2 Implications for This Research

5.2.1 Implications for PETE. This research provides a good foundation of meaningful experiences and how pre-service teachers align or make sense of their own meaningful experiences. Kirk (2005) noted that there needs to be a critical approach to educating pre-service teachers; that teacher education needs to challenge “pre-service teachers’ embodied, unarticulated beliefs and assumptions about learning” by “getting pre-service teachers to consciously think about and discuss their own beliefs about learning and the ways in which they relate to the assumptions about learning that inform constructivist practice and theory” (p. 26). This process has required PETE students to articulate their own meaningful physical activity experiences in order to help them discuss their beliefs about teaching physical education. As meaningful physical activity
experiences are subjective to each individual, it is important to understand how future educators find and make meaning in physical activity, to understand how they will go about teaching their students. This places future teacher educators in PETE programs as key in fostering meaningful physical activity experiences.

Throughout their physical activity experiences, the participating pre-service teachers have accumulated many physical activity experiences which have shaped how they may make meaning. As mentioned in the review of literature in chapter two, pre-service teachers experience occupational socialization, which influences their perspectives and behaviours as a member of the health and physical education profession (Richards, Eberline & Templin, 2016). Throughout their interactions with parents, teachers, and coaches while they were in school they accumulated experiences which may have shaped how they make meaning, which is known as acculturation (Richards et al., 2016). While training for a career in health and physical education in a post-secondary setting, also known as professional socialization (Richards et al., 2016), pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching may have been influenced by these acculturated experiences. Richards et al. (2016) explain that some students may remain resolute in their existing beliefs about teaching.

As pre-service teachers enter their practicum placements within the school board in their teacher education year, they may begin to experience organizational socialization. This occurs on the job in the context of schools where health and physical education teachers work (Richards et al., 2016). Pre-service teachers then have to navigate the socialization process with their existing experiences and beliefs. For example, within the results of this research it was evident that all pre-service teachers placed an importance
on the environment that physical activity occurs in. Many found meaning while being outside in nature and as a result, pedagogically wanted to provide these experiences for their students. However, they may be faced with organization socialization: even though they want to take their classes outside, they may not be able to as a result of barriers reproduced by conservative approaches in curriculum. Teachers must then reconcile within the organizational boundaries of curriculum, context and administration, which can interfere with their desire to create meaningful physical activity experiences for their students. Therefore, reference to organization socialization structures is an area for future research as navigating cultures can be challenging (Richards et. al., 2016).

5.2.2 Implications for physical education. According to Kretchmar (2006), meaningful physical activity experiences are the key to educational transition in physical education. Kretchmar (2006) explains that “it is not the move from health-uninformed to health-informed living. It is from other-directed, impersonal, reason-grounded duty to, self-directed, personally meaningful, reason-transcending play” (p. 7). He explains that if we make physical education seem like work, we do not meet this important human need and we miss this crucial pedagogical opportunity related to lifestyle balance. Kretchmar (2006) explains that when we say or imply to our children that physical education is “good for you,” we are nudging it in the direction of duty and work (Kretchmar, 2006). He argues that physical education should be seen more as a privilege than a duty and a place where students have the opportunity to move, rather than have to exercise (Kretchmar, 2006). He states that one of the smartest things we might do in physical education is aim for delight (Kretchmar, 2006). If we are successful in that, we will surely get health too (Kretchmar, 2006).
So what does this all mean in the context of meaningful physical activity experiences influencing pre-service teacher’s beliefs about teaching? It is evident throughout the research that the value of physical education has long been questioned. Recently, practitioners have jumped on the utilitarian bandwagon (Kretchmar, 2008); that is to say, “physical education is important because it can produce health benefits such as a decrease in obesity and disease, and enhance job productivity and quality of life” (Blankenship & Ayers, p. 171, 2010). However, few studies provide direct evidence that physical education can actually achieve such outcomes and such an emphasis has not been all that effective in producing life-long movers (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). The utilitarian focus makes physical activity seem like a duty or an obligation and the joy of movement, the human component, has been ignored (Kretchmar, 2008).

Therefore, this brings us to the questions of: ‘What is physical education?’, ‘Is physical education play? Is it recess? It is sports?’ and ‘What is the purpose of physical education in 2018?’ Currently, the aim of health and physical education is to create life-long movers and foster being physically active for life, however can our existing health and physical education program foster this for our students if the focus is on a decrease in obesity and disease? Or rather, should we place renewed focus on meaning-making, which carries the potential to shift the focus of current physical education programs away from mere fitness or skill development and toward the intrinsic motivational elements that are more likely to lead to lifelong participation? Perhaps we need to start by asking our students questions such as; ‘What is meaningful to you in physical education?’ or ‘What was meaningful for you in today’s lesson?’
5.3 Implications for Future Research

A series of comments in the descriptions from the pre-service teachers around their meaningful physical activity experiences aligned with Kretchmar’s (2006) feature of delight. In the literature review of meaningful experiences in physical education, Beni et al. (2017) state that “there was not sufficient evidence in the studies reviewed to generate a theme aligned with delight”. Beni et al. (2017) recognizes that the lack of longitudinal studies focused on meaningful experiences makes it unsurprising that Kretchmar’s criterion of delight did not appear prominently, given the deep and sustained experiences that delight demands. Beni et al. (2017) explained that delight may be a difficult concept for a child to articulate, and thus in some cases may have been present, but not expressed by participants. Therefore, a recommendation for meaningful physical activity experiences research is to expand on the notion of delight and what it captures.

Moreover, Kretchmar (2006) refers to personal playgrounds, however does not focus on how meaningful experiences are deeply rooted in context. Personal playgrounds and the importance of the environment/context places a renewed interest on the idea of personal playgrounds, so further research is suggested to see if other types of environments play a role in creating meaningful experiences. Context is not clearly captured in Kretchmar’s (2006) features and that it perhaps warrants further consideration as an extra dimension or feature of a meaningful experience. Perhaps it suggests the importance of setting the right environment for learners.

Finally, this research suggests the possibility of conducting a longitudinal study with the participants for further insight to see if they are following their beliefs in regards to teaching physical education when in the context of schools; or if undergoing
organizational socialization has influenced their beliefs about teaching physical education. As mentioned earlier, navigating cultures in schools can be challenging for teachers (Richards et. al., 2016).

5.4 Limitations

Despite the philosophical and descriptive benefits of the research discussed in this document, there are some limitations to the study that deserve attention. First, the results of this study are not generalizable to all pre-service teachers nor were they intended to be. The participants of this study reflected on their past and present meaningful physical activity experiences that varied from individual to individual. Furthermore, it is important to note that as pre-service teachers are beginning their career, they are developing their beliefs as they continue to grow with experience. Moreover, the research participants represent a sample of pre-service teachers. This research only focused on eight high school physical education specialist teachers, who have similar views, experiences and attitudes towards physical education. It is important to recognize it is only a sample of the population of who shared their meaningful physical activity experiences and beliefs about teaching.

Moreover, this research is limited to the type of data that were collected. Primarily, the bulk of data was in the form of transcribed semi-structured interviews in which participants reflected on and discussed their meaningful physical activity experiences and if their meaningful experiences shaped their beliefs about teaching. Therefore, an element of trust was granted to the participants and an assumption was made that their interview responses were honest and authentic (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).
A final limitation of this study is outlined in Beni et al.’s (2017) review of literature on meaningful physical education and youth sport. Beni et al. (2017) indicate that a number of factors, such as sex/gender and family background, influence meaningful engagement in physical education and youth sport. Several patterns have been identified regarding meaningful participation. For example, many girls prefer to participate in individual, expressive activities, while there was support across participant categories (that is, social economic status, sex/gender, and cultural context) for providing learners with some choice in content and level of challenge. Beni et al. (2017) call for more research on specific types of experiences that promote meaningfulness for individuals in particular groups. Such investigation will help in better understanding how several factors (such as sex/gender, age, race/ethnicity, or family structure) intersect to shape children’s, or in the case of this research, pre-service teachers’, meaningful engagement in physical education.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

Chapter four presents descriptions of the lived-experience of pre-service teachers’ meaningful physical activity experiences. The meaningful physical activity experiences of these pre-service teachers are certainly assumed to be different than experiences of other pre-service teachers as they are specialist teachers. One finding that stood out to the pre-service teachers is the importance of the context and environment in which meaningful physical activity experience took place. The context and environment have been under-studied in meaningful experiences; this research adds to the literature through its emphasis.

Furthermore, this research provides further support of the importance of
meaningful physical activity experiences. Joy-oriented focus emphasizing physical education is important because movement is joyful, pleasurable, provides intrinsic satisfaction, and can be personally meaningful and central to the human experience (Blankenship & Ayers, 2010). Physical education programs that have a joy-oriented focus and educators who understand how to foster these joy-oriented environments for students may produce students who love physical activity, will end up enhancing health and developing life-long movers (Kretchmar, 2008). If our PETE candidates can understand their own meaningful physical activity experiences, they are then able to have a better understanding of how they already are or may like to create meaningful experiences for their students. For example, fostering physical activity experiences that encourage and lead students to feel good about themselves, their bodies, and develop a sense of embodiment.

5.6 Returning to Sea

The research process has brought me to an understanding and realization of what delight means to me. Recently, when I walked through the forest trail behind my house, with my favourite music in my headphones, the snow crunching under my boots, the sun reflecting off my face, as I breathed in the crisp fresh air, even though the temperature was a bit cold, I was much more aware of my enjoyment. So delighted, that when I got back inside my house I realized that I enjoyed the walk so much I got dressed in my snow gear and went out again!

As an educator, this research process has allowed me the opportunity to listen to others and share my own meaningful physical activity experiences. As I return to and participate in new physical activities, I am continuously thinking about the meaningful
features that I feel are present in the moment. This process has challenged not only the PETE candidates who participated, but also myself, to reflect and truly consider my beliefs about teaching physical education.

More recently, I have discovered that my beliefs about teaching school-based physical education deeply reside in social interaction. Whether it be the first day in a classroom or the last day, I believe that is imperative to have positive relationships with students as well as build student-to-student relationships. In turn, these reciprocal relationships help to foster a comfortable and safe learning community for students. It is important for me to show students that I genuinely care about their lives using relational time and show them I understand they come to class each carrying a different backpack. During my undergraduate experience, while reading an article, I came across a quote “…they’ll remember that you took the time to listen, that you stopped to ask them how they were. How they really were” (“What Students Remember Most About Teachers”, 2014). Since reading this, it has resonated with me. At the end of the day most students will not remember the amazing lesson plans I have created or how organized I was, but they will remember their interactions with me as an educator.

Throughout the research process, it has become evident that Kretchmar (2006) has provided me with a language to explicitly speak about my meaningful physical activity experiences. It appears these meaningful experience features act as a lens in which I make my pedagogical decisions to meet the needs of all students. As a result, I hope that these ideas around meaningful physical activity experiences will inform future PETE candidates about the importance of joy-oriented physical education. I hope that this research will continue to stimulate discussion about the goals of PETE, joy-oriented
physical education programs, and the role PETE, PETE candidates, and future physical educators can play in developing life-long movers.

For me, the next time I am on a boat, feeling the wind rushing over my skin, the sun on my face and listening to the sound of the waves colliding with the bow of the boat, I will reflect on what it really means to engage with physical activity in a joyous way; and how I can potentially teach others to be mindful of what motivates them to simply delight in their own expression of physicality.

*Figure 13. Caitlin's photo of being 'Lost at Sea'.*
References


Dowling, F. (2011). ‘Are PE teacher identities fit for postmodern schools or are they clinging to modernist notions of professionalism?’ A case study of Norwegian PE
teacher students’ emerging professional identities. *Sport, Education and Society, 16*(2), 201-222.


Appendices

Appendix A

Purposeful Sampling Criteria

• In Teacher Education year (pre-service teacher)
• Physical Education as first or second teachable
• Male or female
• Any age
• Any demographic profile
• Any level of physical ability
Appendix B

Email Correspondence Recruitment Script

Dear Name,

It was a pleasure getting to know you in KINE 4P32 last year. As you recall I am a graduate student in my Master of Arts in Applied Health Science currently in the process of researching for my thesis entitled “How Meaningful Physical Education Experiences Influence Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs About Teaching”.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research. I am seeking your interest to participate in two one-on-one interviews with me about the meaning you ascribe to your physical activity experiences and how this may translate into your teaching. These interviews will last between 50 to 60 minutes and hopefully will be completed within the same week. The interviews will be completed sometime in January, February or March depending on your schedule.

Prior to the first one-on-one interview, there will also be a small information session briefing you on photovoice-- the research method used for this study that involved taking pictures related to your meaningful physical activity experiences. This information session will take approximately 20 minutes either in a small group with other participants or individually depending on scheduling of the participants. After this session, you will be asked to take about three to five pictures of physical activity experiences you have had that are meaningful to you as well as write a short journal/reflection on the experience (what was happening, why was it meaningful, how were you feeling, etc.).

Please note that participation in this research is completely voluntary and in no way is associated with your Teacher Education program. Your participation (or lack thereof) in this research will not have any impact on your course grades, and your identity will be kept anonymous from course instructors.

If you are interested in participating in this research, or have any questions about this research please see the attached Letter of Invitation form. If many of you are interested in participating in this research, please contact myself (Caitlin Price) by responding to this email. We will take the first 10 students who contact me.

Kindly,

Caitlin Price, B.PhEd., B.Ed.

Principal Investigator (PI): Dr. Nancy Francis, Professor
Department of Kinesiology
Brock University
905-668-5550 ext. 4366; nfrancis@brocku.ca

Student Principal Investigator (SPI): Caitlin Price, MA Candidate
Department of Applied Health Sciences
Brock University
289-338-6760; cp10lc@brocku.ca

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University’s Research Ethics Board (File: REB 16-092 FRANCIS).
Appendix C

Letter of Invitation for One-on-One Interview

April 5, 2018

Title of Study: How Meaningful Physical Education Experiences Influence Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs About Teaching
Principal Investigator: Dr. Nancy Francis, Professor, Department of Kinesiology, Brock University
Student Principal Investigator: Caitlin Price, MA Candidate, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

I, Caitlin Price, student principal investigator of the research project, from the Department of Kinesiology at Brock University, invite you to participate in a research project titled “How Meaningful Physical Education Experiences Influence Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs About Teaching.”

There are two purposes to this research project. The first purpose of this research is to explore how pre-service physical education teachers make meaning from their own physical activity experiences. The second is to investigate the extent to which understanding their own meaning-making shapes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching physical education.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you choose to decline participation in the study it will not impact my ability to successfully complete the research or obtain my degree. Potential participants are by no means obligated to partake in the study and should you choose to withdraw at any time there will be no consequences.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to engage in a brief 20 minute photovoice information session, asked to take photographs of meaningful physical activity experiences and participate in two, one-on-one interviews (approximately 50 – 60 minutes) in which you will be asked to discuss your experiences and perspectives of meaningful experiences in physical activity. Each individual interview will be audio recorded. Participants will be selected on a first-come first-serve basis.

This research and its findings offer the following benefits. First, the findings of this research will allow you to tap into your own meaning-making in order to gain a better sense of the nature of meaningful situations you have experienced as physical activity participants. Second, it will allow you to explore your beliefs about the importance of fostering meaningful experiences for young people and possibly inform the development of your pedagogical practice.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca)
If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (see below for her contact information).

Thank you,

Dr. Nancy Francis  
Professor  
[905] 668 5550 ext. 4366  
nfrancis@brocku.ca

Caitlin Price  
MA Candidate  
[289] 338 6760  
cp10lc@brocku.ca

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University’s Research Ethics Board (File: REB 16-092 FRANCIS).
Appendix D

Informed Consent

Date: April 5, 2018

Project Title: How Meaningful Physical Education Experiences Influence Pre-Service Teachers’ Beliefs About Teaching

Principal Investigator (PI):
Dr. Nancy Francis, Professor
Department of Kinesiology
Brock University
905-668-5550 ext. 4366; nfrancis@brocku.ca

Student Principal Investigator (SPI):
Caitlin Price, MA Candidate
Department of Applied Health Sciences
Brock University
289-338-6760; cp10lc@brocku.ca

INVITATION
You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. There are two purposes to this research. The first purpose of this research is to explore how pre-service physical education teachers make meaning from their own physical activity experiences. The second is to investigate the extent to which understanding their own meaning-making shapes pre-service teachers’ beliefs about teaching physical education.

WHAT’S INVOLVED
As a participant, you will be asked to come prepared to share meaningful experiences that are reflective of your physical activity experiences. Prior to using photovoice in the two individual interviews, the principal investigator will run a brief session either individually or in a group setting to explain (with other participants dependent upon participant scheduling) around how photovoice works. You will have two weeks prior to when the first individual interview takes place to take photographs of meaningful or significant physical activity experiences you have had whether it is a picture of a place, artifact, etc. The photographs will be used as an aid for participants to use to explain their meaningful physical activity experiences. These photographs will not include yourself (as the participant) or other individuals in them. In correspondence with the photovoice photographs, you will be asked to write personal written entries about your meaningful experiences in physical activity. These journals not have to be lengthy, but can act as refresher notes for the participant during the interview. Journals will be used as supporting artifacts to their meaningful experiences in physical activity as well as aid in conversation during the individual interviews.

These experiences can be positive or negative in nature and can have occurred throughout any point of your life. However, the success of this project is embedded in the idea that you choose physical activity experiences that have significant meaning to you. As such, experiences need to be reflective about a time you personally were engaged in physical activity. The meaningful experiences you choose to share can be long or short in durations as long as they signify experiences that are meaningful for you. Once you have shared your experiences, questions may be asked by the researcher to probe for further meaning and understanding. Questions will be used to gain a more in depth
understanding the meaning you associate with each physical activity experience.
Participation will encompass two (approximately 50 – 60 minutes) interviews and the process will be audio recorded.

After each interview has been completed and transcribed immediately after, you will be sent the transcript of our interview (via email) and will have the option of reviewing, responding and to making changes as you see fit. You will be given a week to review the transcript and email back your approval or any changes you may make. The review process of the transcript should take approximately 15 minutes. If the transcript is not returned within the time frame before the next interview, the data from the first interview will still be used once the transcript is returned.

You do not have to agree to engage in all components of the study to participate. If you agree to be interviewed, but do not wish to participate in photovoice aspect, you are still eligible to participate. Photovoice is used as a method to add to the depth of individual responses within the two semi-structured interviews. Similarly, if you do not agree to participate in the two interviews, but wish to engage in the photographs/journal entries component of the study, your photographs and journals can still be used in this study.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS**
While research has developed insights into ways young people make meaning through physical activity – for example, by participating in experiences that: are fun, involve social interaction, provide challenge, and develop motor competence – less is known about ways teachers learn to foster these experiences. By tapping into their own meaning-making, pre-service teachers may get a better sense of the nature of meaningful situations they experienced themselves as physical activity participants. This, in turn, may shape pre-service teachers’ beliefs about the importance of fostering meaningful experiences for young people and inform the development of their pedagogical practice.

The participants will be made aware that all participation is voluntary and if they are uncomfortable with any questions they can choose to decline answering that questions.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
All information you provide is considered confidential; your name will not be included (replaced with a pseudonym) or, in any other way, associated with the stories and information (data) collected in the study. Photographs or anonymous journal entries will be included in the reporting of results. In order to uphold confidentiality, photographs taken during the photovoice session will not include pictures of people or the participant. The data collected for this study will be stored in password-protected personal computer until the principal student investigator has defended her thesis (April 2018) and then will be kept for three years after in case further publications or conference presentations are created. After this point data will be destroyed (i.e. confidential shredding and deletion of electronic files). Personal identifiers will be deleted after the principal student investigator has defended her thesis (April 2018). Hard-copy data (i.e. signed consent forms, photographs, etc.) will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Principal Investigator’s office at Brock University.
Access to this data will be restricted to the principal student investigator and her faculty supervisor.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**
Participation in this study is voluntary. Should you choose to decline participation in the study it will have no impact on the ability of the researcher to successfully complete the research project or obtain their degree. You are by no means obligated to partake in the study and should you choose to withdraw at any time there will be no consequences. Furthermore, it is to your own discretion what you choose to disclose to the researcher.

**PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. If you wish to receive a final report of this research, the principal student investigator will send you an electronic copy in September 2018.

**CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE**
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Dr. Nancy Francis or Caitlin Price using the contact information provided previously. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (File: REB 16-092 FRANCIS). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca. Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

**CONSENT FORM**
I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: __________________________________________________________________

Signature: _____________________________________ Date: _____________________
Information Session

(To be delivered by the principal student investigator).

What is Photovoice in Research?
- Using photovoice adopts an innovative approach whereby participants use photographs/images to document their meaningful experiences in physical activity (i.e. water skiing behind a boat, skateboarding, snowboarding). In photovoice, the photographs and words from your life experiences as a participant will create the basis for discussion (Knowles & Cole, 2008).
- You will have two weeks to take photographs of meaningful or significant physical activity experiences you have had whether it is a picture of a place, artifact, etc. and a one-on-one interview will be held at a time that works best for you after the 2-week picture taking time-span.
- The photographs will be used as an aid to narrative to understand the meanings associated with your chosen images (Enright & O’Sullivan, 2012).

How many pictures should I take?
- 3 to 5 pictures, a minimum of 3

What should I be a taking picture of?
- Can be something that happened one time or over years
- Can be taken anywhere
- Does not have to be organized (game) could be informal like playing something on the driveway, walking in the woods or field
- Can be alone or in a social setting (making sure not to take pictures of other yourself or other people – do not want to be recognizable in the photo)
- Can involve high skill or low skill

What am I journaling/ being interviewed about my picture?
- Be very descriptive: include feelings, sensations, emotions, thoughts

(Participants will then go through the consent form and will be asked, if agree, to sign the consent form).
Appendix F

Individual Interview #1: Guide

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research. The interview will take approximately 50-60 minutes. You should feel free to skip over, come back to, or change your answer to any question at any time during the interview. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym and any references to institutions such as schools, school boards, or universities will also be replaced with a pseudonym. You will be provided with a typed transcript of this interview several weeks after it is completed and you are free to change any responses as you see fit. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the study, your rights as a participant, or my responsibilities as a researcher?

1. Can you tell me about your background in sport/physical activity?
   - What you did as a child?
   - The things you committed to, what were the reasons for that?
   - The things you didn’t commit to, what were those reasons?

2. Can you tell me about what current physical activities you do?
   - What physical activities do you like to do?
   - What do you do now?

3. Can you tell me about the pictures you have taken and why you chose them? What do they represent that is meaningful to you? Look at picture 1 and tell me and describe for me what that picture triggers in your memory or represents in your experience? (Broader event rather than specifics about the picture).
   - Who were you with?
   - What were you feeling?
   - What were your thoughts?

4. Look at picture 2 and tell me and describe for me what that picture triggers in your memory or represents in your experience? (Broader event rather than specifics about the picture).
   - Who were you with?
   - What were you feeling?
   - What were your thoughts?

5. Look at picture 3 and tell me and describe for me what that picture triggers in your memory or represents in your experience? (Broader event rather than specifics about the picture).
   - Who were you with?
   - What were you feeling?
   - What were your thoughts?

6. What has made the physical activity experiences meaningful/significant for you?
   - Does each picture represent something different or are there common threads?
7. Is there another really significant moment(s) that you weren’t able to find a visual representation of?
Appendix G

Individual Interview #2: Guide

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research. The interview will take approximately 50-60 minutes. You should feel free to skip over, come back to, or change your answer to any question at any time during the interview. Your name will be replaced with a pseudonym and any references to institutions such as schools, school boards, or universities will also be replaced with a pseudonym. You will be provided with a typed transcript of this interview several weeks after it is completed and you are free to change any responses as you see fit. Before we begin, do you have any questions about the study, your rights as a participant, or my responsibilities as a researcher?

1. Can you briefly describe your beliefs about teaching PE? What do you believe is important and why?

2. Could you or do you already apply what you have taken from your own meaningful physical activity experiences to your beliefs about teaching? How? Can you give some examples?

3. Would you say this meaningful physical activity experience has influenced what you believe is important in teaching PE? How? the way you will go about teaching or already do teach?

4. Do you think that teaching for meaningful experiences is important? If so, which elements stick out to you as being the most important?

5. Would you apply [these meaningful experiences] to your teaching practice? How are you already or how would you teach in ways that promote meaningful experiences?